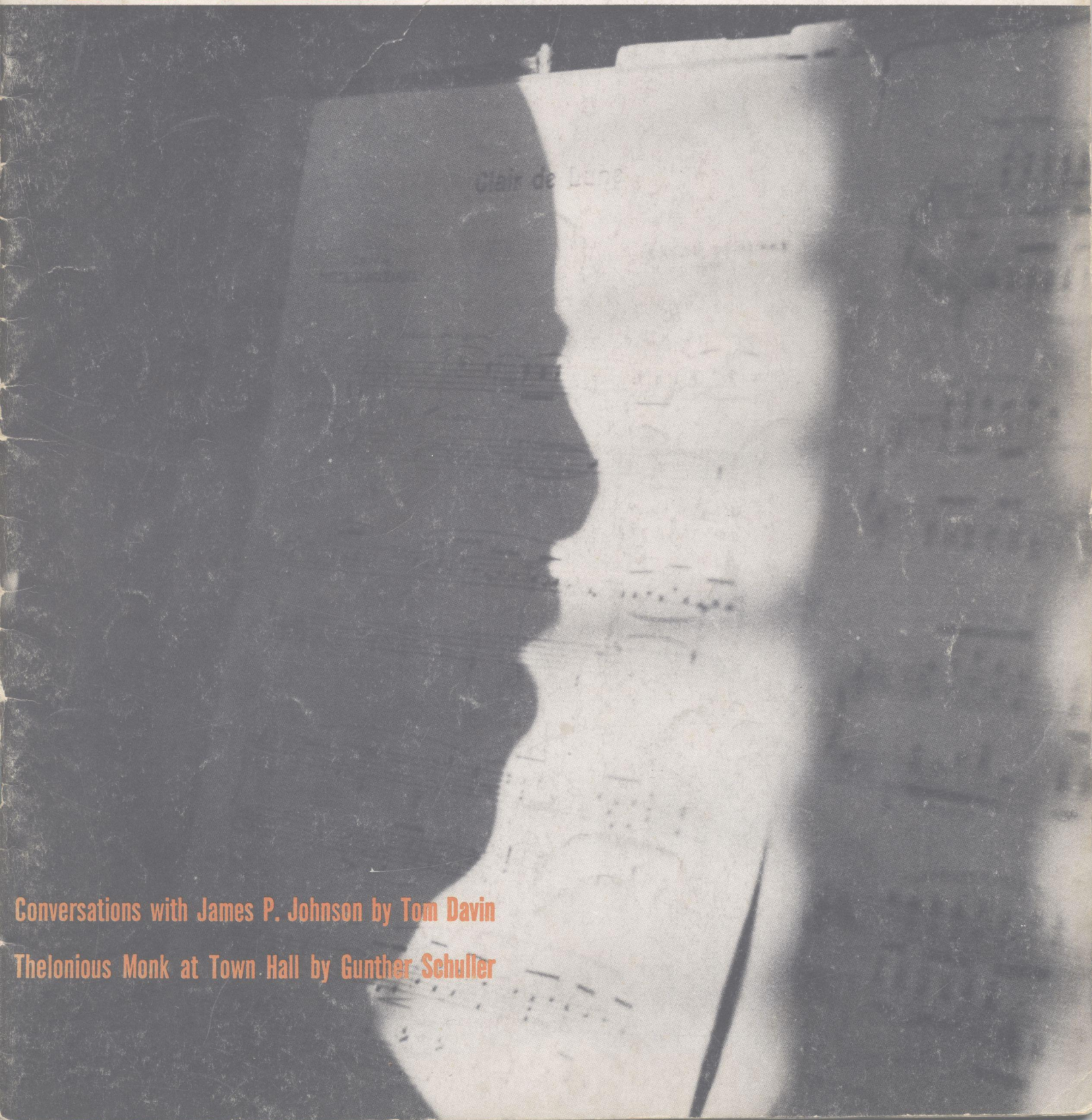


# THE JAZZ REVIEW

Volume 2, Number 5; June 1959, FIFTY CENTS



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Thelonious Monk at Town Hall by Gunther Schuller



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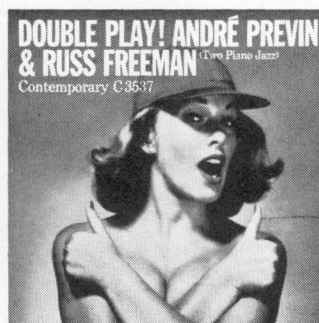
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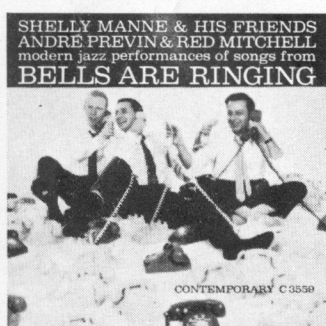


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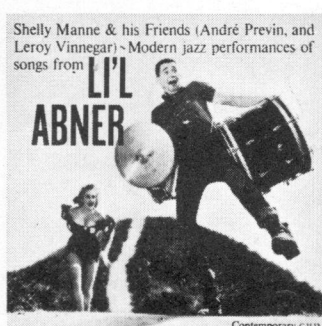


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## LETTERS

### CLARIFICATIONS:

The article by Mimi Clar: *The Negro Church: Its Influence on Modern Jazz* in the January, 1959, issue of *The Jazz Review* begins by attributing to me a statement which I would gladly acknowledge, but which in all fairness must be attributed to the artist and writer, E. Simms Campbell. "It is interesting to note that many (blues singers) who are still living are finishing their careers in church work. Virginia Liston and Sara Martin at this writing are both singing spirituals in churches. There is no doubt that blues and spirituals are closely interwoven."

Footnote 1 gives *Jazzmen* as the source. That is true, but the statement in question appears on page 115, under the chapter titled *Blues*, which is quite clearly identified on p. 101 as having been contributed by Campbell.

Perhaps this is a good time to point out that complete editions of *Jazzmen* (as against those that begin at p. 102 or following) will again be available as of March of this year, when the Harcourt, Brace *Harvest* paperback will appear.

Allow me also at this time to offer belated congratulations and good hopes for *The Jazz Review*. It's good to see an unbiased, intelligent forum publication appearing at regular intervals. Among recent articles, I found *Garvin Bushell and New York Jazz* in the 1920's most interesting. Bushell touches on many areas that are still open for further study and writing; e.g., his reference to the "influence on jazz of the American Indians" and his reference to "the Irish cadence." He is right in stating that "There were a lot of Irish in the South," if some geographic particularizations can be made. This would be true in certain areas (e.g., parts of Alabama where I have studied), but not true in others. But the point is well taken, I don't mean to single these two things out as the only good things in Bushell's piece . . . however. A suggestion coming from it: perhaps Mimi Clar could do some musical studies of Indian musics and find some relationships, just as she has done with Erroll Garner and music from Negro churches.

Sincerely,

Frederic Ramsey, Jr.,  
Stockton, N. J.

### HELP NEEDED

In the name of the Hungarian musicians who love and play jazz, I would ask you to send me material for the promotion of modern and traditional American jazz. In other words, we badly need professional copies of piano arrangements, arrangements for small combos, records, periodicals, books, pictures of famous orchestras and noted musicians, and the like.

Presumably you know that it is very difficult for us to get information. We depend mostly on the Voice of America programs which most of the interested persons cannot understand because of language difficulties.

When sending the material asked for, kindly post it with a return receipt to make sure I receive them.

Thanking you in anticipation for your kind cooperation, I remain,

Joseph Mihaly,  
2, Petofi Sandor UCCA  
Budapest, Hungary

### LIFELINES

. . . *The Jazz Review* is indeed the best jazz magazine I've ever read. It represents what I've wanted for many years. I'm enclosing ten dollars for a two-year subscription . . .

Carlos E. C. Conde,  
S. Paulo, Brazil

I can't begin to tell you how much I've enjoyed the second issue of *Jazz Review*—it's a long-needed addition to jazz literature; the more intellectual treatment of important people and problems in the field is wonderfully articulate and broadening. I can only wish the magazine a long and increasingly rich life.

Dave Hazelton,  
Pomono College,  
Claremont, Calif.

As a semi-pro Dixieland cornetist, I am very interested in a magazine which, by all reports does not bring on the regurgitation usually associated with *Down Beat* and *Metronome*. Please send a two-years subscription and all of the back issues. . . .

George R. Metcalf, Jr.,  
Oberlin College,  
Oberlin, Ohio

After all these years—all the years of knowledgeable writers dedicated to spreading the workings of jazz—we finally have a regular magazine that is the best I have ever read. I say we; I mean the long-suffering jazz follower-reader. The years of struggling through Ulanov's loquacious vagueness — Feather's inconsistency — Simon's theme song (*I'm Old Fashioned*) are now over. Gentlemen, thank you a million for your advance issue . . . Enclosed is \$4.50 for one year's subscription. . . .

"Skip" Fero,  
Utica, New York

Enclosed is my subscription for one year to *The Jazz Review*. After reading the January issue, I feel this is the most enjoyable, profound jazz magazine I have met up with. Being a professional musician, I find it especially interesting in the technical explanations contained within. . . .

William H. Keough,  
Arlington, Mass.

### ANY VOLUNTEERS?

Have you ever found anyone who could do a piece on The Jenks Orphanage Band, which spawned so many later jazz band players and brought the first sound of jazz to New York City streets? As a kid, I also remember hearing great jazz marches played by visiting bands of colored Elks clubs when they had a convention in New York about 1912. They paraded on Lenox Avenue in open formation and not only played what was later to be known as jazz but each member of the band danced or strutted his own steps, including the big horn players.

The busby-hatted leader, of course, was terrific doing a cake walk full of acrobatic steps. These bands don't seem to be mentioned in the jazz histories, but such fraternal societies (like the New Orleans burial societies) bred such bands. Colored Mimmers from Philly and Baltimore and the Jefferson Post Dance, at the Renaissance Casino, were outstanding affairs when they came to New York. They were northern versions of the New Orleans Negro Mardi Gras affairs. . . .

Tom Davin,  
New York

The *Jazz Review* would welcome articles along the lines suggested by Mr. Davin.

### SPELL OUR NAME RIGHT

I have just finished reading your February, 1959, issue of *The Jazz Review*, especially your by-lined article titled *Jazz in Print*, and I don't think I have to tell you the shock I felt at seeing the utter and complete exclusion of any mention whatever of PLAYBOY and what it has done and is doing in the field of jazz. Certainly you must be aware of the fact that we conduct the largest consumer jazz poll in the world, and the only jazz poll to come alive on records each year. This, mind you, in addition to our numerous profiles and picture stories of jazz musicians and our monthly review columns of jazz lps. Nor do I have to remind you that we reach more than 850,000 actual and potential jazz buffs each month. Don't you think your readers might want to be apprised of these facts and what we are doing in the field? It's really not important whether you make your comments favorable or unfavorable, the point is that some mention should be made of PLAYBOY and its activities to further the cause of jazz. It's my opinion that no magazine titled *The Jazz Review* could do anything less.

I'd be grateful for any comments you might have on the situation and if you'd let me know if you need any further information about what we are doing on the jazz scene.

Jack Kessie

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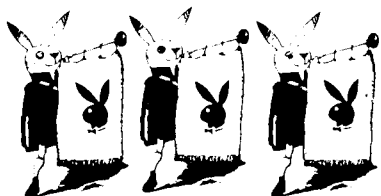
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# JAZZ

## THE REVIEW

### ***new Contributors:***

*Tom Davin*, a magazine and book editor, has been interested in the history of jazz in the New York area since the early 1930's, when he worked as publicity man for several Harlem nightclubs.

*Mait Edey* is a New Yorker who has lived in Sweden and in France. He has worked on the *Paris Review*, and now is studying philosophy at Princeton University.

*Irwin Hersey* edits a journal on rocketry, and has long been a collector and follower of jazz.

*Art Hodes*, a jazz pianist best known for his blues, has recorded for Mercury and Bluenote among other labels, and has co-edited the monthly, *Jazz Record*. He is currently playing and teaching in the Chicago area.

*Erik Wiedemann*, a discographer and critic, writes about jazz for a leading Danish newspaper and has contributed to several European jazz journals.

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photo by Al Hicks

# **Thelonious Monk at Town Hall**

An Evening with Thelonious Monk, Town Hall, Saturday, February 28, 1959. All Compositions by Thelonious Monk orchestrated for a ten piece ensemble by Hall Overton. Personnel were Thelonious Monk, piano; Charles Rouse, tenor or Sax; Donald Byrd, trumpet; Phil Woods, alto sax; Pepper Adams, baritone sax; Eddie Bert, trombone; Robert Northern, French horn; Jay McAllister, tuba; Sam Jones, bass; Arthur Taylor, drums.

**by Gunther Schuller**



At a time when the average jazz concert seeks to overwhelm with an "all-star cast," a circus-like variety and overlong programs, a concert devoted to the jazz compositions(!) of a *single* composer must be considered an unusual—and very welcome—event. That such a concert should be devoted to the music of Thelonious Sphere Monk was perhaps inevitable. The increased though rather belated recognition accorded him by fellow musicians as well as the more aware segment of the jazz-conscious public, and the aura of off-beat controversiality still surrounding Monk would almost seem to guarantee the success of such an undertaking. Indeed, the fact that a near-capacity audience attended the concert is cause for optimism. It may be that we have matured to the point where, along with the usual entertainment "jamborees" that try to be "all things to all people," we can count upon an *occasional* concert with a point of view, a profile and a well-planned format. Maybe!

The music on this occasion was performed by two groups, a quartet led by Monk, featuring his regular saxophonist Charlie Rouse, and an enlarged ten-piece ensemble playing orchestrations by Hall Overton (supervised by Monk himself). Of the two, the latter, of course, aroused the greater interest, and it is disappointing, therefore, to report that they did not come up to the announced expectations. Perhaps it was unrealistic to expect these ensemble performances to be—in the words of Martin Williams, who commented eruditely on the proceedings—"an extension of Monk." I say unrealistic because in all the history of jazz, there has only been one successful example of this sort of musical extension, and that, of course, was the Duke Ellington orchestra. This was achieved, needless to say, through *years* of experimentation with a very special personnel. It would have been a minor miracle if the musicians involved in this concert could have achieved similar results with only four rehearsals.

In contrast to Monk's own solo work—he was in fine form all evening—these arranged ensembles (with one exception) remained bland and thoroughly conventional. Though competently written and well played, they failed to achieve the earthy richness and propulsive swing of Monk at his best. Nor did they in any way go beyond previous experiments with this kind of instrumental group, such as the Miles Davis Nonet, Mulligan's and Brubeck's short-lived ensembles or Hodeir's Jazz Groupe de Paris. The one exception alluded to was an ensemble chorus in *Little Rootie Tootie*, which was a literal transcription for the seven "horns" of Monk's improvisation on the original 1952 recording. This certainly was *not* conventional orchestration. In fact it called upon considerable instrumental ingenuity from Hall Overton, a task he fulfilled rather brilliantly. The players, too, rose to the extraordinary demands of this passage. But the idea, it seems to me, was wrong in its basic concept.

In the first place, many of us have admired Monk for years because, among other things, he seemed to write for the instruments not as an arranger but as a composer. The instrumental parts of many of his compositions of the late forties seemed to be part and parcel of the original inspiration; they were truly independent yet inte-

grated parts of the composition, and well suited to the character of the instruments chosen. (This despite the fact that, because Monk's music is difficult in some ways, the actual performances were often rough and insecure.) Secondly, Monk, as is well known, plays with an unorthodox piano technique. This has led him to create many unusual solos, which are more "orchestral" than pianistic in concept. By that I do not mean that they are *unpianistic*. Rather they attempt to go beyond the ordinary limits of the piano in the sense that the late Beethoven sonatas are no longer merely "piano music," or in the sense that the piano writing of Brahms is more orchestral than, let us say, Chopin's.

If we accept these two premises, it seems to me quite an error of judgment (the decision was Monk's—not Overton's) to write out an instrumental chorus which, in the first place, does not have the validity of being originally conceived in Monk's mind for those instruments, and which, in the second place, happens to be one of Monk's most "pianistic" choruses! It is filled with typical pianisms that are virtually impossible to orchestrate. Certainly many moments in music belong to the special domain of the piano. Transcribing them for instruments will always be a second-best choice. In this case, too, the resultant trumpet parts were not really trumpet parts, and the saxophone parts were unsaxophonistic, and so on. This had its peculiar fascination, but at best it was an ingenious tour de force. It would have been more interesting, I think, to hear the group in a piece *written* (not arranged) for this concert and *this* instrumentation. This would also have given us a chance perhaps to hear a new Monk composition.

I have been told on good authority that Monk was very pleased with these ensemble performances, because they were clean and well balanced, even mellow. This is one of those strange paradoxes which we encounter so often in artistic personalities. Frustrated for years by inadequately prepared performances and recordings, Monk undoubtedly admired the comparative precision of this ensemble. But the pleasure he derived from this also blinded him to the fact that the players failed to get as much "Monk" out of his music as the earlier rougher performances did. Similarly Duke Ellington has for many years now proclaimed that he prefers his present band to the original band of the thirties and early forties, because his present men can read better, play more accurately and have a greater instrumental versatility. And Charlie Parker loved the lush, stereotyped string writing which accompanied him on the famous Norgran dates, while Miles Davis loves his Ahmad Jamal. Perhaps in all creative personalities there is this enigmatic other side. At any rate, the rough-hewn (not to be confused with rough), direct quality—the very antithesis of slickness—which we have come to admire in Monk, was demonstrated in every note of his own piano playing. The contrast between it and the ensemble work was therefore all the more telling.

One of the problems with the instrumentation was that it was too bottom-heavy for most of the pieces, especially in *Rootie Tootie* and *Friday the Thirteenth*. Actually the only instrument with a practical high register was the trumpet, which put a considerable burden on Donald

Byrd, who under the circumstances did a remarkable job. I felt, too, that the voicings could have been used with greater variety and individuality. This kind of non-contrapuntal block writing, if unrelieved, can get very tedious after a while.

To compensate for the debatable merits of the ensemble sections, there were many fine Monk solos. He demonstrated once more his unique ability to create arresting solos, which, though seemingly consisting of mere musical fragments, in retrospect always show that a fine musical mind has been at work linking these fragments into a unified entity. His improvisations are like little compositions in themselves. Monk's extraordinary sense of time—and timing—enables him to relate one passage to the next in such a way that it may surprise you at first but then, after the fact, seems to have been quite inevitable. His sense of formal structure was again very much in evidence. It betrays an orderly, disciplined mind that belies the legend of the disorganized eccentric people have been led to see in Monk. His unostentatious, sober approach (dare I use the word "serious"?) must have been a disappointment to those in the audience who look to Monk for comedy, as well as to the "Monk-debunkers."

Of course, I don't think Monk can play without swinging. And he certainly outswung everybody else on the concert. Not that he swings in any conventionally "hip" or "funky" way. But everything he played had that exciting drive, perfect timing (notably in his free-tempo playing!) and rich, unsentimental expressiveness we have learned to expect from Monk.

Martin Williams at one point repeated a remark Monk had made during rehearsals to the effect that "If you know the melody, you can improvise better." Although this seems like the most obvious kind of truism, the fact is that, some notable exceptions notwithstanding, jazz improvisation is almost exclusively based on the chords and not the melody of a tune. In any case, I wish some of the musicians involved had taken Monk's advice more to heart.

The four soloists—Charlie Rouse, Donald Byrd, Phil Woods and Pepper Adams—played the kind of solos which make the critic's task difficult and unpleasant. They were competent, certainly not *unmusical*, solos; but nothing special happened to make you sit up and compel you to listen. They were fair to good solos that were quite interchangeable with any other fair to good solos. (In reviewing this kind of solo, the critic faces a real dilemma. If he wishes to be kind and say that the solos were good, the musician will think: "Man, what a jerk; he can't even tell when I ain't sayin' nothin'." If, on the other hand, the critic says that the solos were poor, the musician says; "Man, what a jerk; he expects us to play a great solo every time. What does he know about music anyway?" Or words to that effect.)

At any rate, in the first half of the program Rouse had severe problems with intonation (for the record, he played sharp), which made him feel rather uncomfortable. After intermission, playing closer to pitch, he was able to relax and play more cohesively. Donald Byrd, a sensitive musician, was at his best when Art Taylor led him into double-time choruses. It was also interesting to note how the riff-like theme of *Friday the Thirteenth*—which Donald had to repeat endlessly in that number—kept cropping up during the succeeding piece, *Little Rootie Tootie*. Phil Woods was disappointing this time. His playing was too tense and disjointed. Once or twice the opening notes of a solo would promise much, but before long he would retire to the safety of commonplace clichés. Pepper Adams played in his usual manner, again

competent, with good control, making all the right changes, but rhythmically too unvaried to hold one's interest very long.

I should add that all the players more or less came into their own in the repeat performance of *Rootie Tootie* at the end of the program. Perhaps up to that moment the hour was just too early; perhaps they would have fared better 'round about midnight. But more likely it was simply the fact that all the players seemed caught in a trap which this kind of concert presents and which perhaps only the Parkers and Rollinses could survive. This dilemma is that the players are asked at one and the same time to be great individual soloists and yet fit into the style and musical concept of the composer whose music they're playing. The Parkers and Rollinses would perhaps not solve the problem; they would simply be themselves, but at least you'd have Parker or Rollins. In this concert the musicians, it seemed to me, dared not be either fish or fowl; they were caught somewhere in between. Dominated by Monk's presence, they dared not really be themselves, yet on only four rehearsals, to return to my original point, could not be the "extension" of Monk they were expected to be.

The same lack of real affinity characterized the playing of Art Taylor who, I thought, was not a good choice for Monk. Aside from rushing tempos, his playing (except for the effectively "busy" opening of *Rootie Tootie*) was rather hard and inflexible. Sam Jones is a fine player using the full long notes derived from Blanton and Ray Brown that all young bass players have adopted by now. I found his intonation at times questionable, but I was primarily unhappy that Jones was not audible enough. Monk's pieces need strong bass lines.

