

The Jazz Review

Volume 2 Number 9 October 1959 Fifty Cents



The State of
"Dixeland"

The Style of
John Coltrane

A Letter from
Lenox, Mass.

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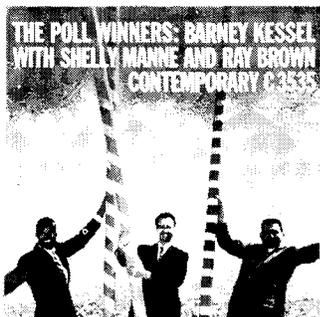


Barney in a free-wheeling session with "Sweets" Edison, Bill Perkins, Georgie Auld, Red Mitchell, Jimmie Rowles, Shelly Manne, etc. C3513

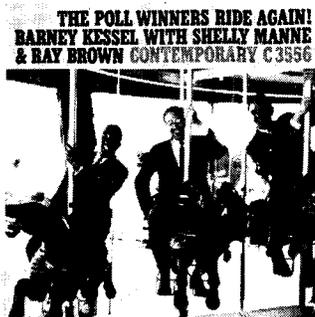
MUSIC TO LISTEN TO BARNEY KESSEL BY CONTEMPORARY C3521



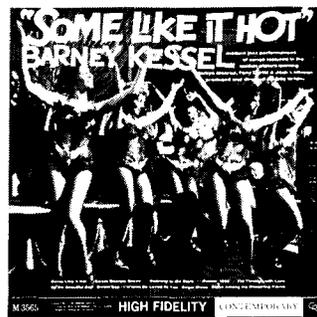
Barney and his arrangements of standards for woodwind orchestra. *Laura*, *Makin' Whoopee*, *Carioca*, *Indian Summer*, etc. C3521 & Stereo S7001



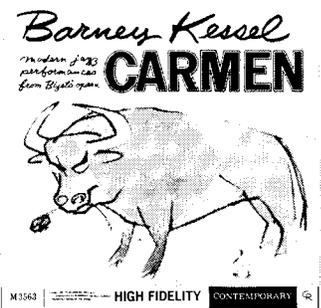
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LETTERS

Martin Williams' recent (**The Jazz Review**, July) criticism regarding the significance of Gil Evans as a jazz orchestrator seems to be based primarily upon Evans' comprehension of the 'bop revolution' and the music of Charlie Parker. Isn't this a rather short sighted criterion? No doubt it is true that the essentials of bop and the particular rhythmic and harmonic advances implied by it are not as easily identifiable in Evans' music as they are in that of Tadd Dameron or Dizzy Gillespie, but this is avoiding the forest for the trees.

Evans satisfies a position in the development of jazz which is somewhat analogous to that of Debussy and Ravel in 'classical music'. At the time when Stravinsky was beginning his massive attack on eighteenth century derived harmonic and rhythmic concepts, the Impressionists (possibly in a more subtle way) were exploring the upper limits of triad-based harmony, venturing into modality and bitonalities and widely expanding the use of cross and conflicting rhythms. Both approaches (along with those of the Schoenberg disciples) eventually resulted in the contemporary music of today, the one method taking the form of a violent iconoclasm while the other explored the existing possibilities to such a degree, that there finally remained only new directions in which to go. The analogy, therefore, is that of Evans remaining closer to the developmental mainstream of jazz, and less prone to the more violent excesses of the bop revolution. (I think too that Bird was far less of a harmonic revolutionary than is commonly considered, and that his contributions were of much greater importance in the fields of melodic improvisation and the destruction of the bar line. By his own admis-

sion, his harmonic vision was strongly related to the use of the upper partials of conventionally triadic based chords.)

As far as the Thornhill orchestra is concerned, it is their inability to grasp the rhythmic inflections of a bop line that make some of the Evans charts sound so awkward. The lines are there to be played, but even **Chasing the Bird** would sound ridiculous if it were played with a ricky-tick dotted eighth note feeling. Nor does it seem particularly fair to qualify Evans' brilliance as a jazz arranger-composer by his association with Miles Davis. The alliance of Ellington with his orchestra is also an important one, and in no way detracts from the specific jazz talent involved. If anything, it's almost as if the Evans' facility as a jazz arranger has tended to obscure his talents as a jazz composer, and this would be a really sad loss. Martin Williams states that 'in no respect . . . rhythmically, linearly, emotionally . . . does Evans apprehend Charlie Parker's music or the basic meaning of the bop revolution as such'. I can't help but feel that this is begging the question. How much of the basic meaning of the bop revolution has been apprehended by Coleman Hawkins? Evans' art, like that of Charlie Parker would be meaningless if it were limited to this kind of awareness. Evans has used whatever rhythmic, linear and emotional techniques of bop that he found pertinent to the framework of his own art. (Like most competent arranger-composers, he was well versed in the harmonic 'advances' of the bop revolution long before that event took place, and by now has far exceeded it.) I do have a slight inclination to wonder about his use of time, but when I listen to the wonderful rhythmic impetus of **Gone** on the "**Porgy and Bess**" album (even though poorly performed) my doubts soon dissipate. What it all comes down to is that Evans is really a sort of prototype of the totally sophisticated jazz composer. He has borrowed freely from whatever sources he finds convenient, whether they be mainstream jazz, classical orchestration, or the rhythmic and harmonic teachings of an avant-garde composer as Harry Partch. I think Evans is perhaps the only composer around who has the ability and awareness to synthesize all of these elements into a kind of greater whole which characterizes and reflects the turbulent elements active in jazz today, while at the same time retaining the

