

THE JAZZ REVIEW

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Tatum The Last Years

Mait Edey

Most jazz musicians have plenty of musical company. They learn with others, work with others, and more or less inevitably reflect the playing of others. Even the few really radical innovators are isolated only until they begin to collect followers. It's only natural that the history of jazz is largely the history of groups of musicians working things out in common, in a web of mutual influence, each one travelling pretty much the same road. Of course, some stop where others begin—a function of age, by and large, some go farther than others in the time they have, and detours and backwaters exist. Still, jazz is a remarkably collective endeavor. Almost any player's style specifies his particular slot in the ample historical pattern.

Art Tatum worked in a peculiar kind of musical solitude. After the thirties, jazz went the way that Christian, Young, Parker, Gillespie, and a handful of others set. Tatum, though, branched off at the end of the thirties on his own tangent. He had absorbed his early Johnson-Waller-Hines influences and now he went his own way. Comparison of his last records with his earliest will indicate that he went pretty far, but it wasn't in the direction everybody else was taking. Nobody could really follow him, and he evidently didn't care to follow anybody else. Pianists almost universally admire him, but only very few show or have shown the ability or the inclination to absorb any of his lessons. What they have absorbed are only isolated elements of his style, and they use them in a radically different context. The later Tatum and bop developed side by side, and I think that either would have been very much the same even if the other had never existed.

The result, of course, was that during the early and middle fifties Tatum's music was utterly unlike the rest of modern jazz. Many of today's young hippies probably find his records baffling and uncongenial. (On one occasion I was informed that Tatum had no soul, just fingers.) Some surely find all that embroidery

an obstacle, and although Tatum's time is subtle and precise, it doesn't provoke finger popping. And his harmonies are far from idiomatic modern, often simpler taken chord by chord, but far more complex considering the uses to which those chords are put. To the young player of the fifties, Tatum was neither a respected ancestor nor a contemporary facing the same problems and applying the same techniques. He was a giant to admire, but not to emulate. For that you turned to somebody like Bud Powell, or to one of the many pianists of somewhat lesser influence.

Yet it was these years, the early and middle fifties (Tatum's last half decade), which produced his most extraordinary recorded work. Norman Granz deserves a lot of our gratitude for recording him so prolifically during this period. Indeed, it was wise to record Tatum in quantity if you wanted much music of quality, because of all the very great jazz players Tatum had the most frequent and horrible lapses of taste. Granz has issued his Tatum unselectively, it seems, and these lapses make almost half the material on the "**Genius**" series and the subsequent posthumous releases hardly worth hearing.

As he grew older, Tatum seemed to exhibit an increasing preference for ballads. At any rate, his treatments of ballads are notably more successful than his up-tempo performances. There is a simple reason for this. Tatum's improvisation was never primarily melodic, but harmonic. And most of the up-tempo tunes he chose to record were, for some reason, relatively shallow dixieland or fast show tunes which were hardly the vehicle for his enormous harmonic capacities. On something like **Tiger Rag** he was completely reduced to bravura display, unable to bring his real talents to bear. A gifted melodic improviser can do wonderful things with simple hidebound progressions, but in Tatum's hands they tended to become pieces of expert triviality. Few musical experiences are as discouraging as hearing Tatum wasting his time on inappropriate material, as he did too much of the time.

It was his totally different approach to improvisation, rather than just a preoccupation with ballads, and a superficial difference in sound, which set Tatum apart from the stream of modern jazz. Unlike most players, his aim was not to construct new lines over a given progression, but to play or suggest the melody of the tune chorus after chorus, erecting a massive structure of counter melodies, fluid voicings, substitute chords, and sometimes whole substitute progressions beneath it. (Some of the early stride pianists occasionally operated this way, though on a far less ambitious scale; it was this school of pianists that provided Tatum with his strongest roots.) At worst, the melody would be adorned with cascades of runs, at best it would serve as a mere framework, becoming fragmented into essential motifs which would constantly recur altered and revoiced. Occasionally Tatum abandoned the melody altogether, to plunge into passages of what were essentially free improvisation. You can hear a relatively simple example of this on **You're Blasé**, on "**The Greatest Piano of Them All**," Verve MGV-8323, which contains a free, sixteen-bar passage between the first and second choruses, rather like a long second introduction. A more ambitious and lovely example is the second chorus on **In a Sentimental Mood** on "**The**

Genius of Art Tatum, Vol. 5," Verve MG V-8040, and there are others scattered here and there through the Verve albums. These passages tend to be short formal pieces in themselves, based on a few little chromatic motifs, carefully related and developed. But such excursions return inevitably to the theme, or a paraphrase of it in some form.

I don't mean to leave the impression that Tatum never indulged in really melodic invention or couldn't do it. His melodic lines fall into roughly two classes. First, rather conventional and often dull swing lines, interspersed with decorating runs; there is plenty of this sort of playing on *Indiana*, on **"More of the Greatest Piano of Them All,"** Verve MG V-8347, as on many of his performances of old up-tempo standards. But secondly, Tatum sometimes got off on passages of extraordinary original melody, long eccentric lines full of unexpected holes, leaps, and accents. You can hear examples, sometimes too brief, on a number of his Verve recordings, almost invariably ballads. Of course, his melodic inventiveness with passing phrases and counterlines needs no comment. No one else in jazz has remotely approached it, not even Ellington. Monk probably comes closest, though I suspect he and Tatum didn't really pay much attention to each other. This, incidentally, is a pity, because if Tatum had been able to restrain himself sufficiently, he would have been the ideal interpreter of Monk's compositions.

A paradigm Tatum ballad (there are plenty of exceptions to what I'm about to say) starts with an introduction of anywhere from four to sixteen bars, followed by a chorus or two out of tempo, several choruses in tempo, and sometimes leaving the tempo again for the final full or half chorus. Occasionally a coda is appended. Many of Tatum's introductions, especially the longer ones, are masterpieces in themselves; they exhibit all his harmonic variety. The transition from out-of-tempo to in-tempo was often gradual. Traces of the beat would be anticipated ahead of time, and often Tatum would be in strict tempo before a casual listener would be aware of it. Some but not all of his in-tempo ballad choruses employ a variety of swing basses. These are rooted in stride patterns, but are more complex harmonically and structurally. Tatum likes to turn the stride bass upside down for a few beats at a time, playing the bass note on the second beat and the middle-register chord on the first; he got a very rich texture by rapidly turning back and forth in this way and interspersing cadences of tenths and other open voicings, as on *Isn't It Romantic*, Verve MG V-8347. He flavored these left-hand swing patterns with some very advanced inversions, used with the utmost discretion and subtlety so as not to destroy the consonant sound which he liked so well. But these choruses are not usually the most interesting. The swing basses often prompted conventional swing lines, stride-style note clusters, or simply runs. Tatum was at his best (and swung just as persuasively) when he left regular bass figures behind and used his left hand to strike passing chords and phrases, ringing single notes, and to lay down counterlines. Finally, the abandonment of tempo in the last chorus, unlike the gradual movement into tempo, tended to be sudden, an abrupt crumbling of the beat, often with an acceleration and condensation of the theme. Tatum was more

comfortable and successful with this extended ballad format than with any other.

His last two albums do not rank with his very best on Verve. Like all the others, they are extremely uneven, but the best passages, naturally, are sublime, and you can feed out of the rest. The last lp, **"More of the Greatest Piano of Them All,"** is by and large a less stimulating set than the other. It is studded with lovely things, but they are separated by passages in which the Tatum imagination seems to be taking it easy. There are two tracks of consistent excellence, however, which alone would make the album well worth anybody's investment. The first of these is the ballad *Isn't It Romantic*, which contains samples of Tatum's most sophisticated use of left-hand counterlines. (A couple of years ago Verve released another version of this tune on which Tatum was accompanied by Jo Jones and Red Callender. A comparison of the two will indicate how inhibiting he found even the best of rhythm sections.) The other, unexpectedly, is the medium-fast and very swinging *Happy Feet*, a nearly perfect performance of its type, virtually free of frosting. Several other tracks would be in the same class but for some vacuous passages.

The other lp contains first-class Tatum at greater length. Except for those ubiquitous runs, *You're Blasé* is a fine ballad. It is an odd tune in that its bridge is only four bars long. Tatum revoices that little bridge completely each time, producing what amounts to a series of related interludes, and introduces a shortened final chorus with it. *That Old Feeling* is a staggering performance (though it too has occasional lapses) with a hardly believable wealth of invention—rich voicings and substitutions, implied resolutions, fragments of melody out of phrase, and so on. *You're Mine, You* is only slightly less impressive, slightly less fertile. There is more original musical matter in these pieces than occurs to most pianists during the course of a whole night. Tatum packs into a few dense bars the content a lesser pianist would spread over a long solo. *Heat Wave* is a short performance in a swinging middle tempo. The tune's simplicity is not inhibiting in this case, and Tatum's brief departures from the key and his compressed sequences of passing chords are especially striking, given their straightforward context. This is a good introduction to his methods for those who aren't familiar with them. There is also much of interest on *I Didn't Know What Time It Was*, a relatively rambling interpretation. But the most stunning passage is the second chorus of *What's New*, a piece of improvisation matching anything Tatum ever recorded. The subsequent choruses don't maintain the pace, but for providing us with that second chorus (and the last verse of the first) we can forgive Tatum every frill and every piece of bombast that occurs elsewhere in his work. Every aspect of his talent is evident here. He follows the theme closely, alternating its fragments with sweeping, dancing lines, cadences of chords strummed as though on a guitar, and those tight little inventions opening like flowers from a single note into clumps of intricate sound full of expanding and divergent motion. His touch and pedalling are beyond comment.

I'm afraid it will be a long time before another pianist conceives of anything to match this.



kenny dorham

H. A. Woodfin

It is an indirect tribute to the subtlety of Kenny Dorham's work of the last few years that he still holds the reputation of a conventional hard-cooking trumpeter of the second rank. The real originality of his recent work has passed unnoticed by the larger jazz public, which has dismissed all of it without the careful attention which would reveal the real nature of his style. But Dorham no longer fits into a pigeonhole, and to listen to Dorham with understanding requires both concentration and involvement.

Some musicians find their artistic identity at a young age with little real difficulty, but for most it comes as the result of a harsh battle which may rage for years. Dorham's artistic identity has come slowly through contact and struggle with the often recalcitrant materials of his art. Today, after fifteen years of playing, Dorham has become a consummate and masterful trumpeter, one of the important voices in modern jazz. This formative process in the work of Kenny Dorham is, luckily for us, well documented on records. Dorham's development has been complicated, and perhaps delayed, because he has worked for so many years in a dominant style which now seems out of tune with his temperament. When Dorham came to New York from Texas in the late forties, he was naturally drawn into the bop movement, then in its first flowering. Good bop playing required musicians of exceptional rhythmic agility and harmonic skill, musicians who could create at the often hectic tempos and with rapidly shifting chord patterns. The rather exhausting demands on performers help to explain the relatively small number of first rate bop recordings. The harmonic density often forced even skillful and experienced players into solo playing which was really only desperate chord running.

It is not surprising that the work of a young and unschooled musician, as Dorham was then, should reflect the pressure of all these problems. His earliest recorded work, with a group which included Bud Powell, Sonny Stitt, Fats Navarro, and Kenny Clarke, shows signs of difficulty with both harmonic and rhythmic problems, and these difficulties were made more striking by contrast with Navarro, an already mature and controlled musician. Dorham's solo on **Webb City**, for example, is disjointed, executed with a stiff but unsteady rhythmic attack and definite problems with

sound. Indeed, his tone on all these records is dull, flat, and somewhat erratic. While **Webb City** contains his first work of the session, none of the other three titles on the date display much better control or conception. Among modern trumpeters only Miles Davis had such an inauspicious beginning. In fact many of Dorham's problems of time, tone, and idea were very similar to those which were to plague Davis until the mid fifties.

However, Dorham was to work throughout the forties in bop, and, although the pure bop idiom of Gillespie and Parker was never to be quite natural to him, his playing continuously showed signs of effort and work. Even on some records made later in the forties with Powell and Stitt, on tunes like **Seven Up**, **Blues in Bebop**, and **Fool's Fancy**, he obviously had improved greatly in general control over his fledgling efforts. But for the most part, his work on these tunes is still basically awkward in articulation and content. His rhythmic sense seems to have become slightly keener, and he was able to sustain a solo better, but important though these acquisitions were, they did not carry him far enough.

Nevertheless, on **Bebop in Pastel** and **Ray's Idea** from the same group of recordings, there are hints of a developing style which are evident only now in retrospect. In these improvisations he begins to work on essentially melodic variations which transformed the line directly. These variations are never carried very far and are hardly even partially completed, but they represent tentative steps toward a style and an identity. At this stage of his development his work could only be inconclusive, for he had as yet not achieved sufficient authority on his instrument, or even simple mastery of the concept of thematic development for which he seems to have been striving.

Unfortunately his work with Charlie Parker in the late forties was not amply documented on record. We have only very few recordings which indicate some progress in general craftsmanship, but which are still somewhat unsatisfactory by any rigorous standards.

His most interesting solo in this series is on **Segment**, where he attempts to construct a thematic variation which seems designed as a development of the slight melodic content of the theme into a fuller line. However, this development comes to very little; the solo is quite incomplete and rather flat in contour. He was still limited by a dull, uniform tone and uncertain rhythmic attack. These difficulties of tone production and rhythm are to be found throughout the recordings with Parker. There are certainly few indications in numbers such as **Cardboard** and **Diverse** that Dorham was the musician he has become.

In retrospect, it is obvious that his playing was far steadier and more consistent than on the earlier recordings. This improvement was, of course, purely a matter of degree. His performances with Parker are marked by a weak melodic conception and the above mentioned failures of intonation and time. But it must also be admitted that these lapses are, in general, less striking than those on **Seven Up** or **Webb City**. We must note too that all of these lapses are the results in a large part of Dorham's efforts to work in the style of Gillespie and Navarro, whose rapidly executed harmonic inventions were alien to his own line of growth. It is no exaggeration to say that Dorham

was still too burdened by the special problems inherent to bop to find his own way with assurance.

This is readily apparent, I think, when we examine the Jazz Messengers recordings on which Dorham first speaks with some of the authority of a mature stylist. It was no accident that he found himself as a soloist with a group in which Horace Silver acted as musical director. Silver simplified the shifting patterns of ad-lib passing chords in the accompaniment though he gave the soloists plenty of pre-set chord changes to make in the writing itself.

Dorham in his earliest work with the Messengers is a thoroughly revitalized and highly disciplined performer. In his solo on **Room 608** the energy of his attack and the clarity of his tone alone are surprising when we recall the Dorham of earlier recordings. His time is still somewhat stiff but far smoother than he had shown previously. On **The Preacher** his solo demonstrates a control in the middle and high registers which allows him to move with ease throughout these ranges. A better sustained melodic conception allows him to achieve on **Doodlin'** a blues invention of some strength and conviction.

However, he had not yet recorded a solo which is really memorable in all respects. What we do find is a good soloist whose work is respectable, but not yet really distinguished. His lack of distinction is still plain on the later recordings with the Messengers, although there is a marked improvement in his rhythmic concept. **Sportin' Crowd** contains a solo in which Dorham masters the rhythm by riding easily along, interacting with Blakey at a medium fast tempo. But his ideas, while consistent and well played, are not first rate. Well executed but undistinguished solos are present throughout the records in **Soft Winds**, **The Theme**, and **Minor's Holiday**. In **Like Someone in Love** he demonstrates an exemplary control without developing any striking line.

But on **Yesterdays** he shows conclusively for the first time that he is more than just an accomplished and professional soloist. He focuses on the theme and develops it in a melodic improvisation which extends, refashions, and toughens the line into a musical entity obviously related to the original, but goes far beyond it in scope and meaning. He treats the theme as a rough sketch which must be filled in. This improvisation is singularly dramatic in its angularity and its contrasts of tone production, immediately impressive both in its variety of detail and its unity. Rhythmically, his pattern of suspensions, anticipations, and syncopations is an integral part of the work. His earlier difficulties in tone control are nowhere to be found, and his masterful use of the expressive possibilities of the tonal variety available on the horn cannot be overlooked. **Yesterdays** established Dorham as a musician of consequence who had thoroughly proven the constant progress he had made since his beginnings.

His insecure work at medium and fast tempos with the Messengers continued in much of his subsequent work with Max Roach. On **Mr. X**, for example, his execution is for the most part good, but significant ideas are not many and when they do appear they are seldom carried very far. The same flaws are to be heard on

virtually all of his up tempo playing of the period. **Falling in Love with Love** is a particularly telling instance in which he attempts to work out a melodic variation at a fairly rapid pace. However, the improvisation disintegrates into several fragments of meaningful development connected by thinner material.

But these failures should not be surprising if we realize the real nature of the style which Dorham was then perfecting. It is a technique of melodic variations which does not just embellish or decorate the line, but which rather depends on the construction of each solo as a melodic unit, the parts of which are integrally related by the underlying thematic pattern. The solos are handled so that the melodic alterations seem only proper and, indeed, inevitable. A great deal of the force of this style comes from the manner in which he utilizes his horn and embouchure from the middle to the high register, with changes in tone and vibrato made an essential part of the development. The maturation of this style can be found in much of the slow tempo work he did with Roach's group in the late fifties. **My Old Flame** is an outstanding illustration. His playing here constitutes a sustained rewriting of the original melody in a stark but impassioned manner, given color and shadow by the dramatic use of the trumpet's tonal resources. The release of the first chorus when he changes from the quietness of his preceding playing to a sharp biting tone not only surprises the listener but completes a thematic pattern, in which this change of tone is an important element.

Parker's Mood is an interesting display of the use of half valve effects in a full development of the Parker theme. Dorham here takes full advantage of all the possibilities of a limited given material and produces a total work of considerable complexity which is both satisfactory and complete.

The body of his work from the period with Roach includes many instances in which his method is successful, but few of them are at up tempo. Indeed, it would seem that he was not then able to adapt this sort of style to fast tempos. Much of his work at up tempos was either in the harmonic bop style or were attempts at melodic variations which fail. **Billie's Bounce** is one example of a successful up-tempo invention in which the ideas are well conceived and the rhythmic fluency of his playing is outstanding, but much of his work in this vein is indifferent and shows that Dorham is not a cooking musician of the Clifford Brown type. The uniqueness of his conception finally became obvious during 1959, the year in which he perfected his style. In 1959 he produced two widely neglected recordings which leave no doubt of the originality or the quality of his musicianship.

On the better of these recordings, he was accompanied only by a rhythm section. His performances of **Lotus Blossom** and **Blue Spring Shuffle** show conclusively that his difficulties in sustaining an improvisation at an up tempo have been settled. His improvisations here are impressive both by their skill and their content. **Lotus Blossom** is particularly striking because of the consummate ease with which he blends his thematic ideas with a rhythmic attack which is dependent on Art Taylor's well patterned work

and yet sets up its own counter pattern. **Blue Spring Shuffle** demonstrates an equally impressive rhythmic ease. However, perhaps his most interesting work to date is to be found in **Blue Friday** where he sustains a beautiful angular variation which is kept in motion by an amazing and subtle variety of devices of tonal inflection and rhythm. The entire construction stands as a tribute to the years of work that Dorham has devoted to his art.

Only slightly less successful is his work with Cannonball Adderley in a series of arrangements scored for a septet with French horn and baritone. The arrangements do not come off very well and damage the impact of the recording. Nevertheless, Dorham's work is consistently interesting and shows again the extent of his mastery of his own style. **Spring is Here** is an excellently controlled study in detail and contrasts, while **Passion Spring** is a marvellously sustained improvisation which is built logically in whole and part. If Dorham is today a mature and skilled soloist, he is also the exponent of a style which is unique among modern trumpeters. His technique of dramatically developed melodic variations is without imitators as yet. Of course, in one way or another it is the keystone for the styles of Monk, Coleman, and Rollins. In this respect Dorham is firmly in the line of those post-bop soloists who are working beyond the limitations of the bop idiom. Still none of the trumpeters who may be thought of as a part of this loosely defined movement has attempted much in this line. The melodic solos of Miles Davis are, for the most part, spun-out lines and are not constructions in the way that Dorham's are. The nature and scope of his style today raises the interesting question of what Dorham will do next. It seems clear that he really requires a stable group of some sort which would provide him with a framework and would allow him to establish his musical personality fully. This was exactly what Davis, for example, was able to do with his often badly assorted quintet/sextet. But Dorham has so far been too dependent on casual recording dates, and public understanding of his work and its nature has, consequently, been too rare. But with a unit of his own upon which he could place his own stamp, it would be no longer possible to misunderstand the musical achievements which are now so undervalued.

Whatever the public image of Dorham, a serious examination of the body of his work shows incontestably that he is, along with Davis and Farmer, one of the modern masters of his instrument and the originator of a style which is both new and impressive.

Recordings

Fats Navarro: Savoy MG-12011. **Webb City, Seven Up, Blues in Bebop, "Opus de Bop"**: Savoy MG-12114. **Ray's Idea, Bebop in Pastel, Fool's Fancy**.

Charlie Parker: Verve MG-8009. **Segment, Cardboard, Diverse** (this is an extra take of **Segment**).

Jazz Messengers: Blue Note 1518 **Room 608, The Preacher, Doodlin'**. Blue Note 1507. **Soft Winds, The Theme, Minor's Holiday**.

Blue Note 1508. **Sportin' Crowd, Like Someone in Love, Yesterdays**.

Kenny Dorham: Riverside RLP 12-239. **My Old Flame, Falling in Love with Love**.

Max Roach: Emarcy MG-36098 **Mr. X**.

Mercury MG-36127. **Billie's Bounce, Parker's Mood**.

Kenny Dorham: New Jazz 8225. **Blue Spring Shuffle, Lotus Blossom, Blue Friday**.