This was Monk's concert, then, in more than one sense. On *In Walked Bud* he showed all who cared to listen how a chorus can be built economically out of simple ideas with a great formal clarity. In *Blue Monk* he demonstrated the use of thematic material while backing Rouse's tenor and then, in his own solo, effectively contrasted melodic (linear) and harmonic (vertical) improvisation. *Friday the Thirteenth* is a piece based on a passacaglia-like repetition of a two-bar chord progression, which presents serious problems for the unaware improviser. Unless he is careful, it leads him into an endless chain of short two-bar phrases which, over a period of a chorus or two, can become deadly boring. Monk, unlike Rouse for instance, skillfully avoided such straight-jacketing. His free and forceful solo, in fact, made one forget the repetitiousness of the chord changes. In *Straight No Chaser* he took what was no more than a little background idea and built it logically into a compelling solo, full of surprises. In "rubato" or free-tempo Monk was just as intriguing, lingering over phrases with tantalizing delays and time-suspensions. Such moments were too numerous to mention separately, but outstanding among these was the way Monk let that wonderful discord in the fourth bar of *Crepuscle with Nellie* ring just the right amount of time. Monk does all these things without any intellectuality. They derive naturally from the forcefulness and originality of his character—qualities which cannot be *learned*, which are inextricably a part of the man.

The concert proved, among other things, that Monk, the erstwhile iconoclast, has suddenly become "acceptable." This may explain why one bewildered listener, not to be cheated of his anticipated "revolutionary" atmosphere, upon noting the heavy representation of beards in the audience, wondered whether he had strayed into a Fidel Castro stronghold.

Who's next? Cecil Taylor?



# Play the Blues

by ART HODES



Courtesy Art Hodes

Maybe you were around then . . . altho I doubt it . . . much too early for you . . . this was the late 20's . . . Chicago . . . a barbecue spot out in Chicago's South Side . . . 48th and State . . . Louie took Wingy there; and Wingy took me . . . after that, I made it alone . . . or took whoever wanted to come with . . . but I kept coming . . . not because of food, altho it was good eating . . . ribs, barbecued; by folks who enjoyed barbecuing . . . ribs; short ends; oh boy . . . fish . . . fried fish . . . turnovers . . . sweet potato, peach, apple; yeh; food was good . . . but that wasn't the main attraction . . . no sir . . . that didn't reach out and fetch me, clear from the North Side.

What hooked me was a player piano that played music that reached in me, grabbed hold, and knocked me clear out; "blues" music.

A bit later the place added a juke box . . . one of the early versions . . . played all of ten records . . . real good ones too . . . There was an *M.&O. Blues* by Walter Davis that did things to me . . . inside. Fact is, that place was just "plumb" musical. I'd never run into anything like this; "nothin' in my early life had prepared me for this experience.

I'd never met any Negro in public school; and I got close to only one in high school . . . Come to think of it, at that we were peas in a pod . . . we were the only ones to flunk out of Algebra . . . and I suppose I'll never forget Teach callin' us up front . . . "Hawkins and Hodes" . . . and when he had us there, he spoke up, not unkindly, "Now then, if I was going on a fishing trip, I couldn't think of two nicer guys to take along . . . but in Algebra" . . . and he left it right there . . . That as I recall it was my closest contact with the colored race up until Wingy dug me up . . . and took my education in hand . . . and brought me out to meet Louie and King Oliver and just about everyone who was anyone in the jazz world . . . and introduced me to "the truth" . . . American jazz.

You know something . . . I never figured I'd become a musician, altho my mother (bless her) always claimed she dreamt I'd become a famous pianist; anyway, we did have a piano and I took lessons. Like most kids, I'd rather be outside playing ball; I wasn't serious about music . . . I just wasn't serious. I studied at a place called Hull House . . . some of you may know of Jane Addams . . . that was her project; made it possible for a poor boy

(or girl) to get some smattering of culture.

Fact is, one day I was playing for dancing when the bandmaster brought some kid in with a clarinet and he joined me on the stand; first time I ever jammed with anyone . . . Benny Goodman. I did a lot of that . . . playing at parties, socials, etc. mostly for free. After high school, I had maybe a hundred different jobs . . . sure, I must be exaggerating . . . but it seemed like that many . . . none fit me . . . I'd stay a week and look around for something else . . . until Dago Lawrence Mangano hired me to play for entertainers and keep the lull out of his joint; the Rainbow Gardens . . . Eighteen months of that and I was a pro . . . I joined the union . . . played all sorts of dates . . . Jewish, Italian weddings; dime-a-dance halls; cabarets; roadhouses . . . heck, I was makin' money . . . What style did I play? I was a natural swinger . . . and I had "an ear" for music . . . I could get by . . .

For me, school began after I left school . . . the barbecue was my school; you wouldn't consider that tumble-down shack a school . . . it was for me . . . You wondered what kept it up until you got inside . . . There was warmth there . . . not only in the stove . . . it was in the people. I remember one character they called "the deacon" . . . He was pretty ancient, but spry. He did a dance that had me all eyes. And sometimes, when I'd be the only white in the place, they'd get to singing; unrehearsed, but together . . . like nothing I'd ever heard . . . no one voice above the others . . . just a rising and a falling into place. I always had a bunch of nickels on me, for the player piano . . . Oh how I longed to be able to play like that. I could feel the "time"; and I felt the music; and I was perfectly at home there. Every once in a while I'd sit down and play; they'd explained to me, "Even tho you don't feel you're as good as the next guy, everybody plays."

One night, when I got to the barbecue, I found something new had been added . . . a trio . . . drums, piano and sax . . . and a cigar box on the piano, with a sign attached, reading "feed the kitty." My insides sunk; I felt that something had gone out of the place, and out of me. Still, I stuck around; and after a bit, the piano man (his name turned out to be Jackson) went into some blues, and honest, he had me . . . like nailed down. Man, he sure could play blues . . . and I could sit there as long as he'd play. By the end of a week, the trio got down to just a duo . . . drums and piano . . . enough for me.

I got to know the drummer pretty good; his name was Papa Couch . . . There was a Mama Couch too; a nice plump couple . . . lived across the street . . . more about them later (if I remember). Jackson was my man . . . He had the blues; he played the blues. After I got to know him real good, he told me, "Art, when I got out of the hospital (a broken leg) I had no money; no job; and my gal had left me." That's how come he was working for a couple of bucks a night, plus tips, and his food . . . I understood how he felt; I'd been empty inside; I knew blues . . . just never called it that.

I remember those chicks making the rounds . . . entertainers singing from table to table . . . *I Wonder What Became Of Sally* . . . that was a big tear jerker . . . and it would always pull a buck out of some pocket. Or *That Old Gang Of Mine*. Gee but its tough when the gang's gone home, etc. I could feel what he felt; only he had a music to express it . . . gosh, if I could just express myself that way. Well, Jackson liked me; liked the way I played . . . Told me, "Art, you show me how to play popular, and I'll teach you the blues." Man, what an offer; he could have had my skin, could I have but peeled.

Jackson taught me, but not the way he'd figured to . . . I just sat and listened . . . and absorbed. I closed my eyes

and lost myself in his playing. Man, if I could have been half as attentive in Algebra, I'd have been an Einstein. "Play the blues, Art" . . . I'd get up and try . . . and get many a laugh. Sure, if I could have been objective, I'd have laughed too. But it didn't run me off . . . After a while, the laughing stopped.

I don't know when it happened, but it sure did . . . no, I don't mean the place moved; no fire either . . . no closed for repairs or "changed hands" . . . It was the music . . . it was Jackson; only it didn't sound like Jackson . . . This Jackson was playing the tunes of the day . . . He swung all right . . . harmony wasn't the greatest . . . he'd play some ditty within a blues frame work . . . but for me, nothing was happening . . . This was a new Jackson . . . He was having a ball . . . And there was some chick there who I swear, owned his eyes . . . Well, I cornered him and asked him, "Man, what goes?" . . . And he told me . . . "Art, I'm happy . . . I'm on a swell kick . . . see my chick?" . . . and he introduced me . . . and that was that . . . for almost immediately, Jackson cut out. Months later, I heard he was working at a Division Street spot . . . near North Side; a gambling joint . . . food and drink added . . . you climb twenty-five stairs, and when you hit the door, an eye spots you thru a peephole . . . Jackson got me in . . . put me at ease; and insisted I play . . . And this time, nobody laughed . . . fact, it got kinda quiet . . . even the dice ceased . . . and I felt people all around . . . they stayed until the spell broke.

Just twelve bars; that's all . . . there's your blues. In music, a bar contains four beats (I mean the music I play . . . I'm not talkin' 'bout 6/8 time . . . or waltz time, etc.). Cut it up any way you like . . . You can hit one note and count four beats; hit two notes, each two beats; four notes at a beat apiece, etc. Do that twelve times and you got the blues framework . . . But it's what you do with it that counts. The music? You could use just three chords . . . three changes . . . and speak worlds . . . not only to me; I'm talking about a whole race of people . . . You can enter into those three chords . . . and say something . . . and everybody stops and listens . . . that's the way it was.

Like Jelly's *Mamie's Blues* . . . (She hardly could play anything else, but she sure could play this) . . . or *Pine Top's Blues* . . . (she could love everybody but still be mean to me) . . . Blues was a language of a people . . . and they didn't go to school to learn how to speak that language (not school in the sense we would mean) . . . And when they got their hands on musical instruments, they already knew what they were going to say . . . To hear them whistle to each other . . . They tell me of a guy down New Orleans who sings it out from a coal wagon . . . Just twelve bars of music to spell out what's wrong inside . . . what's wrong outside.

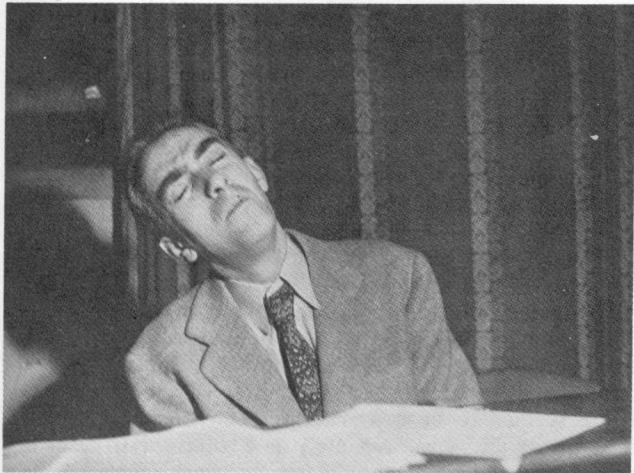
Big Bill spoke of "If you're white you awrite . . . if you're brown, stick around . . . but if you're black, get in back . . ." I never heard of anybody playing "detached" blues . . . blues comes from hurting . . . Now I ain't talking about happy music . . . like my "gone" friend Lips Page would put out . . . I'm cutting back to when I came in . . . when blues meant bitterness, frustration; money gone . . . gal gone . . . when it was "like nothing inside" . . . and you say it on a keyboard because you're no singer . . . somehow you spell it out.

Leadbelly (you could call him that if you were his friend . . . his name was Huddie Ledbetter) was a "folk singer" . . . but when he did *Fannin' Street*, you got the message . . . Or where he sings "mama did you bring me any silver . . . papa did you bring me any gold . . . to keep me from the gallows pole . . ." At the Village Vanguard he used to introduce his blues with this statement (ap-



proximate) . . . "You know somethin' . . . you got chicken on your plate and you can't eat . . . you got yourself a woman and you can't . . . man you got the blues."

I'm sure a lot of you who read this will not have remembered the '29 crash, and what happened to everything and everybody . . . To say "the bottom fell out" is much too mild . . . Chicago, a town that furnished room and board to such legendary jazz names as King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Johnny and Baby Dodds, Earl Hines, Krupa, Wettling, Manone, Tesch, Pee Wee . . . this listing can go on and on . . . this Chicago . . . this Windy City turned into a nothing for us . . . There was a place called Kelly's Stables . . . a "sawdust-on-the-floor" joint that housed the Dodds band . . . what a swinging group . . . In the summertime you could sit across the street on the curb and hear the music . . . no air conditioning . . . just air . . . Yes, inside, everyone who was anyone would hit that room to give a listen . . . no other entertainment . . . except, like the waiters sang and danced . . . No atmosphere; no furnishings; tablecloths? Kerchief style. No ads either . . . but it was full up . . . Kelly's; Savoy; El Rado; The Nest; Dave's. In no time at all . . . too quick, they were gone . . . And the guys that played it hot were gone too . . . or else "in between engagements" . . . Those who stayed grouped a little closer . . . and dug records . . . and went somewhere to play . . . even for free . . . even buy your own drinks . . . no wonder bosses thought we were nuts.



Art Hodes at a Blue Note Recording Session.

photo by Frank Wolff,

One afternoon, roaming the South Side I passed a record shop . . . and the music pulled me in; there were folks sitting on the curb . . . a-listening . . . both sides of the street . . . a loud-speaker was fetching it to them . . . this was 35th and State. Inside, I asked the gal for some Louis Hot Fives . . . You could buy them then, over-the-counter-style, for six-bits a copy . . . and I did. But the record on the turntable kept intruding . . . and I said to the chick, "What is that record?" . . . and she told me . . . so I said, "I'll take a fresh copy if you have one" . . . but that was the only one she had . . . so I took it anyway . . . and as I hit the outside the listeners were gathering themselves "up and away" . . . So when I got home I put it on and listened . . . been hearing it ever since . . . every once in a while . . . Oh, the record? Leroy Carr singing *That's All Right, Baby*.

Chicago; you played your vic quiet like, because the neighbors wouldn't understand . . . "raucous sounds" . . . "call the law" (and they did) . . . disturbing the peace . . . The cops for sure wouldn't understand . . . You think I'm kidding? One afternoon a few of us gathered at Papa

Couch's . . . just listening to records . . . and the player piano . . . we were digging . . . We'd just sent out for ribs . . . and we were waiting for Dave Tough . . . Well, the law spotted him walking in . . . and followed . . . and pinched every one of us . . . and the Black Maria hauled us to 11th and State . . . Luckily for us, our runner got back with the ribs just in time to be included (luckily for us—not for him) . . . So we had ribs in jail . . . kept us over-night . . . fingerprints and all . . . dismissed the next day with a lecture on "why don't you stay in your own neighborhood" . . . Years later, back from New York for a concert with Ed Hall and Lee Collins; Big Bill was on that too . . . a John Schenck production . . . (John was our Granz . . . ) Well, after the gig I'd invited a bunch of musicians to my relative's apartment for a session and some red beans and rice; Mrs. Broonzy contributed the cooking . . . It was a ball . . . early too . . . like 11:15 on a Friday nite . . . The cops came . . . some neighbor "invited" them . . . "You'll have to cut out the noise" . . . Today I see where some of that "noise" plays at the Opera House.

By '38, Chicago and me had "had it" . . . Crystal sets had been replaced by radio sets; player pianos and rolls wound their way . . . the juke box entered for real. Only the "big" sound made it on broadcasts . . . so small bands were "out" . . . arrangers were in . . . never matter that it all sounds so alike . . . Well, some of us were just not cut out to play fifth typewriter in a large office, doing the same copy daily . . . And so the "small" sound began to leave us . . . the bands in the "pit" began to feel it too . . . and Vitaphone (talkies) were hurting the bands on stage . . . More and more musicians began to think of music as a side line . . . The exodus went on . . . Wingy and I saw Louie off to New York. Later Wingy sold me his bear overcoat for two bucks, and he and Joe Marsala "hit the rods" for Florida . . . and on to New York . . . That bear coat . . . Wingy and I took turns wearin' it . . . Louie remarked one day "who's the bear today?" Talk about blues . . . you'd fight not to get them . . . There were still a couple of places that dug us enough to give us some work . . . like the Liberty Inn . . . a palace of strip . . . where a straight man didn't have a chance . . . the last of the bucket-of-blood places. You'd be playing the show and suddenly a fight starts . . . don't stop . . . keep playin' . . . lights remain on . . . afterwards, the porter mops up . . . and the show goes on . . . But around 2 A.M. you could jam and play it hot . . . Man, I've seen Paul Mares (New Orleans Rhythm Kings) Wingy, Prima, Marty Marsala . . . four horns on that small stage . . . Pee Wee, Tough, Wettling . . . Bob Zurke sat in . . . You were sure of an invite to play . . . Too bad there weren't more Liberty Inns . . . One joint I remember hired four of us on the terms "all you can drink and ten bucks a week" . . . only to renege the second night . . . We played every set too.

The good old days . . . Like most things that statement was a mixture of good and bad . . . It was good to hear Bessie Smith in person . . . to play in a band with Teschemacher, Manone, Wade Foster; jam with Bix; to be part of an era when you worried about music first; money second . . . you played for kicks and managed to eat also . . . A time of little bands that had individual styles . . . Louie at the Savoy; Earl Hines at the Grand Terrace; Jimmy Noone at the Nest; yes, it was good up to the days of the Three Deuces . . . Roy Eldridge had the band at the Deuces . . . and what a band . . . That's the place where Tatum asked me to play . . . and after I got through, he played my style like I'd liked to be able to play it . . . And that's the place where I asked Roy's piano man to "play the blues" . . . and he said, "Man I don't wanna play no blues . . . I ain't got no blues."

# MY FRIEND AUGUSTUS

by Benny Green

I had intended never to tell the story of Augustus to anybody. No man likes to be called a liar, and the story of Augustus happens to be that kind of a story. I thought I might put a clause in my will that the truth might be revealed fifty years after my death, or write a documentary account of my association with Augustus and include it among my literary remains, but now I have revoked entirely this cautionary attitude. The reason is that, quite obviously, times have changed.

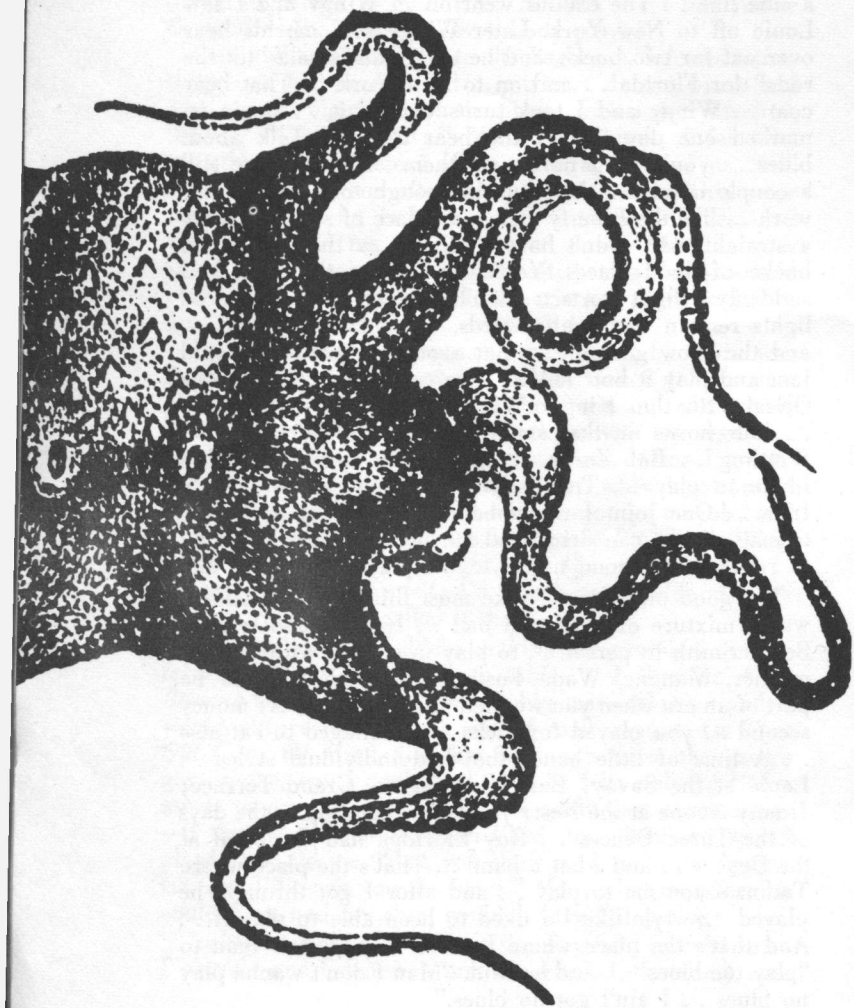
Stories which twenty or even ten years ago would have been received with jeers of disbelief are now swallowed whole by a public which gets more gullible from day to day. I think the time is past when the story of Augustus would be rejected as whimsy or fantasy. Today chimpanzees give art exhibitions, babes in swaddling clothes write novels, and records are cut by what Sinatra called "cretinous goons."

In such a climate, I feel that the story of Augustus is likely to be received without so much as the raising of a brow. I know I will feel better about it. There have been times since the first fateful encounter with him when the strain seemed to be too great to bear, and I considered as logically and dispassionately as I could the issue of my own sanity. Now that I can tell the world the story my burden will be that much lighter.

Augustus was an octopus I met eight years ago at a seaside resort called Brighton. I was doing a summer season down there and had got into the habit of taking a stroll along the beach after work each night to cool off before retiring. One night, under a full moon, I was passing the superstructure of the West Pier when I heard what sounded like a troupe of dancers performing in quickstep tempo. Now, the nocturnal wanderer ought to be prepared for anything, but I confess I was surprised. It did not seem quite right that a troupe of dancers should be performing complicated routines at such a time in such a place.

The situation seemed worth investigating. I followed the noise of the dance as best I could, until I saw at the water's edge, flopping about in the surf, a medium-sized octopus. It was humming *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* and dancing with four pairs of tentacles in perfect synchronization with its own tempo.

On noticing me the octopus nodded briefly, finished the routine and then dropped on to the pebbles, breathing heavily from its exertions. After a few moments it caught its breath and murmured, "Hi."





"Hi," I replied. "What kind of a kick is this, dancing to yourself at three o'clock in the morning on Brighton Beach?"

The octopus shrugged, in itself a remarkable feat if you think about it for a moment. "What I do is not commercial. It won't sell. So I just do it for the kicks. I'm crazy about music. I love to dance and play. My name's Augustus."