more traditional qualities of swing, earthiness and a blues tinged improvisatory base. As long as he continues to develop in this direction I don't see what more can be asked of him.

—Don Heckman

(My remarks on Gil Evans, which I intended to be quite cautious and tentative, seem to have produced a lot of misunderstanding. First, I did not say that Evans **should** have apprehended Parker's music; nor would I, I hope, say anything so foolish; nor was such a position the "basis" of my other remarks. Also, I did not intend to imply that Evans' talent (or even Thornhill's) functions on the level of a Glenn Miller, a Rosemary Clooney, or an Ahmad Jamal—far from it.—M.W.;

OLD RAGS

The Jazz Review and Mr. Tom Davin are to be congratulated on 'Conversations With James P. Johnson' which appeared in JR, June 1959. It's been a long dry spell since these eyes have seen information of this type on the great James P. Johnson, and Davin's "oasis" is certainly a welcome sight. Although much of the information was fresh and straight-forward, one statement by Davin about James P. does need clarification. On page 14, at the top of the 2nd column, appeared . . . since he was the first Negro pianist to cut his own rags.' This, we believe to be incorrect. Until other information comes to hand, we would record Scott Joplin as being the first Negro pianist to cut his own rags. The following hand-played rolls were cut by Joplin somewhere between 1910 and 1913 and released ca. 1915-1917, if not earlier.

MAGNETIC RAG - Connorized 10266

MAPLE LEAF RAG - Metro-Art 202704

MAPLE LEAF RAG - Uni-Record 202704

MAPLE LEAF RAG - Connorized 10265

PLEASANT MOMENTS - Connorized (number unknown)

SOMETHING DOING - Connorized 10278

WEeping WILLOW RAG - Connorized 10277

I hope this clarifies matters. I will be looking forward to further installments of the James P. Conversations.

—Len Kunstadt,
Record Research
Brooklyn, N. Y.

JAZZ BULLETIN

NEW YORK NEWS compiled from reports by Dan Morgenstern, Frank Driggs, and others.

The Upstairs at the Metro-pole, the Theresa Lounge and the Arpeggio, all of which became jazz clubs this summer, have been joined by several newcomers. The Show Place in Greenwich Village has presented TONY SCOTT and a LENNIE TRISTANO group with Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh. BABS GONZALES (Off Beat) at 126th and Broadway opened with CHARLIE SHAVERS' quartet featuring Ray Bryant. Shavers is one of the many swing-era players who have found in the success of JONAH JONES an alternative to ersatz dixieland. Other recent converts included VIC DICKENSON at the Arpeggio where he was followed by ROY ELDRIDGE, and REX STEWART, who followed COOTIE WILLIAMS into the Embers.

The growing list of Jazz Festivals (definition: a concert without a hall) has been augmented by a Fire Island Jazz Festival and a Festival at Westerly, Rhode Island. Dom Cerulli reports that the Playboy Jazz Festival, planned for its public relations value to the magazine, was exemplary in making adequate provisions for the comfort and convenience of both audience and performers. Sight-lines were good, amplification was reasonably good, and the interminable waits between groups was eliminated by a handsomely decorated revolving stage. Backstage facilities included dressing rooms and toilet facilities for performers, photographers were instructed to use only available light, and one vocal group was allowed four hours of rehearsal time with the fifteen piece band.

RAECOX RECORDS, under the direction of Teddy McRae and Eddie Wilcox, recorded a clarinet trio record featuring EDMOND HALL, HERBIE HALL, and OMER SIMEON, with a rhythm section of Dick Carey, Jimmy Raney, Al Hall, and Jimmy Crawford. Their plans include a CHICK WEBB memorial lp with Webb's solos played by Buddy Rich, Gene Krupa and Cozy Cole and a band of Webb alumni including Hilton Jefferson, Taft Jordan, Eddie Barefield, and others.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA NOTES by C. M. Garrigues

KJAZ, northern California's all-jazz FM station, caught on so well in its first month that owners Pat Henry and Dave Larsen extended its programming to 17 hours daily. The station now plays jazz from 9 a.m. to 2 a.m. seven days a week. The Cellar, adopted a "name" policy. Altoist Art Pepper was the September guest artist, with Bill Weisjahns on piano and Chuck Thompson on drums. Count Basie filled the big (capacity: 3600) new Longshoremen's Memorial Hall for four days straight over Labor Day weekend. It was the biggest jazz event in northern California history.