Riverside RLP 12-297. **Spring is Here, Passion Spring**.



waller
to
wellstood
to
williams
to
chaos



Fats Waller

"The Real FATS WALLER."

Camden CAL-473.

The Sheik of Araby; Carolina Shout; Oooh! Look-a There Ain't She Pretty; B-Flat Blues; Ain't Misbehavin'; Everybody Loves My Baby; I Believe in Miracles; Rosetta; Squeeze Me; Crazy 'Bout My Baby; Harlem Fuss.

FATS WALLER and his Rhythm:

"One Never Knows, Do One?"

Victor LPM 1503.

I'm On a Seesaw; Have a Little Dream On Me; You Meet the Nicest People in Your Dreams; Carolina Shout; Lulu's Back in Town; My Very Good Friend the Milkman; Do Me a Favor; Us On a Bus; Porter's Love Song to a Chambermaid; Then I'll Be Tired of You; There's Honey On the Moon Tonight; Georgia on My Mind; I'm Crazy 'bout My Baby; Lost and Found; The Meanest Thing You Ever Did Was Kiss Me; I'm Gonna Put You in Your Place and Your Place Is in My Arms.

Most of the hundreds of tunes which Fats Waller recorded in the 'thirties and 'forties follow the same pattern. After a piano introduction and an instrumental chorus, Fats sings one while Herman Autry or Gene

Sedric noodles in the background, and then Herman will take it out while Fats shouts encouragement. At the end of the record Fats utters a little bit of nonsense ("Such beauty must be deserving!") which habit together with his fondness for slaughtering lyrics ("If you break my heart I'll break your jaw and then I'll die") has led most normal people to regard him as an entertainer and most social critics to regard him as a social critic. There's not much to say about these performances after all these years. If you've ever heard any you know what to expect. If you've never heard them, then by all means buy some, because they present one of the most attractive of the many styles of jazz—good unpretentious swing. Both Herman Autry and Gene Sedric are superb rhythmically, and Sedric's sense of pitch and interval is one of the minor marvels of the age. The rhythm section is heavy, as many rhythm sections chose to be in those days, but it swings like crazy. There are a million ways to

swing, and heavy is one of them, and light is another, and that's what makes jazz interesting, you dig? Each of these records has a representative selection of Fats—the Camden chosen by John Wilson and the Victor by Nat Hentoff. Both assortments are good, although Hentoff's is the more off-beat and therefore more desirable to an experienced listener. Some of the Camden tracks have already been released on Victor LPT 6001, a two-record set, and there is one (to me) godawful organ selection on the Camden, so that my own choice is clearly the Hentoff-Victor. In the album notes Mr. Wilson omits names and dates, but says that Fats lived with overflowing gusto and tells a story about Fats and Eddie Condon with his customary amiability. Hentoff on the other hand says "urban civilization," "classically detached man," compares Fats with Mr. Dooley, and quotes Hodeir. Anybody who buys a record for the liner notes is out of his cotton-picking mind.

Dick Wellstood

When the above review arrived, I thought of a lot of things about Fats and the stride pianists that I'd like to hear Dick Wellstood talk about. I wrote out some questions, hoping to get some answers.

I did. Those least likely to provoke a lawsuit follow.

Martin Williams

How original was Fats and how did he fit into that whole "stride" school?

Well, everybody says the Lion is the most original and he probably is, but the question is original from what? Those guys played a lot different in the 'thirties than they did in the 'twenties. James P. Johnson started off with rags and wound up with a super-Basie, or something. So the point is, what school? Fats sounded very little like Jas. P. most of the time except in the 'twenties. Luckey Roberts probably belongs more with Eubie Blake although I never heard Eubie Blake. (I did, however, finally see a picture of Mimi Clar.) Jas. P. is the focal point. The rags, cotillions, mazurkas, and all those other unknown phenomena all came together in Jas. P., who made jazz out of them, and then the harmonies of Jas. P. went into Duke, the showiness into Tatum, the goodtiminess into Fats, and the rhythmic potentialities into Monk, or something like that. The thing was not a chronological development. And Basie stole the skeleton.

How did Fats play Jas. P.'s Carolina Shout?

Great. Mostly interesting to me because the tempo is unsteady, and yet he still swings. He plays, like I said, a goodtime version of Jas. P. Jas. P. plays the full tune. Fats abstracts what he wants from it. He plays half the tune, in effect. His half.

Can a kiddie learn from Fats?

No. Your pianist who said not was pretty right. Good-time and rent party piano is kind of out of style. Fats had nice technique, but that's not what we're talking about. How the hell do I know what Cecil Taylor will see in Fats or Ornette in Jelly Roll?

Fats' blues . . . are they the blues?

No. Show biz blues. But there are a lot of blues traditions, and Fats' just wasn't one with Memphis Slim and the Mississippi type people. Neither is Basie or Cripple Clarence.

What kind of a composer was he? Most of those guys wrote both piano "compositions" and "show" songs. Fats did too; how did it work out, comparing him to the others? And isn't Monk in pretty much the same tradition in this respect too?

What? Do you live in a reconditioned brownstone?

How about comparing versions of Squeeze Me? Most of them made it under various titles.

Good idea.

How about comparing all Fats' Ain't Misbehavin's?

I never dug the highpowered showpieces like *Ain't Misbehavin'* or *Honeysuckle* and the popular ones. I never could bear to listen to one of them all the way through.

It's so hard to tell what Fats could do, because he was always trying to entertain, and so made his playing entertaining at the damndest times; for example, just when things started to swing.

He plays great on those Commodores with Marty Marsala, don't you think? In other words, he was great, and could play with anybody and sound great, but he didn't always do it. The trouble with a lot of those guys

of that age is that they really in a sense are ashamed of jazz, and sometimes you have to force them to play good, whereas the moderns (and it is so easy to get by on b. s. in modern jazz whereas those older have a real feeling) are not afraid to try to play. Hence the successes and the b. s.

Care to write about Fats?

No/no thoughts/no organization/no coherence/no real verbal command of jazz, only an incomparable musical understanding of it.

So, why didn't you say more in your review?

I have a simple, direct, uncluttered mind. When somebody asks me to review a record, that's what I do. No essays or belles-lettres on such an assignment. When I wrote up that "*Monk's Music*" booklet I said not a word about why he's great but only whether the publication was any good and I think that all the writers should have that much sense, instead of dragging in Kwakiutl love potions.

Best regards to you and yours, and I hope to hear from you in the very near future with some more free records.

Dick Wellstood

Dick Wellstood is a pianist who has been gigging around New York with the musicians active on the Metropole scene. He has worked at one time or another with Ahmed Abdul-Malik, Gus Aikens, Mousy Alexander, Red Allen, Danny Alvin, Jimmy Archey, Harold Austin, Herman Autry, Buster Bailey, Eddie Barefield, Danny Barker, George Barnes, Joe Barufaldi, Ray Bauduc, Sidney Bechet, Aaron Bell, Tommy Benford, Emmett Berry, Denzil Best, Jerry Blumberg, Eddie "Mole" Bourne, Ruby Braff, Gene Brooks, Wellman Braud, John Brown, Lawrence Brown, Pete Brown, Scoville Brown, George Brunis, Roy Burnes, Garvin Bushell, Ernie Caceres, Happy Caldwell, Papa Mutt Carey, Dick Carey, Bob Casey, Big Sid Catlett, Frank Chase, Henderson Chambers, Doc Cheatham, Gary Chester, Buck Clayton, Rudy Collins, Shad Collins, Eddie Condon, Cutty Cutshall, Hank d'Amico, Kenny DaVern, Bill Davison, John Dengler, Sidney deParis, Wilbur deParis, Vic Dickinson, Ray Diehl, Harry DiVito, Baby Dodds, Bobby Donaldson, Fats Donaldson, Buzzy Drootin, George Duvivier, Eddie Edwards, Joe Eldridge, Roy Eldridge, Pee Wee Erwin, Doc Evans, Morey Feld, Herb Fleming, Pops Foster, Bud Freeman, Panama Francis, Roy Francis, Barry Galbraith, Leonard Gaskins, Matthew Gee, John Giuffrida, John Glasel, Tyree Glenn, Henry Goodwin, Brad Gowans, Sonny Greer, Mart Grosz, Bobby Hackett, Al Hall, Edmond Hall, Herb Hall, Coleman Hawkins, Joe Harris, Heywood Henry, Mort Herbert, Arthur Herbert, J. C. Higginbotham, J. C. Heard, Bass Hill, Chippie Hill, Milt Hinton, Ed Hubble, Peanuts Hucko, Aly Jackson, Oliver Jackson, Illinois Jacquet, Conrad Janis, Bunk Johnson, Lem Johnson, Manzie Johnson, Jo Jones, Rufus Jones, Max Kaminsky, George Kelly, Karl Kiffe, Steve Lacy, Cliff Leeman, George Lewis, Jack Lesberg, John Letman, Eddie Locke, Bob Lovett, Herb Lovelle, Lou Malin, Wingy Manone, Marty Marsala, Kaiser Marshall, Stu Martin, Red McKenzie, Louis Metcalf, Mezz Mezzrow, Bob Mielke, Fred Moore, Russell Moore, Sam Moore, Benny Morton, Benny Moten, Phil Napoleon, Buell Neidlinger, Rick Nelson, Frankie Newton, Albert Nicholas, Sal Pace, Lips Page, Walter Page, Tony Parenti, LeRoy Parkins, Ed Phye, Tommy Potter, Paul Quinichette, Gene Ramey, Nat Ray, Django Reinhardt, Jerome Richardson, Prince Robinson, Pee Wee Russell, Sonny Russo, Bob Scobey, Cecil Scoot, Gene Sedic, Ed Shaughnessy, Charlie Shavers, Arvell Shaw, Mickey Sheen, Harry Sheppard, Shep Sheppard, Omer Simeon, Hal Singer, Zutty Singleton, Charlie Smith, Tony Spargo, Alphonse Steele, George Stevenson, Rex Stewart, Slam Stewart, Ted Sturges, Tack Annie, Jack Teagarden, Joe Thomas, Charles Traeger, Art Trappier, Lloyd Trotman, Munn Ware, Herb Ward, Earl Warren, Benny Waters, Dickie Wells, George Wettling, Josh White, Bob Wilber, Sandy Williams, Johnny Windhurst, Steve Wright, Sol Yaged, Abdullah Zuh'ri, and many others.

THE GIGANTIC BABY DODDS

Bruce King

To understand why many people, myself included, call Baby Dodds a great drummer—some say the best jazz has produced—it is necessary to understand the style within which he developed. New Orleans jazz was based on the polyphony of interweaving melodic and harmonic lines. Since the lines were improvised, there was very little harmonic extension, and the parts were conceived in relation to the whole, rather than developed as independent musical lines. Some New Orleans musicians were capable of building an organic part over several choruses while performing in the ensemble, but this was unusual, and the most outstanding feature of New Orleans jazz was the discipline with which the ensemble was varied through subtle shifts in voicing, lead, and texture.

Given this form of musical organization, one main function of the drummer is to provide support for changes in the ensemble texture. The drummer also adds to the texture, plays contrasting rhythmic patterns, and knits the texture together, filling in the gaps. Later when jazz became more open, and the solo took over from the ensemble as the center of interest, the drummer used his ability to keep spaces open; the open spaces provided the soloist with room to move, and left him free to vary his material from the basic melodic structure. It was part of Jo Jones' contribution to drumming that he kept the texture so light that even the most understated solo seemed to stand out in high relief.

The New Orleans drummer, however, had to fill in the gaps, and help emphasize changes in the ensemble texture. In his ability to do this Baby Dodds was a great drummer. But he also considered his drum a percussive—as well as a rhythmic—instrument, and related his part to the melody. When the ensemble voicing would change, his support changed with it. His press roll, the basis of his technique, was capable of great variety of sound and phrasing. It was a marching band technique which older drummers had adapted to jazz, but in Baby's hands the press roll became a subtle vehicle for expression. He could change his roll according to the dynamics of the instrument he was backing, sometimes playing on his snare drum more softly than a guitar or violin. He knew the difference that could

result from starting a roll with the opposite hand; and he knew that it was of importance to plan where a roll should begin. If a roll were to finish at the end of a solo, or chorus, he understood that it must be lengthened so as to fill the gap, and lead in the next instrument. He always listened to the band, on the alert for any transition that required punctuation or a difference in dynamics. He studied each musician he played with, and had a strong sense of what they were likely to do. When Baby worked with Bunk Johnson or George Lewis, he sometimes seemed to be directing them, when his own part anticipated that of the horns.

Baby's press roll will remain the ideal of any drummer. For lightness and smoothness it has never been matched. And he used it with a wide vocabulary of different beats. His basic beat at fast tempos was usually the five-stroke roll; on medium tempos the seven; and on slow blues he usually used the nine-stroke roll. He sometimes played an unusual open six-stroke roll on his wood blocks by letting the sticks bounce once, rather than twice, for each stroke. He would vary his rolls during a number, perhaps using five-stroke rolls on one chorus, and nines on the next. To close the gaps, or introduce a solo, he would use longer rolls, sometimes a sixteen-stroke roll, which lasted from the middle of one measure to the next, sometimes a thirty-two-stroke roll, made by tying two sixteens. Baby did not simply lay down one roll after another, but connected them into phrases which built through the chorus. As the Basie rhythm section might develop a figure against the saxophone section, so Baby phrased his rolls in riff-like sequences. He might also vary his beat with longer rolls, or a few shorter ones, as part of his pattern. Later, during the swing period, Baby would phrase his rolls in unison with the riffs during part of a chorus, then on the release of the tune he would alter his phrasing by playing between the riffs so that there would be a contrast.

Baby always tried to express the melody. In a New Orleans band there usually was one horn carrying the melody, and Baby's own part would be developed to reinforce the lead instrument; if the clarinet took over the lead from the trumpet, Baby would alter his beat to bring out the change. Each instrument would

be supported in a different way, by different beats. Alterations in the ensemble voicing would often be reflected in his dynamics or by a change to the bass drum shell, wood blocks, and snare drum rims. He considered his wood blocks too loud for most purposes, and reserved them for accents or extreme contrasts. Occasionally he used the heavy ends of his sticks upon the rims and shells.

He would begin a chorus on his snare drum, and when he felt that the clarinet was going to take over the lead he would begin to cue its entry with wood block accents. He would back the clarinet on the rims of his snare, and if the trumpet started to riff behind the clarinet, Baby might build his figures on the bass drum shell. He might play on the bass drum rims behind a trombone solo; and on the ride-out he would use snare drum or cymbals.

Baby's wood block and rim figures are difficult to explain. While many are standard drum rudiments, others seem to grow out of the melody. Still others seem to be inspired by various rhythmic figures first played by the horns. He seldom stuck to one beat throughout a chorus, but kept developing his part. The logic of his part often had the organic form of a solo. A rhythmic figure would be explored through syncopation, and emerge with shifted accents. The figure might be restated in double time, put into triplets, or made into a shuffle rhythm. Sometimes he would contrast different beats, while at other times his original figure would go through various changes until it emerged as a totally different beat. Something so simple as a triplet stated against a riff might be developed in various sequences, and in combination with other beats, so that a whole chorus might be a variation on it. Other times Baby would begin by playing 1-2-3-4 on his wood blocks. As the ensemble developed he would pick up an idea, and complicate it with off-beats, new accents, to transform it into a very complex figure. From his figure the horns might pick up a rhythmic pattern and state it as a riff. By this time Baby would be contrasting his original idea with some development of it, interweaving with the horn patterns. There are records where the interplay of Baby's drums with the clarinet becomes so intense that it is difficult to tell which instrument is leading the other. At such times Baby's drumming becomes an equal voice in the ensemble, with the drums and clarinet feeding each other.

His drumming is melodic in another sense. Besides organizing his part around the melodic lead he also follows the structure of the tune. Most songs have a general structure of A-A¹-B-A: statement, slight development, contrasting release, and restatement. Phrasing frequently follows this structure because it roughly represents the chord changes of a simple tune. This is especially true of New Orleans jazz where the trumpet part must remain within the discipline of the ensemble, leaving room for the clarinet and trombone. Baby marks these changes in structure with accents on his wood blocks and tom-toms, fills in the gaps between the phrases with long rolls, and uses different beats for the various sections.

Behind a solo, or a clarinet lead-in ensemble, his concern with form is most obvious. On the first four measures he will play a simple figure; for the second

section he will develop a syncopated beat from his first figure; on the release he may play something different in double time; while on the restatement he might return to his original beat. Alternatively, he might play a series of rolls on the A section; play triplets on the drum rims for the A¹ section; use rolls again on the release; and end the chorus with tied triplets on his wood blocks. During this time he will have marked the structural changes with various wood block and tom-tom accents; especially at any change in the ensemble voicing, where, perhaps, a clarinet takes over the lead from the trumpet on the release.

Superimposed upon this treatment of the chorus is a more general formal conception of each number as an organic whole. Baby will play the early choruses on snare drum, develop complicated beats on the rims for the middle choruses, and close by playing upon his cymbals. He did not use the **dot-da-da** beat of most modern drummers, but preferred to play wood block figures, or tap a straight 1-2-3-4 on the cymbal. The rhythms he uses are often interesting, but they do not add swing or definition to the final chorus. This is probably inherent to the use of a ride cymbal, which tends to lose its bits in a thickly woven ensemble texture. Baby's drumming with Bechet's Feetwarmers showed he could use the cymbal for fine percussive effects when he played with more open sounding swing groups. On the Bechet recordings his cymbal beat is clear and well defined against the soloists. He often makes use of shifting accents, hits the cymbal on off-beats, or in connection with snare drum and wood block figures. He occasionally used a series of tied triplets on the cymbals, and sometimes made a roll with his wire brushes on two cymbals at once. He was, I believe, the first drummer to explore the difference in sound between the various parts of the cymbal, hitting it in various ways, and using its crown. Just as his tom-toms were tuned to parallel fifths, so he played his cymbals to bring out the various intervals within a theme.

Unfortunately most of Baby's career is not well documented on records. When he worked with Oliver and Armstrong, recording techniques prohibited the use of snare and bass drum; the drummer's part was limited to the use of the wood blocks. When recording techniques improved, during the thirties, New Orleans jazz was out of fashion, and few recordings were made. During the forties Baby was often recorded, but usually on small labels which no longer exist. One session with Art Hodes was never issued—does anyone know what happened to the masters of this session? But William Russell used Baby on many of his American Music recordings, and devoted four records specially to Baby's technique and style, though only three were issued. These form the crown of Baby's recording career, and together with the earlier sessions give us some idea of his achievements.

Baby's earliest recordings were made with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. Here Baby is limited to using his wood blocks; but the swing he generates is phenomenal. On **Chimes Blues** we hear him playing subtle variations on his blocks, syncopating his beat, playing in double time, using shuffle rhythms, and playing rolls. On **Froggie Moore** he uses a different variation of his

beat on each theme, developing his part with shifting accents, and Spanish rhythms. On **Canal Street Blues** his wood blocks interplay with the horns. Behind Johnny Dodds' solo his figures first follow the descending runs of the clarinet and then contrast with them during the second half of the chorus. Perhaps he is at his best on **Mandy Lee Blues** where his part is completely constructed from various beats and syncopations which follow the melody. Here we find lots of double-time figures, always implying contrasting time values above the stated beat. On **Snake Rag** we hear him phrasing in unison with the horns, then double timing the second theme, changing his beats on the later choruses, and simplifying his patterns for the ride-out. There is a progressive movement from order to excitement to order. Despite the limitations of recording techniques, Baby's playing shows a wide vocabulary of beats, a concern with texture, and a fine sense of swing that implies several contrasting time values at once.

After the Oliver recordings there is little to demonstrate Baby's ability during the twenties. On the Armstrong Hot Sevens we occasionally hear him playing a wood-block accent, or a charleston beat on the cymbals, but otherwise the drums are inaudible. The same is true of other recordings he made with Armstrong and Johnny Dodds, though on a few sides made with his brother he brings his drumming technique to the washboard. The results are surprisingly satisfactory, considering the limitations. On **Forty and Tight** he varies his beat from measure to measure, making use of broken triplets, and the dot-da-da rhythm that modern drummers play on the ride cymbal. **Piggly Wiggly** shows Baby trying to use the washboard as a voice, interweaving his figures and accents around the horns, varying his beat with triplets, shuffle rhythms, using off-beats, or playing unaccented straight fours. In the early 'forties, Baby recorded a few sides with Sidney Bechet's Feetwarmers, in one of those attempts by New Orleans musicians, common at the time, to compromise with the swing style. It was, I think, an interesting development, which produced extremely exciting music, though sometimes over-excited. It is a measure of Baby's ability that the records he made are hot without being frenzied. On **Ain't Misbehavin'**, for instance, he keeps the rhythm lively by contrasting long and short rolls, yet his playing is a model of discipline. You can hear him accenting the release with his cymbals and cueing in the second chorus with a roll. On the chase choruses he outlines the trumpet part with woodblocks, and keeps the various breaks lively by moving from snare drum to cymbals to blocks. On **Blues for you Johnny** Baby plays unison with the horns, mixing nine-stroke rolls with tom-tom accents; behind the vocal he lays down a basic beat, varying his nine-stroke rolls with twelves, and one-beat presses; there are double-time tom-tom punctuations on the release; on the instrumental choruses he breaks into five-stroke rolls played at double time. For **Save it Pretty Mama**, Baby begins by starting his roll on the afterbeat, switches on to the beat, and then off again. Behind the piano he lays down a seven-stroke roll. He plays on the cymbal behind the trumpet, hitting double time off-beats. On the ride-out, his rolls are in unison with the riffs. On **Stompy Jones** Baby

varies his five-stroke rolls with shorter rolls and rim shots. His accents continually shift the center of the rhythm. He introduces the harmonized riff with a little run of his own on the rims. After the bass solo, Baby solos for eight measures in double time. By slight shifts in accents, the use of sixteenth notes and a changing tonal pattern—he used two wood blocks and four tuned cow-bells—his solo seems to fluctuate between double time and free tempo. The rhythmic idea is not unlike Parker's breaks.