"You love to play? Play what?"

"Horns, man," Augustus replied. "Saxophone mostly, but you ought to hear me at four pianos."

"Look, Augustus, I may seem simple, but whoever heard of an octopus playing saxophone and piano?"

He said nothing but slid off to a corner of the pier where the yellow light of the moon did not penetrate, returning in a moment with an instrument case under each alternate tentacle. "Look, I'll show you," he said. "Two tenors, alto and baritone. Like the old Herman herd. I had a bit of trouble forming four embouchures with one mouth, but I finally managed it."

He rigged up the four horns, produced from another dark corner of the pier four music stands, took a deep breath and began playing *Four Brothers*.

The point about all this was that everything Augustus did was perfectly natural, or manlike if you think that is the same thing. He fingered the horns legitimately, produced a modern tone, or tones, and was apparently well versed in all the latest developments. The great advantage of his method was of course that he had no co-ordination problems with breathing, phrasing and intonation. He literally phrased like one man. Or rather, one octopus. He told me he had big trouble at first reading four parts with one eye, but practice, he always used to say, although it doesn't make you perfect, does make you good enough not to worry.

That night when I returned to the boarding house, Sharp was still up, watching for fleet movements. Sharp was the trumpeter in our band, and his knowledge of modern history ended with the breakup of the Muggsy Spanier band. He had a *thing* about the Admiralty moving the fleet around without letting the public know about it. He was sitting back, feet on the sill, squinting through an old naval telescope. Bathed in the same light by which I had first watched Augustus dance, he did not look up as I entered, but continued with his lunatic vigil.

"Where you been?" he said.

"Beach."

"Chick at the cash desk?"

"As a matter of fact it was an octopus."

"Something afoot tonight," Sharp said, eye still glued to the lens of the telescope.

"Lot of movement over Beachy Head way. Wonder what they're up to. An octopus, eh?" When I went to bed, Sharp was still at the open window.

I took to Augustus. I liked his style. His baritone playing reminded me of Harry Carney and although his second tenor work was a little shoddy, I was in no position to criticize. Our friendship grew rapidly. We met under the pier each night for sessions, and Augustus played guitar, piano, bass and drums. When the rest of the band asked me knowingly where I went after work every night I just said, "To have a blow under the pier with a hip octopus," but only Sharp believed me.

At last I tried to get Augustus to turn professional. That was where I made my mistake. He refused point-blank. "I've got a good job down there. Playing for kicks is great, but the minute it becomes your living the whole scene is a drag."

I did persuade him to do one audition—"just one, no more," that was his stipulation. The agent we went to couldn't tell Paul Robeson from Rose Murphy. "Too modern," he said. "The public will never go for it."

Augustus looked at me wisely, waved his tentacles in a salute of multiple farewell and was off. I have never seen him since, although I heard rumors he was seen a few times off Seaham Harbour a couple of summers later looking for alto reeds.

The day the season ended that summer Sharp and I were sitting on our suitcases outside the house waiting for a cab. Sharp was staring down at the pavement, thoughtfully scratching his chin. In his pockets, protruding at different angles, were one telescope, a book on marine biology, *Old Moore's Almanack* and a chart of the signs of the zodiac. The cab drew up behind us. As we were loading, he turned in the doorway of the cab and said to me, in the manner of a man who has weighed his words a hundred times before uttering them, "I have reason to believe that your octopus friend was working for Naval Intelligence."

"Could be, could be," I said and followed him into the cab. He had the telescope to his eye all the way to the station.



photo by Duncan P. Scheidt

In the December, 1958, *Jazz Review*, Dick Wellstood quoted Thelonious Monk's 1957 remark, made while listening to a playback of one of his solos:

"That sounds like James P. Johnson."

Wellstood continued: "Strangely enough, Monk does sound like James P. from time to time, and so do Fats, Basie, Tatum and Duke (as well as Willie Gant and Q. Roscoe Snowden). Since James P. has had such a strong influence on so many well-known pianists, it is amazing that most people have never heard of him."

If this is so, perhaps an outline of his contributions may be helpful in showing his place in jazz history. Scott Joplin, Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson—these are the three legs which support the grand piano of American jazz. Their influence will never disappear from the jazz scene for long.

From 1916 to 1930, James P. Johnson was the outstanding ragtime pianist and composer for piano in New York. During that time, he developed the New York style of "stride" piano from the rags of Scott Joplin and the southern Negro cotillion and set dances, embellished with the styles of a generation of café pianists from the South and West who came to New York in that era. Additional polish was contributed by the European concert and salon pianists who were heard everywhere in the city at that time, from De Pachmann and Hofmann on down.

Applying these techniques, James P. brought the full piano, or orchestral style of playing to its peak in the 1920's. It has not been surpassed since. True, the current trend in piano style has been toward the "thin" rather than the "fat" piano technique.

His greatest influence on pianists who were in their

formative stage in 1916 or the following years was through his piano rolls for Aeolian and QRS, since he was the first Negro pianist to cut his own rags. Many other pianists learned to play by following them on the player piano. Later, his records had the same effect, even as records are still the schoolrooms of jazz, here and overseas. This pioneering, plus his rich and powerful style, caused the pianists who followed him to come up "sounding like James P." all or some of the time.

He taught this style to his apprentice, Fats Waller, who lightened it, simplified it and made it popular with the public through his exuberant, entertaining personality.

Playing behind Bessie Smith and Ethel Waters, James P. set standards for blues and novelty accompaniment that have never been equaled.

He was a composer of songs, show music, movie scores and symphonic works based on the themes of his piano music.

Some of his piano works are: *Mama and Papa's Blues*, *Carolina Shout*, *Steeplechase Rag*, *Daintiness Rag*, *Fascination Rag*, *Caprice Rag*, *Keep Off The Grass*, *Eccentricity Waltz*, *After Hours*, *Harlem Strut*, *Mule Walk Stomp*, *Gut Stomp*, *Carolina Balmoral*, *Chicago Stomp Down*, *The Charleston*, *The Boston*, *Just Before Daybreak*, *Five O'Clock Blues*, etc.

His songs include: *Stop It, Joe!*, *If I Could Be With You*, *Open Your Heart*, *Old Fashioned Love*, *Ivy*, *Give Me The Sunshine*, *Honey*, *Snowy Morning Blues*, *Bleeding Hearted Blues*, *Make Me a Pallet on the Floor*, etc.

He wrote movie scores for *Yamekraw* and *St. Louis Blues* starring Bessie Smith and *The Emperor Jones*, starring Paul Robeson.



# CONVERSATIONS WITH JAMES P. JOHNSON

by Tom Davin

His show music includes: *Plantation Days*, *Runnin' Wild*, *Keep Shufflin*, *Sugar Hill*, *Meet Miss Jones* and *De Organizer*, a one-act opera, with libretto by Langston Hughes.

In the symphonic field, his orchestral compositions embrace the *Harlem Symphony*, *Symphony in Brown*, *Suite in Sonata Form on the St. Louis Blues for Piano and Orchestra*, *Drums* (African themes and rhythms arranged for orchestra), *Carolina Balmoral* arranged for symphony orchestra, as well as many others.

This is quite a range of achievement for an informally taught, honky-tonk piano player. Who has topped it?

In *The Story of Jazz*, Marshall Stearns writes:

"In the early 'fifties, James P. Johnson, old and sick, often wondered what could have happened to his beloved ragtime. For a brief moment, it seemed that the large compositions on which he had been working were about to be accepted and played, along with the time-honored classics of Mozart and Beethoven. Johnson's concertos were quite as complex and, in a sense, twice as difficult to play as Mozart's. Perhaps his Afro-American folk origins betrayed him, for the average classical musician is utterly incapable of the rhythmic sensitivity that is necessary to play Johnson's pieces. Only an orchestra composed of Smiths [Willie the Lion], Wallers, and Johnsons could have done it."

Two years before he died, I was fortunate to be able to interview him extensively about the early New York jazz scene, the people and music which influenced his style. From the notes on his career, these conversations emerge.

Q. What were your earliest memories of music?

A. In New Brunswick, N. J., where I was born, my mother was a choir singer in the Methodist church. She worked out as a maid and one day she got the chance to buy a big, ebony, "flat top" square piano from the people she worked for and she taught herself to play it.

I remember when I was just a little baby I used to play on the floor with the piano pedals while she played hymns and simple tunes. Her favorite piece was *Little Brown Jug*.

When I got big enough, I got up to the piano and picked out the tunes she played. She started teaching me when I was four years old and my first piece was *Little Brown Jug*.

I had three brothers and a sister, all older than I was. My sister, who was eight years older than me, was taking piano lessons, but she used to dodge them. She and my brothers used to bring sheet music home, so I learned to sing all the latest popular tunes. I had a high soprano voice until I was 14 and was a good enough singer for people to give me 10 or 15 cents to sing songs like *There'll Be A Hot Time In The Old Town, Tonight!* and *I'm Looking For That Birdie*. This would be about 1900, when I was six.

In New Brunswick, the only music I heard outside of home was from bands that paraded in the town. Kids would yell: "There's a band!"—and we'd all run in the direction of the music. The local "Good Will Band" was probably bad, but I thought they were great with their fancy uniforms and plumed hats. Circus bands came by and we'd follow them all over town until they stopped parading.

My mother was from Virginia and somewhere in her blood was an instinct for doing country and set dances—what were called "real shoutings." My *Carolina Shout* and *Carolina Balmoral* are real southern set or square dances. I think the "*Carolina Balmoral*" was the most spirited dance in the South, I find I have a strong feeling for these dances that goes away back—and I haven't found anyone else with it yet.

I heard them first at my mother's social parties with her friends and my stepfather's friends in New Brunswick. Of course, I was supposed to be in bed, but I'd creep to the head of the stairs and listen and watch.

One of the men would call the figures and they'd dance their own style of square dances. The calls were . . . "Join hands" . . . "Sashay" . . . "Turn around" . . . "Ladies right and gentlemen left" . . . "Grab your partner" . . . "Break away" . . . "Make a Strut" . . . "Cows to the front, bulls stay back" . . .

When he called "Do your stuff" or "Ladies to the front," they did their personal dances. The catwalk, for instance, was developed from the cotillion, but it was also part of the set dances.

Sometimes, they would have a prize for the best dancing . . . a quart of wine, gin or whiskey or maybe \$5. When the caller shouted "Ladies, show your underwear," the girls got prizes for fancy ribbons on their

pantalettes or petticoats. The man with the funniest patch on his pants or the funniest coat would get a prize. Sometimes the men would get drunk and go out in the road to fight.

These people were from South Carolina and Georgia where the cotillion was popular—and the Charleston was an offspring of that. It was a dance figure like the "Balmoral." A lot of my music is based on set, cotillion and other southern dance steps and rhythms.

In my mother's church the hymns attracted me—and they have ever since. Southern Negroes who came north carried their traditional music with them. You could hear real southern country church singing in New Brunswick around 1900.

Q. Did you learn your first piano at home?

A. No, except for a few little tunes like *Little Brown Jug*. In 1902, when I was eight, we moved to Jersey City and there I first heard early ragtime. We sold our piano, then, to help pay the moving expenses and so we never had a piano in the house, until we moved to New York a few years later.

Q. When did you first start to play ragtime?

A. When we moved to Jersey City, my older brother met some ragtime piano players, or ticklers as they were called, and since they were popular fellows, always in demand socially, I looked up to them.

I became friendly with one tickler, Claude Grew, who could play anything in all keys. That was the mark of a cabaret player, who had to accompany different singers in their favorite keys. He taught me everything he knew. So did an older boy, George Perry, who was another real tickler. I remember another player, Floyd Keppard, a Creole with French background, sharp features and thick, good hair.

What they played wasn't ragtime as we know it now. It was mostly popular songs with a strong rhythm and with syncopated vamps, not a whole composition or arrangement. Scott Joplin's pieces were popular. They got around the country, but the ticklers I knew just played sections of them that they heard someplace. I never knew that they were Joplin's until later.

Q. Were there many ticklers in Jersey City then?

A. Yes, it was a temporary settlement for them. I guess at times there were more good ragtime players in Jersey City in those days than any other place in the United States.

Q. How was that?

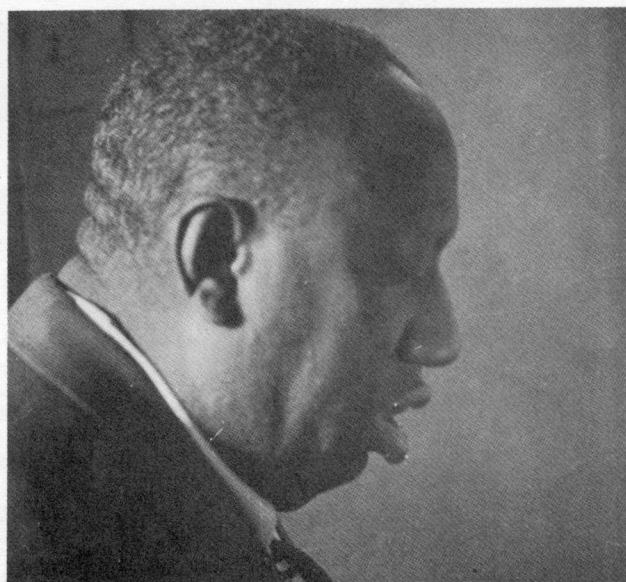
A. Well, most of the ragtime players were working in sporting houses and cabarets in the South—Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston, Atlanta—and in the Middle West—Pittsburgh, St. Louis, Memphis and other places.

Now, most of these fellows were big-time pimps or at least did a little hustling on their own. The ladies liked their music, so these boys would play slow drags, rags or songs that would touch the ladies' hearts—so they would get a woman or two or three to hustle for them. These ticklers didn't make much money, playing sometimes 12 hours a day in the houses or cafés—maybe \$10 a week, and as much more in tips. Some had to work on tips alone. So they managed a few girls on the side.

Now, a good girl was measured by how much money she could draw, and the best kind of sporting woman was a thieving woman who knew how to get into a man's pocket and get his bankroll.

Sometimes, a girl would roll a live one and get \$500 or \$1,000. This usually brought a complaint to the police, so the girl and her tickler friend would have to leave town. They'd head north and east to New York and the last stop on the railroad was Jersey City. It still is for

photo by Duncan P. Scheidt



a lot of railroads.

Q. Why didn't they come to New York?

A. It wasn't easy then. The ticklers and their gals couldn't work in New York right away because there were a lot of hustlers there already who had protection. There wasn't a big Negro section like Harlem then and there were only a few places like the Tenderloin where they could work.

The New York hustlers didn't like somebody coming into their pitch who might be a thief and who would draw the police with robberies. When the strangers pulled a job and left, the permanent residents had to put up with the raids.

So, the ticklers would first cross the river to New York and try to get a job playing in cafés, cabarets, rathskellers, saloon back rooms—there weren't enough good places to work in Jersey City. Sometimes the hustler would get a job during the day and play piano at night, while his girl worked around the place, too. That's how they got established in New York.

These fellows brought all the latest styles of playing from the cabarets and sporting houses of the South and West to Jersey City and that's where I heard them. They were popular fellows, real celebrities. They had lots of girl friends, led a sporting life and were invited everywhere there was a piano. I thought it was a fine way to live, just as later kids would think singers like Crosby or Sinatra were worth copying.

Q. Did you play anyplace when you were a boy in Jersey City?

A. No, I was too young. Like other kids, I used to work around saloons, doing a little buck dance, playing the guitar and singing songs like *Don't Hit That Lady*, *She Got Good Booty . . . Left Her On The Railroad Track . . . Baby, Let Your Drawers Hang Low*. I used to sing through the saloon doorways or at the family entrance since I was in short pants and wasn't allowed to go inside. Sometimes I used to rush the growler for beer parties so I could learn songs at them.

Poor people drank beer, whiskey cost 10 to 12 cents a half-pint or less at the barrelhouses where you brought your own bottle. We came from a religious family, my mother still sang in the church choir, but we had to live in a slum and those places were all around. We lived out near the Dixon pencil factory on Monmouth Street. It was a tough Jersey City neighborhood then with sporting houses all around.



Q. When did you come to New York?

A. We moved from Jersey City to New York in 1908 when I was 14. We had a piano in the house again. In Jersey City I heard good piano from all parts of the South and West, but I never heard real ragtime until we came to New York. Most East Coast playing was based on cotillion dance tunes, stomps, drags and set dances like my *Mule Walk Stomp*, *Gut Stomp*, and the *Carolina Shout* and *Balmoral*. They were all country tunes.

In New York, a friend taught me real ragtime. His name was Charley Cherry. He played Joplin. First he played, then I copied him, and then he corrected me.

When I went to Public School 69, I was allowed to play for the Assembly and for the minstrel shows we put on there. I had a high soprano voice yet, so I was put into the school chorus. Once, Frank Damrosch (Walter Damrosch's brother) auditioned us for his production of Haydn's *Creation*. He used 100 boys in sections. I remember that he personally complimented me because I was singing so strong. We all got a bronze medal for taking part.

In New York I got a chance to hear a lot of good music for the first time. Victor Herbert and Rudolph Friml were popular and were played all the time. It seems they still are.

I used to go to the old New York Symphony concerts; a friend of my brother's who was a waiter used to get tickets from its conductor, Josef Stransky, who came to the restaurant where he worked. I didn't get much out of them, but the full symphonic sounds made a great impression on me. That was when I first heard Mozart, Wagner, Von Weber, Meyerbeer, Beethoven and Puccini.

Q. Was there much jazz or ragtime played in New York in the years before 1914?

A. There weren't any jazz bands like they had in New Orleans or on the Mississippi river boats, but the ragtime piano was played all over in bars, cabarets and sporting houses. From what I have heard from older men who played in New York in 1890 and 1900, there was a kind of ragtime played then. W. C. Handy told me the same. A lot of early New Orleans tunes were played by bands and piano players around New York.

The other sections of the country never developed the piano as far as the New York boys did. Only lately have they caught up. The reason the New York boys became such high-class musicians was because the New York piano was developed by the European method, system and style. The people in New York were used to hearing good piano played in concerts and cafés. The ragtime player had to live up to that standard. They had to get orchestral effects, sound harmonies, chords and all the techniques of European concert pianists who were playing their music all over the city.

New York developed the orchestral piano—full, round, big, widespread chords and tenths—a heavy bass moving against the right hand. The other boys from the South and West at that time played in smaller dimensions—like thirds played in unison. We wouldn't dare do that because the public was used to better playing.

We didn't have any instruments then except maybe a drummer, so we had to use a solid bass and a solid swing to get the most colorful effects. In the rags, that full piano was played as early as 1910. Even Scott Joplin had octaves and chords, but he didn't attempt the big hand stretches. Abba Labba, Luckey Roberts and later ticklers did that.

When you heard the biggest ragtime specialists play, you would hear fine harmony, exciting touch and tone and all the themes developed.

Q. Were blues played in New York then?

A. From 1910 on, Handy's blues were played in cabarets. Mannie Sharp, a singer and dancer, and Lola Lee, a blues singer, taught me Handy's blues in 1911 . . . *Memphis Blues*, *St. Louis*, and later *Beale Street* and *Yellow Dog*. Before that, there were "natural blues" sung on southern waterfronts, in turpentine camps, farms, chain gangs. Leadbelly and Ma Rainey were singing "natural" 12-bar blues that were developed from the spirituals.

Q. Who were some of the ragtime pianists you heard in your early teens?

A. In 1911, when I was still going to school in short pants, we lived on 99th Street, Manhattan, and I used to go to a cellar on 100th Street and 3rd Avenue, called The 100th Street Hall, run by a fellow nicknamed "Souser." I never knew his name; he was a juice hound. They had a four- or five-piece band there (piano, drums, violin, flute or clarinet). It was called the New Amsterdam Orchestra or Hallie Anderson's Orchestra. They played verses and choruses, in simple arrangements until 2 A.M. every night.

But after two, they pulled the piano out into the middle of the floor and "Souser" would play terrific rags. Then he'd let me play and I'd hit the piano until 4 A.M. I kept my schoolbooks in the coal bin there and went on to school after a little sleep.

In the same year, I was taken uptown to Barron Wilkins' place in Harlem. Another boy and I let our short pants down to look grown up and sneaked in. Who was playing there but Jelly Roll Morton! He had just arrived from the West and he was red hot. The place was on fire! We heard him play his *Jelly Roll Blues*.

I remember that he was dressed in full-back clothes and wore a light brown melton overcoat, with a three-hole hat to match. He had two girls with him.

Then I was just a short-pants kid in the back of the crowd and I never saw him again until 10 years later in Chicago. I was able to appreciate him then, but I couldn't steal his stuff. I wasn't good enough yet. In 1943, though, they picked me to impersonate his style at the New Orleans Jazz Carnival.

That same year, 1911, I heard Thad "Snowball" Wilkerson who played only by ear and in one key—B natural. He had taught Alberta Simmons to play rags. She was a fine instrumental pianist who played with Clef Club Bands. She lived at 8th Avenue, and 41st Street. Below her lived Willie Gant, then about 12 years old and a very talented youngster, like Fats Waller was when I first met him. Incidentally, Russell Brooks, another fine pianist lived there, and it was in his flat on 133rd Street that I first met Fats in later years as a boy of 13. Raymond Boyette, called "Lippy," also lived there. He was a tickler, too. Years later, in the 1930's, he used to get me rent-party jobs in Harlem when the depression was on. Other players I heard in that house were Conky Williams, the great Dick Turpin and Nat Stokes, who came from Richmond, Va.

Alberta Simmons was kind enough to teach me the full Joplin rags that she played so well: *Frogs Legs* . . . *Maple Leaf Rag* . . . and the *Sunflower Slow Drag*.

Q. Were you playing anyplace then?

A. No, I was still going to school. But my mind was made up. I was going to be a pianist as soon as I felt I was good enough to get a job. That came next year in 1912, during vacation from school.

[In his next conversation, James P. Johnson relates the start of his career in Far Rockaway during the summer of 1912.]

## REVIEWS: RECORDINGS

*I WANT TO LIVE*, United Artists, UA L 4005. Composed and conducted by Johnny Mandel.