CHICAGO SCENE by Bob Koester

The active jazz clubs include the Blue Note, the London House and the Sutherland Hotel Lounge, all presenting touring groups, and the C&C Lounge with the NORMAN SIMMONS septet, the Bambu with AL BELLETO, the French Poodle with the JOHN YOUNG trio, and the Avenue Lounge with the WALTER PERKINS MJT+3. Joe Segal holds off-night sessions on Sunday evenings at the French Poodle, on Mondays at the Gate of Horn, and Tuesdays at the Sutherland

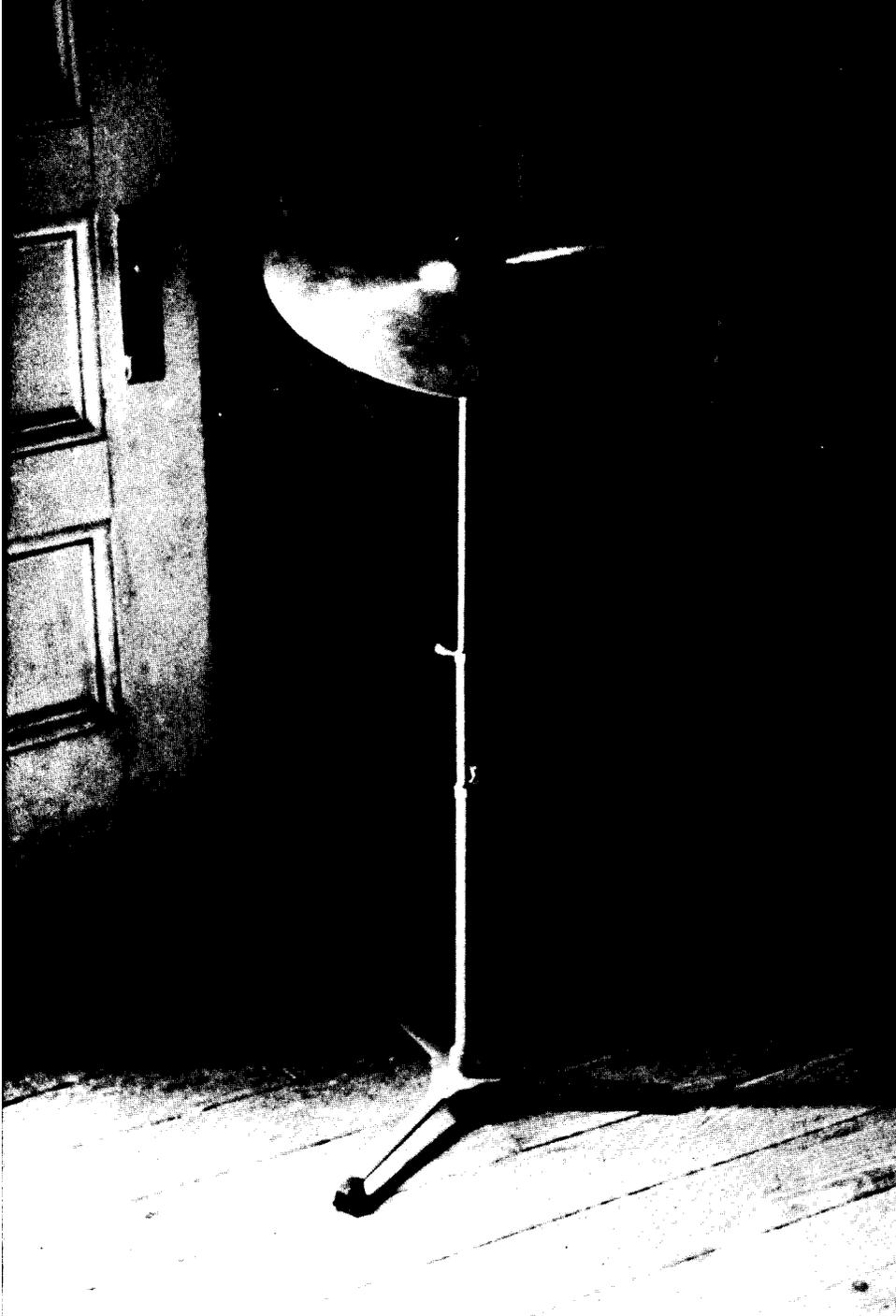
Hotel, and among the regulars are trumpeter IRA SULLIVAN, tenorist JOHNNY GRIFFIN, and the SUN RA Arkestra (sic); the Jodie Christian trio, Richard Evans trio, Chris Anderson and other Chicago musicians frequently appear. Visiting musicians Sonny Stitt, Rolf Erickson, Lee Morgan, Les Spann, Philly Joe and Elvin Jones, Junior Mance and Tommy Flannigan all sat in during recent weeks.