During the 'forties Baby also recorded with Chippie Hill, Mezzrow, and various small groups for Blue Note and Circle. Among the best of these sessions were the trio sides with Albert Nicholas. **Wolverine Blues** is especially good, with Baby's wood block work building throughout. During this period he also made a few recordings as a soloist, examples of his ability to construct rhythmic variations, rather than displays of virtuosity. Beginning with one syncopated beat, Baby will explore it until it is transformed into another. Often the idea will be explored in various tonal areas through the use of rims, tom-toms, and cymbals. Sometimes Baby explored an idea in intervallic variation, using his tuned tom-toms. Another record shows Baby using a percussive effect known as nerve beats, by loosely holding two drum sticks in one hand, and making them rattle through the contraction and expansion of the nerves between the elbow and shoulder. It is technically difficult, since the rattles must be as quick, even, and precise as a drum roll. During the forties Baby also worked for a period on the **This is Jazz** broadcasts. Only one lp was released from the series, and it does not give us a particularly good idea of Baby's drumming. However, many collectors made private recordings of the programs, and from these we can see how well Baby could play within a mixed Dixieland-New Orleans group. As on the Feet-warmer session, Baby's style is highly individual. On the broadcasts he was expected to fill in Chicago-style tags. Where other drummers might use these spaces to show off their technique, Baby's breaks are economical and witty. He would hit his tom-toms two or three times in a syncopated rhythm, cleverly parodying the pyrotechnics of others. Or he would simply leave his breaks open until the very last moment, to release the growing tension with a witty tom-tom punctuation, or a run on his cow-bells.

The recordings Baby made for William Russell's American Music label range from the early forties to the early fifties. The musicians include Bunk Johnson, George Lewis, Kid Shots Madison, Jim Robinson, Darnell Howard, and Natty Dominique. Except for a few brass band sessions, these are the only modern recordings of Baby playing with a group of New Orleans musicians. Here Baby is in an ideal environment, a band whose playing calls for a drummer aware of nuances in texture and voicing. Few other New Orleans drummers are still capable of fulfilling these functions. Barbarin, for example, has become crude through working with Dixieland groups. In such an environment, however, Baby was perfectly at home, for his work had always remained within the New Orleans tradition. **Lonesome Road** amply demonstrates Baby's sense of musical form. On the first two choruses, the A-section is marked with snare drum or rim accents, and the


release (B section) is ended with block or tom-tom punctuations. For the third chorus Baby moves over to his drum shell, where his rhythms are ambivalent between the stated beat and double time. On the release he plays a series of linked triplets. The end of the release is signaled with wood block accents. For the last chorus Baby plays on the shells, using a little syncopated tom-tom figure at the end of the A section. He plays triplets on the rim again for the release, and marks the conclusion with woodblock accents, before returning to the shell for the restatement.

Other recordings Baby made with Bunk show the same taste and musical organization. **Lord You've Been Good to Me** begins with Baby playing open six-stroke rolls on the rims, and triplets on the tom-toms. Behind Bunk's runs he approximates the same rhythm on his tom-toms. Behind Lewis he echoes the clarinet on his wood block until the release, where he plays a contrasting rhythm. Each section of **Careless Love** is marked by rolls, block work, or snare drum accents. There are contrasting seven-stroke rolls behind the trombone on the fourth chorus, and double time wood block rhythms on the release behind the clarinet and trumpet choruses. These sides also show Baby giving direction to the band, controlling its dynamics, and preparing for breaks and changes of texture. On **827 Blues**, Baby plays double time on the shells behind the clarinet, then slows down to the basic tempo to introduce the "snag it" break. He introduces the riff on the same number with his wood blocks. On **Golden Leaf Strut** he introduces the trombone-clarinet duet with wood block accents. Notice how he prepares the breaks two measures in advance by playing accents which suggest the rhythmic contours that are forming. Again notice, on **Low Down Blues**, how he suggests stop time by pressing down hard on his rolls behind the horns on the sixth chorus. On most of these tracks we find him phrasing the introduction in unison with the horns, marking the tune structure, directing the dynamics of the band, and adding counter-rhythms behind the lighter ensemble passages. On the fourth chorus of **Blue As I Can Be** Baby brings the band down low—or funky—with heavy nine-stroke rolls.

But perhaps the finest drumming is on the famous Lewis-Robinson duet of **Ice Cream**, on which the absence of a trumpet allows the drum an equal part with the clarinet and trombone. It begins at a very fast tempo, and from the first, Baby generates excitement by using wood block and tom-tom accents. Each release, and the end of each chorus, is marked by some accent or explosion. On the second chorus Baby is already playing syncopated rhythms on the drum rims, using triplets on the release, and eighth-note figures on the return. On the third chorus, these syncopated eighth note figures develop, echoing the clarinet's phrasing, mixed with six-stroke rolls, and double-timed triplets. When Robinson takes over lead, Baby begins playing snare drum, since the trombone offers fewer rhythmic variations with which to interweave. However, Baby keeps dropping accents and various beats here and there to support the other musicians. Here, I believe, we have the soul of jazz in simultaneous contrasting rhythmic variations upon a single pulse. It is, of course, not absolutely necessary for drummers

to state counter-rhythms as explicitly as Dodds (or for that matter Roach). During the thirties, more was implied, and the tension resulted from the interplay of slight nuances of rhythm. However, New Orleans jazz was explicit, and within this sphere Baby was the finest drummer jazz has produced.

We know that many New Orleans drummers, including Zutty Singleton, were influenced by Baby; many white musicians, including Tough, Krupa, and Wettling, found their inspiration in his work. Listen to Krupa playing a roll and you hear Dodds. Listen to Wettling varying his texture behind different instruments, and there's Dodds again. However, changes in the equipment of modern drumming and in musical style in general, prevented Dodds establishing a tradition for drummers as we can speak of the trumpet tradition established by Armstrong.

Baby's drumming was rooted in an ensemble style. When musicians developed the solo as the primary means of musical expression drummers had to develop a lighter, more open sound around which the horn could play. Instead of the drum filling in gaps its job was now to leave them open. Kaiser Marshall solved this problem by developing the high-hat beat which is still used today by most drummers on the top cymbal. The adoption of the high-hat, and later the ride cymbal, broke the link with the New Orleans snare drum style. Or so it would seem. But was it as simple as that? Wasn't Baby one of the first modern drummers after all? He was, supposedly, the first to begin beating regularly on a top cymbal. Though he didn't use the , there are good reasons for crediting him with the basic idea of riding the cymbals. Moreover, we hear elements of Baby's musical approach in the work of other drummers. Listen to Jo Jones' brush work on his early recordings, and see if it isn't the five-stroke press roll reinterpreted. Or for that matter, listen to Jones playing melody solos behind Tatum, as Baby had played melody on his trio sides with Art Hodes. Again, listen to Catlett's press roll, and his playing on the rims of his drums; Catlett was either influenced by Baby, or indirectly influenced through another drummer (Webb or Singleton), who had learned Baby's ideas. Even in modern drummers, many percussive effects seem to derive from Dodds. They may have been learned independently, but they are the same effects. Roach, we know, was impressed by Baby's drumming at a concert where they both played. It would be interesting to know whether Roach had played accents upon the rims of his bass drum before that. Certainly he must have learned to do nerve beats by watching Baby. Blakey and Roach use their elbows to change the tone of their snare drum. Is this an African idea, or did it come from watching Baby use his heel to vary the pitch of his tom-tom? For that matter, did modern drummers become fascinated with the use of the snare drum roll before Roach saw Baby use it? I have no answers to these questions. Perhaps they are only of interest to jazz historians. They do show that Baby was years ahead of his time in his use of a drum set as a musical instrument. Any drummer who is concerned with tonal patterns, timbre, texture, and rhythmic variation belongs to Baby's tradition. We have come full circle back to his idea of drumming.

INTRODUCING SCOTT LaFARO

"It's quite a wonderful thing to work with the Bill Evans trio," said bassist Scott LaFaro.

"We are really just beginning to find our way. You won't hear much of that on our first record together, except a little on **Blue In Green** where no one was playing time as such. Bill was improvising lines, I was playing musical phrases behind him, and Paul Motian played in free rhythmic drum phrases."

LaFaro is dissatisfied with a great deal of what he hears in jazz, but what he says about it isn't mere carping. He thinks he knows what to do about it, at least in his own playing. "My ideas are so different from what is generally acceptable nowadays that I sometimes wonder if I am a jazz musician. I remember that Bill and I used to reassure each other some nights kiddingly that we really were jazz musicians. I have such respect for so many modern classical composers, and I learn so much from them. Things are so contrived nowadays in jazz, and harmonically it has been so saccharine since Bird."

Charlie Parker was already dead before Scott LaFaro was aware of him, even on records. In fact Scott LaFaro was not really much aware of jazz at all until 1955.

He was born in 1936 in Newark, New Jersey, but his family moved to Geneva, New York, when he was five. "There was always the countryside. I miss it now. I am not a city man. Maybe that is why Miles Davis touches me so deeply. He grew up near the countryside too, I believe. I hear that in his playing anyway. I've never been through that 'blues' thing either."

LaFaro started on clarinet at fourteen and studied music in high school. He took up bass on a kind of dare. "My father played violin with a small 'society' trio in town. I didn't know what I wanted to do when I had finished school, and my father said—half-joking, I think—that if I learned bass, I could play with them. When I did, I knew that I wanted to be a musician. It's strange: playing clarinet and sax didn't do it, but when I started on bass, I knew it was music." He went to Ithaca Conservatory and then to Syracuse; it was there, through fellow students, that he began to listen to jazz. He got a job in Syracuse at a place called the Embassy Club. "The leader was a drummer who played sort of like Sidney Catlett and Kenny Clarke. He formed my ideas of what jazz was about. He, and the juke box in the place—it had Miles Davis records. And I first heard Percy Heath and Paul Chambers on that juke box. They taught me my first jazz bass lessons. There was also

a Lee Konitz record with Stan Kenton called **Prologue**."

In late 1955, LaFaro joined Buddy Morrow's band. "We toured all over the country until I left the band in Los Angeles in September 1956. I didn't hear any jazz or improve at all during that whole time." But a few weeks after he left Morrow, he joined a Chet Baker group that included Bobby Timmons and Lawrence Marable. "I found out so much from Lawrence, a lot of it just from playing with him. I have trouble with getting **with** people rhythmically and I learned a lot about it from him. I learned more about rhythm when I played with Monk last fall; a great experience. With Monk, rhythmically, it's just **there**, always."

LaFaro remembers two other important experiences in California. The first was hearing Ray Brown, whose swing and perfection in his style impressed him. The other came when he lived for almost a year in the mountain-top house of Herb Geller and his late wife, Lorraine. "I practiced and listened to records. I had—I still have—a feeling that if I don't practice I will never be able to play. And Herb had all the jazz records; I heard a lot of music, many people for the first time, on his records."

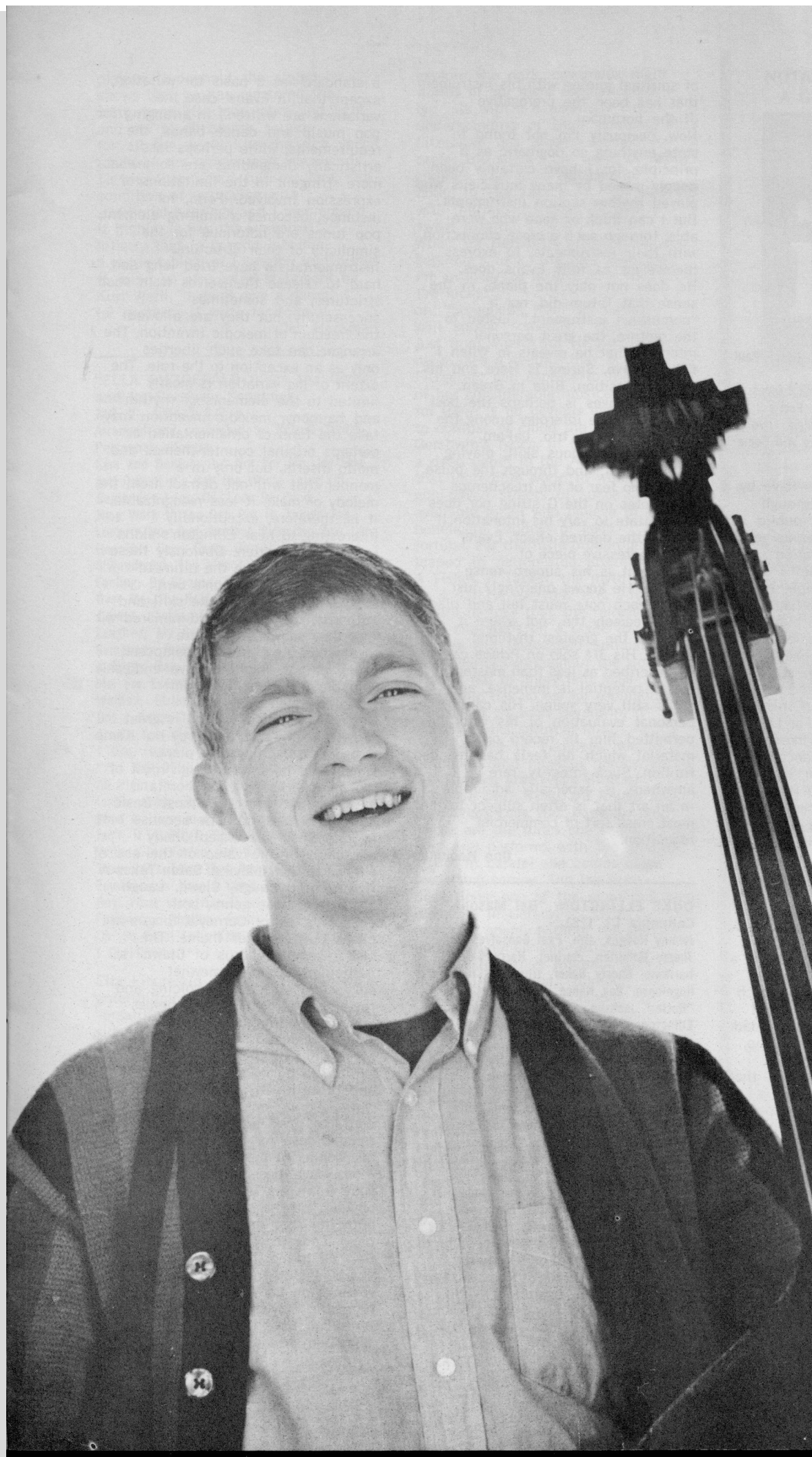
In September 1958 LaFaro played with Sonny Rollins in San Francisco, and later he worked with the same rhythm section behind Harold Land. "I think horn players and pianists have probably influenced me the most, Miles Davis, Coltrane, Bill Evans, and Sonny perhaps deepest of all. Sonny is technically good, harmonically imaginative, and really creative. He uses all he knows to make finished music when he improvises."

"I found out playing with Bill that I have a deep respect for harmony, melodic patterns, and form. I think a lot more imaginative work could be done within them than most people are doing, but I can't abandon them. That's why I don't think I could play with Ornette Coleman. I used to in California; we would go looking all over town for some place to play. I respect the way he overrides forms. It's all right for him, but I don't think I could do it myself."

"Bill gives the bass harmonic freedom because of the way he voices, and he is practically the only pianist who does. It's because of his classical studies. Many drummers know too little rhythmically, and many pianists know too little harmonically. In the trio we were each contributing something and really improvising **together**, each playing melodic and rhythmic phrases. The harmony would be improvised; we would often begin only with something thematic and not a chord sequence."

"I don't like to look back, because the whole point in jazz is doing it **now**. (I don't even like any of my records except maybe the first one I did with Pat Moran on Audio Fidelity.) There are too many things to learn and too many things you can do, to keep doing the same things over and over. My main problem now is to get that instrument under my fingers so I can play more music."

Martin Williams



RECORD REVIEWS

BILL EVANS: "Portrait In Jazz." Riverside RLP 12-315.

Bill Evans, piano; Scott LaFaro, bass; Paul Motian, drums.

Come Rain Or Come Shine; Autumn Leaves; Witchcraft; When I Fall In Love; Per's Scope; What Is This Thing Called Love?; Spring Is Here; Someday My Prince Will Come; Blue In Green.

The accolades for Bill Evans have by now ranged far and wide through critics, musicians, and the public. Although I don't think he has as yet achieved the level of innovation that his talent indicates, this recording is a further example of his formidable potential. Perhaps just as important as anything he plays is the stride that he took as a leader, especially in organizing a cohesive, tightly rehearsed unit which still allows both Scott LaFaro and Paul Motian full freedom in their contributions to the group. For LaFaro, in particular, this is a wise move. His role is one of great importance, combining responsibility for meter with a remarkable invention in solo. There is still a deficit in the percussion, and at times the drumming seems almost superfluous in the face of the improvisatory excursions of the piano and bass. But I don't mean to denigrate the group accomplishments; Evans' avowed intention to "grow in the direction of simultaneous improvisation" is highly admirable, and this album is a giant step in the proper direction. Evans seems to me to be very much a Romantic, both in orientation and preference. Often when an almost dark sombreness encompasses his music, it brings a feeling of closeness between him and his instrument that is unparalleled in pianists. This is the sort of thing one might expect from horn players, most of whom are, after all, concerned with a highly personal vision. But pianists, drummers, bassists and guitarists are usually more objective (and how intriguing that they have come to be thought of as a sort of symbiotic organism called the Rhythm Section). Their business has been to 'keep time,' 'lay down the changes' and 'stay out of the way' of the front line. By playing instruments they could control only in the kinesthetic sense, they lacked that sense of coupling,

of spiritual joining with his instrument that has been the prerogative of the hornman.

Now, obviously I'm not trying to state anything so dogmatic as a principle, for I have certainly been deeply moved by many musicians who played rhythm section instruments. But I can think of none who were able, through such a close connection with their instruments, to express themselves as fully Evans does. He does not play the piano, in the sense that Tatum did, nor a "percussive instrument." Listen to the rapture, the great personal intensity that he reveals in **When I Fall In Love**, **Spring Is Here** and his own composition, **Blue in Green**. **Autumn Leaves** is perhaps the best example of the interplay among the members of the trio. LaFaro shows a stupendous skill, playing with, against, and through the pulse. He has no fear of the treacherous high notes on the G string nor does he hesitate to vary his intonation if that is the desired effect. Evans' most impressive piece of equipment is his superb sense of time. He knows unerringly just where each note must fall and places it at precisely the spot where it will give the greatest rhythmic impact. His 3/4 solo on **Prince** cannot be described as less than masterful. Evans' potential is immense, and he is still very young. His careful personal evaluation of his work has permitted him to record only material which he feels has reached fruition. Such integrity, rare anywhere, is especially admirable in an art that is often subject to the most crass sort of commercial regulation.

Don Heckman

DUKE ELLINGTON: "Bal Masque." Columbia CL 1282.

Johnny Hodges, alto; Paul Gonsalves, tenor; Jimmy Hamilton, clarinet; Harry Carney, baritone; Shorty Baker, trumpet; Clark Terry, flugelhorn; Ray Nance, trumpet and violin; "Butter" Jackson, John Sanders, trombones; Ellington, piano; Jimmy Woode, bass.

Other personnel unlisted.

Alice Blue Gown; **Who's Afraid Of The Big Bad Wolf**; **Got A Date With An Angel**; **Poor Butterfly**; **Satan Takes A Holiday**; **The Peanut Vendor**; **Satin Doll**; **Lady In Red**; **Indian Love Call**; **The Donkey Serenade**; **Gypsy Love Song**; **Laugh, Clown, Laugh**. Perhaps the least obvious facet in the diamond-pure talent of Duke Ellington is that of orchestrator. Of course, he orchestrates his own compositions brilliantly, but most composers prefer the development of their own germinal ideas to the transformation of the themes of others. (The immediate exception is Gil Evans, who uses non-original source material in the same manner that a horn man will use the chords of

a standard—as a basis for variation, except that in Evans' case the variations are written.) In arranging for pop music and dance bands, the requirements, while perhaps less artistically demanding, are somewhat more stringent in the limitations of expression involved. Form, for instance, becomes a limiting element; pop tunes are notorious for the simplicity of their structure. Instrumentalists have tried long and hard to release themselves from such strictures, and sometimes successfully, but they are allowed the freedom of melodic invention. The arranger can take such liberties only as an exception to the rule. The extent of his variation is mostly limited to the elements of rhythm and harmony; melodic invention may take the form of ornamentation or perhaps original counter-themes and motto inserts, but only in a manner that will not detract from the melody or make it less recognizable. It is, therefore, exceptionally interesting to hear Ellington's skills in such a situation. Obviously these charts will not have the ultimate importance of Ellington's own compositions, but for the skill and authority, the satiric good-humored wit that they show us, they are invaluable. Any arranger-composer, young or old, might receive endlessly valuable technical tips from repeated listenings.