THE MUSIC FROM *PETER GUNN*, RCA-Victor, LPM 1956. Conducted and Composed by Henry Mancini.

There is an increasing tendency in the motion picture and television industry, here and even abroad, to couple violence with jazz, or something resembling jazz. The immediate impression to be gained from viewing this wedding is that jazz is the anthem of the underworld; and for reasons which go to the very roots of American culture, it would not be difficult to construct a moderately solid case defending the juxtaposition of the two.

Jazz is the Negro's most important gift to American culture. However, a pattern of rejection of jazz was established almost immediately after the music was introduced upon the American scene. This rejection was sustained by "respectable" Americans who, being too immature to penetrate the birth of their own culture, emulated instead the habits, patterns and cultural tastes of Continental society as a mark of superficial refinement.

It remained (and it is to their everlasting credit) for the mobsters, the bosses, the whores and the pimps to incubate America's most profound contribution to the arts. I'm sure, however, that the Al Capones, Buck Bradys and Pendergasts hurriedly orphaned their cultural charge when business was slim. But as the French say, "Les affaires sont les affaires."

The point is academic. Although it is true that jazz has largely outgrown the context of its origins, it is also true that any story told of the American underworld is most naturally and authentically supported with the jazz of the corresponding period.

Such a story with such jazz is now being circulated by the movie media: *I Want To Live*. With capital punishment as its main theme, it is a notably grim, desolate comment upon the medieval, senseless practice of legal murder performed by the state, and also

a penetrating study of the seamier side of the American moral fabric with its accent on personal gain at any cost, even a life. It shows how those psychotics who play the solid citizen game, the D.A., the governor, the newspapermen, and even the plain people, suck blood from the desperate situation of an innocent woman on trial for murder.

The movie is based on the true story of the first woman sent to the gas chamber in California a few years ago. The heroine of the story is, as Norman Mailer describes in his article, *The White Negro (Dissent, Summer, 1957)*, "a hipster": "One is Hip or one is Square (the alternative which each new generation coming into American life is beginning to feel), one is a rebel or one conforms, one is a frontiersman in the Wild West of American nightlife, or else a Square cell, trapped in the totalitarian tissues of American society, doomed willy-nilly to conform if one is to succeed."

She liked the right kind of jazz and the wrong kind of men (for her) . . . but she had an uncompromising integrity in her "Hip" philosophy (either because of it or in spite of it) that made her angelic in comparison to the people who pimp off her misery.

With material like this, one would think that composer John Mandel could skate; offer a few syncopated ominous sounds supported by a walking bass fiddle and repeat this format throughout and this would be enough. Mandel, however, dug in and composed a notable work. His score is used functionally to support the moods of the story and as a participating part of the picture when the heroine exhibits her love for jazz. The latter instances are demonstrated generally better than in the scene where she is listening to her radio in her prison cell and suddenly blurts out "That's Gerry Mulligan . . . man I sure dig him!" Suspicions of a publicity agent's contrivance made that scene a bit less palatable.

Almost any jazz coming from contemporary influences would have

served the story and would have added depth and dimension to the moods. Mandel, however, met the challenge admirably and produced a contemporary mainstream jazz score that, although inferring no new musical direction, remains nevertheless a distinguished, virile, tasty, economically constructed and masterfully handled composition (despite the many mood demands made on it by the story). It sustains itself and one's interest in it throughout the whole composition.

### SIDE I

The thematic construction reflects a great deal of thought. The main theme (see musical example A) is stated in the opening section "Main Title"—a bluesy section with the baritone carrying the melody. This is followed by two sections—"Poker Game" and "San Diego Party." "Poker Game" opens with a beguine-type "pretty" thing and then into a secondary bluesy theme (B in the examples). "San Diego Party" is a traditional improvised blues with the trumpet Jack Sheldon blowing best.

"Henry Leaves" is a slow blues section opening with a variation of theme A stated by a haunting bass flute and then digressing into a restatement of theme B. "Stakeout" opens with still another statement of B but in a military-like snare-drum pattern that channels the music out of its dark mood into a violent, tension-building 6/8 percussion sequence. An unusual comblike instrument (scratcher) is used very effectively.

"Barbara Surrenders" is a kind of summary of all that has gone on before with theme A being supported effectively by the 6/8 (or 12/16) percussive designs which occur throughout the composition. Mandel's orchestration talents are very apparent in his handling of woodwinds, bass and percussion in this section.

### SIDE II

#### 1. "Trio Convicted"

This is an extension of the last section on Side I.

#### 2. "Trip To Corona"



The composer gets his material from the latter part of "Poker Game," Side I.

### 3. "Peg's Visit"

A beautiful and poignant melody is stated by a tender assortment of woodwinds and horns. The section closes with a blasting brass statement by way of contrast.

### 4. "Gas Chamber Unveiling"

Bits of thematic material are dressed in a dark, ominous orchestral fabric, (largely attributable to the contra bassoon and other winds pitched in the low register) which gives the feeling the worst is yet to come.

### 5. "Nightmare Sequence"

Low winds punctuating brass, and Latin rhythm support the animated simultaneous improvisations of the trombone and clarinet.

### 6. "Preparations For Execution"

The composer restates material used in his "Gas Chamber" sequence with tympani throbbing slowly in a foreboding manner.

### 7. "Letter Writing Sequence"

Mandel shapes material that seems to have originated from his "Peg's Visit" song into a tasty, minor-feeling 6/8 waltz on which he uses the tuned drums effectively.

### 8. "The Last Mile"

Again a dark and foreboding restatement of the "Gas Chamber" material with tympani tolling the death knell.

9. Mandel's talents for orchestration excel here as he paints from an eerie tone-palette. The woodwinds are muddy and deep. The middle ground is nebulous and ethereal while a high

wind instrument bites off bits of theme A—the cyanide pellets fall into the container of acid and our heroine is no more.

### 10. "End Title"

This is an afterstatement. It could have been omitted except that in the picture it may have mirrored the "Gee, you know, she was really a nice girl, so sorry" attitude of the apathetic public who tolerate and possibly are entertained by such goings-on.

My congratulations to Mr. Mandel for his excellent score.

By contrast, *The Music From Peter Gunn* is to me not a jazz album. It belongs with the pop or novelty division. The fact that it's selling as jazz (and selling well) due to its exposure on the *Peter Gunn* show, (Mon. 9:00 P.M. NBC TV) can be debated as both good and bad for jazz. Those who hold the position that public acceptance of anything resembling jazz is a good thing for the art, will argue that this is an important album. On the other hand, those of us who feel that miseducation is far worse than no knowledge at all will argue that this combination of George Shearing, Bela Bartok, Arnold Schoenberg, Terry Gibbs, and pre-Mulligan Kenton, is the worst for jazz.

As a composition, jazz or whatever, it doesn't make it. If it is trying to be modern jazz, it is pseudo and superficial. If it is trying to be a composition, it is an undeveloped mess. There is a bit more to modern jazz than a walking bass punctuated at pseudo-hip intervals by horns conveying strange sounds or screaming

trumpet drops. This, like all TV jazz background music (and most jazz shows) is a caricature of jazz. I'd classify it as "ad agency jazz."

The viewer of the *Gunn* show can expect to kill a half hour with a pleasant, fairly likeable young man acting out a comic-book script that relies heavily on slightly off-beat photography and off-beat jazz-based music that is used as a sort of auxiliary sound effect. (The sale of the album will change that, however.) The viewer may in this way be conveyed through 30 minutes of slick, mildly entertaining TV. He is not likely to be moved either spiritually or intellectually. A combination like this is pretty frail—take the story away from the music or the music away from the story and you come up with half of what you started out with, and that wasn't much.

The composer, who is musical director of the agency which directs the *Peter Gunn* show, has obviously been profoundly impressed by almost everyone who is now or ever has contributed to modern music. It is easy to hear all the sounds, Shearing, MJQ, Kenton, Bull Moose Jackson, Ezra Pound, you name it . . . !

I understand, incidentally, that in Hollywood, a motion picture is "tracked" first with the music that suggests the mood that the director wishes the composer to convey in his final score. The albums of two contemporary jazz composers were used in this fashion in a recent picture. No matter how questionable this practice is, especially to the composers who gain neither monies nor credits from it, it must be of great aid to the composer who is to do the final score. Of course an inventive composer is capable of coming up with a score that is brand-new, fresh and alive and more important, his own.

A lesser composer, however, sounds like everyone he has listened to. There is plenty of everyone else and little of the composer in this album of music from the *Peter Gunn* show.

—George Russell



**HARRY ARNOLD:** *Harry Arnold + Big Band + Quincy Jones = Jazz!* Emarcy MG 36139. Recorded in Stockholm, Sweden in March and April, 1958.

*Quincy's Home Again, The Midnight Sun Never Sets, Cherokee, Count 'Em, Brief Encounter, Room 608, Kinda Blues, Meet Benny Bailey, Doodlin'.*

Personnel on tracks 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, & 9: trumpets—Sixten Eriksson, Weine Renliden, Bengt-Arne Wallin, and Arnold Johansson; trombones—Ake Persson, Andreas Skjold, George Vernon, and Gordon Ohlsson; saxophones—Arne Domnerus, Rolf Backman, Bjarne Nerem, Rolf Blomquist, and Rune Falk; rhythm—Bengt Hallberg, piano; Lars Pettersson, bass; Egil Johansen, drums. Trumpeter Benny Bailey added on tracks 8 and 9. Personnel on remaining tracks: Carl Henrik Noren replaces Blomquist; Johnny Ekh replaces Rune Falk; Simon Brehm replaces Pettersson; Rolf Berg, guitar, added.

Four of the arrangements on this album were done by Swedish writers (tracks 1, 5, and 7 by Arnold and 4 by Gösta Thelelius). These writers handle the idiom with the same delicacy and understanding that is evi-

dent in Quincy's work, though there are a number of fine distinctions in approach. The most marked example of the effect of Quincy's presence is the difference in feeling between Arnold's *Kinda Blues* and Quincy's *Count 'Em* at the same tempo. Both tunes are in a medium blues groove, well written and played. But on the Jones tune the band has a much surer grasp of the whole time feeling and sustains the swing better.

The ensemble work is very clean and well balanced throughout the album and there isn't a poor solo to be found anywhere. Hallberg satisfactorily provides the traditional fills and solos on the arrangements that seem to call for the style of Basie, but I prefer his chorus on *Cherokee* where his attack and general approach take on a vitality that suggests that his strongest interests lie with his younger contemporaries.

The Benny Bailey track introduces us to a very competent trumpeter whose big brilliant tone is displayed

well against Quincy's backgrounds. He sometimes overblows his horn in an effort to get an even bigger sound, but I like his cordial, pungent feeling for big band soloing.

*The Midnight Sun Never Sets* is a lovely ballad written by Quincy and the talented French singer-comedian Henri Salvador. Arne Domnerus' alto solo is quite moving.

This is a very, very good band. Their response to Quincy's writing and conducting was obviously on a very mature level, and the resulting music is a pleasure to hear. The vibrant strength of inspired performance is absent, but the band sounds ready. It would be interesting to see what would happen if an evangelist or two like Zoot Sims, Cannonball, or Gerry Mulligan were mixed in with these men. They play like true believers, and the presence of a fundamentalist preacher in one of the sections might be all that is needed to start a real fire.

—Bill Crow

**DAVE BRUBECK:** *Re-union.* Fantasy 3268.

Brubeck, piano; Dave Van Kriedt, tenor; Paul Desmond, alto; Norman Bates, bass; Joe Morello, drums.

*Chorale, Leo's Place, Darien Mode, Pieta, Strolling, Shouts, Prelude, Divertimento.*

Brubeck, Desmond, and Van Kriedt display their well-developed sense of form and structure and the writing (Van Kriedt) is well done with each tune providing stimulating material for improvisation. Unfortunately the structure of both writing and improvising is seriously undermined by the lack of vitality in the sound of the saxophonists. Neither of them seems to be able to make his instrument resonate deeply except when playing a soft subtone; the stronger they play into the instrument, the weaker the tone becomes in resonance. The resulting sound is thin, weightless, and often a whiny little complaint with no energy behind it.

Jazz form grew largely out of the blues, a sort of musical complaint that is satisfying because it is energetic—the singer or player can change his own feeling for the better by expressing it. Feeling expressed without vitality can only lead to more of the same; the music that results is an uninteresting catalogue of sickness rather than the cry of life.

One musician here is doing his best to breathe life into the music. Joe Morello gives the essence of it in every measure, playing the musical equivalent of deep breathing, warm body, peaceful mind, free movement, expanding spirit. Brubeck seems most

affected by Joe's playing . . . he frequently responds with a rhythmic feeling that approaches Morello's easy flow, and he seems to have softened his attack without losing his vigor, so that the brutal chord-beating of his earlier work has melted and gone—forever, I hope. Notice that though Morello is a large man with a strong arm, he chooses to create a broad, full expression without the use of unnecessary decibels. He is able to relax at moderate volume and pour his strength into time, dynamics, and a sense of musical gravity.

Norman Bates suffers from the lack of exactly what Joe has—the ability to use himself fully and freely. The notes he plays are nice, and his sound is basically pretty, but both sound and time come out stinky. His rhythm has no joy in it, and there is no loving contact between himself and his instrument. Consequently he dries up the swing and encourages the same preciosity in the horn players.

Van Kriedt doesn't sound quite as set in his ways as Paul does. There are many indications in both his writing and his playing of an earthier, freer conception of sound and time, though his improvising has a less personal style than Paul's. His admiration for Zoot and Brew is evident, but on this album he never plays with the full voice of his instrument. He has a nice feeling for time that he should give in to a little more.

Paul's time is precise, as is his intonation and the shape of his sound, but all this precision is used in a

small, stiff way that, though played on a wind instrument, gives the impression that the player is holding his breath. The blue notes he plays—the bends, the funky little figures, the moans—become caricatures. He may be expressing pique or disdain or vague longing, but certainly not any feeling as overwhelming as the blues.

Dick Hadlock's album notes seem to be describing some other record. He talks about Norm Bates reminding one of Wilbur Ware, Brubeck reminding one of Jess Stacy, Van Kriedt's writing reminding one of Duke Ellington, and makes reference to Desmond's playing in various places as "electric," "relaxed," "[filled with] persistent optimism," "buoyant." He speaks of the soloists' "unfettered vigor and enthusiasm." Even if I had never heard the work of Caruso, or Joe Turner, or Bird, or Ben Webster, or Janos Starker, or Mahalia Jackson, or Louis Armstrong, or Roland Hayes, or Fats Waller, or Ray Charles, or Paul Badura-Skoda, or Harry Edison, or Oscar Pettiford, or Sid Catlett, or (additional list of 500 names on request)—it would still take the mental state brought on by multiple Martinis to allow me to refer to the music on this album as an example of unfettered vigor and enthusiasm. Both of these qualities find themselves firmly restricted here with fetters of the heavy-duty variety. The disappointing fact is that, rather than being strained against or gnawed at, they are carefully polished and displayed like family heirlooms.

—Bill Crow

**BENNY GOLSON:** *Benny Golson's New York Scene. Contemporary C3552.*

Golson, tenor; Art Farmer, trumpet; Wynton Kelley, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Charles Persip, drums on *Something in B Flat, Step Lightly, Blues It*. Same personnel plus Gigi Gryce, alto; Sahib Shihab, baritone; Jimmy Cleveland, trombone; Julius Watkins, French horn on *Whisper Not, Just By Myself*, and *Capri*. Golson and rhythm section on *You're Mine You*.

The balance on this album is strange. No matter how I adjust my playback equipment, I can't seem to dispel the illusion that I'm listening to the music from behind the bandstand, with the horn players standing beyond the rhythm section and facing the other way. The presence of piano, bass, and especially drums is much more immediate than that of any of the horns. Add to this the fact that Charlie Persip is a little heavy-handed for small groups, and you have enough distraction from the horns to make concentration on their playing difficult. I can't subscribe to the attitude prevalent among certain engineers and drummers that the rhythm section is the principal point of interest in a band. It's nice that

they're there, and they should be heard, but not louder and clearer than the front line. Drums used in an overbearing way can dull the subtle ear of both musician and listener quicker than anything short of the Hammond organ.

The level of musicianship on this album is very good. The performances of Farmer, Golson, Kelly, and Chambers are exceptional. Golson seems to reach a deeper expression on the slower tunes, especially *You're Mine You* and *Blues It*. His tone and conception are from the Hawkins-Byas school, with a younger man's point of view. He sometimes runs through the changes with little selectivity, but when he really exercises his talent for composition his playing becomes, like his writing, the work of a skilled craftsman.

He has written four nicely constructed tunes here, and arranged two of them well. The other two were arranged by Ernie Wilkins and Gigi, neither of whom handle the instrumentation quite as well as Golson does. Ray Bryant's *Something* is a nice line reminiscent of some of Dizzy's early tunes. Gryce's *Capri* starts out like *Spring Is Here* but goes

somewhere else almost as nice.

I've heard both Gigi and Cleve get more out of the material on solo work than they do here. They play well on the ensemble sections, but sound a little weak when they are on their own. Watkins is getting his instrument well under control. His ensemble work here is very good, and he plays a nice solo on *By Myself*.

Art's ensemble playing is clean and beautiful, and his solos are generally good, though far from his best recorded work. His muted solo on *Step Lightly* is well played but under-recorded—the rhythm section seems to have all the microphones.

Wynton and Paul both contribute sensitive accompaniment and interesting solos. I much prefer Paul's plucked solo work to his bowing; his conception is excellent, but the predominance of extraneous overtones in his arco sound disguises the tone of the instrument and makes the notes he is playing difficult to hear. His chorus on *Step Lightly* (plucked) is clear, clean, and interesting. His chorus on *Something in B Flat* (bowed) sounds like a large insect trying to escape from the bass drum.

—Bill Crow

## AHMAD JAMAL

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EARL HINES-COZY COLE: *Earl's Backroom and Cozy's Caravan*. Felsted Records, FAJ7002.

Earl Hines and a small group on one side, with Cozy Cole and a slightly larger group on the other. If the record is worth owning, it is because of the Hines side.

Hines is associated in these three numbers with Curtis Lowe on sax, Charles Oden on bass, and a swinging Earl Watkins drumming.

*Brussels' Hustle* is an uptempo blues. A relaxed first chorus reveals tasty, swinging drums by Earl Watkins. The second chorus then brings in bass. Then, with a magnificent up-beat snort from Hines, begin a series of sax solos, a series of piano solos, a few bass and drums solos, then several ensemble out. To this reviewer, the most remarkable things about this number are both products of Hines's timeless jazz musicianship: (1) the long, gradual build-up of the piano background from chorus three until the first piano solo chorus; and

(2) the far-ranging imagination of the piano choruses.

The first sax solo is a straightforward light statement, anything but frantic, the piano only slightly varying a simple *oom-pah*. In the second chorus, the sax line is identical but the piano right hand adds a supporting melodic line. When we turn into the third chorus, it sounds like we're settling down for the standard, level chorus-after-chorus of sax. The piano gives us the kind of boppish background which we would expect to continue on the same plane for a while. But a slight tremulo in the start of the fourth chorus heralds things to come. Going into the fifth chorus, with a rise of tension definitely underway, Hines kicks the dominant furiously. By the sixth chorus, the accompaniment is pushing more and more, and has risen to a higher register. The tone builds up further in the next chorus. Then at the start of the eighth, sax and piano simultaneously get more dramatic. By the next chorus and the last three, both are swinging furiously. In these last few choruses, they are playing together wonderfully.

Hines's solos sustain the interest. In fact he ties the two series together by using a figure from his accompaniment of the final sax chorus as the opening line for his first solo chorus.

The Hines of today is startlingly unchanged from the Hines of thirty years ago. Hines broke jazz piano wide open in the late twenties. Pre-Hines piano styles are "closed," filled in, explicit rather than implicit. (The single important exception that comes to mind is the special case of Jimmy Yancey.) And Hines's style is wide "open" in a way that has been followed by all jazz piano styles since, with few exceptions. This was the great Hines revolution.

What this record brings out again, as repeatedly demonstrated in recent years, is that the highly personal Hines style requires so little alteration in moving from 1928 to 1958. He recasts the "sound" to bring it thoroughly up-to-date. The repertoire changes (*A Monday Date* is no longer automatically included in each recording session). But many of the devices, particularly rhythmic, carry over intact the full thirty years. What this means is *not* that these devices are appropriate in any context. The language of jazz is too dynamic over time for that. The contexts change completely. Rather what this reflects (this appropriateness of the same devices of the hot Hines of 1928 to the modernist Hines of 1958) is that Hines in the late twenties projected about as far ahead of his time as any man in jazz ever has—and yet remained in the center of the changes taking place at that time.

There are better recent recordings of Hines. But *Brussels' Hustle* still shows us that beautifully controlled touch, the tremendous use of accents, the unpredictable left hand, and above all the mighty, ever-present *swing*. Hines at his best is better than ever.

The other tunes offer good listening, though Hines has difficulty handling slow tunes (hence his persistent double-tempoing.) *Oooh* is a slow blues within which Hines strains at the leash. *Backroom at the Villa D'Este* is a casual-swinging minor-key number. Again many specific phrases are identical in 1928 '78's I have.

Cozy Cole, on his side, is accompanied in three displays of drumming virtuosity by Lou Jones, Phatz Morris, Boe McCain, June Cole, Dicky Thompson, and Pete Compo. *Margie* is handled pleasantly and produces some nice guitar playing from Dicky Thompson.

—Guy Waterman



Noted jazz historian, MARSHALL STEARNS, author of the *STORY OF JAZZ*, takes notes for his new book on jazz and the dance from an interview tape that he plays back on his NORELCO 'Continental' tape recorder. DR. STEARNS is Director of the INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES and Associate Professor of English at HUNTER COLLEGE. "I make constant use of my NORELCO 'Continental' when doing field work for my books and articles," states DR. STEARNS. "Here, the most significant feature is three speed versatility. I find that the extremely economical 1 1/2 speed is ideal for recording interviews from which I later take material needed for my work. The other speeds are exceptional for their ability to capture the full fidelity of music and voice." The NORELCO 'Continental' is a product of North American Philips Co., Inc., High Fidelity Products Division, Dept. 1ec6, 230 Duffy Avenue, Hicksville, L. I., N. Y.