Traditional and revivalist groups based in around Chicago include the Franz Jackson band and LIL ARMSTRONG's quartet at the Red Arrow, the Charleston Chasers at the Lincoln Lounge in Joliet. Little Brother Montgomery is also working, with a quartet, in Joliet.

Clarinetist ALBERT NICHOLAS recorded two lps for Delmar, one with a septet including FLOYD O'BRIEN, and the other with the ART HODES trio. Argo has signed the RICHARD EVANS trio. Vee-Jay, moving into the jazz field, signed ART BLAKEY, and tenor player WAYNE SHORTER under a separate contract, and recently recorded Walter Perkins with his MJT+3. Tempus recorded another Dave Remington lp, and Albert Nicholas recorded another side for Audiophile with a group including trumpeter Doc Evans.

ST. LOUIS REPORT by Frank Driggs

A W. C. Handy Riverfront Musicale was held in Mid-August featuring trumpeter BOBBIE DANZIE'S muted modern jazz group and the dixieland-swing group of ex-Basie-ite bassist SINGLETON PALMER. Nightclubs currently featuring jazz include Spider's El Capitan Lounge at 5523 Easton (corner of Burd) with CHRIS WOODS band and The Havana Club at 1176 N. Kingshighway at Vernon with the CHICK FINNEY'S Tomorrow's All-Stars. Trumpeter GEORGE HUDSON still has the only big band that works regularly around St. Louis.



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The Jazz Review

Volume 2 Number 9 October 1959

- 6 **The State of Dixeland**
by Dick Hadlock
- 16 **The Style of John Coltrane**
by Zita Carno
- 22 **The Blues**
- 23 **Ed Lewis' Story**
as told to Frank Driggs
- 26 **Introducing Bill Evans**
by Nat Hentoff
- 29 **A Letter from Lenox, Mass.**
by Martin Williams

RECORD REVIEWS

- 33 Early Bebop by Max Harrison
- 35 Eubie Blake by Guy Waterman
- 35 Bill Evans by Martin Williams
- 36 Art Farmer by Glenn Coulter
- 36 Ed Hall by Guy Waterman
- 37 John Lee Hooker and
Sticks McGhee
by Chris Strachwitz
- 38 Milt Jackson by H. A. Woodfin
- 39 The Modern Jazz Quartet
by Martin Williams
- 40 Sarah Vaughn
by Martin Williams

BOOK REVIEW

- 42 Francis Newton's *The Jazz Scene* by Ernest Borneman

THEATER REVIEW

- 45 Jack Gelber's *The Connection*
by Hortense Geist
- 46 *Jazz in Print* by Nat Hentoff
- 48 Fletcher Henderson on Records
by Erwin Hersey
- 50 Woody Herman in Great Britain
by Max Harrison

Israel Young and Leonard Feldman were among the founders of the Jazz Review.

NEW CONTRIBUTORS

Zita Carno is a young pianist who will give a recital at Town Hall in December. She is a graduate of Manhattan School of Music, and has recorded with John La Porta.

Hortense Geist has worked professionally in the theater in many capacities, and was co-owner of the Off-Broadway House, The Little Theater, producing plays and jazz concerts.

Max Harrison has been a longtime contributor to the *British Jazz Monthly*. His study of the MJQ will appear in Martin Williams' forthcoming anthology *The Art of Jazz*, and essays on Charlie Parker and boogie-woogie will appear in the Hentoff-McCarthy anthology. Mr. Harrison has had extensive training as concert pianist.

Chris Strachwitz, who came to this country in 1947, is particularly interested in the post-war blues singers on whom he is preparing an extensive biographical and discographical series.

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ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

by DICK HADLOCK

the STATE

The thirteen recent releases to be discussed—some of them reissues—represent most of the ground, arid or bountiful, within the province of "Dixieland." Behind this ambiguous label can be found a wide variety of musical attitudes and aims among scores of musicians, most of them contending with the built-in limitations of collective improvisation, as well as more personal problems of self-expression.

The time-honored three or four horn "front line," with its logical delineation of musical roles (trumpet lead, trombone bass, clarinet embroidering above) is, I believe, more a convenient format than an art in itself. It requires little imagination to fashion a passable Dixieland ensemble, although there are worthwhile challenges for those who care to bother with them. The opportunities for multi-linear collective improvisation are frequently ignored by old-timers and young musicians alike. As Paul Desmond replied when asked recently if he was tempted to stay with Dixieland for its contrapuntal possibilities, "Nobody was doing any of it except me." Observing the ground rules of ensemble playing is not a creative act, but merely prepares the way for the artist.