Got A Date With An Angel is great fun, especially in the snappy Hal Kemp muted brass. Ellington's piano is featured here, as through most of the album. His style is short and to the point, with an almost Basie-like sparseness, perhaps because both he and Basie are exceptionally conscious of the value of the use of silence in their playing. **Satan Takes A Holiday** and **Laugh, Clown, Laugh** are in the same genre, both employing Harry Carney's tongue-in-cheek statement of theme. The last ensemble chorus of **Clown** is particularly good—somewhat suggestive of Basie in voicing and rhythm patterns but nevertheless completely original. Johnny Hodges is not the driving force of old, but his playing still exhibits a purity that is both rare and beautiful. **Gypsy Love Song**, while verging on saccharine on occasion, gives an indication of Hodges' love for the saxophone and the wonderful breadth of its interpretive possibilities. On **Alice Blue Gown** his text is somewhat more obvious, but he speaks with an authority that enlivens the whole band. **Lady In Red** and **Indian Love Call** are to me the most interesting charts. Listen in particular to the sax voicings on **Lady**, and the wonderful harmonic movement in the interlude of **Indian Love Call**. Clark Terry's flugelhorn solo on **Lady** and indeed his

playing throughout the album shows that he has mastered the instrument. His tone, pure and light and not at all brassy, sounds for all the world like the rich velvet tones of the single reed woodwinds. To me, this record fulfilled that rare condition of improving with additional hearings and I recommend it highly. It has the universal artistry that is beyond labeling, a virtue typical of Ellington that brings to mind an oft-quoted statement by Kurt Weill, "I don't give a damn for posterity; I write for today."

Don Heckman

"ELLA FITZGERALD Sings the George and Ira Gershwin Songbook."
MG V-4024/5/6/7/8.

Arranged and conducted by Nelson Riddle. Personnel unlisted.

Sam and Delilah; But Not For Me; My One and Only; Let's Call the Whole Thing Off; Beginner's Luck; Oh, Lady Be Good; Nice Work If You Can Get It; Things Are Looking Up; Just Another Rhumba; How Long Has This Been Going On.

S'Wonderful; The Man I Love; That Certain Feeling; By Strauss; Someone To Watch Over Me; The Real American Folk Song; Who Cares?; Looking For A Boy; They All Laughed; My Cousin From Milwaukee; Somebody From Somewhere.

A Foggy Day; Clap Yo' Hands; For You, For Me, For Evermore; Stiff Upper Lip; Boy Wanted; Strike Up The Band; Soon; I've Got A Crush On You; Bidin' My Time; Aren't You Kind Of Glad We Did?; Of Thee I Sing (Baby).

"The Half Of It Dearie" Blues; I was Doing All Right; He Loves And She Loves; Love Is Sweeping The Country; Treat Me Rough; Love Is Here To Stay; Slap That Bass; Isn't It A Pity?; Shall We Dance; Love Walked In; You've Got What Gets Me. They Can't Take That Away From Me; Embraceable You; I Can't Be Bothered Now; Boy! What Love Has Done To Me!; Fascinatin' Rhythm; Funny Face; Lorelei; Oh, So Nice; Let's Kiss and Make Up; I Got Rhythm.

Ella Fitzgerald is unique in American entertainment. With amazing versatility, she has performed on both sides of that tenuous curtain between pop and jazz singing. It would be foolish and irrelevant to attempt to label this particular undertaking with such generalities as "jazz" or "non-jazz." The question of her legitimacy as a jazz artist is secondary to the fact of her universal appeal.

The Gershwin Song Book, like the accumulated work of any good songwriting team, includes material that runs from excellent to mediocre, from near-jazz to sentimental trifles. More intriguing is the fact that the lyrics of Ira Gershwin seem to suggest a feeling about life that is much to Miss Fitzgerald's liking. Unlike Billie Holiday, who could

explore the dark, cavernous night worlds of our more sophisticated lyricists with a harrowingly clear understanding of their content, Miss Fitzgerald has always seemed to prefer the sugar-plum world of happy endings. She is, as Nat Hentoff noted in *The Jazz Word*, "an innocent with the musical capacity of a sweet wizard."

When Ira Gershwin writes: "I've got beginner's luck,/The first time that I'm in love/I'm in love with you./Gosh, I'm lucky!";

or: "Somebody from somewhere/Will appear someday/I don't know just from where/But He's on his way"; he evokes a feeling that Miss

Fitzgerald can express to the fullest of her considerable musical powers, for there is no devious emotion to confuse or cloud the issue. Many of Gershwin's lyrics, in fact, suggest a deep belief in the American dream, that incredible world in which gold-paved streets of success are available to all who believe in the beneficent goddess of good fortune.

For the little orphan girl who leaped to nation-wide attention with *A Tisket, A Tasket*, the myth must be a part of everyday life, a dream fantasy that she relives every time she steps on a stage to receive the unabashed enthusiasm of audiences throughout the world.

This is not to imply that Miss Fitzgerald has no ear for sophistication. But again, as with Gershwin, it must be of a satirical kind, compounded of harmless double-entendres and musical parody, as in *By Strauss, Aren't You Kind Of Glad We Did?, Treat Me Rough and Boy! What Love Has Done To Me!*

These are the tunes she seems to like best and performs with the greatest gusto. In *Lorelei* she comes close to getting campy. And the word distortions, one of the more precious elements in Gershwin's style, are done openly without the well-know-he's-not-serious attitude.

Even *Just Another Rhumba*, with its rhymes of 'rhumba,' 'dumber,' 'September' and 'succumb-a,' is brought off with honest, almost little girl sincerity. For the same reason, the exasperating coyness of *Let's Call The Whole Thing Off* (tomato-tomato; potato-potato) becomes as guileless as a bit of fluff. The ballads are not, in general, all that one might desire. On

Embraceable You, A Foggy Day, Love Walked In, Love Is Sweeping The Country, Someone To Watch Over Me and But Not For Me, she sings with a quiet, relaxed assuredness, but the overall effect is bland and, I'm afraid, uninteresting. The few that do succeed stand out far above the others. *I've Got A Crush On You, Isn't It Romantic and How Long Has This Been Going On* are beautiful stylizations, but I strongly object to

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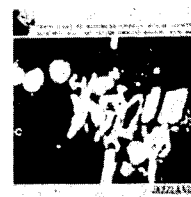
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the last chorus of **How Long**, with its insipid and unnecessary use of a spoken section. Many fine and little performed verses are used in their entirety. Listen in particular to those of **Beginner's Luck**, **Somebody From Somewhere**, **Aren't You Kind Of Glad We Did, Of Thee I Sing**, **Funny Face**, and **I Got Rhythm**. The charts are very obvious throughout. Riddle relies heavily on devices that he has used over and over again, especially the ponderous after-beat accents that were so often on his Frank Sinatra dates. The one saving grace is his string writing, which is quite outstanding, most notably on **The Man I Love**, **A Foggy Day** and **Isn't It A Pity**. Of the tunes on the five albums, the following are completely successful, both in terms of Miss Fitzgerald's performance and the appropriateness of the accompaniment: **Let's Call The Whole Thing Off**, **Things Are Looking Up**, **By Strauss**, **The Real American Folk Song**, **My Cousin From Milwaukee** (practically a jazz line), **I've Got A Crush On You**, **Isn't It A Pity** (which certainly deserves more performances), **They Can't Take That Away From Me**, **Boy! What Love Has Done To Me!**, and **Lorelei**—a total of ten out of fifty-three; not a bad percentage when one considers the variety of material.

Norman Granz has done a superb production job on the album; the liner notes by Lawrence D. Stewart are among the best and most informative I have ever read. Cover art by Bernard Buffet is printed on a separate fibre board and can be removed for framing. But those who remember the Gershwin numbers recorded with Ellis Larkins at the piano should think twice about these records.

Don Heckman

WARDELL GRAY-STAN GETZ:

"Groovin' High." Crown 5002

Wardell Gray, tenor; Howard McGhee, trumpet; Sonny Criss, alto; Dodo Marmarosa, piano; Red Callender, bass; Jackie Mills, drums.

Groovin' High; Hot House.

Stan Getz, tenor; Charlie Shavers, trumpet; Willie Smith, alto; Nat Cole, piano; John Miller, bass; Louis Bellson, drums, Johnny Moore, guitar; Red Norvo, vibes.

How High the Moon; I Got Rhythm.

The major figures of the bop revolution (Bird, Diz, Bud) are considered "immortal" by insider and layman alike; many other excellent musicians from this period, however, have been forgotten. Some of them are dead, some are off the scene, but their music—some of the most exuberant, powerful music in jazz—deserves to be heard.

This lp represents a concert recorded on the West Coast in 1948; the Wardell Gray, Howard McGhee, Sonny

Criss pickup combo impresses me most by their effortless swing. The slurring legato style had reached its height during this period. Most of the hornmen here were using long melodic phrases like Bird, but rhythmically were not yet as advanced. They accent on and behind the beat but rarely between beats. Howard McGhee and Wardell Gray are two good examples of such evolving jazz soloists.

Gray was at this time strongly influenced by Lester Young. In the next few years he was to assimilate more and more Bird until, by 1950, he was playing in a strongly individual manner somewhat reminiscent of Sonny Stitt's tenor playing. Though Rollins was probably the first on tenor to assimilate Parker's rhythmic approach thoroughly, I feel that Gray was an outstanding musician and very underappreciated. His lines show a wonderful continuity. (It is no accident that Jon Hendricks and Annie Ross have set lyrics to some of his solos.) They are flowing, complete melodies. His time was perfect; and I have heard no one swing more effortlessly. Howard McGhee, one of the earliest bop trumpet men, had wonderful control in the upper register and a loud, powerful, if rather narrow sound. His phrases were long and loosely constructed, and he paced himself intelligently, so that he excelled in long solos. A concert setting like this one was just right for him since it gave him all the room he needed. During the fifties

McGhee became more modern. His phrasing tightened and he was generally much more introverted. I haven't heard any of his work in recent years to compare with these sides.

Sonny Criss was and still is one of the outstanding alto men in the idiom. He anticipated the beat less than Bird did then, though, and had a more delicate sound. Perhaps because of personal difficulties, he has not received the credit he should have.

Dodo Marmarosa plays a fine solo on **Hot House**. The quality of Marmarosa's few records placed him a niche above such fine pianists as Al Haig. His solos were exquisitely structured, and even in 1960 I would call him a harmonically advanced pianist. There are some resemblances between his style and Tristano's, probably most obviously on Boyd Raeburn's **Boyd Meets Stravinsky**, and I wonder if this is coincidence.

It's a pleasure to hear performances which excited a not-too-hip crowd without resorting to any JATP bad taste gimmicks.

The quality of the second group is not so consistently high but is nevertheless interesting. Charlie

Shavers loves fireworks, and a lot of his fancy technical stunts are just that and no more. And he is very stiff and employs a corny, romantic terminal vibrato which takes the edge off his hard swing style. Nat Cole has a wonderful solo on **How High The Moon**. It should remind us that he was an important jazz pianist. He (not Tatum) was Oscar Peterson's principal influence, and Peterson got some of those funky comping chords from him. Getz, in his **Early Autumn** period, has a fine solo also on **High High The Moon** but runs out of ideas half way through **I Got Rhythm**. Willie Smith is good on **Moon** (a very fine track if you haven't already guessed), but on **Rhythm** his solo is a series of unrelated arpeggios. He repeats a lot and concentrates mostly on getting a mean edge on his tone. Norvo is tasty as usual. The rhythm sections are almost inaudible because of poor recording and lousy surfaces.

Harvey Pekar

"HELEN HUMES." Contemporary 3571.

Helen Humes, vocals; Benny Carter, trumpet; Frank Rosolino, trombone; Teddy Edwards, tenor sax; Andre Previn, piano; Leroy Vinnegar, bass; Shelly Manne or Mel Lewis, drums.

You Can Depend on Me; Trouble in Mind; Among My Souvenirs; Ain't Misbehavin'; Star Dust; Bill Bailey; When I Grow Too Old to Dream; A Good Man is Hard to Find; Bill; Tain't Nobody's Biz-ness; I Got It Bad; When the Saints Go Marchin' In.

Helen Humes is a phenomenon in her way. A veteran of at least 33 years' professional singing experience, she sounds, today in high fidelity, as she did on blue label Decca in 1938 when she entered the big-time with the Basie Band. The clear, light, schoolgirlish manner which links her with Mildred Bailey of Red Norvo's Band and Ella Fitzgerald of Chick Webb's Band, still remains, virtually unchanged by any darkening of tone or alteration of style. During her years with Basie, she was the band canary, chanting the ephemera which the Basie orchestra, as a dance band, had to play. Her backgrounds were usually of stock arrangement quality, occasionally leavened by a brief solo from Buck Clayton or Lester Young. Since her style was unaffected and straightforward, she was not an unpleasant stage wait. Until the Vanguard Town Hall concerts increased the count by one, she had recorded perhaps two titles of substance with Basie, both ballads: **If I Could Be With You**, and **Someday Sweetheart**.

This present-day recording indicates that her forté remains the slow ballad which she sings expressively, with good diction and minimum

embellishment; her most effective tracks are **Star Dust**, **Among My Souvenirs**, and **I Got It Bad**. When she is singing at faster tempos or declaiming the blues, she retains too much of that quality of the thirties which is the equivalent of the vo-de-o-do of the twenties. Lest I appear too harsh, let me say that by the standards of my favorite columnists and jazz disc jockeys, who all tell me that Kelly, Chris and Christy, and Dinah, Della and Dakota are important jazz singers of our day, though she lacks the hipness and the distortions of most of them, Helen Humes also is important, also a great jazz singer. She is accompanied by a polite jam band directed by Benny Carter, with the competent Contemporary house rhythm section. The horns acquit themselves nobly in their brief solos: Carter's fine trumpet recalls such players as Bill Coleman and Arthur Briggs; the agile Rosolino, who normally sounds as though he is operated by IBM, plays in an unaccustomed soulful manner, and Teddy Edwards, after his many years as a lonely West Coast non-Brother, displays a splendidly full-toned horn.

Louis Levy

MAHALIA JACKSON: "Come On Children, Let's Sing."
Columbia CL 1428

Come On Children, Let's Sing; **If We Never Needed the Lord Before**; **Because His Name is Jesus**; **You Must Be Born Again**; **Brown Baby**; **The Christian's Testimony**; **Keep a-Movin'**; **A Christian Duty**; **One Step**; **God is So Good**.

Dan Morgenstern's recent letter about imposing standards on a piece of music which are alien to it probably apply aptly to my view of this record. I've never been interested in Gospel singing, and now that I'm faced with an lp of it, I find that the criteria I normally apply to music don't seem to work, and I haven't any others to substitute. I enjoyed the 'rhythm' songs, particularly **The Christian's Testimony** with its delightful instrumental introduction and **You Must Be Born Again**. **If We Ever Needed** is interesting harmonically, but it goes on too long. The title song is sung with a great deal of enthusiasm, but the composition itself struck me as being rather synthetic. **Keep-a-Movin'** shares the qualities of the others, but is more adventurous melodically and harmonically, and at times shows a definite affinity with certain elements of what is still being called (but no longer is) rock and roll. This was the only track on the record that seemed to me to have a strong musical personality of its own rather than being yet another variation on a standard theme.

With the exception of **One Step**, all the other songs are so overwhelmingly fervent as to be beyond criticism. My discomfort was greatest during the recitative on **God is So Good**. The notes, not surprisingly, make a point of Miss Jackson's religious sincerity, which, since this is a collection of religious songs, must be relevant. Unintentionally or otherwise, however, it does seem to stifle criticism in advance. I don't know whether this is a good thing or not.

Peter Turley

MILT JACKSON & COLEMAN HAWKINS: "Bean Bags." Atlantic 1316.

Milt Jackson, vibraharp; Coleman Hawkins, tenor; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Eddie Jones, bass; Connie Kay, drums. **Close Your Eyes**; **Stuff**; **Don't Take Your Love from Me**; **Get Happy**; **Sandra's Blues**; **Indian Blues**.

"COLEMAN HAWKINS with The RED GARLAND TRIO." Prestige-Swingville 2001

Coleman Hawkins, tenor; Red Garland, piano; Doug Watkins, bass; "Specs" Wright, drums. **It's a Blue World**; **I Want to be Loved**; **Red Beans**; **Bean's Blues**; **Blues for Ron**.

Lots of Beans, some partially cooked and some spilled. The Atlantic association of alliterative aliases is only a semi-success. The two titans are properly professional, but without exceptional direction, or strong summations. Like most of the Atlantic output, this album is a careful production. It is a relaxed session in which rehearsal and preparation are evident. There is good diversification of selections and tempos. It isn't just a take-your-turn-and-disappear-date—the group works orchestrally. Nevertheless, and despite all, the parts are far better than the whole. With one exception, all tracks are handled as theme-and-variation-and-out, without any attempt at conclusion. The exception, **Indian Blues**, based on the hokum background music of every juvenile western, seems to inspire all hands and winds up the session exhilaratingly. If thoroughgoing professionalism is everything to Atlantic, it is nothing to Prestige. Their "Swingville" Hawkins-Garland Trio date is a casual blowing affair—which does not necessarily diminish its value. There are even indications, in the originals, that this session might have been of greater musical value, but, gelded by Van Gelder, it is spoiled by terrible recording. While Garland and his men are recorded with, by comparison, a relatively natural sound, Hawkins' saxophone is forced through an echo chamber and distorted into an ugly belching caricature of his full but crystal-hard tone. This kind



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of juke-box howl has sold millions of records but is purposeless here and all but destroys a possibly fine blues-oriented date.

Louis Levy

"The M.J.Q. at Music Inn, Vol. 2." Atlantic 1299.

John Lewis, piano; Percy Heath, bass; Connie Kay, drums; Milt Jackson, vibraharp. **Yardbird Suite**; **Midsommer**; **Festival Sketch**; **Balled medley**: **Stardust**, **I Can't Get Started**, **Loverman**.

Sonny Rollins, tenor, added.

Bag's Groove; **Night in Tunisia**.

"The JOHN LEWIS Piano." Atlantic 1272.

John Lewis, piano; Connie Kay, drums:

Harlequin.

Percy Heath, bass, added: **Little Girl Blue**; **D and E**.

John Lewis, piano; Barry Galbraith, guitar:

The Bad and the Beautiful; **It Never Entered My Mind**; **Warmeland**.

Jim Hall, guitar, replaces Galbraith:

Pierrot; **Columbine**.

JOHN LEWIS: "Afternoon in Paris."

Atlantic 1267.

Barney Wilen, tenor; John Lewis, piano;

Sasha Distel, guitar; Percy Heath, bass;

Kenny Clarke, drums.

All the Things You Are; **Bag's Groove**;

Willow Weep For Me.

Pierre Michelot, bass, and Connie Kay, drums, replace Heath and Clarke.

I Cover the Waterfront; **Dear Old**

Stockholm; **Afternoon in Paris**.

For many years the music of Ellington's orchestra could be classified under various types: blues, mood, and descriptive pieces, portraits, solo features, 'abstract' musical compositions, etc., and earlier, 'jungle' style items. These categories represented separate, simultaneous paths of development within the band's output. The paths would sometimes continue over a number of years, or disappear to return later. Thus **Lightnin'** (1932), **Daybreak Express** (1933) and **Happy-go-lucky Local** (1946) are points along the same line. This kind of richness and diversity can only be expected in jazz from a group that has been together for a long time, in which each member contributes creatively.

It has become increasingly clear during the past three years or so that the Modern Jazz Quartet is the one group since the war that can be compared in essential respects with the Ellington orchestra. Its detractors, who spend little time listening to it, have contentedly heralded its stagnation and forthcoming demise more than once—just as Ellington has been dismissed as 'finished' each time he has done something new—but, really, fresh things are still happening, and it is no surprise that there are several areas of development. Atlantic 1299 draws particular attention to two of

these: fragmentation of material, and extensions of contrapuntal technique. Counterpoint has always been a prominent feature of the Quartet's work of course, and systematic fragmentation first appeared in the **God Rest You Merry Gentlemen** variation.

Yardbird Suite, the most absorbing track, illustrates both thematic fragmentation and an unusually diversified overall treatment that is probably a larger application of the same principal. The line of Parker's original melody is broken up—analyzed, we might almost say—into a number of detached and contrasting segments. Consecutive segments are announced on different instruments so that fragmentation is emphasized by changes of tone-color. Later there is a flashing stop-time chorus, by Jackson—an entirely convincing revival of this old device—and a subtly-conceived passage in which Heath and Kay hint at the fragmented version of the theme without direct statement. Lewis' improvisation is a notable example of lucid melodic thinking. Another solo by Jackson leads to a masterly compressed restatement in the form of a series of nimble canonic imitations on a part of the theme. No one should need reminding of the significance of strict contrapuntal pieces like **Concorde** and **Versailles**, either in relation to the development of the Quartet's special qualities, or to jazz composition as a whole. Although Lewis has not produced anything in quite that category for some time, counterpoint remains a vital and increasingly subtle part of the group's method. There is some beautiful intermingling of piano and vibraharp lines in **I Can't Get Started**, **Loverman**, and, above all, **Midsommer**. Another contrapuntal approach seems to have developed out of Lewis's singular powers as an accompanist. While Jackson improvises on the melody, Lewis supports him with an unusually full and varied accompaniment that contains frequent references to the theme. It constitutes, especially in **Festival Sketch**, a kind of parallel thematic exploration. A situation in which a theme is subject to two simultaneous lines of development in this way might be called counterpoint in depth.

The Quartet's earlier ballad medley on Atlantic 1265 was not as convincing as their Gershwin medley. These linked selections have become a cliché in assembling lps, and many are far too off-hand. However, it is like the M.J.Q. to take a somewhat discredited formula like this and make more of it than even their greatest admirers would expect. That

is what they have done here. It may be their finest achievement within the limits of form and melodic-harmonic content of ballads. Apart from the lyricism of the whole performance, the most notable passage occurs in **I Can't Get Started**, where the melody is implied, rather than stated, by piano and vibraharp in what amounts to an example of both counterpoint and fragmentation. This record, perhaps more than any other, leads one to speculate whether the real significance of the M.J.Q.'s celebrated innovations is that they have been the means of reviving and reinterpreting collective improvisation on a higher level than ever before in jazz.