HANK MOBLEY, LEE MORGAN, BILLY ROOT, CURTIS FULLER: *Monday Night At Birdland*. Roulette Birdland Series, 52015.

Hank Mobley, tenor sax; Lee Morgan, trumpet; Billy Root, tenor sax; Curtis Fuller, trombone; "Spec" Wright, drums; Ray Bryant, piano; Tommy Bryant, bass. *Walkin', All the Things You Are, Bags's Groove, There Will Never Be Another You.*

A high order of improvisation occurs frequently in the numbers played in this album. The reasons are twofold: first, that the musicians are the very texture of New York jazz, in that the collective impression of their performance is a fine balance of brusque and abstruse emotionalism; and secondly, that the pieces done are, by now, normal appendages to these and to all musicians, a convenience which lends to the artist the opportunity to reconsider and reflect upon well-known surroundings, rather than move somewhat self-consciously in exploration of more unfamiliar grounds.

All of the pieces are at a comfortable up-tempo; the metrics do not interfere with plausible improvisation. All of the solo choruses are long, which, in this use—and in many others—is a good thing. Lengthy solos tend to enervate the sincere listener only when played by mediocre musicians.

*Walkin'*: Mobley plays aggressively, exploiting quite effectively the Lydian Auxiliary Diminished scale

in a group of related passages. His is a hasty lyricism. Morgan employs Clifford Brown's graced passing notes to embellish a nicely wrought series of paragraphs. Fuller allows the tonic to serve as point of departure and of return before and after some rather elaborate thoughts. Ray Bryant rapidly resorts to the comfort and effectiveness of the mid-keyboard block chord and, with few repetitious exceptions, stays there.

*All The Things You Are*: Fuller at his best; his work is easily digestible. Root swings through rather invisibly. Morgan, lacking his usual force and meaning, pours long strands of correct notes, saying very little. Mobley enters with enthusiasm, mellowing to grant passing thoughts careful consideration, and repeating them at logical points. Ray Bryant's power usually lands on the initial note of each idea; the idea then travels downward, terminating with a plonk; and another emerges, follows the same scheme, and dies with a similar reverberation.

*Bags's Groove*: Frequent recurrences of Jacksonian figures characterize Morgan's best work on the album. With a firm rhythmic background—a Basie cakewalk—Fuller plays closely about the tonic; he seems to accomplish little more than preparation for the ensuing emotional heights. Root's plight is composed of bits of moving lyricism often marred by understatement; at one point he

performs what might be called a satire on funk, in honking up and down the scale for several measures, touching only the tonic and dominant. Mobley enters robustly, playing with greatest candor, and constructs well-founded ideas that lead to the most exciting point of the album. Whereas Ray Bryant's accompanimental faculties are unusually bold and excellent, his inventiveness as a soloist—at least at the end of these hearings—seems to lack imagination. The recent and sudden reappearance, among pianists, of the slurred-third block chord has now gone beyond the novelty stage and has become a pest. Bryant's use of this funk device is quite artificial and may well be hiding better things from us.

*There Will Never Be Another You*: Drawing a flimsy and almost unfavorable sketch of the original line, the ensemble falls apart to allow Mobley to speak in Lydian moods once again. Root then crashes into the action with savage force and tone, calming himself down to less interesting patterns. Morgan wanders dizzily through, matching the correct note to its corresponding beat. Fuller allows his notes to resound, filling in necessary gaps with graceful figures, all in close abundance about the tonic. Ray Bryant follows to shiver through several choruses, playing with the swiftness, coldness, and durability of sleet.

—Tupper Saussy

BROWNIE MCGHEE and SONNY TERRY. Folkways FA2327.

With this record and other recent releases on another label, Brownie McGhee, long consigned to the second rank of what used to be known as "race artists," lays strong claim to consideration as a real big-leaguer. Over the past 15 years or so of a recording career which goes back some 30 years, Brownie has developed a reputation as a "refined" blues singer, possibly capable of singing in the old tradition but, for commercial or other reasons, seemingly lacking in the true feeling and authenticity of the long line of great traditional artists from Blind Lemon and the other early blues singers, to Leadbelly and Big Bill. On records, as well as in person, Brownie has, in the past, always seemed to be too "citized," too hip, at times almost jivey.

To those who have always regarded Brownie in this manner, this new recording will come as a revelation, for here is a traditional artist who

appears to have improved, rather than deteriorated, with the passing of time and the struggle to make it commercially. (For a startling contrast, compare the early and recent recordings of Mahalia Jackson or, for that matter, even the Big Bill records made 20 years ago and those made in the past few years.) In any event, in the 13 tracks on this recording, Brownie, ably abetted by the ever-dependable folk harmonica of Sonny Terry and some unobtrusive drumming by Gene Moore, provides a full rundown on the blues—the 8-bar, 12-bar, 16-bar, city, country and what-have-you variety—and even throws in a couple of folk songs for good measure. The result is a first-rate recording, worthy of a place in any collection of traditional blues artists of the first rank.

If one has the patience to struggle through Big Bill's tortuous explanation of the difference between country and city blues, then, by Bill's definition at least, Brownie must fall into the city category of blues singer, for

most of the selections on this record are a long way from Bill's *Plough Hand Blues* and similar country blues. Careful listening, however, will reveal that the dividing line Bill tries to draw between the two is slim indeed. In fact, the city variety may be perhaps be more meaningful and more "traditional" to us today than the so-called country type. In any event, few would care to argue that Brownie's singing here is not in the great tradition, regardless of whether the particular tradition concerned stems from Blind Lemon or Lonnie Johnson.

This is not to say that Brownie has not been affected by nontraditional elements in jazz. Rock and roll, for example, is clearly discernible in the *Boogie Baby* track. But, for the most part, on this record Brownie is just singing and playing the blues, as he learned to do years ago—with deep feeling, and with all the warmth and poignancy the form engenders in every artist who admires and respects it.

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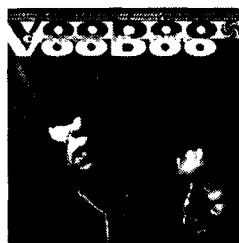
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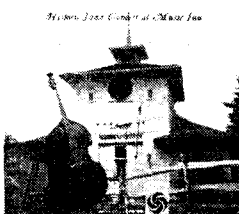


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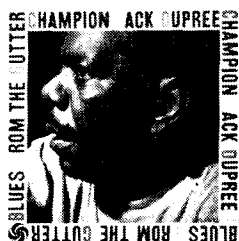
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In listening to this record, one tends to wonder why the poetry-and-jazz enthusiasts have been so disdainful of the blues in their experiments. Certainly there is no purer form of folk poetry than that found in blues of this type. Examples on this recording are almost too numerous to mention. *Better Day*, *Dark Road*, *Make a Little Money* and many of the other tracks contain folk poetry of the highest order, plus a feeling and a philosophy of life much more meaningful (and certainly more easy to ascertain) than the torrents of words provided for the vast majority of P-and-J projects.

This feeling and philosophy are evident in almost every selection here, for on these tracks Brownie is singing of things which touch almost every human being at one time or another—woman trouble, loneliness, hardships and deprivation—always with the hope in the future that is a hallmark of the blues.

Take *Make a Little Money*, for example. Here is a tale of a man down on his luck, trying to get a few bucks together for his woman and pleading: "If you can wait, woman, and don't get tired of waitin', I'll get a little money and make you happy and satisfied." Or, *Guitar Highway*, which goes all the way back to Leroy Carr's *Mean Old Train Blues*, and the itch to travel which comes to a man when he hears that "mean old lonesome train whistle blow." Or *Dark Road*, with its poignant description of how the blues walk in on you when your woman walks out. Or almost any other of the seven or eight blues Brownie sings here. Even the sentimental *Best of Friends*, dedicated to Leadbelly, has something to say and says it simply and effectively, with little in the way of frills or flourishes.

Multiple recording techniques allow Brownie to sing c-jets with himself on about half the tracks, and he varies his voice to such an extent that it takes some little time before you realize both voices are his. Meanwhile, his own guitar and Sonny's insidious harmonica provide an admirable accompaniment, with Sonny taking over to solo on many tracks and starring on the driving *John Henry* and *Old Jabo*, which seems to be an alternate version of *Old Dan Tucker*.

To sum up, here is a record worth listening to over and over again for all that is good in the blues. In its spontaneity, its warmth and its deeply rooted feeling, it has many lessons to teach.

—Irwin Hersey

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THE JAZZ REVIEW



**SHORTY ROGERS: *Afro-Cuban Influence*, RCA Victor LPM-1763.**

Personnel: Leader: Shorty Rogers. Trumpets: Al Porcino, Ray Triscari, Ed Leddy, Don Fagerquist, Buddy Childers; Trombones: Frank Rosolino, Harry Betts, Bob Enevoldsen, George Roberts, Ken Shroyer; Saxes: Bud Shank, Bob Cooper, Herb Geller, Bill Holman, Bill Hood, Chuck Gentry; Bass: Joe Mondragon; Drums: Shelly Manne, Modesto Duran, Carlos Vidal, Luis Miranda, Mike Pacheco, Manuel Ochoa, Juan Cheda, Frank Guerrero; Specialty Maracas: Sirelda Gonzales.

*Wuayacañjanga (Suite); Manteca; Moon Over Cuba; Viva Puente; Un Poco Loco.*

Afro-Cuban jazz is for me a dissatisfying experience. Although the blending of African and Latin music with modern jazz has possibilities, the three-fold union more often than not results in an immature, fruitless musical concoction which is nothing but a gimmicky, lets-go-native product. Frankly, I prefer undiluted modern jazz, Latin music, or African music separately to a watered-down, popularized, or simulated combination of them all.

Admittedly, the blend succeeds sometimes. Powell's *Un Poco Loco* I would cite as one example. The Latin or Afro-Cuban rhythms I find particularly effective when employed in single choruses, as in Max Roach's and Clifford Brown's *Sunset Eyes*, where the Latin rhythms yield each time to jazz rhythms in the bridge, the contrasting Latin choruses serving to emphasize all the more em-

phatically the swing of the jazz bridges.

The jazzman can, has, and will mould Afro-Cuban jazz to his advantage. I don't mean to dismiss the movement entirely, but I do feel Afro-Cuban jazz would be more effective if cultivated sparsely and with considerable discrimination.

Among those who have fallen under the spell of Afro-Cuban music is Shorty Rogers. In his *Afro-Cuban Influence* album, Shorty leads a big band of Los Angeles musicians and Latin drummers through the Gillespie-Fuller-Pozo composition *Manteca*, the Ellington-Tizol *Moon Over Cuba*, Powell's *Un Poco Loco*, a Rogers original, *Viva Puente*, and the Carlos-Vidal — Modesto-Duran — Shorty-Rogers *Wuayacañjanga Suite*.

With reference to the *Wuayacañjanga Suite*, which occupies an entire side of this lp, I must report the completely unsolicited and unbiased reaction of our Siamese cat, Ralph, who was asleep in another room when the *Suite* started. He woke up, crept apprehensively from his chair, slunk furtively into the living room, and began stalking the record player. I wouldn't go that far myself, but the outcries and tribal chants set to big band accompaniment seem to me a pointless and contrived device, and merely serve to increase my appetite for the authentic product with no superfluous nonsense. After getting

underway with a slow, all-quiet-in-the-jungle intro, the *Suite* alternates recitatives and vocals in native dialect, drumming, orchestral riffs, horn solos, and inserts, for welcome contrast, a conventionally swinging Kentonish section. Some of the melodies spun from the title motif are nice.

*Manteca*, like *Skin Deep* and other riffed excuses for performing extended drum solos, plows through the inevitable percussive interlude of ever-changing conga patterns and, here, some Shelly Manne tom-tom and cymbal effects. Certainly the performing drummers impress with their technical abilities; *Manteca*-type solos, nonetheless, fail to answer any immediate need in this reviewer.

*Moon Over Cuba* is pleasant listening but it's a relief when the anchor of the Latin rhythms is lifted and a swinging beat sets sail behind the flute. The only thing Latin about *Viva Puente* is its title, a few of the ensemble voicings, and the surfacing of the conga every other beat; otherwise it's conventional jazz. Bud Powell's recording of *Un Poco Loco* says so much more than Rogers' big band version. The multiplicity of instruments doesn't pack the rhythmic or harmonic punch of Powell's keyboard interpretation. I noticed the band reaches for some of Bud's excitement and tension by slightly increasing Powell's original recorded tempo.

—Mimi Clar

**BOB SCOBIEY'S FRISCO JAZZ BAND with CLANCY HAYES: *College "Classics"*, RCA Victor LPM-1700.**

*I've Been Working on the Railroad; Let the Rest of the World Go By; We'll Build a Bungalow; I've Been Floating Down the Old Green River; Let Me Call You Sweetheart; Absinthe Frappe; Put on Your Old Grey Bonnet; Shine On Harvest Moon; The Whiffenpoof Song; There's a Long Long Trail; You Tell Me Your Dream; I'll Tell You Mine; Wedding Bells Are Breaking Up That Old Gang of Mine.*

Personnel: Bob Scobey, trumpet; Clancy Hayes, banjo and vocals; Jack Buck, trombone; Doug Skinner, trombone; Pete Dovidio, clarinet; Clyde Pound, piano; Tom Beeson, bass; Davey Black, drums.

There is a big market among college kids for the sort of "college classics" which recur in the Bob Scobey and Clancy Hayes album. As the liner says, "these songs . . . have been favorites in college circles since the days of Red Grange, Jim Thorpe, and Lorelei Lee. Their popularity has never diminished, nor is there likelihood that it ever will."

These popularized versions of *I've Been Working on the Railroad*, *Let*

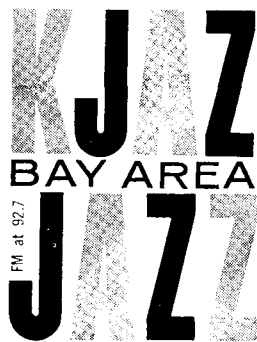
*the Rest of the World Go By*, *We'll Build a Bungalow*, *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*, *Put on Your Old Grey Bonnet*, *Shine On Harvest Moon*, *There's a Long Long Trail*, *Wedding Bells Are Breaking Up . . .* (oh, you know), sung by Clancy Hayes to incidental Dixieland accompaniment by Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band seem to answer some sort of universal need felt by generations of college students all over the country. Perhaps it is a desire to tie in with the same tradition in which Dad and Mom participated, perhaps a desire to become

one with any tradition, or perhaps an expression of newly found independence ("Look, Ma, I'm growing up and I'm listening to jazz")—I don't know. Maybe the songs are enjoyable because they lead to something else, to shared group interests, perhaps.

Nothing creative goes on here. The songs performed are re-creations of the type anybody's uncle could stand up and sing if allowed. The approach to the material is such that a channel is already provided through which any expressive content can flow; in other words, there really is no act of expression involved, but merely the carrying out of a predetermined routine. The songs are like illustrations that appear on greeting cards: they answer one's interests for what they represent, not for their own sake.

Hayes and Scobey present the perennials as tax-free entertainment and for those who are still in college or wish they were, this album will produce the desired atmosphere very nicely.

—Mimi Clar



# blue note

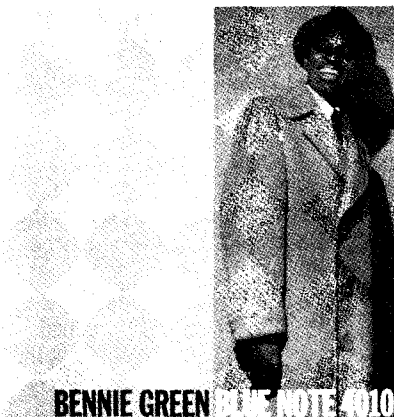
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On *Blues for "The Street,"* and *Love Is Just Around the Corner:* Joe Thomas, trumpet; J. C. Higginbotham, and Wilber De Paris, trombones; Tony Scott and Pee Wee Russell, clarinets; Sonny White, piano; Denzil Best, drums; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Al Casey, guitar. On *Body and Soul:* Coleman Hawkins, tenor; Tony Scott, clarinet; Tommy Flanagan, piano; Gene Ramey, bass; Walter Bolden, drums. On *Ornithology:* same as *Body and Soul* plus Jimmy Knepper, trombone. In *Lester Leaps In, Lover Man, Woody 'N' You, 'Round Midnight,* and *Mop Mop:* Tony Scott, clarinet and baritone sax; Al Cohn, tenor; Red Rodney, trumpet; Jimmy Knepper, trombone; George Wallington, piano; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Roy Haynes, drums; Mundell Lowe, guitar.

A legend has somehow grown up around Tony Scott, casting him in the role of "the real jazzman" whose credentials are his eagerness to sit in with everyone and to organize jam sessions. Now, it is true that a lot of pleasure, inspiration, and education is available for jazzmen at informal sessions. This sort of playing is a source of true recreation, offering a musician more freedom than he may be allowed where he earns his money, or a chance to play when he is out of work, or close artistic contact with other musicians without the responsibility to entertain customers. These objectives are interfered with and often made impossible to attain by the attitude with which Tony approaches a session. Though he professes a great respect for the work of other musicians, he seldom waits to be asked before leaping onto a bandstand with them, horn in hand—and he evidences little awareness of the tastes or sensibilities of the musicians playing with him. When he is around it is always a show, and it is always Tony's show, unless a bigger ham upstages him.

Tony wants to be a star. He uses every situation as a stepping stone in his energetic scramble not for artistry, but for fame. He is so intent on his goal that he doesn't even realize how badly he uses his associates. His manner has become so ingrained that he continues to put on a break-it-up show even when musicians are his only audience. He plays in a tortured, rigid, sensationalistic manner that successfully attracts attention but has little to do with playing music.

Since he usually hires good men, I assume that Tony is able to recognize high quality work, but he does not appear to aim for this quality in his own playing. He concentrates on the end-result image of himself as a musical hero and applies himself to

the evocation of that image in more dramatic than musical terms. His entire bag of effects are used with no concern for their musical value, but only as large electric signs flashing "ME! ME! ME!" His affectations of humility are loaded with egotism. He continually professes his respect for the work of Ben Webster, Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, etc., and showers them with maudlin praise, but his playing indicates that he has learned very little from them.

The foregoing notwithstanding, Tony is a definite presence on the jam session scene, and probably belongs on this album as much as anyone else, since he is the inveterate sitter-in. His presence is representative, if not particularly valid musically. His tone and phrasing here indicate a stiffly held body, shallow breathing, a generally un-giving attitude, and a lack of belief in what he is playing. He tries to make up for all this with dramatics that are about as believable as Liberace's smile.

He plays with less affectation on the baritone sax than he does on clarinet, though he is never completely candid. His baritone sound is very clarinet-like. It occasionally slips into the true resonance of the instrument, but Tony evidently prefers the airier quality. His clarinet sound is either a fidgety, watery sub-tone or a thin, shrieky full tone, with rare lapses into a more normal timbre. Instead of following up the interesting fragments of ideas that pop up in his playing, he falls back constantly on his three favorite devices: five-note descending chromatic runs, ear-piercing squeals and glissandos, and hysteric noncommittal twittering around the changes with an air that puts one in mind of Billie Burke in a high wind.

Tony is juxtaposed in an illuminating way with Pee Wee Russell on *Love Is Just Around The Corner.* (They split the opening chorus, alternate choruses, exchange fours, and take the tune out together.) Pee Wee's style is, for entirely different reasons, very similar to Tony's. He plays tentatively, falteringly, uses both sub-tone and full tone, bends notes, and shrieks, but the difference could not be greater. His faltering and muttering is an expression of the agonizing self-consciousness that causes him to qualify every statement with effacement and apology, but beneath this is a warm gentle man who, with all his stammering, manages to expose his most tender feelings. The indefiniteness in Tony's playing is of another genre, resulting from an

THE JAZZ REVIEW



evasion of rather than an attempt at direct expression. I hear no gentleness in him, only hardness at varying levels of volume.

*Blues For "The Street"* is characteristic of jam sessions, each man playing several choruses with a rhythm section. Al Casey sets a very easygoing mood in his opening choruses, and Joe Thomas, Sonny White, and J. C. Higginbotham follow in a similar vein, J. C. playing with more enthusiasm than inspiration. Oscar Pettiford's solo is ripe and fluent and his intonation and blend with the accompanying guitar is exquisite. Tony begins his chorus *sotto voce*, playing perfectly valid blues melody in what amounts to a loud stage whisper. . . . "Look, look! I'm being subtle!" Wilbur DeParis' straightforward simplicity seems particularly meaty after all this, and Pee Wee's customary intensity sounds relaxed by comparison.



The remaining tracks are more restricting, since the amount of individual playing time has been curtailed in order to give everyone a chance to be heard. *Body and Soul* is divided among Coleman, Tony, and Tommy Flanagan. Though Tony fools around less here than he does on up tempos, the time would have been much better devoted to further development by Coleman. Hawk makes a whole lot out of his last half chorus, blowing away all the cobwebs with which Scott has decorated the first half.

*Mop Mop* allows each soloist one chorus of *I Got Rhythm* at a fast tempo, and hardly anyone gets going before his chorus is over. Red Rodney plays with just Oscar accompanying (except on the bridge), and his tone takes on an unusual richness because of Oscar's resonant support. Knepper and Cohn both needed another chorus. Scott plays like a stunt rider on a tricycle. Roy Haynes' excellent half chorus is upset by Pettiford, who puts a lead-in figure on the

bridge in the wrong place. Everyone goes along with Oscar, so the ending is strong even though displaced a beat. Roy makes the adjustment nicely.

Al Cohn hits his stride on *Lester Leaps In*. He plays a fat, rolling introduction, decorates the lead chorus tastefully, and composes a well-constructed chorus of his own. Lowe's guitar, Scott's baritone, and Wallington's piano solos are satisfactory, and Knepper, Rodney, and Haynes create interesting choruses. Oscar begins his solo with a delayed permutation of the original melody, loses Roy, loses himself, and leads the band back into the last chorus a bar early, but his conception is so interesting and his recovery so absolute that it's a good chorus even with the goof.