The group of musicians who, by historical accident or commercial design, are associated with Eddie Condon's name have devoted considerable attention to ensemble playing, as well as to the development of their individual musical characters as soloists. Nearly all of them worked successfully in top swing-era bands, but for most the creative fire burned highest in the climate of relative freedom offered by the small

band and the jam session. Bud Freeman, Pee Wee Russell, Brad Gowans, Jack Teagarden, Miff Mole, Jess Stacy, and Bobby Hackett made real contributions to the development and enrichment of creative thought in jazz. Their restless search for fresh ways to broaden the jazz language is the chief characteristic that distinguishes the Commodore reissues from the routine Dixieland generally offered—even by Condon—today. These men did not, like early "bop" experimenters, express their disillusionment with the state of musical affairs before World War II by breaking **away** from tradition (most of the key men were a little too old to think in those terms anyway), nor could they condone retrogression of the kind that "revivalists" were advocating. Rather, they attempted to expand within the traditional framework of Dixieland that had served them so well. While many worked out satisfactory solo styles, only a handful were as successful in constructing new ensemble patterns more appropriate to 1938 than to 1918.

Clarinetist Pee Wee Russell is the ensemble musician **par excellence**. Forsaking the undulating lines of more conventional Dixieland clarinetists, Russell adds a cutting edge to the top of the ensemble sound with a powerful but flexible rasping attack. His unusual sensitivity to ensemble harmony is a joy to trumpet players, for it permits them to depart from the melody without fear of crashing head-on into clarinet notes. Russell touches the traditional third above the lead note often enough to construct a "proper" clarinet part, but more importantly he stretches the en-

of
"DIXIELAND"

semble fabric with fourths, fifths (this requires an alert trombonist, for the fifth is traditionally his territory), sixths, and ninths, while spinning elastic counter lines that are closer to second trumpet parts than to the arpeggio-dominated filigrees that one is accustomed to hearing in Dixieland and military bands. It is largely his skillful handling of his very personal ensemble role that gives these old Commodore recordings (**Condon à la Carte** and **Jam Sessions**) an exhilarating vigor undiminished by time.

The most satisfactory ensemble tissues captured on record by Commodore are those involving Russell, Max Kaminsky, and the late Brad Gowans. Kaminsky provides a stocky lead that leaves space for other instruments to editorialize, yet he neither leans on rhythmic drive alone, as Spanier does, nor confuses the proceedings by trying to play Pee Wee's harmonic games, as Hackett seems to do. Gowans achieves with his valve instrument a third part that adds a kind of bass trumpet voice to Russell's and Kaminsky's forthright upper lines. Like Russell, Gowans possessed an extraordinary ear that told him exactly what notes best suited the ensemble texture. Bud Freeman, who contributed a fourth perceptive musical mind to the Russell-Kaminsky-Gowans alliance from time to time, is heard briefly on **Carnegie Jump**, **Carnegie Drag**, and **A Good Man Is Hard To Find**. Freeman is unsurpassed as an ensemble tenorman, one who knows how to add fourth harmony to a front line without walking all over clarinet and trombone parts. It is hoped that Commodore will reissue more Freeman sides from their extensive 78 rpm catalog.

For all their concern with creating contemporary ensemble techniques that would work as well as the discarded "Chicago" style, the Condonites remained devoted to the main business of jazz, which is (I believe) individual expression. In this area, the men discussed so far stand considerably above most so-called Dixieland musicians.¹

The creative rallying point for much of the solo work in and around Commodore's studios was again Pee Wee Russell. In the 'twenties Russell was work-

EDDIE CONDON:

"Condon à la Carte." Commodore FL 30,010. **It's Right Here For You**; **Jelly Roll**; **Save Your Sorrow**; **Nobody Knows You**; **Tell 'Em About Me**; **Strut Miss Lizzie**; **Ballin' The Jack**; **Pray For The Lights To Go Out**; **Georgia Grind**; **You're Some Pretty Doll**; **Oh Sister!**; **Ain't That Hot**; **Dancin' Fool**.

Personnels include: Condon, guitar; Max Kaminsky or Marty Marsala, trumpet; Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; George Brunis, Brad Gowans, Benny Morton, or Lou McGarity, trombone; Fats Waller, Joe Bushkin, or Gene Schroeder, piano; Bob Casey or Artie Shapiro, bass; Tony Spargo, Sid Catlett, or George Wettling, drums.

ing out jazz ideas that were regarded by many observers at the time as too "far out," ideas that probably came largely from Bix Beiderbecke, who was practicing in 1927 what a few early "bop" modernists (Charlie Parker in particular) felt they were discovering some twelve years later. Parker himself claimed to have stumbled onto the idea, in 1939, of "using higher intervals of a chord as a melody line and backing them with appropriately related changes."² Which is exactly what Bix Beiderbecke (and, to a lesser extent, Frank Trumbauer) was up to, although most of his cohorts weren't always aware of it and invariably failed to furnish the "appropriately related changes." (This helps us to understand why Bix might have drawn as much inspiration from the harmonically sophisticated scores of Bill Challis et al as he did from loose "Dixieland" surroundings). Here is a classic Beiderbecke solo, recorded in 1929, that illustrates his gift for melodic architecture in the higher intervals of the chord and, in its short sixteen bars, suggest much of what was to come in the next decade or two. Contrast Bix's chorus, with its constant emphasis on sixths and ninths, to the tune as originally written.³

Example I

The musical notation for Example I consists of three systems. The first system shows the original melody on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Above the staff are the chords G, D+, G, D+, G, G, D+. The second system shows Bix's solo on two staves, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. Above the staff are the chords G, Eb7, E7, A7. The third system shows Bix's solo on two staves, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. Above the staff are the chords Cm6, G. The notation includes various rhythmic values, ornaments, and dynamic markings.