In the context of the Quartet we accept Lewis's piano playing, perhaps a little too casually, as an integral part of the overall sound, and his solos as just one of the group's voices. Heard in comparative isolation on Atlantic 1272, it presents us with certain problems at first, but, finally, with further illumination of the nature of Lewis' music. This record has an unobtrusive originality that only becomes fully evident with close acquaintance, and this quality, the unique flavor of his improvising, is very hard to define. To mention just one sphere: the harmony is really most conservative, especially by the standards of Monk or Cecil Taylor. The truth is that in this case originality does not derive, even partly, from the application of specific technical devices, but from qualities that lie behind the rather deceptive outward aspect of the music. To begin with, the gentleness, and more especially the apparent understatement, are misleading. One feels Alun Morgan was out of touch when he wrote, "I like Lewis not so much for what he actually plays but for what he implies." As the listener begins to understand this music, it becomes clear that Lewis implies nothing, but states whatever he has to say with uncompromising directness. This, surely, is what he meant in his reported remark to a pupil that "every note you play must be the truth." Intently thoughtful but never too deliberate, his own playing follows this precept completely. Lewis's solos have a self-sufficient spareness that is not merely the result of a taste for economical textures, but—trite though the phrase may be—of making count every note he plays and registering with expressive purpose his feelings and reaction to the musical situation in which he finds himself. Nothing is played for effect. This peculiar directness is further implemented by another quite different aspect of his approach to the piano. Although everything he does

is attuned to the instrument's qualities, he thinks of the piano as a composer does all the time and as a pianist only rather incidentally. Thus *Harlequin*—the best track here—is not some kind of exploitation of the piano's potential in texture or sonority, but a study in space, displaced accents and fragmented melodic development. His musical ideas are expressed directly and not couched in terms of and therefore modified by conventional pianistic scale, chord, arpeggio and decorative formulae. This contrasts sharply with, say, Art Tatum, whose singular harmonic vision was always communicated strictly in terms of a transcendental keyboard technique. Indeed, if a comparison is to be made it must be with Ellington's playing on the "*Back to Back*" lp. There is the same kind of freedom and directness, and it is probably no coincidence that both men are reported to have played quite differently on the alternates takes of each piece.

Because of its directness this music is a valuable indication of many of Lewis's ideals. The singing sound he always seeks to draw from the piano, the acutely sensitive phrasing, the balance of tension and release both between adjacent phrases and within a single phrase, the variations of tonal shading, the overall clarity of thought—all these are illustrated more clearly here than on the M.J.Q. discs where the goals are more complex and other personalities contribute.

The "*Afternoon in Paris*" lp finds Lewis in a context which although normal for most jazzmen is rather unusual for him—a "blowing session." Inevitably the music is looser in texture and less organized than most of the work we associate with him, but there is evidence of fruitful preparation in the casual poise of almost all of the solos. If there is an element of M.J.Q. integration in the music it is because Lewis, Heath and Kay tend always to think in that way.

Wilens is a discovery, with plenty of ideas, good melodic continuity, excellent time and a full, firm tone. His best solos are on *All The Things You Are* and *Willow Weep For Me*. The latter is the more impressive because his vigorous solo altogether avoids the trap of lethargic phrasing that slow ballads set, particularly for tenor players. Distel has less to offer. His solos are assured and have some subtlety of rhythm and accentuation, yet do not suggest the presence of a distinctive musical personality. But listen to the beautiful sound Clarke's brushes make behind the guitar in the *Willow* theme chorus! Lewis's contributions exhibit, though in a somewhat less concentrated form,

the qualities already discussed. Accompaniments are simpler, less involved in the train of the soloists' thoughts, but help the music to swing in a most marked fashion—as behind Distel in *Dear Old Stockholm*. As we would expect, he improvises on the themes themselves, as the explicit references at the beginnings of his *Afternoon in Paris* and *Dear old Stockholm* solos indicate, and not just on their chords. Unusual powers of thematic variation and suggestion are shown in the intriguing *Willow Weep For Me* introduction, which in its unexpectedness recalls again some of Ellington's openings in "*Back to Back*." Solos like the one on *Bag's Groove* exhibit the abundant melodic invention that is so valuable a gift for a composer, which has served Lewis so well.

Max Harrison

"MULLIGAN Plays Mulligan." Prestige 7006.

Allen Eager, tenor; Gerry Mulligan, baritone; George Wallington, piano; Phil Leshin, bass; Walter Bolden, drums.

Mulligan's Too.

Max McElroy, baritone added.

Funhouse; Mullenium.

Nick Travis, Jerry Hurwitz, trumpets;

Ollie Wilson, trombone, added.

Idie's Side; Roundhouse; Kaper; Bweebida Bobbida.

The artist who has gone on to further achievements will probably deplore critics returning to his earlier, less successful, less typical work. There seems especial point in doing so in this case, however, for this 1951 recording was the first to reveal the nature of Mulligan's potential and to include all the elements—some still in provisional form—of his mature style. Insofar as a musician's development can be documented with records we may, with our knowledge of his later work, point to this lp as the beginning of the real Mulligan. Until this time none of his records had given much indication of what direction he was likely to take. Items such as *Waterworks* and *Night on Bop Mountain*—recorded with Kai Winding in 1949—had no real group feeling; extemporisations like those on Chubby Jackson's *So What* and *I May Be Wrong* of 1950 contained some individual ideas but were not outstanding. On the other hand, Mulligan had contributed valuably to Miles Davis's 1948 nonet. The records that group made for Capitol in 1949 and 1950 have become indisputable classics but in collective endeavors of that kind some compromises are unavoidable. Michael James put the matter very illuminatingly in his essay on Mulligan in the November 1957 *Jazz Monthly*: "The particular weakness of

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such experiments is the absence of a consistent emotional pulse. It is true Davis emerged as the leading soloist and that his contributions lend the recordings a sort of creative unity. No one need be reminded of the importance of the new scoring devices. Such commendable innovations are infrequent enough to warrant liberal praise. Nonetheless, every soloist makes some concession to the need for musical unity, and the result may conveniently be described as a brilliant compromise." If these Prestige titles are Mulligan's first to embody a coherent expression of a tangible and consistent musical personality, with at least some integration between writing and improvisation, it is because they are the first of which he had sole charge. The instrumentation is not as unconventional as that of the Davis nonet, nor does it have so wide a range of tone-color, but is unusual in employing two baritones and no alto. Mulligan no doubt had the Claude Thornhill and Elliot Lawrence bands of that time in mind when he decided to use two baritones to obtain a full, heavy, dark-toned ensemble sound. Unity of conception is apparent both in the compositions, which are all Mulligan's and represent the first real crystallization of this aspect of his talent, and in the almost uniform level of the saxophone solos. **Bweebida Bobbida** (originally called **September Serenade**) and **Funhouse** are the most interesting pieces. In the former, brass and saxes alternate two strong and contrasting figures over a neutral rhythmic background during the first sixteen bars. In the final eight of the theme chorus the same phrases are swung strongly as they lead into Eager's solo. The references to the theme in Mulligan's solo increase the feeling of continuity and the only weak link is the tense playing of Jerry Hurwitz. **Funhouse** was almost the first indication we had of Mulligan's liking for the stark contrapuntal lines over a simple accompaniment, that were to become such a feature of his Quartet. These two also hint at later compositions: the ensemble bridge between Eager's and Hurwitz's solos in **Bweebida** is the origin of **Western Reunion**, while **Funhouse** reminds us of **Bernie's Tune**—and of Jimmy Raney's **Minor** too. **Mullenium** is the most attractive theme melodically and, together with **Funhouse**, foreshadows something of the Quartet's emotional atmosphere, if not its musical organization. **Kaper** swings exceptionally well—always a prime concern with Mulligan—and **Roundhouse** is the only poor composition included. It is

reminiscent of Shorty Roger's banal efforts. Most of the solos are by Mulligan, Eager and Wallington. Eager plays a personal variant and diminution of Lester Young and his best solo is on **Bweebida**. Wallington's contributions are not representative of his real powers, and little he does here is really distinguished. In his solos Mulligan displays greater force and clarity in his thinking than he had shown before. Roughness of tone remained but the increased discipline in phrase formation was most notable in his thirty-five choruses in the eighty-one chorus **Mulligan's Too**. He was at that time an inferior instrumentalist to Chaloff or Lars Gullin but the ability to sustain those thirty-five choruses augured as well for his future as a composer as his handling of the session did for his future as a leader.

Max Harrison

STUFF SMITH: "Cat On a Hot Fiddle." Verve MG V-8339.

Stuff Smith, violin; John Eaton, piano; Lewis Powers, bass; Harry Saunders, drums. **Undecided**; Take the "A" Train; **Blue Violin**.

Smith, violin; Paul Smith, piano; Red Mitchell, bass; Sid Bulkin, drums.

The Man I Love; **Oh, Lady Be Good**; **Nice Work If You Can Get It**; **They Can't Take That Away From Me**; **Somebody Loves Me**; **'S Wonderful**; **Nice and Warm**; **Strike Up the Band**.

There is a long tradition back of the violin, and the average person probably has more fixed ideas about how it should be played, or how it should sound, than he has about any other instrument. That may partially explain some of the recent severe criticism of Stuff's records in this magazine.

Quite apart from amplification, Stuff's fiddling is certainly unorthodox.

He gives you, by turn, a violin, a horn, and a band, and though academic accuracy may often be lacking, he also gives what they don't teach in academies—a wonderful beat and quick-witted, frequently humorous invention.

Eddie South is the other great jazz violinist (dig his **C Jam Blues** on Mercury MG 20401) and he plays with more grace and more regard for the established rules. Like the achievements of Louis Armstrong, Johnny Hodges and Coleman Hawkins in the thirties, his conception, his sound, technique and phraseology, together represented an ultimate which might understandably have resulted in a kind of jazz orthodoxy. But there was room for Stuff, too, as there was for Hawk and Lester, or Jimmie Harrison and Tricky Sam.

Stuff has cited Louis Armstrong's **Savoy Blues** as an original source of

inspiration. "Trumpet style" has long been accepted on both piano and clarinet in jazz, and Stuff similarly adapted it for the fiddle. In fact, when double-stopping on riffs, he can sound like a whole brass section. The intense drive and ferocious attack are, however, frequently contrasted with passages that are mockingly tender, romantic or whimsical. In this respect, there is a close resemblance to Fats Waller's formula—swinging music, humor, and a minimum of solemnity. This is equally apparent in the hoarse vocals on **Somebody Loves Me** and **Oh, Lady Be Good**, where Stuff comes on like a cross between Louis and Fats, and in the often irreverent intros and codas. Normally as much a chameleon as Tatum, Stuff shows his ability to sustain a mood on **Blue Violin**, an attractive composition he evidently wrote in collaboration with Andy Razaf. Stuff's opening melodic choruses alone are worth the price of the record, and they should prove irresistible to anyone whose appreciation of jazz is not bound by the conventions of the fifties.

Stanley Dance

BUDDY TATE: "Buddy's Date."

Prestige-Swingville 2003.

Buddy Tate, tenor; Pat Jenkins, trumpet; Eli Robinson, trombone; Ben Richardson, alto and baritone, clarinet; Sadik Hakim, piano; Wendell Marshall, bass; Osie Johnson, drums. **Me 'n' You**; **Idling**; **Blow Low**; **Moon Dog**; **No Kiddin'**; Miss Ruby Jones.

Buddy's band will probably have to be recorded at The Celebrity Club.

This one no more than the Felsted and Baton albums does proper justice to the way the band can sound. It's even conceivable that, through long usage, the four horns have somehow developed a sound which specifically fits a broad, low-ceilinged hall.

Wendell Marshall and Osie Johnson substitute for regular members of the group. Wendell is fine throughout, but Osie had a harder task. He is an adaptable, swinging drummer, but the band is accustomed to a heavier and more straightforward beat than he sometimes provides here. His light, explorative accentuations at times sound foreign to the basic style, although Eli Robinson and Sadik Hakim show themselves far from unaware of contemporary trends. This is, of course, a dance band, and the nearest thing today to the famous Savoy Sultans. It is at its best at medium tempos, playing numbers like Dickie Wells' **No Kiddin'** and Eli Robinson's **Me 'n' You**, **Blow Low** and **Miss Ruby Jones**, the last being an obvious relative of **Miss Sadie Brown**. When Buddy is swinging, with the other three horns moaning behind him, the band can create a

stirring effect of a kind too rare nowadays. Pat Jenkins, formerly with the Savoy Sultans, plays several direct, well-conceived trumpet solos. Muted, he gets a stinging and distinctly stimulating sound. But Buddy is the star. He has the same trick of making a dancing entry as Hawk or Lunceford's Joe Thomas. No matter who has preceded him, he seems to come in swinging twice as much. His music's close relationship with the dancers is always noticeable, for he immediately lifts them, too. He has a full, satisfying note, which is neither sentimentally lush nor boastfully hard. Though it originally resembled Hershal Evans', his uncomplicated phraseology has become increasingly individual and it is well suited to the bold simplicity of his solo structures. When it comes to the blues, there is, as Jimmie Rushing confirms, no tenor to touch him, no one who sounds so right. "He sounds, big, like Texas, where he comes from," says Jimmie, "and healthy, like the climate they have there."

Stanley Dance

BILLY TAYLOR: "Taylor Made Jazz."
Argo LP-650.

Harry Carney, baritone; Willie Cook, Clark Terry, trumpet; Paul Gonsalves, tenor; Earl May, bass; Johnny Hodges, alto; Billy Taylor, piano; Ed Thigpen, drums; Britt Woodman, trombone.

Biddy's Beat; Theodora; Mood For Mendes; Daddy-O; Cu-Blue; Day Dreaming; Can You Tell By Looking At Me; Tune For Tex.

Obviously a small group of Ellington men will partially reproduce a cross section of Duke's orchestral sound in spite of themselves since Ellington takes into consideration the stylistic tendencies and idiosyncrasies of his men when he writes for the band. And yet this petit-point version of Duke's orchestra dissatisfies me. First, I miss Duke. His absence is reflected in the playing. Second, the men seem bored with the whole undertaking, or at least their performances sound bored to me. Of all the things Taylor has composed in this album, the ballad *Theodora*, a solo vehicle, is the only one with melodic interest. And this is partly due to Hodges, who brings life to even the dull compositions. He also gives his tracks unity, purpose, direction, and form, all of which are lacking in the others.

The Taylor compositions were arranged by Johnnie Pate, and his ensemble parts are a combination of Ellington and Shorty Rogers. Even in the smaller combo, Carney is the base on which the ensemble rests. Gonsalves is Gonsalves, typical on *Tune For Tex*, a bit galleryish on *Cu-Blue*. Taylor adds nothing; neither does he detract in any way.

Mimi Clar

"LESTER YOUNG with COUNT BASIE and his Orchestra." Epic SN 6031.

Pound Cake; Rock-a-Bye Basie; Riff Interlude; Shoe Shine Boy; Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie; Taxi War Dance; Ham 'n Eggs; Lester Leaps In; Dickie's Dream; Blow Top; Broadway; Boogie Woogie. Easy Does It; Lady Be Good; Jump for Me; Hollywood Jump; Louisiana; Moten Swing; Tickle-Toe; 12th Street Rag; Let Me See; I Never Knew; Song of the Islands; I Left My Baby.

Buck Clayton, Harry Edison, Shad Collins, Ed Lewis, Al Killian, Carl Smith, Bobby Moore, trumpets; Benny Morton, Dickie Wells, Dan Minor, Vic Dickenson, George Hunt, trombones; Lester Young, Tab Smith, Buddy Tate, Earl Warren, Jack Washington, Caughey Roberts, Hershal Evans, saxophones; Bill Count Basie, piano; Freddy Green, guitar; Walter Page, bass. Jo Jones, drums. Jimmy Rushing, vocals.

Two twelve-inch lps, containing twenty-four tracks that Lester Young recorded with Count Basie between 1936 and 1940, make up the "Memorial Album," now available on Epic. It is a package that belongs in every serious collection of whatever orientation, for these are incontestably jazz classics. Like the Armstrong Hot Fives and the quintet of Charlie Parker, these records preserve a body of music at once fresh and mature, which went on to dominate jazz for a good decade to follow. The re-release, handsomely mounted, with superlative photos and Charles Edward Smith's literate notes is therefore welcome news.

The foundations of modern saxophone style have been correctly traced back to Lester Young. The legend of his influence on contemporaries and on the younger generation of musicians of his day is now pretty well common knowledge. This legend carried well beyond the Basie period, coming to an end only last year with his death in New York at the age of forty-nine.

But this lp is more than just a memorial to the great, impeccable Prez. Star though he was, Lester functioned for over five years as an integral part of the Basie orchestra. His was perhaps the most fetching sound, the grandeloquent swing. But he worked among illustrious players. The reeds included Tab Smith, Herschal Evans, Chu Berry, Earl Warren and Buddy Tate. In the next tier above were such trumpeters as Harry Edison, Buck Clayton and the formidable Shad Collins. And the trombones! Has any band, any band at all, possessed a section sound so broad or supple as that of Benny Morton, Eddie Durham, Vic Dickenson and Dicky Wells?

The band was very strong in solo talent indeed. But it commanded other talents as well. The sections could

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swing as one man. This was partly because the ensemble possessed a rare single-mindedness in the approach to matters of intonation and rhythm. It was due also to its singular good fortune in resting over the mightiest rhythm section of that period. Yes, and the most modern too.

Jo Jones had already worked out the rudiments of a new percussion style. He had acquired a tighter bass drum sound, more variety and economy in punctuation on the snares and above all, a freer, lighter, more constant cymbal sound. The maturing of this style, which can be followed on the sides under discussion, led directly to the school of Clarke and Roach. In its own day it was admirably suited to the light, free swing of the sections and the solos of Young, Collins, Edison, Smith and Wells. The freedom enjoyed by Jo Jones was possible thanks to the rock-like reliability of Walter Page on bass and Freddy Greene on guitar. And finally the entire section was crowned by Basie, one of the great pianists of jazz, whose clear, simple concept is as fresh today as it was 25 years ago. Like Ellington, Basie conceived the keyboard as a kind of master control of the over-all operation. But unlike Duke and others like Luis Russell, he thought beyond terms of harmonic foundation and used adroitly-timed melodic phrases to give continuity, spice and emphasis to the band performance. Within the Basie band, more than within the bands of Goodman or Ellington, lay the sounds and rhythms of the jazz future, the seeds of bop, indeed everything that has developed along the main line since the days when America danced, in a thousand ballrooms now dark, across the land. This was a very great band that came out of Boss Pendergast's Kansas City. Fulsome praise? Perhaps. But let's examine the evidence. The small band sides, for example, of which the album contains five: **Shoe Shine Boy**, **Lady Be Good**, and **Boogie Woogie** from the rough and ready Jones-Smith, Inc. date in 1936, and **Lester Leaps In** and **Dickie's Dream**, cut at the Kansas City Seven session some three years later. The latter pair at least must stand comparison with many distinguished performances in the genre, for the late thirties not only witnessed the flowering of big band jazz, but the perfection of the small ensemble: by the various Ellington combinations, the electric ensembles collected from time to time by Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton, and the Goodman cycle that began with the trio and culminated in the sextets with Charlie Christian. However, as André Hodeir has gone to

some pains to point out, **Dickie's Dream** may be the finest small group side of the decade. It goes beyond the hard hitting perfection of celebrated sides like the Billie Holiday-Teddy Wilson **Miss Brown to You**, Barney Bigard's **Caravan** or Hampton's exultant **Wizzin the Wizz** with Chu Berry in peak form. On **Dickie's Dream**, an ideal equilibrium is in effect among the seven performers and creativity flows onto a new level of subtlety and tonal achievement. The timeless quality of great art, the more remarkable because it is folk art and essentially ephemeral, retained only by the odd chance of the phonograph record, has been captured, creativity in full flight, fused and fixed for all time. This same timelessness can be heard in Lester's solos on three of the band sides, notably **Song of the Islands**, and again on **Easy Does It** and **Jump For Me**. He had found new forms of expression which went beyond the exuberant manner and dramatic contrasts, leaping statements and flamboyant tonality of **Twelfth Street Rag**, in itself an elaboration on the punching, jazzy delivery of **Shoe Shine Boy**. (There was possibly another link, the so-called "lag-along" manner that one hears on **Hollywood Jump**.) In **Jump For Me**, all of the essential elements had been resolved.

Negative vibrato, extended dynamics, subtlety carried to or past the point of understatement, are the qualities now brought forward. But these late solos do not swing any less than the straightforward **Twelfth Street Rag**. The same rhythmic urgency is there. But now it exists by implication. This might be called the cryptic style of Lester Young. It is this complex of elements that the coming generation of musicians extracted in arriving at the methods of the next decade. Swing had become very ripe on the vine by the time **Easy Does It** was cut. Endless possibilities seemed to exist for the jazz musician. And indeed some beautifully wrought performances were captured on record: Ellington's **Don't Get Around Much Any More**, Lunceford's **Organ Grinder's Swing** and Goodman's **Till Tom Special**, to name just three. All had the same effortless swing and luminous sound. But it is a curious phenomena of jazz history that this new high ground was occupied for so short a time. Extrinsic factors were operating against the jazz musician. Soaring overheads and personnel turnover in the great orchestras, waning box office business, and the unmistakable threat of World War II, all combined to unsettle the old hands who had brought a style to a point of perfection. "New Sounds" became a sort of rallying cry during the 'forties. These

were more than anything else the creation of Lester Young, extended by the Basie ensemble, and, in embryo form, preserved on **Dickie's Dream**. But the new generation had still more radical innovations to make with the rhythmic possibilities of jazz and new adaptation to the more dynamic emotional requirements of a new era. Perhaps this was our folk music's way of replenishing itself to avoid becoming esoteric and effete. The time for day dreaming was past. The new generation was to voice a far more violent message of protest than the bland Bohemians of the less complicated 'thirties had offered.

As for Prez, when he left the Basie band and its matchless rhythm section in 1940, it is probable that, although he continued to experiment and develop, he never played as well again. The curtain side was **Broadway** and it is included in this album.