With all his preciousness, Tony comes closest to playing meaningful music on *Lover Man*. The notes he chooses have something to do with the tune, and he restricts himself to a minimum of archness. Mundell plays a prettily chorded bridge, and Jimmy Knepper's last eight of the first chorus is lovely. George Wallington's bridge sustains the mood effectively, but seems terribly sere and brittle.

*Woody 'N' You* allows each soloist eight bars, and there is hardly enough time for anyone to say anything, let alone relate it to what has gone before. Still, it's a pleasant, craftsman-like track. *Midnight* has a prettily played intro and coda by Red, the melody played rubato with great depth of feeling by Oscar, and a melodramatic clarinet solo played by Theda Bara. The sad thing is that if he would drop the phony passion he'd discover that he is actually playing some beautiful notes, and might feel some real passion about that.

Flanagan plays two handsome choruses on *Ornithology*, illustrating his indebtedness to Hank Jones. Coleman barely gets warmed up to this tune before his time is up. Knepper is agile and imaginative, but sacrifices a lot of tone quality for speed. (Whatever became of the fat trombone sound? Jack Teagarden, Jack Jenney, Murray McEachern, and several others played with agility and still got a big tone.) Tony builds an agitated chorus out of his chromatic descending runs and little else, giving an impression of great mobility restrained by tremendous rigidity.

The album notes make a good try at tying the music to the album title, but it's a moot question. The personnel notations are correct on the cover, not on the label. (Who is Denizil Vest?)

—Bill Crow

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ART TATUM: *Here's Art Tatum*.  
Brunswick BL 54004.

Art Tatum, piano; Tiny Grimes, guitar;  
Slam Stewart, bass.

*Honeysuckle Rose; Moonglow; I Got  
Rhythm; Begin the Beguine; Tea for Two;  
Stormy Weather; Gone With The Wind;  
St. Louis Blues; Cocktails for Two; Deep  
Purple; After You're Gone; Rosetta.*

ART TATUM: *The Art of Tatum*,  
Decca DL 8715.

*Elegie; Humoresque; Sweet Lorraine;  
Get Happy; Moonglow; Indiana; Lullaby  
of the Leaves; Tiger Rag; Cocktails for  
Two; Emaline; Love Me; I Would Do  
Anything for You.*

Most of these records date from three sessions, one in 1937 and two in 1940, and none are later than the trio sides, which were done in 1944. A listener familiar only with Tatum's work from the fifties will find most of these sides different in several respects, as Tatum was a musician who "grew" steadily (whether better or worse is, I guess, a matter of taste). These earlier sides lack some of Tatum's most effective later devices, notably his use of countermelodies in the left hand, rich passing chords, and what I might inadequately call his preoccupation with the shape of the total sound, rather than with single lines as such. Where these elements are present here, it is in embryo.

These sides are short, having been originally cut, of course, on 78's, and the best of them have the advantage of being tighter and on the whole better balanced than the later recordings, which sometimes include passages of dull filler between the fine parts.

In Tatum's later work there is usually something of interest harmonically for even the most advanced modernist, but the jaded ear is liable to identify many of these older sides, with several very notable exceptions, as run-of-the-mill swing, harmonically.

One final difference might be mentioned. Much of Tatum's later playing, particularly his ballad work, followed the melody of the tune very closely, reserving the spaces between the phrases of the melody for embellishment or short improvised lines. The melody itself was made interesting almost entirely by harmonic variations and by countermelodies. Only rarely did Tatum make use of long improvised lines; purely linear improvisation, the backbone of so much jazz, took a back seat, though of course with some exceptions, usually at fast tempos. In the earlier records, however, this is not so true. There is a lot of purely linear swing playing,

sometimes like Teddy Wilson's, and occasional lines and whole choruses full of the phrasing and accents which were, at that time, becoming bop.

Though the style in these older sides is integrated in the sense that it is always obviously Tatum, it includes vastly different elements. First, and perhaps most basic, the influence of the James P. Fats style, generally most obvious in Tatum's left hand, and particularly in the frequent stride passages scattered through these records. Second, the swing right hand, sometimes almost like Hines, more often like Wilson (who in a recent *Down Beat* article credited Tatum as the most important influence on his playing). Third, the new chords and phrases which only a few of the established musicians were beginning to experiment with before the end of the thirties. Last and not least, the influence of the European Romantics, obvious only in the two "classical" pieces, *Elegie* and *Humoresque*.

Of these two collections, I prefer the Brunswick. It includes the only really exciting trio side, *I Got Rhythm* (Norman Granz was right when he said a rhythm section usually just got in Tatum's way) and the best of the 1937-1940 sides. None of these records lack interest, and the best of them are without dull or badly dated passages. The material ranges from ballads (*Stormy Weather, Gone with the Wind, Begin the Beguine*, etc.) to swing standards (*Rosetta, The Shiek, Tea for Two*, etc.). Five choruses of *St. Louis Blues* are a Tatumized boogie-woogie; the rest in the swing-almost-bop style.

An exhaustive description of each track would make this more than a review, but a few can be examined without getting too long-winded. More than any other, *St. Louis Blues* runs

through the history of jazz from boogie to bop, though omitting the stride style except for a very few left-hand figures, which is just as well in a blues. It begins with a traditional Pinetop Smith shake, followed by two choruses of boogie. The right hand plays fairly standard boogie figures, with a few individual Tatum surprises. The fourth chorus is the *St. Louis Blues* verse, the only time it appears, followed by three more choruses of boogie. The non-boogie choruses are more interesting, technically dazzling, as is usual for Tatum, but without the showiness which sometimes afflicted his less successful work. In the eighth through tenth bars of the eighth chorus occurs a line of even triplets which is one of those fascinating previews of bop, and which could easily have come from Bird or Bud in another context. The final chorus is like an excited Teddy Wilson.

*Rosetta* is still more of a virtuoso performance, though again without excess showiness; also again with little of the stride influence. *Rosetta* is a Hines tune, and Tatum here appropriately displays the Hines-derived elements in his style: a brittle, tense attack, and a number of short, crisp phrases in lightly shivered octaves. To these elements, though, he adds long rolling lines, often in triplets, and sometimes with modern turns. The first ten or twelve bars of the third chorus are particularly modern, with unexpected accents and phrases which disregard the bar divisions. One of these, a short, fast motif, is played, then immediately turned upside down, a wonderful effect.

To my ears, *Begin the Beguine* is the best balanced, and, taken as a whole, the most satisfying track on the Brunswick album. Tatum created



Courtesy Verve Records



a little masterpiece with this less than fascinating tune, a tune I for one always associated with Xavier Cugat. Except for a long introduction which also occurs as a coda in a somewhat varied form, the record includes only two choruses. The first, except for the bridge, is played over the two-note bass figure which is the basis for the introduction-coda. This chorus is advanced for 1940, particularly before the bridge. The bridge, though harmonically more conservative, is beautifully voiced. Both choruses stick fairly close to the melody, with delicate, and sometimes very modern, embellishments. This is a restrained performance for Tatum, and very tightly constructed. His time is perfect. I don't know whether the then young boppers knew this record; if they didn't, they should have. A historian, attempting to construct the history of jazz styles from records, without otherwise being told what happened, might be tempted to say that Tatum's harmonies were one of the main influences on early bop. Certainly, many of the chords he occasionally used as spices became the main dish during the forties.

These remarks apply primarily to chords, and not to melodic invention. The closest Tatum ever got, to my knowledge, to real bop lines on record was in *I Got Rhythm*, included in the Brunswick collection. This was made at the beginning of 1944, a date which leaves room for some possible influence on Tatum by the younger players. This is a trio side, made with Slam Stewart and Tiny Grimes, who provide fine rhythm, but who unfortunately also solo. The high point of the record is Tatum's chorus directly following Slam's. The first eight bars are composed of three bop lines, beautifully shaped, which make a balanced unit. They are followed by another unit of three similar phrases which form the second eight bars. The left hand is also spare and bop-pish (unusual for Tatum) in this passage. Note the chromatically leading chords going into the bridge. This bop style is one he chose not to use often in his later records, and even in most of the trio records from this period. The other trio sides here (of which *Moonglow* appears in both the Brunswick and Decca collections; it and *Cocktails for Two* form the only overlap) are gently swinging and generally shallow performances.

*Gone with the Wind*, *Stormy Weather*, *Chlo-E*, and *The Sheik* all date from 1937, and *Tea for Two* from 1939. *The Sheik* is mostly fast stride; *Tea for Two* is notable for

its chromatic key changes, possibly the first recorded use of this device (though as usual, someone might point out that Joplin or Morton did it first); and *Chlo-E* has some harmonies which were daring for the period. *Stormy Weather* is a relaxed, mellow performance, without real surprises, but sustaining a fine mood.

As noted, the Decca is the inferior of the two collections. Nothing here matches *Begin the Beguine* or the high points of *Rosetta* and *St. Louis Blues*, and some of the sides here are boring or downright embarrassing. A case in point is *Tiger Rag*, which may have some value as an exhibition of technique, but I have trouble staying for the end. The last couple of choruses, superstride under impossible downward runs, may interest some listeners. There is some more display in *Elegie*, both classical and stride, but little of interest. *Humoresque*, based on a melody by Dvorak, begins with a stomach-turning lilting passage, includes just a half chorus of rather gentle stride. I won't comment on the practice of "transforming" classical pieces into jazz, but will say that if it can be done successfully, it must start with better material than Tatum uses here.

The rest of the album is fortunately not this bad. Tatum's playing throughout is technically impeccable, and there is always the superficial, if brief, pleasure in listening to difficult passages well performed. Most of the tracks offer little that is stimulating or challenging to the contemporary ear, however. It is tempting to judge these records extra severely, though, knowing what Tatum was capable of. They certainly surpass most of the swing piano in richness of sound and subtle changes, if not always in "soul." Two in particular are worth noting: *Sweet Lorraine* and especially *Get Happy*. *Sweet Lorraine* does not match the ballads in the Brunswick album, but it is a fine, lyrical, swing-style interpretation. *Get Happy* is another virtuoso performance without being only that. It is mostly stride, incorporating a couple of phrases right out of Waller, but with a more complex left hand and long runs and phrases in the right. This is the finest example I know of the stride element in Tatum, with the same light, expert gaiety that Fats and James P. had at their best.

The Brunswick album is highly recommended; the Decca will probably interest only those Tatum admirers who are willing to pick the jewels out of the mud.

—Mait Edey

## BLUE J.



In a wonderfully relaxed and happy blowing session for trombonist J. J. Johnson with three jazz cohorts of distinction. (Max Roach, drums. Paul Chambers, bass, and Tommy Flanagan, piano) proved that northern jam, though sometimes tart, has a sweetness all its own. "We had a session," J. J. remarked afterward. Translation: a delicious *tour de force* for cats. We think you'll agree.

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## Reconsiderations 4



Courtesy Capitol Records

RED NICHOLS: 1930, *China Boy* and *Peg o' My Heart* (originally BR 4877) *The Sheik of Araby* and *Shim-me-sha-wabble* (BR 4885), 1929: *Dinah* and *Indiana* (BR 4373) and *Tea for Two* and *I Want to Be Happy* (BR 4724). Reissued, BL 58808 (Brunswick), 1950.

Red Nichols is a name at which jazz purists, both ancient and modern, have often been wont to sneer. His career has, in fact, followed an increasing spiral of commercialism to the present, when he can be said to be playing practically no jazz at all. This has not always been the case, as the records under consideration will emphatically show. The truth is that Nichols, now settled into a comfortable sinecure, was at one time struggling along in the front ranks of jazz. Almost thirty years ago, just at the dawn of the thirties, he and his bands were true progressives, in the most healthy sense of the word; they were playing lively, experimental jazz of a type later to become world famous. Historically, then, these records are of interest, because almost a decade before the rise of men like Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Jim-

my Dorsey and Gene Krupa, all of whom appear here as sidemen, Nichols was experimenting with roughly Chicago-style big-band swing, if I may use these somewhat ambiguous terms. A little later, music of this general type caught the fancy of the whole country and changed the whole direction of jazz.

Musically speaking, these sides, while streaky, are often very, very good for a number of reasons. First there is still present on these records the exuberant, swinging, slightly raucous flavor of the kid-jazz of Chicago—the joy of the white youngsters who had discovered jazz not so long before. These early Nichols records feature uninvolved arrangements by young Glenn Miller, and clarinet solos by Benny Goodman, who had just left off sounding like Mezzrow on the first chorus and Pee Wee Russell on the next, and was beginning to sound like Benny Goodman all the time. We have Joe Sullivan, very rough and tough, coupled with Gene Krupa, and these two provide a beat which, while sometimes inclined to shoulder weaklings to the wall, is steady and good. These and others showed brilliant futures; and

there were some who, though they were to become famous later, never played better. I should put Nichols here, and Jimmy Dorsey, too. Dorsey is somewhat of a puzzle; most of the time we are certain that he has very little feeling for jazz, that he just noodles from one chorus to the next. Occasionally, however, he has played genuinely fine solos, and to my mind he never played better than he did on some of the slow pieces here, very quiet and thoughtful, still very much under the influence of Beiderbecke. Charley Teagarden, who shows little at present except shallow flamboyancy, plays very simply and sparsely here, and the style becomes him. Babe Russin, who became just another tenor, sounds here like fire-breathing Bud Freeman; he is game for anything, and he swings most of the time.

These are most of the important men, with the most important one of all saved for last. On every record is Jack Teagarden, who towers above his sidemen, and brings to these sessions the consciousness of greatness. Jack Teagarden is playing well today; he has never played badly. It is on these records, however, that we can clearly see the terrific impact that this man has had on jazz. The deference shown him here is obvious; he dominates every side overwhelmingly, both when the arrangement is built around him, and when he appears as vocalist, or with one chorus, or even a coda. He clearly inspired everyone on these dates, just as surely as he changed the whole approach to the trombone. With Teagarden, in fact, the trombone became a lyric instrument, a fact which has not become too widely known.

The issue which I have is an old ten-inch Brunswick lp, now out of print.<sup>1</sup> Mine contains these eight representative pieces: *China Boy*, *Peg o' My Heart*, *The Sheik of Araby*,

<sup>1</sup> Brunswick 54008 collects twelve titles from two previous ten-inch lps and 78 rpm albums—Ed.

*Shim-me-sha-wabble*, *Indiana*, *Dinah*, *Tea for Two*, and *I Want to Be Happy*—all very well known. First up is *China Boy*, a Chicagoan favorite, like so many of the others here. Teagarden, while he has no part in the song proper, contributes one of his favorite introductions, a beautiful cadenza over a richly chorded background. The band begins to come in, a bit roughly, with the first ensemble chorus, and Teagarden helps them over the bumps with a couple of fine progressions before retiring. The general band sound is quite archaic and rather charming, if you like the period: the brasses barking out the theme in a conventional way, with the saxophones moaning fruitily in the background. Nichols gets the first chorus, which the program notes assure us is often considered "his very best"—and, as a matter of fact, it is not bad—very enthusiastic and Bixian. The best is coming up, however: Goodman takes a hair-raising chorus. This is one of the occasions I had in mind when I said that he was beginning to sound like Goodman: he gives the rhythm section a terrific shot, and they roar ahead without him. Sullivan takes two very good choruses, very aggressive, percussive piano playing. He sounds a little less like Earl Hines here than he often did at the time; his solo, particularly near the end of the second chorus, depends on a series of charging riffs that somehow brings Louis Armstrong to mind. It is very well done: the band comes in for a carefully arranged last chorus—courtesy of Glenn Miller—and then the record closes with a pretty Teagarden coda, in the same style as the introduction.

*Peg o' My Heart* is another simple little Miller arrangement that has awakened echoes on many later records: here I am thinking of a fine Commodore recording by Miff Mole featuring Bobby Hackett and Pee Wee Russell. It opens with an interesting figure by three saxophones, followed by a very plain and effective solo by Charley Teagarden. The opening figure returns: it is used to separate each chorus. Babe Russin plays a very interesting solo, proving that he knows the inside of a chord, for which the notes duly apologize: "[he] has since altered his style to a more flowing, graceful manner." Goodman is next, very good, with a very modern sound. Then Teagarden is on, with a brilliant muted chorus, very fine over background chords. Glenn Miller, while completely eclipsed as trombonist, nevertheless claims real credit for his taste in

arranging here: Teagarden is always backed up in the way most congenial to him. An element of corn intrudes with a double-time half-chorus led by Nichols, but sanity reasserts itself, and the boys go out with an ensemble coda.

*The Sheik of Araby*, which follows, is a Teagarden classic, and has been imitated on records numerous times, with especial success by Teagarden himself with Condon's group. The special introduction features the style of the fatuous singer of the twenties who is rudely interrupted by Jack, who goes on to sing the rest of the introduction as it should be sung, and then plays the tune as it should be played. One of the faults of this particular reissue is that not enough Teagarden vocals are included; his timing, quality and beautiful pitch put just about everyone else in the shade as far as I am concerned. His trombone solo here is a masterpiece of inventive swing, worked against the theme played straight by Glenn Miller. It is very difficult to follow this sort of thing, but Benny Goodman is well up to it. After him, however, there is an unpleasant anticlimax, presumably by Nichols, although the notes suggest Charley Teagarden. The band finishes the chorus, and Sullivan leads expertly into the ending, which is sung by Jack. The whole thing is a beautiful demonstration that an unsequential tune need never be a handicap.

*Shim-me-sha-wabble* is very rough in the ensembles, but features an excellent string of solos by Russin, sounding more like Bud than ever. Goodman, Teagarden and Sullivan. Krupa is a bit obnoxious behind Sullivan, with his wood blocks (program notes: "Krupa is especially effective behind Joe's solo"), but the record has good swing: the tune is a swinging one. The final chorus has a very lively riff—perhaps by Glenn Miller—which helps keep this bunch of individualists together.

On the other side we find *Indiana*, noteworthy chiefly for excellent solos by Goodman and Teagarden, backed by Carl Kress's guitar. Goodman is rough and angular, showing his Teschemacher-Russell pedigree. Teagarden is stormy, too, and very energetic. Nichols plays a fair solo.

*Dinah* finds Jack taking the melody at the outset. Playing the melody has never been too popular; it is too difficult. Teagarden can do it. Goodman and Russin split a chorus, with Russin getting the bridge; they sound good, especially Benny. Carl Kress

is very much in evidence: he gives Goodman a shuffle rhythm that might have proved embarrassing but does not. Teagarden takes a solo, too, one of his finest for this period. He opens humorously with a fanfare, then proceeds beautifully and originally through the release where the band picks him up again. They all go out as Jack can be heard improvising in the background—a very good record.

The last two numbers are from Youman's *No No Nanette*. The first, *Tea for Two*, is extraordinarily simple and beautiful. Adrian Rollini leads through the first chorus, over harmony by Glenn Miller and Jack, and then we are offered a chorus split three ways. The first portion is played very beautifully by Jimmy Dorsey; it is quiet, withdrawn and pensive. Joe Sullivan gets the release, and Jack finishes up, in superb style, playing long, lazy notes over the shifting chords. The band plays the last part over again, and Teagarden takes his best coda of all—blustery at first, subsiding into idyllic calm. The record maintains a rare quality: there is, whether from Dorsey's plaintive little solo, or Teagarden's long, quiet phrasing, a definite impression of melancholy to be gained from it. I find it difficult to avoid superlatives, because it has always been one of my favorite recordings.

The set closes with the flag-waver *I Want to Be Happy*. It is especially pleasing to note how the fundamentally corny conception of the melody is altered into pure swing by Jack Teagarden. His solo is, simply, a masterpiece. Elsewhere this side is not so fortunate. The ensemble is very micky, until Teagarden gets in; and then the swing is as complete as anyone could wish. Dorsey's solo is not bad, but noticeably inferior to his work on *Tea for Two*. Nichols is uninspired, but Russin and Krupa, in a furious duel, restore some vitality, at which point Jack takes over again for the ending at top speed.

This is enough to say about these records. Historically, I repeat, they are interesting, but this is a poor recommendation to the music lover, and these works do not need it. They contain some beautiful and forceful passages by some very good musicians, and that makes them worth hearing. Those who have forgotten them, or who have never heard them, will be surprised at their quality.

—Charles Alva Hoyt

(Contributions to this department are invited.)



## REVIEWS: BOOKS

## Langston Hughes'

by Mimi Clar

*Tambourines to Glory* by Langston Hughes. John Day Co., 1958.

"Girl," says Laura Reed to Essie Belle Johnson, "with your voice, raise your fat disgusted self up out of that relief chair and let's go make our fortune saving souls." And so, one June night Essie and Laura begin to shake their tambourine and save souls on the corner of 126th and Lenox Avenue in Harlem. With the help of two converted sinners—Birdie Lee, a little old lady drummer who follows the church into its first home in an old apartment building, and Chicken Crow-For-Day (a *real sinner*) who becomes an upright deacon even though he lies about his age on the night of his conversion—Essie and Laura see their Tambourine Temple grow until it moves into a rundown theater with a thousand seats, an upstairs, and a marquee.

Big-Eye Buddy Lomax, Harlem flunky for a white leader of the numbers game, has his eye on the church (and on Laura, too) and soon moves in to take advantage of a good thing by selling bottles of Holy Water from the Jordan at a dollar a bottle ("Just turn on the tap, that's all") and by having Laura give out numbers from the pulpit in "Lucky Texts."

Of course, the plot is but one more variation on the good versus evil theme, Essie, whose rock is Jesus and whose meaningless life has suddenly taken on purpose thanks to her church work and to her daughter's coming from the South to live with her again ("I thrills when I touches the Bible!"), stands for the "good"; Laura, whose rocks are men, liquor, and numbers and who can indulge in her vices thanks to the church

funds ("I thrills when I touch that man!"), is the "bad." Good naturally triumphs as Essie, Birdie, and Crow-For-Day make plans to add a day nursery, clubhouse, and playground to their facilities, and as Essie's innocent daughter, Marietta, will marry young C. J. from the church without any interference from Buddy or Laura, who eventually outsmart themselves.