This was part of the magic of Bix that continued to excite so many jazz musicians, especially Condon and Company, long after his death. His ability to build well-proportioned melodies in the upper harmonic strata of any given tune has seldom been equalled. Before Charlie Parker, Pee Wee Russell was one of a very few jazzmen who comprehended Bix and possessed the necessary musical equipment to explore similar paths. Here is the way Pee Wee got into his solo on **Embraceable You** in 1938.⁴ Compare it to Parker's first bar of the same tune⁵ almost a decade later:

Example II

Original



Russell



Parker



Although Russell moves down from the sixth (suggested by the original melody note) to the ninth whereas Parker descends from the ninth to the sixth, the rhythmic, harmonic, and melodic similarities are obvious.

So we find Gowans, Kaminsky, Hackett, Freeman, and even unadventurous players like George Brunis falling under the Beiderbecke-Russell spell. Other musicians (Red Nichols, Fud Livingston, Adrian Rollini, Jimmy McPartland, etc.) were exploring these avenues in the 'twenties, but alongside the overwhelming communicative power of Louis Armstrong and Coleman Hawkins, whose direct styles were being widely admired and imitated, the experimental clique must have seemed almost effeminate to many jazzmen. (Hawkins, though, was sensitive to what was going on; listen to **One Hour**,⁶ recorded in 1929, as Hawkins, Russell, and Glenn Miller forge a

EDDIE CONDON:

"Jam Sessions At Commodore." Commodore FL 30,006 **Carnegie Drag**; **Carnegie Jump**; **Basin Street Blues**; **Oh, Katherina!**; **A Good Man Is Hard To Find**.

Personnels include: Condon, guitar; Bobby Hackett, Max Kaminsky, or Muggsy Spanier, trumpets; Joe Marsala, alto; Bud Freeman, tenor; Pee Wee Russell, Joe Marsala, clarinets; George Brunis, Benny Morton, Brad Gowans, or Miff Mole, trombone; Jess Stacy or Joe Bushkin, piano; Artie Shapiro or Bob Casey, bass; George Wettling or Sid Catlett, drums.

EDDIE CONDON:

"Confidentially . . . It's Condon." Design DLP 47. **That's A Plenty**; **Ballin' the Jack**; **Cherry**; **Sweet Georgia Brown**; **Wherever There's Love**; **What's New? Ja Da**; **It's Been So Long**; **Royal Garden Blues**; **Sugar**; **Back in Your Own Back Yard**; **Indiana**.

Personnels include: Condon, guitar; Bobby Hackett, Billy Butterfield, or Max Kaminsky, trumpet; Pee Wee Russell, Ed Hall, possibly Joe Dixon or Johnny Mince, clarinet; Lou McGarity, possibly Benny Morton, trombone; Ernie Caceres, baritone; Gene Schroeder, possibly Dave Bowman or Joe Bushkin, piano; Bob Haggart or Bob Casey, bass; Joe Grauso, Johnny Blowers, possibly George Wettling or Dave Tough, drums.

"new" composition in which each solo is part of a sympathetic whole, a rare instance of musical understanding that takes shape as each man opens his solo on the ninth of the initial chord. This effective device is so simple that it is at first unnoticeable, the listener being only vaguely aware that something special has happened to the tune.)

Beiderbecke and Russell are held in esteem because they combined these harmonic devices with personal, persuasive jazz voices in ordered choruses, laced with warm humor, that stand on their own as good music. Except for Lester Young, no one seemed to accomplish as much along these lines until Parker ripened in the 'forties.

Joe Marsala, who appears briefly on **A Good Man Is Hard To Find**, is a musician who knows his "extensions" (sixths, ninths, elevenths, etc.) but uses them as passing tones or places them on the weak pulse, losing much of the shock value and melodic potential of the device.

Miff Mole, the man who liberated the trombone from the status of jazz clown, is not heard to good advantage on these recordings. He shows but a small sample of his prodigious talent on **A Good Man Is Hard To Find**. **Good Man**, an extended performance originally spread over four 12-inch 78 rpm sides, suggested rewarding sessions to come with the advent of lp, but unhappily these musicians have been forced to move in the opposite direction instead, toward telescoping each performance until only frantic little digests are left. (See below re Condon's latest releases on Dot.)