The Epic lp is a fair and intelligent compilation but it does not exhaust the Lester-Basies. There are another half-dozen wonderful performances in the Columbia-Vocalian-Okeh-Epic archives: **Volcano**, **Super Chief**, and those striking overtime performances, **Miss Thing** parts I and II, and **The World is Mad**, parts I and II. These are of a piece with the best of Basie in 1939-40; that is to say, they embodied the last refinements of swing as it was performed by the key figures who had shaped it. What came later followed divergent ways, the main one leading to bop, cool and the modern period, and the less important paths, imitations, deteriorations, dilutions and imitations of imitations. Besides the grand swing of the Columbia-Vocalian period, there are forty-seven sides recorded for Decca, from 1937 to 1939. This is music of early maturity and unqualified distinction, to some, the high mark of lusty, hard-swinging big band jazz. In spirit that work has much in common with **Taxi War Dance**. Lester also recorded with pick-up groups under the leadership of Teddy Wilson and Billie Holiday. Some of these, enhanced by Basie colleagues, rank close to the famous **Dickie's Dream** date. Finally, there were a handful of odd items of varying interest made with Glenn Hardman, Benny Goodman, and under Lester's own name for Commodore. The memorial album on Epic is a one in a thousand example of how records ought to be if they could be—deathless music contained in a handsome package, with photographs and writing of the highest quality. It might be wise to lay in a spare copy. This is apt to be played as long as interest endures in jazz music.

Ross Russell

SHORTER REVIEWS

The latest production of **AHMAD JAMAL** Enterprises, "**Happy Moods**" (Agro LP 662), is played by the founder and president. A good deal of very fancy stuff has been said and written about Jamal. I have heard his use of silence discussed in terms that would be more appropriate to Webern and Boulez. I suppose we all realize that Jamal's influence on Miles Davis is very apparent in such things as **Bye Bye Blackbird** and **All of You**, but that is surely small reason for such inordinate praise. One must admit that he has found a gimmick and, with the precision of Crosby and Fournier to complement him, he has perfected a series of shiny, beautifully produced, empty works. On the current release he runs from **Little Old Lady** through the blues to his own **Rhumba No. 2**. The workmanship is both impeccable and dull. His **Excerpt from the Blues** seems vacuous posturing, but, Lord knows, it is chic! "**This Here Is BOBBY TIMMONS**" (Riverside RLP 12-317) contains enough funk or 'soul' to saturate even the most avid admirer of the, by now, cliché of blues cum gospel; tracks such as **This Here, Dat Dere**, and **Moanin'** are best seen, I think, as travesties on a style which at one time served a necessary function with integrity and point. Timmons' playing seems to reiterate stale fragments of dull ideas with blatant force. The balance of the lp is devoted to standards like **Prelude to a Kiss, My Funny Valentine** and **Come Rain or Come Shine**. On these, Timmons abandons the defrocked preacher in favor of a Bud Powell and Red Garland attack which does not seem to attempt very much in the way of serious playing. I get the impression on these ballads of a lack of melodic imagination. The ubiquitous **RAY BRYANT** is to be found on two recent releases, "**Ray Bryant Plays**" (Hanover-Signature SM-6008) and "**Ray Bryant Trio**" (New Jazz 8227). On each he runs through a selection of modern jazz standards (**Blue Monk, Doodlin', Django**, etc.). Bryant has developed a manner which allows him to play improvisations that superficially seem incisive and even compelling. There is an air of precision and cogency which leads one to think that Bryant has

a style characterized by measure and by melodic grace. I think, however, that his playing is actually a kind of nonstyle. His performance of **Blue Monk** on the Hanover-Signature lp shows what I mean. He does not really come to grips with Monk's composition. In place of a consistent performance he offers a series of well articulated but fairly standard blues riffs which in this context lack cohesion, and throughout the lps one searches vainly for any freshness. Bryant's problem comes down to a question of artistic identity and the fact that he has not yet achieved his own identity makes him sound conventional and glib in spite of his obvious talent. The French pianist **BERNARD PEIFFER** is back with us on "**The Pied Peiffer of the Piano**" (Decca DL9218). He displays again his well known pianisms to the fullest. His all too obvious skills are not complemented by taste and imagination. Thus a typical Peiffer performance, say **Stardust** on this recording, consists of a series of melodic or harmonic variations, none too well developed, which are evidently meant to dazzle by the exhibition of frankly sensational runs and frills. His sense of time is academic in its continuous emphasis on the most obvious patterns. Essentially, all his work seems designed to be immediately impressive by means of the ostentatious dressing which is strewn through each number. I am in a minority. I have a leaflet published by Laurie Records advertising another Peiffer recording from which I quote following. **Leonard Feather**: "Peiffer is amazing. I can't recall any jazz pianist except Art Tatum blessed with such complete mastery. He manages, in his jazz work, to swing in a peculiarly exultant manner." **Barry Ulanov**: "Nobody I've heard matches his skill as an improviser and his thorough knowledge of his instrument." This is considerable praise. I am not sure whether Ulanov really means that Peiffer is better than Parker. Armstrong and Tatum, to name a few. "**Profile**" (Blue Note 4022) presents the first solo recording of **DUKE PEARSON**. He is the latest of the lyrical pianists who now include Duke Jordan, Barry Harris, and Wynton Kelly. The most prominent characteristic of this group is their concentration upon a continuous melodic flow to which rhythmic and harmonic elements are subordinated. Pearson does not show the melodic grace of the predecessors and ancestors I have named. His playing seems modelled on Wynton Kelly's, but his lines do not have the melodic clarity for which he seems to strive, and some rather hackneyed and obvious figures appear regularly. On **Gate City Blues** his playing is

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undistinguished, strictly modern funk, not aided by the rather soporific work of Lex Humphries on drums and Gene Taylor on bass.

Hanover-Signature's "**The Wild Piano of MARY ANNE JACKSON**" (HM 8009) introduces a frenetic stylist who tries to compensate for a lack of ideas by a ferocious attack which seem to me to border on the ludicrous. Miss Jackson relies on the reiteration of certain rather mediocre rhythmic and melodic figures which may seem authentic on a cursory hearing because of her emphatic and forceful presentation. There are moments, by the way, when she sounds vaguely like and oddly distorted and curdled Tristano.

The tunes are all Miss Jackson's own. "**Good Deal**" (Blue Note 4020) features **THE THREE SOUNDS** at their dullest. Of course, they are a very slick group which produces its own modish brand of *ersatz* jazz with a glib, serious air. They have found a formula which permits them to entertain and, presumably, enlighten the great jazz public which so credulously accepts the current Basie band, Chico Hamilton, and Red Garland. The Three Sounds have adapted their 'style', a variegated pastiche, from Garland and from Jamal, but Bill Dowdy is an inept drummer, and Andrew Simpkins only an adequate bassist. No Crosby, Chambers, Fournier, or Philly Joe here.

"**Mighty High**" (Argo LP 660) has **MILT BUCKNER** on organ assisted by Kenny Burrell and Jimmy Campbell on alto in a program of blues and standards like **Organ Grinder's Swing** and **Willow Weep for Me**. The general atmosphere could be called funky mainstream à la Bill Doggett, but Buckner's solos range from movie-house melodrama in **Abstraction** to stridency on **Mighty High** and **After Hours**. Nor did anyone else have much to contribute. Burrell is the best assistant, but, for him, he is undistinguished.

H. A. Woodfin

The collection of songs by **JOE WILLIAMS** entitled "**That Kind of Woman**" (Roulette R 52039) is hardly designed for readers of this magazine, although it does contain a few solos of interest by Thad Jones and Zoot Sims. Except on **Cherry** (arranged by Frank Foster), the scoring was all done by Jimmy Jones, who reveals a handsome talent. On one session, he uses three horns, flute and rhythm; on a second, trumpet, woodwinds and rhythm; and on a third, a full complement of strings. Joe Williams is a good craftsman. He has a voice to work with and there's no reason why he should be confined to blues, but he might well leave songs like **Here's To My Lady** to lesser mortals.

I didn't particularly like the kind of music to be heard on "**PETE FOUNTAIN Day**" (Coral CRL 57313) when it was fresh, a quarter-century ago. If Fountain has added something new, I haven't heard it, but I must admit my attention kept wandering as I listened. He does, however, play with much facility and a comprehensive knowledge of Goodman phraseology. His four companions do a competent accompaniment job, but there is no Lionel Hampton or Teddy Wilson among them to induce or evidence tolerance. And any Goodman analogy will break down on that sour note. Here we have an elaborately packaged album with four whole pages of hoopla devoted to New Orleans, city of "pralines, postcards and picturesque sights." The music was recorded at the eleventh annual jazz concert of the New Orleans Jazz Club. Attended by "dowagers, resplendent in jewels and furs," it was an occasion when Fountain "brought jazz home to respectability in New Orleans." Significantly, he had to ship in a couple more ofays from the West Coast to complete his group. I hope colored people were admitted to the concert, for there are still some in "the City that Care Forgot." A picture on the sleeve shows one sweeping the sidewalk.

LIONEL HAMPTON's "Open House". (Camden CAL-517) probably is as good an example as any of the kind of stagnation that existed in jazz prior to the arrival of bop. It ought to make you wonder whether we are really so much better off. Besides Hamp, who sang, played vibes, piano and drums, there were over fifty assorted musicians on the different dates from the thirties and forties presented here. The standard maintained was, I submit, higher than we are getting on records today. The maligned three-minute form and its cramping compression seem, after all, to have resulted in more inspiration and richer content. Even the tracks with inferior personnels swing. In fact, of the ninety or so sides Lionel recorded for Victor with small groups, more than two-thirds were eminently successful, so that a couple more albums like this from Camden would not be amiss. The people who assist Hamp here are recommendation enough, among them: Hawk, Chu and Ben Webster; Clyde Hart, Nat Cole, Billy Kyle, Jess Stacy and Sir Charles; Hodges and Benny Carter; Cootie, Rex and Jonah; Casey and Christian; Hinton and Kirby Cozy; Jo, Sonny Greer and Alvin Burroughs. **Sweethearts On Parade, One Sweet Letter, Blue Because of You** and **Rock Hill Special** are little masterpieces in their genre. Hearing these performances again after too long an interval, one is reminded how pretty and flexible a four-piece sax section without baritone can sound, especially

when led by Benny Carter how underappreciated (outside the profession) Sonny Greer has always been; how tasteful and compelling Jess Stacy's piano still sounds; how grievous was the loss to jazz of Nat Cole; how distinctive and exciting the beat and tempos of the Hines band were in the late '30s, as reproduced on **Rock Hill**. This last title, on which the tenor solo is by Bob Crowder (not Budd Johnson), also reveals the excellence of another much underrated drummer, one of the best in jazz history, the late Alvin "Mouse" Burroughs.

"**Going for Myself**" (Verve MG V-8298), is a testimony to the sad later years of **LESTER YOUNG**. Though authority and fluidity are lacking, the music, when viewed with the charity of those who love Lester, retains in its blurred images not a little of his piquant lyricism and singular rhythmic sensitivity. At times, too, his angular phrasing and sparsely noted lines suggest ironic recognition of the policy of attrition adopted by younger popular rivals. He takes up his clarinet on **St. Tropez**. The playing is not very mobile, but he produces that delicate and soulful sound which may well have inspired some of Jimmy Giuffrè's low-register research. Harry Edison, on trumpet, provides an almost brutal contrast. There is nothing blurred here. The curt articulation and the direct, uncomplicated phrasing transport us from twilight to high noon and the shortest of shadows. There are a number of smart quotes for those who appreciate that kind of musical humor, including one from **Yes, Sir, That's My Baby!** on **Love Is Here To Stay**.

The two rhythm sections are unobtrusively competent; that on the first three titles Peterson, Herb Ellis, Ray Brown and Louis Bellson gives slightly more lift.

Stanley Dance

The difference between the **GEORGE LEWIS** of the American Music and Climax records and today's Bourbon Street Dixielander is of course Bill Russell. Russell picked the personnel (not to say the instrumentation), the repertory, and in New York even arranged the way the music was presented. In a way the Climax records are as much Bill's as they are Lewis', and if Lewis furnished the raw genius, Russell brought out what was in him. The 1950 band with Elmer Talbert was the only good band Lewis had more or less on his own. When he began using Kid Howard again, Howard's lip was shot, and the bands never did achieve the earlier coherence and cohesion. On "**Blues from the Bayou**" (Verve MG V-1019) George Lewis' 1959 Monterey Jazz Festival band—

Lewis, trumpeter Andy Anderson, Bob Mielke, Joe Robinchaux, Drag, and the incredibly noisy Joe Watkins—play what I suppose is a typical program: **Panama, Milenberg Joys, Memphis Blues, Beale Street Blues, Salty Dog, There's Yes, Yes in Your Eyes, Second Line, and Louisian-i-a.** Lewis' tone is thin and hollow and his weakness for falling back on cliché is much more pronounced than on his great records. Mielke's best bit is on **Beale Street**. Consciously or not he sounds most like he did with Bob Wilbur on **Salty Dog** (ou est les neiges d'antan?). I still find Joe Robinchaux completely uningratiating. I would say the same thing about Joe Watkins vocals (**Yes, Yes; Louisian-i-a; Second Line**) except that they do take him away from the hi-hat for a chorus.

The album notes refer to Lewis as perhaps the only remaining exponent of pure New Orleans music. A moratorium on that phrase is overdue: **BILLIE AND DE DE PIERCE**, for example, are only two of many active exponents of New Orleans music discovered during the Third Wave of the New Orleans revival, who have been recorded only on lps. Billie and De De can be heard along with Brother Randolph on washboard and Lucius Bridges, who sings **John Henry**, in twelve tunes collected by Harry Oster and Richard Allen (Folk Lyric Recording Co. EL 110, distributed by the Louisiana State University Press). Despite the much advertised fact that she accompanied Bessie Smith, and the frequently repeated references to her continuing the Bessie Smith tradition, I find Billie's piano, in large doses, monotonous (the three selections on Irwin Helfer's **Tone** lp were just about right). Her voice is gratifying. Although he receives less attention, I think De De is the better artist of the two. In spite of the fact that his trumpet playing is likely to be uneven nowadays, his best blues accompaniments at least suggest the Louis Armstrong of 1925, and he brings to his singing of tunes like **Eh La-Bas** and **The Peanut Vendor** a variety and inventiveness of phrasing Billie never shows. When Billie gets into the right groove, as she does on **Mama Don'a 'Llow** she can play with a vigor and exuberance that is irresistible—to the listener as well as De De. The other tunes, incidentally, are **Gulf Coast Blues, Some of these Days, You Can Depend on Me, Jelly Roll, Nobody Knows You when You're Down and Out, Goin' Back to Florida** (an autobiographical blues by Billie), **Panama**, and **St. James Infirmary**. Dick Allen's album notes are a very model for the genre.

The composer of **Jelly Roll**, Ferd Morton, plays and sings it under its

more usual title, **The Original Jelly Roll Blues**, on "**JELLY ROLL MORTON Plays and Sings**" (Riverside 12-133).

With the release of this second volume of selections from the Library of Congress recordings, Riverside is in effect announcing that its reissue program which has been moribund anyhow the past few years—the re-reissue of 10" lps on 12" was feverish at Riverside—is now officially dead. The label had hardly begun to touch the store of material available to them on Paramount and Gennett—fabulous, that is, to those simple souls who know something about the unreissued material. Riverside has violated the music on this lp by ripping it out of context, robbing it of a good deal of its charm and significance. **Freakish**, probably the most completely realized piece in the set, survived the operation, and **Wolverine Blues** (the scatted version from Volume VIII of the original issue) stands up pretty well too. The point of his vocal on **My Gal Sal**, on the other hand, is lost. The lone accomplishment of the lp is to reunite the two parts of **Original Jelly Roll Blues**, which Blesh was never very happy about separating, on two consecutive tracks. **Panama, Ain't Misbehavin', Miserere, The Murder Ballad**, and very fragmentary versions of **The Naked Dance, Darktown Strutters Ball** and **You Can Have It** complete the list.

WALLY ROSE, aided by Morty Corb, bass, and Nick Fatool, drums, plays two Morton compositions—**The Pearls** and **King Porter Stomp**—not included in the Riverside set, as well as ten other more or less classic rags: **Topliner Rag, Gladiolus Rag, Euphonic Sounds, Easy Winners, Pineapple Rag, Cascades Rag, Frog Legs Rag, Red Pepper Rag, and Springtime Rag**—on "**Ragtime Classics by Wally Rose**" (Good Time Jazz M 12034). Good Time Jazz is another outfit that has gone flabby in its traditional half, while forging fearlessly ahead (with Ornette Coleman) in its Contemporary end. This is, I believe, the third time that Wally Rose has recorded some of this material for them. I can't see that anything has been gained, except perhaps a little in audio quality, and I can see where something has been lost. Rose's playing has gotten flashier, and the drumming (if, indeed, the earlier sessions had drums) more obtrusive. I think it was Guy Waterman who complained that Rose never had the right conception in his rag playing anyhow. I wouldn't know, but I've always been fond of his 78s of **Euphonic Sounds** and **Topliner**. At any rate, he doesn't have it here, understandably. It's hard to resist the temptation to try to make something out of ragtime—but really it's impossible to do a damned thing with it.

J. S. Shipman

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BOOK REVIEW

The Listener's Companion, revised second edition, by B. H. Haggin. Doubleday Anchor Books; New York, 1959.

As everyone always says, B. H. Haggin, now of **The New Republic**, is one of our best music critics. Actually, B. H. Haggin is, in the true sense of that much-abused word, one of our few music critics—but he is not one of our best only by default. What everyone does next in talking about him is to mention Haggin's "blind spots". I won't bore you with such things because (a) it is not my purpose to review all of this book, (b) I learn at least as much in disagreement with him as in agreement, and (c) if I did I might end up giving further exposure to my own blind spots. But I would like to talk about something similar, about some particular omissions.

The collection in question begins for "someone who has just begun to be interested in music" and continues to include chapters on composers, on forms, and on periods and styles. Among these is a brief section on jazz. So far as it goes, it is good. Its main point of departure is the series of Columbia reissues by Armstrong, Bessie Smith, Bix and Billie Holiday—Teddy Wilson. It further mentions Jess Stacy (rather oddly in view of a slighting of Earl Hines, I feel), the "Chicagoans", Ellington, Teagarden, etc. As you can judge, it all could have been written in the late thirties, and as a matter of fact, most of what Haggin says about these people admittedly comes from his old **Nation** colleague Otis Ferguson or indirectly from Ferguson's reading of Panassie's first book. Thus, for example, we have the old line about the Armstrong Hot 5s as better than the "Savoy Ballroom" sides. Better they may be, but any critical comparison should show the realization that the latter attempt something very different, and very necessary to the development of an innovative musician like Armstrong.

I can go on taking exceptions: it no longer seems reasonable to me to speak so highly of a potential but so obviously undeveloped talent as Frank Teschmacher's as many once did and Haggin still does. But the real point is that the real loss is Haggin's. No one who has his acute understanding of melody and lyricism and his very real appreciation of the kind of melody that jazz offers in an Armstrong should deny himself the great lyric pleasures of at least a Lester Young, a Ben Webster, a Miles Davis, an Art Pepper—

that begins a good list. Another point is that Haggin's comments are such commonplaces on the whole; I cannot imagine him having so little of personal perception to offer about any other kind of music that he liked as well as he obviously likes the jazz he mentions.

Martin Williams

MOVIE REVIEW

Some of the most perceptive and sensible use of jazz background (composed and played by Dizzy Reece) in a recent movie occurs in **Nowhere to Go**, a recent British melodrama which apparently evaded every New York reviewer as neatly as George Nader, in its opening sequence, skins past his prison warders. In this sequence, Mr. Nader's supporting cast includes Bernard Lee, a rope ladder, a home-made bomb, an almost soundless soundtrack, and Reece's piquant, skittering theme which annotates the anticipation, anxiety and triumph of Mr. Nader's escape. Later, in a flashback, Mr. Nader—an up-and-coming Raffles—phones the home of his potential victim; the theme punctuates his call with a mewing aside. And later still, when Nader's ex-buddy, Lee, ransacks his apartment for loot, the theme whispers anxiously, at the level of outside street-noise.

In short, jazz is used flexibly in this film, unobtrusively and respectfully as a well-trained muscle. It represents, perhaps, nothing more brilliant or sensational than a very good level of unassuming efficiency; and we can give it ample credit only by remembering how often we have seen such efficiency at work in eight out of ten recent films or television shows. That's right. In this film, jazz is not used as a smudge-pot for ready-made "atmosphere"; it is not used as "underscoring," like those flatulent wow-wows from the brass section which notify you when to be convulsed, on the Dennis O'Keefe Show; nor is it used to express the film-maker's spinsterish mixture of fascination with, and contempt for, any kind of vital emotion. The final evidence of how deftly and cleanly jazz, or any music, can be handled in a film comes late in **Nowhere to Go**; when—for a moment in a Welsh cottage—the jazz theme is replaced by a freezing shower of Bach-like chords.

The film as a whole expresses—less successfully—this determination to produce a self-contained, consistently molded work. The story—a kind of simmered-down Graham Greene novel—centers on Nader's quarrel with his accomplice, Bernard Lee, over the division of loot. Lee is accidentally killed; and Nader appeals for help,

successively, to his underworld contacts, a night-club entertainer and, finally, a restive debutante, played by Miss Maggie Smith, who understands and, to an extent, shares the emotional vacuum in which he has learned to live. She helps him get away; but he mistakenly suspects her of betraying him; and, finally, shuffles down into oblivion, badly wounded, at the bottom of a Welsh pasture.