Although Hughes stresses that all characters are imaginary and that the book "is in no sense an attack on organized religion, or on cults as such, but is a fictional exposé of certain ways in which religion is misused in large city communities today by various types of unscrupulous leaders who might be called 'gospel racketeers,' preying upon the gullibility of simple people," I hope that no one will be misled into thinking of *Tambourines to Glory* as a portrait of the Negro, either as represented by the lust and weaknesses of pleasure-seeking Laura and Buddy or by the artlessness of Essie or the impressionability and pliability of some of the congregation. The characters have been necessarily stereotyped or caricatured to limn more realistically a small segment of the community at large.

To those who would misconstrue or condemn the goings-on as anything beyond the circumstances and plight of a people victimized by an environment, I would recommend a more careful reading of the book's "One Lost Lamb" chapter, which unobtrusively gets in a little preaching of its own.

Primarily, *Tambourines* illustrates the power and function of the church

cure for colds and fevers; a song text reads "God gave the people the rainbow sign—No more water but fire next time . . ."; Laura dreams about fish—782—and decides to play that number next day), boasts ("My in the Negro community: the church as a fountain of religion and spiritual comfort and salvation; the church as an outlet for social contacts and convivial life; the church as a source of entertainment ("They like color, glitter, something to look at along with these fine rhythms we're putting down."); the church as a front for unscrupulous persons out for personal gain; and the church as an avenue of emotional escape for those whose lives are otherwise empty and frustrated. In short, the Negro church is a unique, picturesque institution where both festive drama and spiritual communion stand side by side.

Hughes tells his tale in a vivid folk idiom. The language of his characters swings with jive talk (Is your wig gone? Dig? put down, neat-all-reet, cool, solid), proverbial lore (Wine is a mocker and strong drink is a tempter; You should be as good on Monday as you are on Sunday; Blessed is he that giveth, and blessed is he that receiveth; to burn a candle at both ends), proverbial comparisons (purple as Devil's ink, lower than a snake's belly, innocent as a lamb, naked as a kangaroo, grinning like a chesscat, temper like a tiger, float away like soap bubbles and bust, to look like a grand piano: full in front, streamlined rear), alliterations (green as gall), beliefs and superstitions ("I was borned to bad luck," says Essie; Laura cites a whiskey

(continued on page 36)

# Tambourines to Glory

by Le Roi Jones

*Tambourines to Glory* by Langston Hughes. John Day Co., 1958.

I suppose, by now, Langston Hughes's name is synonymous with "Negro Literature." For many, he is the only Negro in the world of books. This, of course, is unfortunate. But in quite another sense this is as it should be. Hughes is probably the last "major" Negro writer who will be allowed to write what could be called a "Negro Literature" (as differentiated from literature in general): to impose upon himself such staggering limitations.

Now, don't for a moment take this to be a plea for "assimilationist" literature (i.e., novels, etc. written by Negroes that assiduously avoid any portrayal of Negro life in much the same way that the "Black Bourgeoisie" avoid any attempt to connect them, even vicariously, with blues, jazz, "greens" or anything else even remotely "Negroid"). I am merely saying, that the Negro artist, and especially the Negro writer, A. E. (After Ellison), has come too far and has experienced so much that cannot be, even vaguely, attributed to the "folk tradition." And that to confine all of his thinking, hence all his writing to that tradition (with no thought as to where that tradition has got to; what significance that tradition has, say, in relation to the macrocosm of American life in general, or for that matter, man's life on earth) is to deny that there is any body of experience outside of that tradition. A kind of ethnic solipsism. Poet Robert Creeley says (in quite another context . . . but with the same general implications . . .) "A tradition becomes inept when it blocks the necessary conclusion: it

says we have felt nothing, it implies others have felt more." This does not mean that the Negro writer, for instance, ought to stop using Negro Life In America as a theme; but certainly that theme ought only to be a *means*. For the Negro writer to confuse that means with the end (let us arbitrarily say that end is "art") is stultifying and dangerous. For these reasons, Hughes, to my mind, is a folklorist. He abdicated from the world of literature just after his second book of verse (*Fine Clothes To The Jew*: 1927); since then, he has sort of crept backwards and away from significant literature, until finally (with this book) he has gotten to a kind of meaningless ethnic name-dropping.

I am pretty well acquainted with the Negro in literature. I know of Hughes's early writing: his first novel (*Not Without Laughter*, 1930), his early poetry (some of it very beautiful, a rough mixture of spoken blues, Masters, and Imagists). I know of his affiliation with the "Harlem School" (Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Countee Cullen, and a few others) and the importance and merit of the "School" (Toomer's novel *Cane* is among the three greatest novels ever written by a Negro in America. The others: Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*). I also know of the "School's" (or at least Hughes's) wonderful credo . . . "To express our individual dark-skinned selves without fear or shame. If the white people are pleased we are glad. If they are not, it doesn't matter . . . If colored people are pleased, we are glad. If they are not, their displeasure doesn't matter either." This credo almost singularly served to notify the

world that the Negro artist had got to the point where he was ready to challenge that world solely on the basis of his art. Hughes's attitude, along with the even fiercer attitude of Claude McKay, and the more intellectually sound attitudes of Jean Toomer and Countee Cullen, was a far cry from the "head patting" parochial "literature" of Chesnutt, Dixon, Dunbar and the so-called "Talented Tenth" of the 1890's. Hughes and the rest were interested in dispelling once and for all the Negro novel of apology. . . . (For example, from an early novel by a Negro, Charles Chesnutt; he relates an incident where "A refined Afro-American is forced to share a Jim Crow car with dirty, boisterous, and drunken Negroes.") . . . of fawning appeals for "an alliance between the better class of colored people and the quality white folks." The "School" was also reacting against the need for a Negro artist to be a pamphleteer, a social organizer, or, for that matter, anything else except an artist. This, of course, was the beginning of the Negro in literature; and the beginning of the end for a "Negro literature."

"Negro literature" is simply *folk literature*, in the sense I choose to take it. It has the same relationship to literature *per se* (that is, to that writing which can be fully significant to all the world's peoples) that any folk art has to art in general. It is usually too limited in its appeal, emotional nuances, intellectual intentions, etc. to be able to fit into the mainstream of world art. Of course, when a folk art does have enough breadth of intellectual, emotional, and psychological concern to make its

presence important to those outside of its individual folk tradition, then it has succeeded in thrusting itself up into the area of serious art. And here, by "serious," I mean *anything* containing what Tillich calls an "Ultimate Concern" (God, Death: Life after—the concerns of art) and not as some people would have it, merely anything taught in a university. "Negro Literature" is only that: a literature of a particular folk. It is of value only to that particular folk and perhaps to a few scholars, and certain kinds of literary *voyeurs*. It should not make pretensions of being anything else.

Of course, utilizing the materials of a certain folk tradition to fashion a work of art (the artist, certainly, must work with what he has, and what is closest to him) can lead to wonderful results: Lorca, Villon, Joyce and Dublin, Faulkner, Ellison. But merely relying on the strength and vitality of that tradition, without attempting (either because one lacks talent or is insincere) to extend the beauty or meaning of that tradition into a "universal" statement cannot result in art. Bessie Smith is certainly in the folk tradition, but what she finally got to, through that tradition, is, as they say, "something else." *Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out*, could almost be sung by Oedipus leaving Thebes. As Pound said of great literature, "language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree." That is art. A work that never leaves or points to some human reference outside a peculiar folk tradition is at best only folklore.

Ralph Ellison is a Negro writer. His novel *Invisible Man* won the National Book Award as the best American novel of 1952. It is among the best books written by an American in the last twenty years. The novel clearly deals with what is superficially a "Negro theme." Its characters are primarily Negroes, and its protagonist is a Negro. And although it is this "Negro theme" that gives the book its special twist, the theme is no more than a point of departure for Ellison. It is no more a "folk tale" than Faulkner's *The Sound And The Fury*. Ellison's horrifying portrait of a man faced with the loss of his identity through the weird swinishness of American society is probably made more incisive by its concentration on one segment of that society. Ellison uses the folk materials: jazz, blues, church songs, the southern heritage, the whole phenomena of Harlem. But he "charges them with meaning," extending the provincial into the univer-

sal. He makes art. Ellison, by utilizing the raw materials of his environment and the peculiar cultural heritage of the Negro, has not written a "Negro novel" but a novel. Ellison is a Negro writing literature and great literature at that.

To get back to Langston Hughes, Hughes and the "Harlem School" proposed (the credo was written around 1926 in *The Nation*) essentially to resist writing mere folklore. They were to become "full-fledged" artists; though bringing in the whole of the Negro's life. Jean Toomer's novel *Cane* succeeded; some of Cullen's poetry, and Langston Hughes's early verse. Toomer's is perhaps the greatest achievement. His *Cane* was the most significant work by a Negro up until Richard Wright's *Native Son*. Cullen's failure to produce great art is not reproachable. He just wasn't talented enough perhaps. Perhaps Langston Hughes is not talented enough, either. But there are the poems of his early books. "The Negro Speaks Of Rivers" is a superb poem, and certainly there must be something else where that came from. And though he is never as good as a prose writer, *Not Without Laughter*, his first novel, with all its faults, did have a certain poise and concern nowhere after so seriously approached. Some of the famous "Simple" pieces (started as a series of sketches for *The Chicago Defender*), at their best, contain a genuine humor; but most of them are crushed into mere half-cynical yelping (through a simulated laughter) at the almost mystical white oppressors. At any rate, Hughes has not lived up to his credo. Or perhaps the fault is that he has only lived up to a part of it. "To express our individual dark-skinned selves." Certainly, that is not the final stance of an artist. A writer must be concerned with more than just the color of his skin. Jesse B. Simple, colored man, has to live up to both sides of that title, the noun as well as the adjective.

Since this is a review of a particular book rather than a tract on the responsibilities of the Negro artist, as it must seem I have made it. I must mention the book, *Tambourines to Glory*. There's not much I can say about the book itself. Probably, if a book of similar literary worth were to be written by another author it would not be reviewed (probably, it would have never gotten published). But the Negro writer (especially Hughes, since he is so well known as such) raises certain peculiar questions that are not in the least "literary." I have tried to answer

some of them. But the book is meaningless, awkward, and never gets past its horribly inept plot. In fact, were it not for, say, the frequent introduction of new characters within the book, it would be almost impossible to distinguish the novel, itself from the blurb summary on the jacket. "Laura Reed and Essie Belle Johnson, two attractive Harlem tenement women with time on their hands and no jobs, decide to start their own gospel church on a street corner. Laura wishes to make money. Essie honestly desires to help people." The characterizations don't get much past that.

Even as a folklorist Hughes leaves much to be desired. His use of Harlem slang is strained and rarely precise. When a Harlem con man "Big-Eye Buddy" is trying to make little Marietta (from the South), he says hiply . . . "Men don't start asking a sharp little chick like you what school you're in." "Sharp?" Marietta replies incredulously. Buddy says, "Stacked, solid, neat-all-reet, copasetic, baby!" It reeks of the Cab Calloway — Cotton Club — zoot suit era. No self-respecting young Harlemite hipster would be caught dead using such passé, "uncool" language today. As they say, "Man, that stuff went out with pegs." At least a folk artist ought to get the tradition of the folk straight.

But there are so many other faults in the very structure and technical aspect of the novel, as to make faults in the writer's own peculiar stylistic device superfluous. None of the basic "novelistic devices" are used correctly. Any advance in the plot is merely stated, never worked into the general texture of the novel. By mentioning the landmarks of Harlem and its prominent persons, occasionally, and by having his characters use a "Negro" dialect to mouth continually old stock phrases of Negro dissatisfaction with white America, Hughes apparently hoped to at least create a little atmosphere and make a good folk yarn out of it. But he doesn't even succeed in doing that this time.

It's like a jazz musician who knows that if you play certain minor chords it sounds kind of bluesy, so he plays them over and over again; year in, year out. A kind of tired "instant funk." Certainly this kind of thing doesn't have anything much to do with jazz: just as Hughes's present novel doesn't really have anything to do with either literature *per se*, or, in its imperfect and shallow rendering, the folk tradition he has gotten so famous for interpreting.



*Jazz 1959*. The Metronome Yearbook 1959. Edited by Bill Coss. Assisted by Robert A. Perlongo.

The editors of this yearbook take the position that jazz is presently in a static condition because no new forms have been invented in the past ten years. Their hope for the future is for something new and different, more mature, more profound. They write off much of what is being done today as trivial because it is development of an established conception.

Though I agree that there are musicians who play jazz in a bloodless way that could be called static, I submit that this is a characterological attitude that has long been with us and is not a specific characteristic of contemporary playing. It is true that no soloist or writer with a completely original conception has recently captured the fancy of the jazz world, but it does not follow that today's jazz is static. It is impossible to apply that adjective to the expansive lively music being played by (to name a few) Zoot Sims, Al Cohn, Bob Brookmeyer, Cannonball, Sonny Rollins, Harry Edison, Dizzy, Miles, Jim Hall, Lee Konitz, Hank Jones, Donald Byrd, Paul Chambers, dozens more. Though none of these men have invented a brand-new style lately, their work continues to mature, their expression becomes more consistently complete, their artistic sense becomes more highly refined.

In music, as in automotive design, there is little value in making structural changes for the sake of change alone. New forms arise out of the functional requirements of the artist. As Mozart carried the musical inventions of Haydn and Gluck to artistic heights of his own without inventing anything really "new," so many of today's jazzmen are refining and developing the vein of playing established by the innovators who came before them. Creativity and artistic expression are achieved on many levels. The discovery of new forms is not the only criterion for a healthy jazz atmosphere.

The editors also remark that "nearly everyone who could write, did write about jazz, many in a way that was calculated to confuse." I found myself applying this statement to much of the writing in this book. I quote a paragraph from page 10: "The basic lack in jazz—expressed in the two song titles of the Swing Era: *It Don't Mean A Thing If It Ain't Got That Swing* and *It 'Taint Whatcha Do, It's The Way Thatcha Do It*—was most excellently and beautifully presented by Basie and his

band and carried to various extremes by a number of bands, both in record studios and on the road. In a big band, particularly in these big bands, the lack—and some people were inclined not to think of those affirmatives as expressing negatives—was not as apparent as in a smaller group where sound could not overpower judgment. Not as apparent in those bands as in the orchestra of Duke Ellington, where a studied and peculiar sophistication of long-standing made swing less important than thought."

Here is a model of indirect comment. After reading it over dozens of times I am still unsure of the writer's precise viewpoint. The verb "lack" is frequently used as a noun by the editors ("Sonny Rollins . . . [is] impeded by some of the lacks in the style to which he seemed once to belong.") with no definition of the meaning of the term as applied. One does not possess a lack; one lacks something. Such usage is evasive.

A great deal of the comment in the "History Of The Year" is well presented. Much of the writing could be clarified, however. The statement that the majority of "hard-boppers" comprise an unimportant segment of jazz needs more specific argument, as does the condemnation of Monk as "picturesquely inept." In the section titled "A Hope For The Future" is the statement ". . . we believe that the ills that do exist will become the rhythm and blues of tomorrow . . ." leaving the reader to decide for himself which of the "ills" are meant. The "impediments in progress" listed are vaguely psychological generalizations of little value to the musician. The advice to the listener on appreciation of jazz as an art is also too general. "Read a book on general esthetics . . ." Why the reluctance to recommend a specific source? On page 16 is the statement, ". . . more minds of quality are becoming involved in jazz" without identification of the owners of these minds.

The year's awards to outstanding musicians are generally well deserved. I question the attitude toward Miles, ("a consummate artist whose sense of humor stands between him and the greatness of which he is possessed") Philly Joe, Monk, and Sonny Rollins, and I am surprised at the outrageous statement that "Chico Hamilton stood for what was musically genuine." I am pleased to see Charles Mingus receiving credit for his recent work, but I find the description of it here extremely uninformative. "Filled with bleeding, brooding, and blessing

. . . searching for profundity," tells me nothing.

Bill Coss's sketch on Erroll Garner is quite nicely done, although there is a tendency to overromanticize him. The reference to the "magic" with which Erroll cuts a couple of minutes out of a number to get it down to air time is naïve. The accompanying photographs are charming.

Frank Driggs has contributed an encouraging report on current musical activity in Kansas City, submitting a long roster of names that he says belong to some very good jazzmen. Nat Hentoff's sympathetic analysis of the conditions that produced the popular decline of many still creative jazzmen of the thirties is presented clearly and with refreshing logic.

The article on modern jazz by Jack Maher expands the editorial viewpoint expounded in the opening articles. This yearning for a change indicates his dissatisfaction with what is being played by the younger generation of jazz musicians. He minimizes the effect that George Russell's work is having on musicians like Bill Evans, Art Farmer and Bob Brookmeyer. His definition of "realism" and mystification of the term "soul" as used by the musician contains an idea but is not well expressed. I don't mind his categorizations as much as I mind his tendency to dismiss entire categories once he has delineated them. In his plea for "more and wider separation among our players" he fails to take into consideration the fact that today's low-cost transportation and communication system has nearly eliminated the fully developed isolated jazzman. A musician lives by his ears, and what he hears is bound to affect what he plays. Since today there is more opportunity than ever before for every musician to hear the work of others, it is not surprising that there is an amalgamation of influence. However, I find it impossible to think of the playing of any individual musician of stature as interchangeable with that of another. Originating forms is certainly not the only avenue of creativity that is artistically satisfying. As nature constantly illustrates, variations on a theme can be an unending source of wonder and delight.

The photographs throughout this book are interesting, pertinent, and generally of good quality. The folio of jazz festival impressions by Robert Parent, despite his array of expensive cameras, includes a number of quite ordinary snapshots. He caught Miles, Gerry Mulligan and the Farmer twins at interesting moments, but the col-

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lection would have been improved with more selective editing and some cropping with a keener eye for composition. A fuzziness in many of the shots throughout the book is either because of poor focus, extreme enlargement or faulty reproduction.

Herb Snitzer's pictures of the late Lester Young aren't as sharp as they might be, but indicate a sensitive eye for the expressive moment. The book's best photography is Bill Spilka's Miles Davis and Charles Mingus portraits, Burt Goldblatt's study of Art Farmer, and Parent's shot of Bird, Monk and Roy Hayes at the Open Door.

The sections of the book devoted to the art of writing are far inferior to the writing about the art of playing. There is a short story and a poem by Robert A. Perlono, three poems by Aaron Miller and two by Robert S. Sward. The poetry is pretty bad; the implication that it is written in some sort of jazz genre is insultingly presumptuous. The story *Jollity On A Treadmill* is a grotesque fantasy and powerful emetic. It is amazing that such a noxious assortment of affectation, fatuousness, tastelessness, mawkishness, pointlessness, silly symbolism, parlor psychology, and tabloid English has been crowded into such a short space, and I congratulate the author on his gall. The

current notion among certain writers and poets that the appellation "jazz" will excuse any amount of amateurish balderdash puts a strain on the digestive tract. This sort of thing richly deserves all the abuse that can possibly be heaped upon it.

Tom Feelings' "Portfolio of Jazz In Art" is a series of dull cartoons of taffy-twisted gargoyles holding musical instruments, only slightly more crude and tasteless than those god-awful portraits of jazz personalities in *Birdland*. Here again the subject matter is used as an exemption from the requirements of good taste. What is a "jazz artist" anyway? Or a "jazz poet"? By the same token I suppose Toulouse-Lautrec was a brothel artist, Whitman a labor poet, and Bernard Shaw a socialist playwright.

The remainder of this volume includes a thorough explanation of the problems involved in setting up a stereo rig and a list of suggested units and their approximate cost; a listing of the favorite records of seven drummers evidently chosen at random; a selective list of jazz records reviewed in *Metronome* during 1958 that represents the critical point of view of that magazine and a fair cross-section of the year's recording activity.

—Bill Crow

**CLAR**

(continued from page 33)

mother could jive a man back, make him run and butt his head against the wall, lay down his month's salary at her feet, then beg her for a nickel"; and "I carried a pistol, called it Dog—because when it shot it barked just like a dog."), poetic adjectives (tower-tall, lighthouse grin), slang terms (do-re-mi, simoleons, konk, Abe Lincolns, live high on the hog, grease your palm, let your hair down), racial terminology (brownskin, ofay, rounder, songster, musicianer), a slavery-time joke based on a folk tale ("Thank God for this ham, even if the Devil did bring it!"), and references to the heroes of the folk—those who have "made it," who have risen above their surroundings and "the problem" to achieve national recognition (Cozy Cole, Sarah Vaughan, Joe Louis, Milt Jackson, Dorothy Dandridge, Mahalia Jackson, Ward Sisters, Teddy Wilson, Eartha Kitt, Lena Horne).

*Tambourines to Glory* is fast, light, entertaining reading and could be adapted to other media besides liter-

ature; it lends itself to TV, radio and theater presentation as well. I kept visualizing it as a play even before I noticed on the lp accompanying the book that the author has dramatized it too.

The *Tambourines* record album (Folkways FG 3538), with songs written by Langston Hughes and Jobe Huntley and sung by the Porter Singers with Ernest Cook at Second Canaan Baptist Church in Harlem, sounds like the unrehearsed and spontaneous waves of music and rhythm that nonprofessionals perform in churches all over the country. The garbled words, the spur-of-the-moment "Hallelujah's" and "Amen's," the tambourine player and other "musicianers" create an authentic live-service atmosphere that matches that of the Tambourine Temple in the book. It does not represent the best in Negro church music, though, and I'd recommend tuning in radio broadcasts from the churches or the gospel disc jockies over a period of time in order to grasp more fully the various musical qualities of gospel music. Song texts are those appearing in the pages of the book.