Russell was still in top form in 1943, when **Basin Street Blues** was recorded, but the alliance was broken and the ensemble work is that of any group of good "mainstream" musicians thrown together. Benny Morton, a skilled musician, is sympathetic but lacks the almost mystic ensemble insight of Gowans.

By 1944, individual attitudes had drifted still farther apart. Hackett had been studying his horn and, it seems, Louis Armstrong as well. The results were electric, but much of the old humor and fancy had gone. The new positive Hackett seemed content to play satis-

fyng arpeggios rather than to roam with Russell through uncharted territory. There has always been a place of honor at the Condon table, though, for well-grounded musicians like Hackett with a flair for the elegant. The 1944 transcriptions issued on Design reveal some of the old gang running through ensemble passages almost numbly in order to get to the solos, which they render as convincingly as ever. Only Russell, and sometimes baritonist Caceres, show much concern about who plays what in the collective openings and endings. The tempos are a little too fast, perhaps the first sign that the men who used to get together for fun were now peddling the same product as "concert" music. Facing an audience sitting on its hands in a concert hall, performers are frequently tempted to do something dazzling, or at least to deliver the old goods at a more frenzied pace. Still, there is a cheerful spontaneity about the Design hodge-podge, especially in the solos of Russell and Hackett.

After some fifteen years of methodically converting his friends' music to a commercial formula, Condon, represented by his new Dot release, has turned to mass production methods, stringing tunes together like hot sausages. The musical outcome is about as digestible. His players blow what customers expect them to, flooding the record with "get-hot" mannerisms. Herb Hall sounds like brother Ed. Peanuts Hucko lifts from Goodman, and even Rex Stewart appears to be trying to wear Bill Davison's shoes. Only Bud Freeman, particularly on **China Boy**, remains a firm individual voice struggling to salvage a few musical moments from the blustering carnival around him.

Jack Teagarden's eloquent trombone always seemed to me to be at home with Condon's retinue, as well as with Armstrong, where the soloists were near his level; on his new Capitol lp, Jack has strapped himself to a small band of quietly undistinguished musicians who reduce Dixieland jazz to a spineless recital of ensemble and solo clichés. I don't believe Teagarden has ever been particularly suited to Dixie-

EDDIE CONDON:

"Dixieland Dance Party." Dot DLP 3141. Copenhagen; Riverboat Shuffle; Sugar Foot Stomp; Fidgety Feet; Little White Lies; Louisiana; Dinah; Indiana; Original Dixieland One Step; I've Found A New Baby; China Boy; South Rampart Street Parade; At the Jazz Band Ball; That's A Plenty; Now That You're Gone; Willow Weep For Me; Blue Again; Sugar; Liza; There'll Be Some Changes Made; Nobody's Sweetheart; Clarinet Marmalade; High Society.

Personnel: Condon, guitar; Rex Stewart, Billy Butterfield, or Dick Cary, trumpet; Herb Hall or Peanuts Hucko, clarinet; Bud Freeman, tenor; Cutty Cutshall, trombone; Gene Schroeder, piano; Leonard Gaskin, bass; George Wettling, drums.

JACK TEAGARDEN:

"Big "T"'s Dixieland Band." Capitol T 1095. Wolverine Blues; Weary River; Rippa-Tutti; Tishomingo Blues; Doctor Jazz; Dallas Blues; China Boy; Casanova's Lament; Walleritis; Mobile Blues; Someday You'll Be Sorry.

Personnel: Teagarden, trombone; Jerry Fuller, clarinet; Dick Oakley, trumpet; Don Ewell, piano; Stan Puls, bass; Ronnie Greb, drums.

PEE WEE ERWIN:

"Oh, Play That Thing!" United Artists UAL 4010. Kansas City Stomps; The Chant; Yaaka Hula Hicky Dula; Temptation Rag; Black Bottom Stomp; Dipper Mouth Blues; Grandpa's Spells; Dill Pickles; Sensation Rag; Big Pond Rag; Jazz Frappé Rag; Georgia Swing.

Personnel: Erwin, trumpet; Kenny Davern, clarinet; Lou McGarity, trombone; Dick Hyman, piano; Tony Gattuso, banjo and guitar; Jack Lesberg, bass; Harvey Phillips, tuba; Cliff Leeman, drums.

land, anyway. His work with Pollack, Nichols, Whiteman, Goodman, Freeman, Condon, and his own big band stood out because space was set aside to display Teagarden the soloist.

Like the Condonites, Tea loves to indulge in tunes that have the harmonic and melodic twists of Russell and Beiderbecke built into them. His smoky singing and playing on **Weary River** and **Someday You'll Be Sorry** are warm and delightful. Much of the joy of listening to Jack Teagarden stems from his flawless execution, perfect intonation and his very relaxed manner rather than from unusually imaginative lines or carefully-wrought melodic structures. He seems to form ideas flatly in terms of the **trombone**, leaving more gossamer musical realms, unlinked to the mechanics of any one horn, to the likes of Russell and Gowans.