The movie, then, attempts to depict the need for dependence on others, even to a man who has consciously and systematically divested himself of all emotional contact; and the pathetic reflex twitchings with which he tries to meet this terrible need. The producers have tried to do so by recreating as nearly as possible the pure distillate of plot, action, quick-sketches character, and background, in which Frank Tuttle and other one-punch directors specialized during the thirties. The approach comes in strongest during the early jailbreak, burglary and robbery sequences, where the necessities of business-like crime are anatomized with a pedantic literal-minded respectfulness which characterizes the best British melodrama, from Conan Doyle to Ian Fleming. The film-makers are helped further by an equally literal-minded camera, which frames and close-ups every important detail like the insignia in a TV ad; and by a sound track which fools around entertainingly with a few devices made available by Hitchcock's early films, but not used conspicuously since then. I imagine that director Seth Holt deserves credit for these things, although—on no better evidence than his drama criticism—I'm inclined to thank scenarist Kenneth Tynan for much that is shrewd, circumstantial and graceful in the script. George Nader has little to do that wouldn't be required of a well-paid floor-walker; but he does that about fifty times more ingratiatingly than he did it in, say, the best-forgotten **Ellery Queen** TV series. Bernard Lee exploits a dolphin smile to the limit; and Maggie Smith frequently suggests the plump, high-enamelled charm which typifies the Daughters of Barnard and Smith, over here in the States.

The movie fails in that it misses emotional contact all along the line almost as completely as does its hero; partly, I suppose, because the point of view is almost exclusively that of Mr. Nader's rather vacuous con-man-turned-burglar. I suspect, though, that much of the blame rests with the attempt to reproduce a kind of film which is as much confined by its era as are the crisp, linear, jaunty advertisements of the thirties. I wonder, in fact, whether the melodramas of Tuttle, Le Roy and others—supposedly expert in evoking the emotions of rage and fear and anticipation—didn't do a lot toward stereotyping and almost killing those emotions, by the very

fact of their poker-faced efficiency; so that later audiences turned, in almost trope-like reaction, to the overweening pseudo-emotions of the science-horror movies. In any case, the only recognition of such feelings in *Nowhere to Go* is far too intermittent and sketchy to dramatize the need for emotional fusion. Also, like so many half-allegories, the film tends, I think, to blur distinctions rather than express them more clearly; for example, the distinction between emotional and social contact. Watching the theoretical agonies of Mr. Nader, I could imagine a quite different sort of man, equally cold but more articulate and self-projecting, who might have been much more successful at finding the friends he wanted. The point is, that even a supposedly instinctual medium like the movies has to stand still and speak up for itself when it ventures to say something about human relationships. I imagine a certain measure of self-awareness is indispensable even to the modest sort of tragedy which *Nowhere to Go* proposes; whereas Mr. Nadar shows—and is asked to show—all the self-awareness that one would expect of a handsome and contented airdale. The handsome, dead-center technique which gives charm and exactness to the film's exposition, makes its emotional sequences seem too foreshortened, cold, and rather fatuous; again, when explanations are required, a movie has to stand up and sing out; and this movie suffers regrettably from the cleft palate which I've tried to diagnose.

Don't try not to see it; as I say, a good deal of it is technically astute and respectful and its basic idea, however mistakenly applied, seems to me one of the few intellectual approaches to movies which suggests a genuine understanding of, and interest in, movies. But for the film as a whole—well, what was that title again?

Donald Phelps

RADIO REVIEW

The idea of "all-jazz" radio would seem to be an exciting possibility. Like the jazz festival, a station devoting its full schedule to jazz might successfully reach a vast new audience of uninitiated listeners. But if WHAT-FM in Philadelphia is typical, things are little better in jazz radio than they are in the majority of sadly presented jazz festivals. Twenty-four hours a day of WHAT's dull programming, uninformed disc jockeys, and unwarranted repetition have almost succeeded in the apparently impossible—in making jazz dull.

Growing out of WHAT-AM, aimed at

a Negro audience, the all-jazz FM station was created in 1958 to play "all forms of jazz twenty-four hours a day." Such a thing is easily said. But one does not start a jazz station simply by gathering a large collection of current records and playing indiscriminately. The rhyme and reason to jazz must be brought out by men who know and are sympathetic towards its history and styles. Further, a collection of great (and lesser) jazz works of the past must be brought together and played freely. Unlike "classical" FM stations, a jazz station cannot hope to gain a broad sampling of history by waiting for the older sides to be reissued on current lps.

And, of the number of masterpieces from the past that are available on lps, few are ever heard on WHAT. A better reason for this incompleteness of jazz is, I suspect, an almost total lack of understanding of jazz history by the station's disc jockeys. Excepting Danish-born Chris Albertson, it seems that the station's personnel and management have little more than album note knowledge and "I-heard-X-say-the-other-night-at-Pep's" gossip to pass on to a still largely uninformed audience.

The record-playing staff of WHAT-FM includes program director Sid Mark (formerly of the Red Hill Inn, home of "Jazz in Jersey"), Gene Shay, Chuck Sherman, Ron Robbins, Chris Albertson, and Henry Earl, who plays "classical, semi-classical, and show tunes" on "Sunday Surprise" between 9 A.M. and noon on Sunday mornings. (This single strange departure from jazz policy might well be related to nursing Sunday morning hangovers, if we assume that all jazz is noisy, but one suspects that it is more likely connected to a still existing stigma surrounding the playing of jazz during church hours.)

The format for the bulk of the shows on this station seems to feature three or four different lps an hour. This method presumably allows for as many different "sounds" (the station's favorite cliché) as possible. In practice there seems to be a strong disregard for over-all programming that results (my examples come from a few months back) in "Everybody Digs Bill Evans" being featured three times in one day, or Jimmy Wisner's "Blues for Harvey" being played unmercifully, day after day. But these are minor points. The real failure lies in lack of authority in presentation.

Extended listening will quickly reveal that only one of five jazz disc jockeys seldom if ever plays anything but the "latest sounds"—the newest releases. Thus, there are frequent appearances by Basie, Chico Hamilton, Miles, Shelly Manne, and all west coasters, but one has to look hard to find early or middle Ellington, Louis, any of the 1946-49 bop things—or for that matter, any-

thing recorded before 1954. Somehow the names of Chris Connor and Frank Sinatra appear more and more throughout whole hours of music. The station once conducted a poll to see if their listeners would approve of hearing Johnny Mathis included as a jazz singer. I mention that, not to stir up the old argument over "what is a jazz singer," but to indicate that these singers are being presented at the expense of more important material. I realize that this station is a commercial venture, but I question whether or not a steady diet of only modern jazz, interspersed with an occasional singer, will really please anyone.

As I suggested before, this state of one-sided jazz at WHAT-FM is probably due more to a lack of understanding of jazz, than to merely a matter of station policy. The disc jockeys' comments are few, generally dull, and seldom helpful. This restricted scope (modern jazz only), combined with bland commentary, makes serious jazz listening to WHAT-FM impossible, and one must be painfully selective.

There is an exception to all this, and Chris Albertson is a very large exception. Formerly with Radio Denmark (he still does a weekly show for them), Albertson is the only member of WHAT's staff who has the background and understanding to make a genuine contribution to jazz on radio. Albertson's personal collection, augmented by listener's contributions (in one week, he received over 800 jazz 78s from two listeners alone), represents all of the station's historical library—and Albertson alone takes advantage of these. His Sunday afternoon show is a delightful potpourri of Kansas City, skiffle, Waller, Chick Webb, Morton, and lots of items not likely to be reissued tomorrow.

It is only in the programs of Chris Albertson that one sees some of the vast educational and entertainment possibilities of jazz radio: tape recorded interviews with visiting jazzmen, e.g., Jimmy Rushing, Lester Young; an hour a week spent with a listener, listening to his choices of great jazz and his reasons, and perhaps most important, his intelligent programming and his broad jazz experience which he freely imparts to his listeners. But he is a voice in the wilderness and he has some of the poorest air time.

WHAT-FM has developed a monthly guide which accurately lists selections hour-by-hour and carries moderately entertaining articles on jazz personalities. With the aid of such a bulletin, selective listening is easier. The real problem, of course, is that any station that fails to view jazz intelligently runs the risk of presenting jazz lop-sidedly to an unsuspecting audience and making jazz dull for the sophisticated listener.

John F. Szwed

JAZZ IN PRINT



HSIO WEN SHIH

While Nat Hentoff is on vacation, I'm going to try a Jazz in Print too. Rather than doing one more report on the same old round of jazz magazines and European medical journals spiced with bits from Louella and Kilgallen, or a piece on the collected works of Max Harrison, I want to take a look at one source of writings about jazz in the United States widely circulated and widely read--the Negro newspapers. These weeklies are edited for local communities and are supported by local readership and local advertising. They all have in common some natural preoccupations: segregation and

desegregation, local (Negro) politics, African affairs, and the accomplishments of Negroes in almost any field. Although they are like all local newspapers in reporting the local church doings (like the N.Y. Times), school news (like the N.Y. Post), and the social life of the local gentry, they also have another rather special tone which I can perhaps convey by quoting a few column heads: Uptown Lowdown, Tavern Topics, Everybody Goes when the Wagon Comes, and best of all, Dapper Dan's Dope (Dapper Dan is a numbers tipster).

One would expect that these papers might have a lot to say about jazz, since there is so much talk about jazz as the main artistic contribution of America to the world and of the Negro to America. Sure enough, there is a good deal more lineage about jazz than one would find in other American papers of equivalent circulation and influence. But these papers hardly see jazz at that level of idealization. It is instead a part of the raffish world of Tavern Topics. Jazzmen are obviously bigger celebrities in the world of the Negro press

than they are in the general press. There are jazz 'items' in the show business gossip sections of every one of the papers, and one can pick up a good deal of miscellaneous information about the comings and goings of jazzmen from them. I discovered from Nat Middleton's Daze'N'Divots column in the Philadelphia Independent that Beryl Booker, a lady whose blues playing I've long admired, is preparing to come out of retirement, and that Barney Bigard is back with Louis Armstrong. From this column, and from an adjoining one by Jimmy Brown, I learned about two jazz nightclubs in Philadelphia that I didn't know before. From Les Matthews, Mr. 1-2-5 Street in the Amsterdam News, I learned that Eddie Lockjaw Davis has broken up his group. But I am afraid that I found out a good deal more about the domestic life of Dakota Staton, the rather less domestic life of Della Reese, a forthcoming happy event in the Sarah Vaughan household, and Miles Davis' latest fist fight, this time with a DeeJay; all of which leads me to believe that whatever Jazz Review intellectuals and esthetes say about "artistry" and

"creative daring", jazz musicians are just entertainers to the folks back home.

Of the five papers that I looked into (The Chicago Defender, The Pittsburgh Courier (New York edition), The Amsterdam News, The Philadelphia Independent, and The New York Citizen-Call, all dated June 11, 1960), only one had a column that specifically dealt with jazz, but nearly all of them had several references to jazz in one form or another.

There were five jazz items in the Defender, the most conservative paper.

Gossip column mentions of Sarah Vaughan and Dinah Washington need no comment. A feature article about the twentieth anniversary of the death Walter B. Barnes, a Chicago alto saxophonist, singer, and dance band leader, rather perplexed me. The article told of his success at Chicago ballrooms like the Grand Terrace, the Sunset, and the Arcadia in the early thirties, and about troubled years in the late thirties when he had to tour the South to keep working. It told me nothing of his musical accomplishments, in fact never used the word 'jazz', and I began to wonder whether the piece might have been a long-forgotten obituary, recently unearthed. But why?

Then there was a musical calendar listing various musical events at churches and educational institutions, that omits all mention of jazz except for a listing (accidental?) of an appearance by Franz Jackson, who leads a Dixieland group in Chicago, at a settlement



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house. And finally there was a column on the teenagers' page called Platters from which I quote the following: "... I know you go for that swinging background music composed and conducted by Henry Mancini . . . Swingin' huh!" and "if ballads aren't your speed, you'll probably go for What a Day by Sarah Vaughan or Bill Bailey by Bobby Darin. Both of these records swing to no livin' end, which means that the teens in Chi-town should go for them in a big way." It seems jazz is for the young.

The New York papers are rather hipper. I was pleased to see in the Amsterdam News a straight news item headed Monk Gets Card for NYC Clubs, and amused because it was placed next to a larger item that read Ira Aldridge Society has Negro Composers, which I suppose shows where the real composers are. Actually, the Amsterdam does a fair job in covering jazz. I found from their theatrical column that Bud Johnson is leading a band on a rock and roll tour, that Noble Sissle and Eubie Blake's "Shuffle Along" will be revived on Broadway next fall for the nth time, that Luckey Roberts, who I had feared was inactive because of poor health, was able to play at a recent social occasion. Elsewhere in the Amsterdam I found that the Hotel Theresa's Gold Room has the "nationally famous Latin Jazz Quintet plus one", which aroused my curiosity, and that Prestige Records is conducting a talent search for folk singers. This last announcement was so tactfully worded that I

almost missed the point. It is blues singers they're hunting for, isn't it?

And then, right under the TV guide, there was a list of the Top Ten. The Times does that for books every Sunday, and I've always wondered about that too, but I think that's done for book sellers in the provinces. But what is the function of a sales volume listing in a non-trade paper? As that teenager said to David Reisman, "We like it because it's popular." Both the Courier and the new Citizen-Call have regular record review columns. The Courier's column is by Harold L. Keith, and is called Data 'bout Discs. It isn't restricted to jazz, but the alliance of musical styles in this record section reflects an attitude that forces Miles and Cleanhead to rub shoulders, an attitude that has more to do with Miles' love for Ahmad or Cannon's for Cleanhead than many people are willing to admit. About the new Cannonball record (that filthy one) Keith says, "There's no need to waste words on this one. Suffice it to say that 'Cannon' has another great album on the market that will sell like hot-cakes". About a new Benny Carter he says, "We wish we had room to expound on the virtues of the latest Benny Carter outing on the United Artists Label . . ." And, "Ray Charles has another smash on the Atlantic label . . . Everybody is bound to say 'Yes!' to this disc . . .". I wish we had enough room to expound on the virtues of this kind of commercial enthusiasm, but there's

no need to waste words on it; suffice it to say that it is meant for phatic communion rather than communication. The Citizen-Call, which seems aimed at that nice light couple in the Pepsi ad rather than at Killer Joe or Sister Sadie, has a column called The JAZZ Bit by Louise David Stone. I can suggest the tone of the column by reproducing here the explanation of the star rating system:

Record Ratings

* * * * * *Oh, man, what a gasser!*
 * * * * *Like, it swings nicely*
 * * * *Sometimes, it jumps*
 * * *A noble effort, but later*
 * *They should never have gone to the studio, man*

as I can suggest the level of musical sophistication by quoting "Bryant gives his left something to do besides banging out block chords or 'comping' as the in-group calls it". The emotional attitude of the writer isn't too distorted by the quote, "In Cannonball's latest record, a performance of 'Work Song' is really saying something, but here it lacks the proper strength and sweat". The Citizen-Call also devotes a page to an entertainment guide that normally covers theater, restaurants and movies. This week, it was restricted to a listing of eleven jazz night clubs, Uptown, Downtown, and Midtown. The listings include little blurbs that are written in a kind of high school yearbook cum New Yorker style, and while it is less restricted geographically than The New Yorker's listing, it is just as incomplete. Small's, the Half Note, and the Show Place could all request equal space. Nat

Hentoff bibliographers will be happy to know that he has already made the scene with one of his minor polemical pieces in this, the third issue of the Call.

Last of all, there is an article of a series called the Golden Jubilee of Jazz, in the space normally occupied by Izzy Rowe's Notebook in the Courier; a dehydrated history of jazz, really a history of the Negro in New York Jazz. It is a notably shoddy piece of work, full of half absorbed facts and dubious interpretations. It naturally leans to the all Negro interpretation of jazz history, but in a peculiarly disjointed way. The "real pure jazz" is described as "the weird and rhythmic intonations of an Ellington, a Basie or the playing of Goodman from the scorings of a jazz giant like "Smack" Fletcher Henderson". Henderson is later described as a young man who came up from Georgia to study chemistry at City College. The article makes a point of establishing the priority of drummer Louis Mitchell as the first man to play jazz in New York, to discredit the white ODJB, but immediately contradicts itself by saying that Mitchell's band featured "refined music with a turkey trot specialty number". The conclusion of the piece is that familiar and certainly true bit about white musicians stealing all the ideas and making all the money, but the proof is strange indeed. "Today, only occasionally does one find a top name band of Negroes along Broadway, or in any of the more classy houses". But the

fact is that Basie plays Birdland at least eight weeks a year, and has played the Waldorf this summer. Is there a white jazz band that works that much in New York? Ellington's band has played a Town Hall concert by themselves. Has any white band done that in the last fifteen years? Does Chet Baker still do better financially than Miles Davis with Miles' style? Is this chip really necessary?

When I think over all I read in these papers, I am no longer surprised at the success of Ahmad or Dakota in the Negro communities. I begin to wonder whether Billy Taylor wasn't right about Negroes and jazz after all.

But all that doesn't sound at all like the old Jazz in Print, so just to hold the franchise, I have some short bits. A recent Saturday Review survey of photography as an art noted that Ray Bryant will be on view at the Metropolitan Museum this summer in a photo by Larry Shustak. So there is a Royal Road after all.

In the Summer 1960 issue of Art in America, one of those beautifully designed coffee table magazines that have an enormous circulation but no readership, there is a portfolio of Lee Friedlander's photos of New Orleans jazzmen; beautiful tender work, technically superb and moved by profound human sympathy.

In the latest issue of Ralph Gleason's Jazz (at last): a beautiful, touching piece about Monk in San Francisco; an interview with Jon Hendricks by Gleason in which Jon tells us that

he works with the titles of tunes and builds his lyrics around the title, because they are so meaningful. I am tempted to ask Jon to translate Every Tub for me and explain how he built his lyric on that phrase. Frank Kofsky, the recent winner of a Down Beat prize, has a piece about the "philosophy" of Jon Hendricks that I can only diagnose as an acute case of quarterly writing in the head. I would suggest that he search for further examples of Hendrick's "philosophy" in the New Testament, in the Baghavad-Gita, in Dostoevsky, in lesser Dickens, in Edgar Guest, in Vincent Youmans, in the Sat. Eve. Post, perhaps even in Orphan Annie and Mary Worth. But as J. S. Shipman so rightly says, "One man's tautology is another man's criticism". Students of the genuinely inane, which is happily becoming rarer in current jazz writing, will be interested in the notes to Duke's new "Blues in Orbit", Columbia CL 1445, written by Ted Macero. Two last things which have nothing to do with Jazz in Print. (I notice they always sneak in, and I don't want to disappoint the fans.) As I listen to some jazz groups recently formed (the Jazztet, Slide Hampton's group and Cannon's among them), I wonder if Negro musicians have gotten tired of the old pattern of having their stuff popularized by white musicians and decided to join together to cut out the middle man. And I wonder, when the Ancients were looking for the Seat of the Soul, why they never thought of looking in the region of the back-beat.

This is the fifth in a series of articles surveying the literature on the origin and history of the word "jazz."

the word jazz,

part V

Alan P. Merriam
and
Fradley H. Garner

By any other name

Is the word "jazz" really bad enough to be thrown out of the language? Three times in the last thirty-five years determined efforts have been made to bury it. Twice, less formally in the literature, euphemisms have been offered for the "unmentionably low" word.

The first anti-"jazz" campaign was sparked by a gentleman with a vested interest. *Musical Courier* in 1924 reported the views of a prominent hotel society band leader:

Vincent Lopez, who is doing his bit at the next meeting of the League of Composers to clarify the situation, objects to the term "jazz." Being on the inside, he feels more strongly on the subject than most of us. . . . He insists that, jazz being dead [sic], the name ought also be dead, or, at least, ought not to be hung on to what he calls Modern Music or Modern Popular Music.

This is a point for discussion—and we must say at the outset that we agree with Mr. Lopez, that the use of the word "jazz" leads to a lot of misconception and misunderstanding, and that the progress of American music would be more rapid, that it would more readily gain universal acceptance and respect, and would take its proper place especially with the mass of our people, were the term by which it is to be called not suggestive of an unpleasant phase in our history from

which we have happily escaped.

Jazz presents to the mind disorder. It is suggestive of things unpleasant, or atavistic leanings of which we are all properly ashamed, of borrowings from savages, of near-orgies that have quite properly been combatted by those who have care of the young and the morals of youth. The word has evil associations . . . (Anon 1924e:36).

Although the *Courier* agreed with Lopez about the word's connotations and pointed out that jazz (music) had come a long way, the journal did not like Lopez's "Modern Music" substitute. Rather than sully the music, it suggested the word be kept "until it dies a natural death" (*loc. cit.*). Lopez's suggestion apparently received no further notice.

In July, 1924, however, another society maestro got into the act. Meyer Davis reportedly offered a prize of \$100 for a new name for jazz which "must . . . be at once both dignified and comprehensively descriptive" (Anon 1924d:28). *Musical Courier* shrugged its shoulders: . . . perhaps one should say that this attempt to get a better word than jazz for the expression of American popular music in its present stage of development is laudable. It is rather difficult, however, to see what difference the name makes; and it is still more difficult to believe that any such effort will actually change the name or prevent people from talking about jazz, as long as it is jazz, in the future just as they have in the past.

The thing to change is not the name but the music, and, in spite of what Mr. Davis says on this subject, and what others have said, jazz is still jazz. A bit better, certainly, than the weird "ad libbing" of half a dozen years ago, but a perfectly obvious development from that style.

. . . However, may someone win the hundred dollars—and here's wishing good luck to a lively and vigorous contest (Anon 1924d:28).

The Davis offer apparently never cost him a cent. At least it is not reported again. If there was a lucky winner, he remains as anonymous as his entry.

Meanwhile, two unsolicited suggestions made their way into print, one from Clay Smith: "But why stigmatize what is good in the music by the unmentionably low word 'Jazz?' . . . Why not call it 'Ragtonia' or 'Calethruppia' or anything on earth to get away from the term 'Jazz'" (Anon 1924e:595).