—Mimi Clar

THE JAZZ REVIEW

# ***the Blues***

## **CRYING MOTHER BLUES**

Dear mother's dead and gone to glory, my old dad has strayed away  
Dear mother's dead and gone to glory, my old dad has strayed away  
Only way to meet my Maker have to change my lowdown way

Nobody knows my trouble but myself and the good Lord  
Nobody knows my trouble but myself and the good Lord  
I used to have a sweet woman to love me but now she treats me like a lowdown dog

Tombstone's my pillow, graveyard gonna be my bed  
Tombstone's my pillow, graveyard gonna be my bed  
Blue skies gonna be my blanket and the pale moon gonna be my spread

Black Jack Frost laid out at midnight, nightmares ride till the break of day  
Black Jack Frost laid out at midnight, nightmares ride till the break of day  
What's the use of lovin' some woman, some man's gonna steal your love away

Stop your cryin', do away with all of your tears  
Stop your cryin', do away with all of your tears  
If you can't stay with me, Mother, it must have been your time to leave from here

(Written and sung by Red Nelson. Decca 7171. Transcribed by Eric Townley.)

## **SIX COLD FEET IN THE GROUND**

Just remember me baby when I'm six feet in the cold, cold ground.  
Just remember me baby when I'm six feet in the cold, cold ground.

Always think of me Mama say there's a good man gone down  
Don't cry baby, after I'm gone.  
Don't cry baby, don't cry after I'm gone.  
I'm just a good man left you and done nothing wrong.

Just lay my body in six cold feet of ground.  
Just lay my body in six cold feet of ground.  
I'll have to be the loser when the deal goes around.

(By Leroy Carr. Bluebird 5963. Transcribed by Frank Driggs.)

## **PATROL WAGON BLUES**

I sure do hate that wagon, I mean that old police patrol,  
I sure do hate that wagon, I mean that old police patrol,  
The best thing I can wish for it, I hope it falls off in some hole.

An' if that wagon gets you make up your mind to go to jail,  
Yes, if that wagon gets you make up your mind to go to jail,  
You feel just like a hound-dog with a tin can tied to his tail.

(By Henry Allen. British H.M.V. B6377. Transcribed by Max Harrison.)  
(Contributions to this department are invited.)



by Nat Hentoff

## JAZZ IN PRINT

*Jazzmen*, edited by Fred Ramsey, Jr. and Charles Edward Smith, the first widely influential American book on jazz, will finally be available again, probably as you read this, in a Harcourt, Brace Harvest paperback. . .

According to the February, 1958, *Vogue*, people are talking about "... the odd idea of reviving tattooing not by sailors, but by painters and jazz lovers; one Newporter, female, has a speckled butterfly on her arm, and another, male, a heart. . ."

The butterfly spelled out "non-profit"—if you'd seen it when it was a caterpillar. . .

The March 5 *Down Beat* had interesting pieces by John Wilson on Connie Kay and Dom Cerulli on Philly Joe Jones. Dom, being then a staff member (he's since left) didn't get a by-line. After all, *Down Beat*, we all know there's an editorial staff of only three. At least give the men psychic income. Also worth reading is Jack Tynan's interview with Shelly Manne (no by-line for Tynan either, because he's on staff). Manne said: "I remember once a drummer told me he'd been to some club to dig Davey (Tough) but, he said, 'Davey didn't do anything.' He meant that there were no fireworks on the stand that he could see. Well, I told this guy, 'But man, that's what's beautiful about Davey. How does he make it move without doing anything?'"

Fine article, *Blues on the Danube*, by Francis Newton in the January 31 *New Statesman*, on jazz in Vienna. Friedrich Gulda, it turns out, is doubling on jazz flute these days.

As part of his exhaustive discographical series in *Schlagzeug*, the German jazz magazine, Horst Lange is now on part five of all the different versions of *Tiger Rag*. Part five has some 33 entries, including one by Andre Kostelanetz.

In an interview with composer Lukas Foss in the *Los Angeles Times*, February 21, classical critic Albert Goldberg begins: "A form of musical activity that promises to be new and possibly revolutionary will be unveiled in UCLA's Schoenberg Hall Thursday night when the Improvisation Chamber Ensemble makes an official debut in performances of improvised ensemble pieces after a year and a half of preparation and a few out-of-town 'tryouts.'" Foss is the pianist in and force behind the group. As Goldberg notes, "Improvisation, of course, is nothing new in music; such great composers as Bach, Mozart, Handel and Beethoven were noted for their extemporizations, and such 19th-century virtuosi as Liszt, Thalberg, Herz, Mendelssohn and Hummel were invariably expected to improvise at their public performances. Cadenzas to concertos by 18th-century composers were left to the improvisatory powers of soloists, a habit that even Beethoven followed until the 'Emperor' Concerto, although the custom may have been followed more in the breach than the observance. But since the middle of the 19th century solo improvisation has become practically obsolete in public performance; only an occasional pianist and a few organists indulge in it nowadays.

"Nor is ensemble improvisation unknown, as Mr. Foss points out. Harpsichord players were expected to fill out 18th-century ensembles from a figured bass that indicated harmonies; East Indian music uses ensemble improvisations based on traditional ragas; and contemporary jazz is a form of group improvisation. But in all these there is a given theme or a set of harmonies or rhythms as a foundation. Mr. Foss and his group start from scratch, as it were."

Foss told Goldberg: "What we are doing has nothing to do with jazz

though the idea came to me when listening to the Modern Jazz Quartet. It occurred to me that these musicians had the chance to be, really creative. So my idea was in part born of jealousy."

The latter is a point Jule Foster, classically trained dean of The School of Jazz, has been making for some time.

Foss will eventually publish a book explaining how he and the other musicians do it. "No one," he says, "was ever meant to play just a cello, for example, and to play only printed notes all his life. The life work of a musician has become nothing but slavery to the printed note. I do not mean in any sense to do away with the printed note or with written-down composition. I think, on the contrary, that composition will gain from improvisation. And a performer will come to understand better how to play the compositions of other people if he knows how compositions are made and if he can pick his notes on the strength of what others do. As a more practical kind of solfège the system should prove invaluable and might eventually make our present way of training musicians antiquated."

I'd suggest that any of you interested in the above hear Gunther Schuller's *String Quartet*. The B section of the third movement provides the musicians with improvisational or quasi-improvisational opportunities. The work as a whole is a remarkable one, and data on how it can be obtained (along with five other compositions commissioned for and performed during the 1957 Festival of Contemporary Music at the University of Illinois in co-operation with the Fromm Music Foundation of Chicago) by writing to The School of Music, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois. . .



Photo by Bill Spilka

Mimi Clar, a regular contributor to this journal, has been invited to read a paper on *Superstitions in the Blues* at the April meeting of the California Folklore Society in San Francisco. . .

You can contribute to the South Africa Defense Fund, 4 West 40th St., New York, N. Y. "to help fight racial injustice in The Union of South Africa."

The February *Jazz Journal* has the second part of a Muddy Waters interview by Tony Standish; a good *New York Scene* report by Dan Morgenstern, almost none of which had appeared in *Down Beat* and *Metro-nome*; and a strange but characteristic (of many European writers) article by John Martin, *culture conscious cats*. Here are two excerpts, reprinted because the Martin perspective is unfortunately quite representative. I have commented on the article in a chapter for a book Albert McCarthy and I are editing, and would welcome reactions, pro or con, from readers. I feel the Martin points are well meant but absurd:

"The idea of teaching jazz seems to me to be completely incongruous if the past is to be accepted as evidence. For it cannot be denied that the hard school of life is the proven breeding ground for future greats. Jazz is the musical expression of a personal outlook and, unlike knowledge, which can be transmitted, the art of expression in music must be acquired individually, otherwise the musician's work will represent a mere parody of life, or worse, a pale imitation of a more eloquent exponent.

"Musicians have always accepted the fact that to produce music of any lasting value a person must have, first of all, experienced the hard knocks of life. In the wider field of classical music both Chopin and Beethoven, together with many others, fought all their lives against illness and great personal handicaps. The almost unbearable anguish of King Oliver's horn playing the blues gives testimony to the poverty and prejudice of his times. The legend of Charlie Parker is a story of battle against the inevitable and is an expression in music which might never again be equalled. Parker would never have produced his contributions to jazz had he been assured a protection from the reverses of living. A cotton-wool world of respectability would have strangled Parker."

Don't study your horn, man; cultivate masochism, and acerate your soul.

COMING IN JULY . . .

JACK TEAGARDEN by Jay D. Smith.



# JAZZ

THE REVIEW

Other articles include **Blind Lemon Jefferson** by Paul Oliver, and a continuation of Tom Davin's *Conversations with James P. Johnson*. Reviews include **Cannonball** and **Johnny Griffin** by Bill Crow, **Lenny Bruce**, **Jelly Roll Morton**, and **Claude Thornhill** by Martin Williams, **Art Farmer** by Joe Goldberg, **Thad Jones** by Ross Russell, **Buddy Tate**, **Dicky Wells**, and **Lester Young** by Frank Driggs, and **Joe Turner** and **Brownie McGhee** by Mimi Clar. Reconsiderations of two **Lester Young** versions of *These Foolish Things* by H. A. Woodfin. There will be reviews of books and music folios, and as always, **The Blues and Jazz in Print** by Nat Hentoff.



The February 18 *Variety* reports from Fife, Scotland: "A minister tried out jazz to help fill his pews at Lumphinnans Parish Church here. Highspot of the evening service was the tune, *When The Saints Go Marching In*, played in stomp tempo by a local group, the Saints All-Stars. The minister, Rev. Angus Cameron Mackenzie said: 'This is far from being sacrilege. It is absurd for people to suggest that. I don't see why the organ should be more sacred than other instruments. The five all-stars also pepped up the tempo of hymns like *Onward, Christian Soldiers* and *Safe in the Arms of Jesus*.' Rev. Mackenzie added: 'By advertising this rhythm group I hope to get people to come to my evening service. I will try anything to get people to church in the evening.'

*There'll Always Be a Revolutionary Publicist:* A press release from Roulette:

"Hi:

"The recent Cuban revolutionary movement known as 'The 26th of July', has caught the imagination of people everywhere. The gallant fight and hard-won victory of the small band of rebels, is another stirring chapter in man's fight for freedom!

Now, from out of this revolution comes an inspiring, thrilling new march. . . . 'Spanish Marching Song', by Joe Reisman and His Orchestra. This was the march that the victorious Cuban freedom fighters sang and whistled as they marched from Oriente Province on to Havana!"

Hi:

Let's try the U.A.W. marching song next.

The following is quoted from John McLellan's February 19 *Boston Traveler* jazz column. It was an interview with George Wein about Newport and plans for expansion: "We're not accomplishing anything," Wein added. 'Just going along breaking even is not our purpose. We're got a big organization and there are a number of worthwhile things we'd like to do. But to do them, we need stability.' Well, this stability is something the Festival hopes to gain by expanding jazz activities along fairly commercial lines. That means other festivals, concerts and tours. And not just in the United States either. What this means to Wein is that all of his activities will be under the aegis of the Newport Jazz [sic] Festival. Right away this removes the possibility of a conflict of interests as George becomes involved in a number of outside activities.

"The first big commercial enterprise which Newport will enter is the series of three major festivals to be co-sponsored this summer with the Sheraton Corporation. These are set for Boston, Toronto and French Lick, Indiana. Plans are also in the works for Newport to sponsor a European concert tour in the fall. And maybe another one here in the States. There's even a remote possibility of still another in the Caribbean.

"The first thing one might ask," says John, "is: What possible reason could an ostensibly non-profit institution like the Newport Jazz Festival have for promoting these obviously commercial ventures?

"The answer is simple," says John, whose definition of simplicity might well elude me, "to raise money for at least two artistic but financially unprofitable projects. The most important of these is be a school of jazz. This will provide an opportunity for deserving young jazzmen to study under qualified instruction and with almost complete scholarship assistance. The second project will be a series of three or four concerts a year in New York City at some suitable place like Town Hall. These concerts will be conceived from an artistic rather than commercial point of view and, as a result, will very likely lose money."

What cant! Take that one sentence: "These concerts will be conceived from an artistic rather than commercial point of view." Is this an admission that Newport all along has been getting exemption from taxes as a nonprofit organization while strenuously trying to be commercial? Which, of course, has been exactly the case. Phil and Stephanie Barber have never pretended that the Music Inn or the concerts at the Music Barn during the regular season (except for the students' evening) are nonprofit. But they have already made possible The School of Jazz, now starting its third year, on which they lose money. And how about people like George Avakian and Anahid Ajemian who have already put on artistic concerts at Town Hall without preceding them with five years and more of circuses? I can think of no organization less entitled to a nonprofit halo than Newport, and the Wein interview with McLellan underlines more boldly than anything yet printed the Newport double talk that has repelled this writer for several years now. As Norman Granz once said about Newport, "Let them admit once that they're out for a buck, and not pretend to be what they're not."

The invaluable High School of Music and Art in New York was the site of a jazz alumni concert February 16. The jazz concert will probably now be an annual event. Recognition of jazz by a high school of this quality is more important in the long run than all of Newport's "festivals."

Ralph Gleason's jazz column is now also in the *Detroit Free Press* and *Minneapolis Tribune*. Ralph is now the most widely read jazz writer in the country, and probably in jazz history.

*George Lewis in England:* Benny Green in *The Observer*: "Lewis plays in an uncorrupted turn-of-the-century manner, recalling the days when jazz was the do-it-yourself music of an oppressed minority dumped in an alien society. It is here, on the fringes of the sociologist's world, that the value of Lewis's performance really lies. By strict musical standards his band is abysmal. Intonation is hopelessly at sea. Technical limitations cripple the soloists, and the lead given by 'Kid' Howard is so weak as to be at times literally inaudible. Melodic conceptions are rudimentary and the triad of the tonic major appears again and again in the improvisation of Lewis himself, the most articulate of the six. The appeal is elsewhere, in the miraculously preserved artistic naivete of musicians who were active before their music had begun to travel up-river to St. Louis and Chicago, artists whose repertoire of over 500 themes creates echoes of a vanished past in classics like 'Dallas Blues,' 'Canal Street Blues,' 'Georgia Camp Meeting' and 'Corrine Corrine.' The mystique which envelops this kind of revivalism in jazz has created for it audiences hungrier for the legends than for the music which inspired them, audiences unaware either of the serious limitations of the Lewis method or the place this kind of jazz style has in the history of the music."

Francis Newton in the *New Statesman*: "... a religious rather than a musical phenomenon, the visit of George Lewis. Mr. Lewis and his band of elderly players are authentic figures from New Orleans, and doubtless sincere. They were never in the first flight of New Orleans musicians, and it is only fair to assume that they are past their prime. And yet—there are crowds of fans to greet them on the station, the halls are full, and a jazz columnist declares that this visit it 'the greatest moment of my musical life.' Clearly New Orleans jazz has entered the realm of pure myth."



by Erik Weidemann



photo by Duncan P. Scheidt

## Ornithologically Speaking

Charlie Parker's record career embraces a short span of scarcely fourteen years—from April, 1941, (with Jay McShann) to December, 1954 (the Cole Porter album). During this period Parker took part in a total of 393 issued recordings—at least this is the number included in a discography that has been compiled for the forthcoming Parker biography by Richard Gehman and Robert Reisner.

This discography does not include airshots and private recordings, unless they have been released on records, but on the other hand it tries to cover all American and European issues. These are to be found under no less than 105 different labels: 42 in the U.S. and 63 in Europe, so it will be understood that the Parker discographer may have to check on quite a few records.

On the whole, the personnels for these recordings do not offer any serious problems. However, there has been some discussion about the first session under Parker's own name (Savoy MG 12079), but this should be settled with Argonne Thornton's recent account in this magazine, which is confirmed by aural evidence.

It has previously been assumed that on the 1945 Red Norvo session for Comet J. C. Heard played the drums in *Hallelujah* and *Slam Slam Blues* and was replaced by Specs Powell in *Get Happy* and *Congo Blues*, but Heard assures that he is on the two blues and Powell on the other two.

According to the liner notes for Miles Davis' "Collector's Items" (Prestige LP 7044), Sonny Rollins should not be present in *'Round About Midnight*, but if you listen to the releases in the first and last choruses, you will find that they are played by Rollins, not by Parker.

It might also be useful to note that while the liner notes for Parker's "Now's the Time" (Verve MG V-8005) give Al Haig, Percy Heath, and Max Roach for all the tracks, Haig and Heath are, in fact, replaced by Hank Jones and Teddy Kotick in *The Song Is You*, *Laird Baird*, *Kim* and *Cosmic Rays*.

The many cases in which alternate takes of Parker recordings have been issued, constitute one of the most fascinating problems for the Parker discographer, especially

because the album notes do not always give the correct data. For instance, the first and second take of *Donna Lee* are given as Take 2 and 3 on the label and in the notes to Savoy MG 12001, and in the same places are announced a third take of *Sipping at Bells*, which is not found on the record.

In the "Genius of Charlie Parker" series (Verve MG V-8003—8010) different takes of the same numbers were used in several cases, and these takes are placed on the records in order of recording. This means that, except for *Cosmic Rays*, the originally issued take is in all cases the final one on the records. But in the liner notes and on the labels the first of the tracks are consequently given as the original take and the following as the alternates. By chance, this information has become correct for *Cosmic Rays*, while in the case of *Leap Frog* an alternate, unfinished take is found between two complete takes of the same number, which, in fact, prove to be one and the same take.

The results of a May, 1949, Granz session are particularly confusing. On Verve MG V-8009 are found two different takes of the same tune, titled *Segment* and *Diverse*. (Parker is given as the composer, but the theme is quite un-Bird-like. Now, the same theme has been recorded by Cecil Payne (on Signal S-1203) as *Man of Moods*, and here Cecil Payne and Duke Jordan are given as composers. Since Kenny Dorham is present at both sessions, may we assume that he is the man?) Also on V-8009 is *Passport* from the same session, an *I Got Rhythm* variation, and this is not the same as, not even an alternate take of, the *Passport* (also from this session) that was issued on Mercury/Clef MG C-512, and which is a blues. So, we find that, from this session, one tune has been issued under two different titles, and two different tunes under one title.

As any initiated Parker collector will know, the alternate takes from Parker's Dial sessions are particularly confusing, not so much on the original Dial releases as on the later Jazztone and Concert Hall reissues, which have, in many cases, given wrong titles to the themes and misleading information in the liner notes. When the

American and European releases of these Dial recordings are viewed as a whole, it will be found that, for instance, each of the titles *Bongo Beep* and *Bird Feathers* has been used for three entirely different themes, and that two takes of one number have been released as *Charlie's Wig*, *Crazyology*, *Bongo Bop*, and *Bongo Beep*.

It is to be hoped that the Parker Dial recordings, which are some of his very best, will be made available in a complete and correct edition, to supplement the Savoy and Verve editions. With a total of at least 79 Dial recordings featuring Parker there would be material for something like six 12-inch lps. They are long overdue!

Among the less well-known cases where alternate takes have been issued, a few might be mentioned. An alternate take of Rubberlegs Williams' *4-F Blues* has been issued on a 10-inch Plymouth lp (P-100-38). Also, the 12-inch Dial lp (903) by Red Norvo does not comprise all the material from this session. A further alternate take of *Congo Blues* is only found on Dial 1035 (a 78 rpm record). Possibly the reverse of this record, *Get Happy*, as well as *Hallelujah* (on Dial 1045) are also different from the alternate takes on LP 903, but *Bird's Blues* (Dial 1045) is presumably identical to the original *Slam Slam Blues* on Comet.

On the 10-inch Savoy lp "Bird-Diz-Bud-Max" (MG 9034) is found two Parker recordings under the titles *Co-Coa* and *Wailing Willie*, but these turn out to be nothing else but the original takes of *Ko Ko* and *Little Willie Leaps*. On the other hand, *Riff Warmer* (Savoy MG 9011 and XP-8005) is not, as one might expect, *Warming Up a Riff*, but instead *Confirmation* from "A Nite at Carnegie Hall," originally on The Black Deuce. Here seemingly is, well, confirmation of an old suspicion that Savoy had something to do with The Black Deuce.

On a 12-inch Dial lp under Parker's name (LP 905) is contained three rather short takes, of which two are entitled *Home Cooking I* and *II*, while the third is not mentioned on the label. They are Parker improvisations on the chords of *I Never Knew*, *Cherokee* and *I Got Rhythm*, accompanied by piano, bass and drums. Since the pianist and the drummer evidently are Dodo Marmarosa and Roy Porter, it must be assumed that the bassist is Vic McMillan and that the recordings are warm-up takes made at the 1946 session that produced *Yardbird Suite*, *Moose the Mooche*, etc.

It will probably be news to American Parker-collectors that there has recently been issued a 12-inch lp of concert recordings made during Parker's visit to Sweden in November, 1950. The title of the record is "Charlie Parker and Arne Domnerus in Sweden" and it is on Swedish Oktav OKTLP 164. One side is by the Domnerus Quintet, while the reverse has Parker replacing Domnerus and playing *Anthropology*, *Cheers*, *Lover Man*, and *Cool Blues* with Rolf Ericson (trumpet), Gösta Theselius (piano), Thore Jederby (bass) and Jack Norén (drums).

If any of the readers of this magazine should have any of the following records, complete details of their master nos. would be appreciated:

Mercury/Clef 78 rpm records of *Crazy Rhythm*, *Sweet Georgia Brown*, *After You're Gone* and *Lady Be Good*—all by Jazz at the Philharmonic.

Decca 4387, 4418, 8570, 8595, 8607 and 8623—all by Jay McShann.

Comments on the points raised above will also be welcome at 7, Frederik VI's Alle, Copenhagen F, Denmark.

**forthcoming issues of The Jazz Review will include:**

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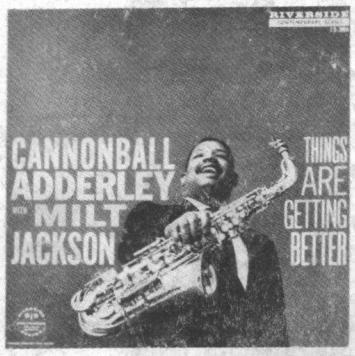
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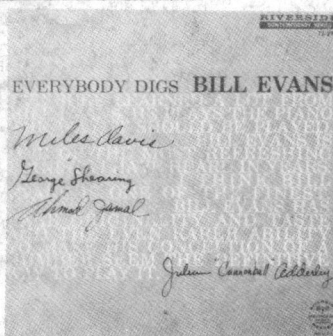


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