The other suggestion came two months later in an unsigned article in the *Musical Leader*. "Syncopep," said the periodical, "represents an honest effort to provide something new within the limitations of its exponents." It is a "new way of presenting old melodies" (Anon 1924b:568).

The writer was talking about jazz influence on classical music, but he apparently envisaged "syncopep" as the label for all modern music, composed or not. Whether he intended it for jazz music *per se* is uncertain.

The semantic tempest in a teapot simmered down toward the end of 1924 and no publication turned the gas on again until 1949. Then *Down Beat*, the jazz trade magazine, had a circulation-building brainstorm. "New Word for Jazz Worth \$1000," it announced.

For years, musicians, writers, and critics have complained there is no word to describe the music of today. The term *jazz* has lost its significance. *Swing* just isn't swinging anymore. *Be-bop* refers to one restricted school. . . . The same situation existed back in the early 30's, when the word *jazz* had been applied to the music of the Ted Lewises and the Paul Whitmans and had lost much of its virility and color. . . .

Join the fun! Help select the word to replace outworn jazz! (Anon 1945a:10).

In a later issue, semanticist S. I. Hayakawa, jazz scholars Marshall Stearns and John Lucas and band leader Stan Kenton were named as judges (Anon 1949b:1), and on November 4, 1949, the 26 winning entries were announced:

1st Prize: **Crewcut** (\$1000)

2nd Prize: **Amerimusic**

3. Jarb, 4. Freestyle, 5. Mop, 6. Novaclassic, 7. Pulsemusic, 8. Mesmerhythm, 9. Le Hot, 10. Bix-E-Bop, 11. Hip, 12. Id, 13. Sock, 14. Swixibop, 15. X-Tempo, 16. Ragtibop, 17. Blip, 18. Beatpoint, 19. Idioism, 20. Ameritonic, 21. Improphony, 22. Schmoosic, 23. Syncorhythm, 24. Beatfelt, 25. Syncope, 26. Reetbeat. An editorial in the same issue cheerfully admitted:

All of the judges concurred on one thing, that none of the hundreds of words poured in could be accepted as a suitable substitute for *jazz* . . . Probably now we will revert to the continued use of jazz with more satisfaction and with greater assurance. It

might be nice to utilize "crewcut" once in a while, as a change of pace and to avoid monotony. But if any word ever replaces jazz it will have to be because like Topsy, it "just grew" (Anon 1949c:1).

There is the story of "jazz" as reported in some fifty sources in the last forty-one years. Its etymology is uncertain, no matter what the etymologists or the folklorists or the writers, sociologists, jazz historians, musicians or moralists say. The folk stories or name-corruption accounts are ingenious, many of them, but they cannot be substantiated. The use of the word as a minstrel or vaudeville term leaves us only a little closer to the original source.

The African and Arabic theories need to be explored further, if possible, but the alleged English, Indian and Spanish accounts are probably untenable. The relationship of "jazz" to the French verb "jaser" remains a distinct possibility, given the French influence in the Southern United States and particularly in New Orleans, and taking into account the early idea that "jazz" as a minstrel term involved actions not unlike the French translation of that word (to prattle or jabber).

The reference to the alleged French "chasse beaux" (a Gallic dandy) is intriguing and should be investigated further. The onomatopoeic and spontaneous etymologies are speculative and frustrating, since they cannot be confirmed. The link between jazz and the slang sex terms "jasm" and "chism" remains a distinct and logical possibility.

As for locale, the earliest account we have seen reports the word was first applied to the music in San Francisco. This is hard to believe, in view of where the music began. But it is fairly certain the term caught on across the country between 1913 and 1915. Most of the early spellings (jass, jas, jaz, jasz, jascz, etc.) probably were the inventions of the writers concerned. Suggested replacement words have fallen on deaf ears.

Less imagination and more research may produce results, but we seriously doubt whether the real origin of "jazz" ever will be discovered. So far as music and folklore are concerned, it may not make the slightest difference.

LETTERS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JAZZ

The positive effect of your publication upon the jazz community has been good, that is, on players and listeners who feel vitally affected by jazz. The attempt to formalize emotional responses to music should be congratulated; it has been depressing for me to watch this valid form of expression surrounded by the cult of the hipster. Positive effects aside, **The Jazz Review** too often lapses into pedantry. Some of the sentences and paragraphs in the magazine are in effect a parody of academism. And the inclusion of musicians as reviewers doesn't always help the clarity of the magazine; too often, musicians are facile with in-group language without considering whether they communicate with readers not privy to that group.

I would also like to disagree with your reference in **Jazz In Print** some months ago to Billy Taylor's article in **Dude** in 1957, "Negros Know Nothing about Jazz". It is difficult not to be prickly about this, being a Negro, but really Taylor has led you up a blind alley. Jazz has been a part of my musical experience, and that of my friends and their families, for too many years to even need a polemic in our defense. After all, Miles Davis, perhaps the most influential musician today, certainly developed from an upper middle class background . . . My wife, who is a musical consultant, has been developing the use of jazz in the elementary school music program . . . For her first grade class in rhythms, she has used Miles Davis' record of **Flamenco Blues**; for the study of brass instruments, she has used the record **Music for Brass**; as part of the study of the movement west, she has used Sonny Rollins' **Wagon Wheels**; the program ends in the sixth grade with a unit on jazz as such, as part of modern music, where records of the **Brandeis College Concert** and **Music for Brass** have been used as examples of larger works in jazz.

Robert T. Tatum
Gary, Indiana

HIP TIP

Lately, in almost every jazz article (or at least in most) written by a "white kat", the writer tries to show his hipness by using the term "o'fay" to describe the members of his in group, under the assumption that this is a term used by Negroes to describe whites. Well, as a Negro, I have news for you. I have never in my life heard a Negro use that term (except in "**Odds Against Tomorrow**" where it sounded so very awkward).

So the next time you want to use hip (or Negro) words to describe whites, try "paddie", "grey" or "non member".

If you must use "o'fay", omit the o and just say "fay". It sounds much better.

Charles Blagrove Hobson
New York City

MORE EARLY MILES

My copy of Herbie Fields' Savoy 591 contains **Run Down** (5813), played by Herbie on tenor with rhythm section and **Camp Meeting** (5820), where Herbie plays clarinet and Cobb (?) tenor sax, both soloing; there is an uncredited trumpet in ensemble, but it cannot be heard alone at any point, and could be anybody, including Miles.

Mr. Edwards correctly states in his letter that masters 5805-8 are by Rubberlegs Williams, but when he says no trumpet, he is completely wrong. I have Savoy 5516, which contains **Deep Sea Blues** (5807) and **Bring It on Home** (5808) by Rubberlegs with the Herbie Fields Orchestra. In addition to Herbie's clarinet and tenor, both sides contain trumpet obligatos to the vocal. The trumpet work is very good, and very much like Dizzy's many vocal background work of that time (with Rubberlegs/Clyde Hart on Continental, Rubberlegs/Pettiford on Manor, Albinia Jones on Black & White). This trumpet might well be Miles Davis.

Johns Bergh
Oslo, Norway

THE GOOF AND I

In an article published in **The Jazz Review** for November, 1959, I cited a double-time run on **Boppin' a Biff** as representative of Fats Navarro's amazing technique. That run was actually played by Kenny Dorham, whose name was not listed on the ten-inch lp on which I have the piece and who, at that time, played very much like Fats. My apologies to the readers of **The Jazz Review** for my carelessness.

Harvey Pekar
Cleveland, Ohio

APOLOGY

The review of **The Country Blues** by Samuel B. Charters in our June issue on pages 34 and 35 was written by Dick Hadlock. A production error caused his name to be omitted. Our sincerest apologies to Mr. Hadlock and our readers.

RECONSIDERATIONS

"The Modern Jazz Society presents a Concert of Contemporary Music."
Verve MG V-8131.

Stan Getz, tenor; J. J. Johnson, trombone; Anthony Sciacca, clarinet; James Politis, flute; Manuel Ziegler, bassoon; Gunther Schuller, French horn; Janet Putnam, harp; John Lewis, piano; Percy Heath, bass; Connie Kay, drums.

Midsommer; **The Queen's Fancy**.

Lucky Thompson, tenor, replaces Getz;

Aaron Sachs, clarinet, replaces Sciacca.

Little David's Fugue; Sun Dance; Django.

All the compositions on this lp are by John Lewis, and all the orchestrations, except **Django** and **The Queen's Fancy** which were arranged by Gunther Schuller. These pieces were presented in concert in the form in which they appear here (all except the fugue, to my knowledge, have been recorded in other versions) in 1955. It seems safe to guess that among the reactions to these pieces was the inevitable "It isn't jazz!" Such accusations have been levelled at John Lewis since that time, and the compositions here have probably been responsible for that feeling to some degree. Though they may have started some people wondering about the fusion of jazz and classical music, this record at least seems to ignore the question. Instead, John Lewis' notes specify that the works "center on and depend on the jazz soloist and incorporate jazz and classical techniques."

Little David's Fugue and **The Queen's Fancy** have nothing to do with jazz as original material. In fact the chords on which the soloists improvise in the former are not, strictly speaking, part of the original material, but rather by-products of the coexisting melodies. They ought not be available at all, unless one incorporates them as a "jazz technique"! Similarly, there are what amount to background riffs behind the trombone solo in this piece. In **The Queen's Fancy**, Getz' solo emerges from the ensemble directly, and although the material is Elizabethan in matter, the manner of its utilization is strictly in 1930's-big band style. Actually, these two pieces seem most out of place only because their thematic material

is so evocative of non-jazz forms.

Actually, it is no less valid than the rest, and the fugue is certainly superior to the countless four bar blues that pass as "jazz originals." John Lewis is nothing if not an evocative and sensitive musician. This talent did not come in the envelope with his **No Sun In Venice** contract; that is made clear on this record. **Sun Dance**, inspired by dancers in New Mexico and Africa, has a gentle sway and melodic directness which are implemented in the recapitulation, when the three soloists, Sachs, Johnson and Thompson are used as a contrapuntal trio. **Midsommer**, which I enjoyed as an MJQ performance, seems overdramatized here, even though the orchestration needs to be somewhat fuller; there seems to be a great deal of empty space between the instruments in the ensemble. There remains **Django**, one of John Lewis' most successful and characteristic compositions. It exemplifies the form into which he has cast his own group by treating solo and arrangement as equal contributors toward the overall "piece". The written material, which appears to open and close the composition, is a slow dirge. The middle section is improvised by the soloists at a slow swinging pace. The first section of the improvisations are based on chords derived from the dirge, while the bass plays a straight walking four. Next, the chords are abandoned for a pedal tone dully repeated by the bass. A short reprise of the chords is followed in the background by a loping Western figure. The effect of this evolution on the soloist is far-reaching. The chord background, while somewhat swinging, is still mournful. The pedal bass restrains the soloist; he plays phrase after phrase against it, but seems to make no progress. He starts each time where he began before. At last we definitely capture the major scale; and only then does the background cooperate with blues-based improvisation. The release is felt and communicated by all the soloists. They all seem to breathe easier out in the open. The preparation for this climax by John Lewis is masterful.

A unique feature of this record is the influence of the music on the improvisors (sax, clarinet and trombone only). One of the most deeply plumbed sources of an improvised line in modern jazz has been the notes of implied passing chords. While some musicians today are exploring other lodes, two lps by guitarist Wes Montgomery should indicate that the passing chord is not passé. In John Lewis' music, though, care has been taken that few such opportunities shall be offered the soloist. In a composition like **Afternoon in Paris**, for instance, the changes are "tightly packed" with very little room for implications between them. The improvisors are compelled to use melodic ideas. The result is that all five here seem determined not to waste a single note. Lucky Thompson's solo on **Sun Dance** is still all music. Each time he seems to have exhausted the simple harmonies, he unfailingly finds a final phrase. In **The Queen's Fancy**, Getz, who has often used repetition "for emphasis," uses it only when the background changes behind him, calling attention to the background rather than himself. J. J. leaves no idea in mid-air (neither does Lewis) and uses the same rhythmic pattern on many occasions where the shape of his melody permits an idea to be transposed and then repeated (note **Django**). In some other work (**Billie's Bounce** with Getz "**At The Opera House**"), he anchors a whole chorus at a time on one tone, surely an impediment to an evolving melody. This habit is absent here. What has prevented a recording of such virtues from being acclaimed and influential? First, although the music swings enough to satisfy the definition, I suppose, there is no real momentum or drive. This, plus the uniform tempo and constantly simplified harmonies, dulls the presentations. Most important is the basic emotional climate of John Lewis' work. It has been most aptly expressed, I think, as charm. This feeling is not easy for the composer to communicate and certainly difficult for the jazz improvisor to project. Since it is Lewis' true expression (and increasingly is becoming Milt Jackson's too), he is successful as his own soloist. Though they are not so-called "hard boppers", the soloists here express less than total involvement with this attitude (although they emulate it), and thereby they shed a disturbing unreal light on the record.

David Lahm

YOUR **GUIDE** TO 140 HOURS OF THE BEST JAZZ ENTERTAINMENT IN AMERICA

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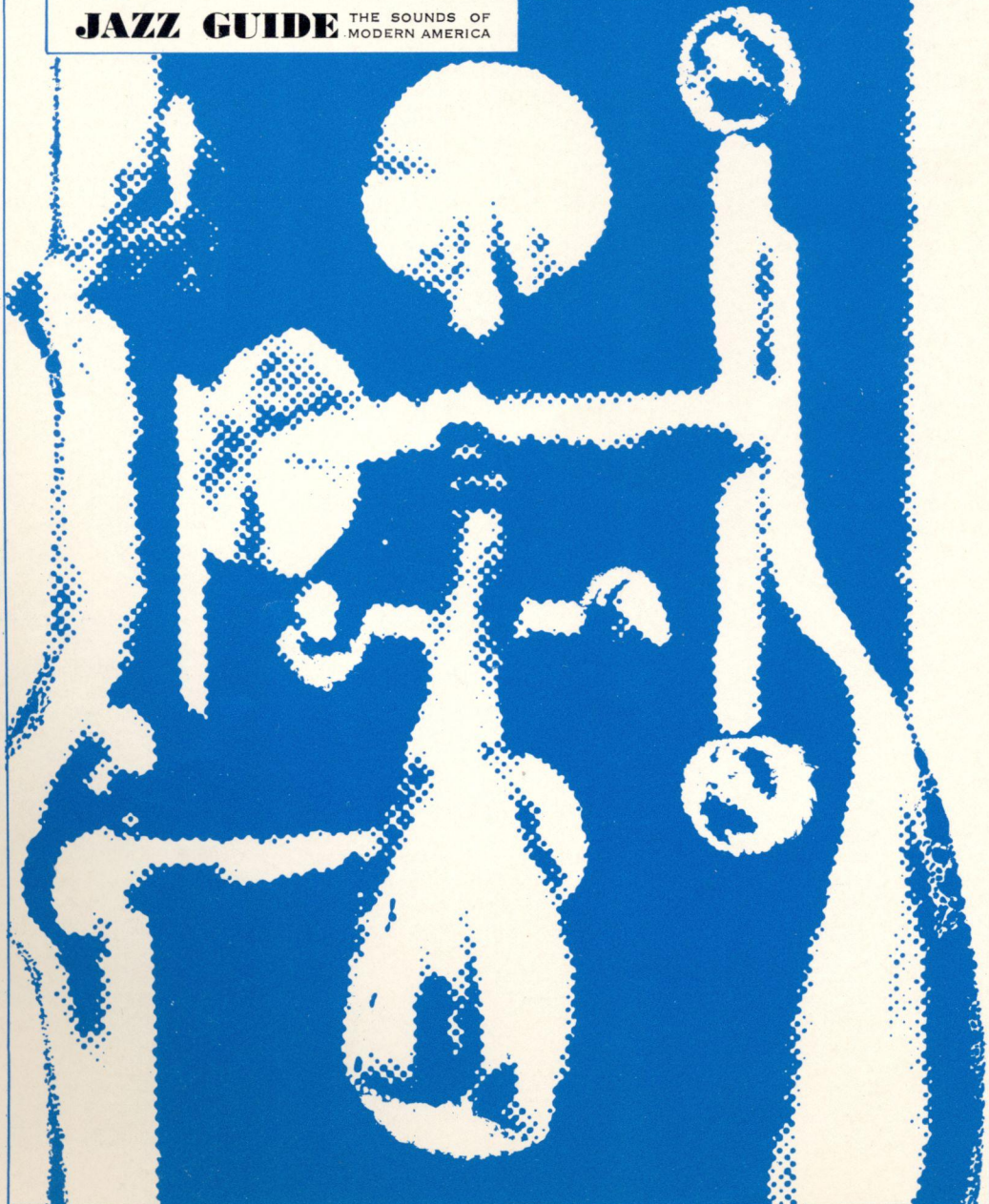
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JAZZ GUIDE THE SOUNDS OF
MODERN AMERICA

**GUIDE
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JUNE 1960 35c



Inside Stuff from RIVERSIDE Records

This marks the first appearance in *Jazz Review* of a more or less regular page in which we hope to abandon the usual formality and stiffness of a normal advertising format and, instead, just tell you what's going on at Riverside. We'll tell you about what's new, what's going to be new, what we're excited about and what we think you'll be excited about . . . To begin with, let us note the record debut of a witty and controversial columnist who has been attracting quite a bit of attention from his position in the pages of another publication in the jazz field. A fellow called **GEORGE CRATER**¹.

We are well aware that this distillation of Mr. C's. inimitably pungent, devilish and lop-sided views on life, liberty and pursuit will not please everyone. On the contrary, **not** pleasing everyone seems to be one of his motivating forces, leading us to suspect that if George Crater ever did succeed in pleasing everyone, he would immediately shrivel up and crumple away, like a Shangri-La debutante exposed to the outside air.

This record (aptly, if unstartlingly, entitled **OUT OF MY HEAD**) will tell you all about such important contemporary social phenomena as wind-up dolls, TV jazz shows, the care and feeding of jazz night-club audiences, the quaint habits of jazz critics. It will relate the tale of the fearful night that George Crater faced a jazz-concert audience in a live (at least temporarily) appearance. It will do all this and more . . . and it will do it in the dulcet tones of the man whose evil brain turns out the Crater column every issue these days, a remarkable (obviously) fellow named Ed Sherman. This record will even bring you a set of incisive album notes on Crater, man and myth, by Ira Gitler. And (particularly if you got rhythm), who could ask for anything more?

In addition, Riverside has been busy in more conventional areas — like

making records with just plain music on them. Some of our more recent new releases are making us feel more than a little proud and happy; among them, may we call to your attention the following:

■ A most unusual excursion into the area called "soul," a big, full-sounding album that is already stirring up much comment and excitement, combining the exciting tenor of **JOHNNY GRIFFIN** and the remarkable scoring of bright new arranging star **NORMAN SIMMONS**. This one goes by the fitting name of **THE BIG SOUL-BAND**².

■ There is only one man who can make an oboe sound as if it were born to play the blues, then create rich and exotic melodies on the flute, and then play some of the earthiest tenor imaginable. And that one man does all this on a single LP, a fascinating effort entitled **THE THREE FACES OF YUSEF LATEEF**³.

■ Everyone who came out of Detroit in the past several years, it seemed, had something to add to the living legend of just how much piano was being played out there by a most retiring young man who refused to leave home. Then, suddenly, he did leave (to join the Cannonball Adderley Quintet); Riverside caught up with him during a San Francisco engagement by the Adderley group, and recorded a "live" (in every sense of the word) trio performance that proves those legends to have been most accurate: **BARRY HARRIS AT THE JAZZ WORKSHOP**⁴.

But it is not only the new that makes us happy these days. There are, also, a few elderly releases that keep roaring along. In that connection, we could point to any one of a dozen exceptional Riverside albums by **THELONIOUS MONK**, but let us arbitrarily single out his very first work for this label, a five-year-old LP on which this modern genius interprets the music of Duke Ellington⁵. If there is any one of you who has not sampled this enduring classic, there

is no need to feel guilty. Instead, just run right down to your friendly local record store; they still have it very much in stock for you.

Not quite as venerable, but no fledgling any more, is that remarkable **CANNONBALL ADDERLEY San Francisco**⁶ record, now about nine months old. At this advanced age, most of today's jazz LPs are about ready for the scrap heap, but this phenomenal masterpiece of "soul" is still a full-fledged best-seller, and showing no signs of slowing down.

Having moved this conversation around to the subject of Cannonball Adderley, and recognizing that this page promises you nuggets of inside information, we would like now to reveal for the first time that we are hoarding, for release at some future date, a really superb surprise package put together under Cannonball's leadership, on which the alto star's hand-picked supporting cast includes the very great Ray Brown on bass and the incredible Wes Montgomery on guitar. Now that we've told you this, however, all you can do for the time being is dream about it. Sorry, but that's how it goes with inside information. . . .

Footnote Department: Careful readers will have noted above a total absence of all those confusing catalogue numbers that clutter up most people's advertisements. Instead, there have been a half-dozen judiciously placed single numbers of the type that indicate the existence of footnotes. And here, at the conclusion of this scholarly essay, are the footnotes themselves, a handy reminder of the full numerical and title identification of the records we have been discussing:

1. "OUT OF MY HEAD" by **GEORGE CRATER** (RLP 841 — Mono only)
2. **THE BIG SOUL-BAND: JOHNNY GRIFFIN** Orchestra (RLP 331; Stereo RLP 1179)
3. **THE THREE FACES OF YUSEF LATEEF** (RLP 325; Stereo RLP 1176)
4. **BARRY HARRIS AT THE JAZZ WORKSHOP** (RLP 326; Stereo RLP 1177)
5. **THELONIOUS MONK** Plays Duke Ellington (RLP 201 — Mono only)
6. **CANNONBALL ADDERLEY QUINTET IN SAN FRANCISCO** (RLP 311; Stereo RLP 1157)

RIVERSIDE