The "revivalists" must have made inroads on some front-rank jazzmen at last, for now we find Teagarden including **Doctor Jazz** and **Tishomingo Blues** in his repertoire. Perhaps former Bunk Johnson pianist Don Ewell had something to do with it. Today Ewell has "progressed" to Fats Waller, but his attempts to find the Waller touch fail because he does not produce the crisp vitality, the buoyant swing, or the musical authority that were prominent in all of Fats' work.

A more decisive tactical victory for the "revivalists" is Pee Wee Erwin's new United Artists release, which offers four Jelly Roll Morton compositions along with miscellaneous vintage rags and stomps. Clarinetist Kenny Davern, who has toyed with every jazz era off and on, jumps casually from imitations of George Lewis and renderings of Morton parts à la Omer Simeon to busy eclectic counter-lines delivered somewhat in the manner of Irving Fazola. Davern's idea of ensemble playing is to punctuate each trumpet phrase with a soaring glissando that fills the empty space and spills into the next lead statement. While this procedure conforms roughly to the bylaws of ensemble counterpoint, repeated use of the device induces monotony. Worse still, Davern misses several important harmonic changes,

even in the simple **Yaka Hula Hickey Dula** and **Big Pond Rag** (actually **Over The Waves**).

Erwin is a good player, but he has seldom advanced anything distinctly his own. Probably his chief claim to jazz fame is his recorded work with Tommy Dorsey's orchestra, most of which consists of facile copies of Bunny Berigan's style.

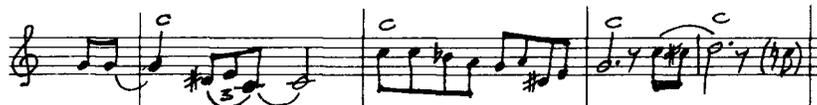
Perhaps Erwin's lack of individuality and Davern's inability to settle in any one groove are clues to the appeal of antiquarianism. Like a professor who escapes the perplexities of today's world by living in history, the musician who emulates past performances is on relatively safe and predictable ground. His musical goals are laid out for him, requiring only hard work and enthusiasm to reach them. The large burden of individual creative responsibility (which, after all, not **everyone** is capable of carrying), is gone, for music that may have been difficult when it was conceived can be reconstructed with comparative ease years later. And the results **can** be lots of fun.

In the hands of these well-schooled musicians, the old Morton arrangements (most of them put together by Mel Stitzel or Elmer Schoebel) almost come alive—at least more so than in any post-Morton attempts I have heard. Lou McGarity, incidentally, is Lou McGarity at all times, and a constant delight. He is, in this instance, a man among boys, a man who **knows** how he wants to play. Ironically, McGarity's uncompromisingly personal amalgam of barrelhouse and "mainstream" is more in context with both the Morton and George Lewis styles than is Erwin himself!

The Dixieland Revival began with the resurrection of Bunk Johnson, some of whose first records are now re-released on a Commodore lp. Johnson startled his sponsors by coming out of retirement to blow with more skill and vitality than they had expected; so much more, in fact, that critic Gene Williams, one of Bunk's patrons, built a veritable religion around the old man. Perhaps Johnson had kept up with jazz developments more than anyone suspected, for

his playing on this 1942 session reflects, in spite of the bothersome din behind him, a sense of melodic development through harmonic alterations that even "younger" men like Keppard and Oliver never revealed on records. In his own way, Bunk was flirting with the use of upper harmonic intervals as melody notes that we have found to be an important element in the work of Beiderbecke and Russell. Here is a typical Bunk Johnson blues phrase:⁷

Example III



This simple melodic statement is enriched in the second measure by an upward movement that touches the sixth, and by a sustained ninth in the fourth bar. Compare it to a characteristic Louis Armstrong blues, which relies more upon bold announcements of durable ideas than upon harmonic subtleties.⁸

Example IV



Similar features in the work of the two trumpeters have led many observers to the conclusion that Louis learned much of his style from Bunk. It is more logical, I think, to assume that the Johnson we have on records was influenced by Armstrong, for Bunk, after all, was still professionally active when Louis was at his peak. Certainly on **Shine** and on a later recording of **Some of These Days**⁹ Bunk shows familiarity with Armstrong's records. **Shine** also presents a more relaxed and free Bunk Johnson than the stodgy recreations of his distant past. But the blues were not Johnson's forte for he was a cautious, cool musician, unlike the fiery Armstrong. None of the men on this record, in fact, have much feeling for blues; they cling to a somewhat "legitimate" attitude toward tone control and phrasing. When Lewis' clarinet "sings," it is **song**, not blues. Although severely limited, Lewis' work on this record is

BUNK JOHNSON:

Commodore DL 30,007. *The Thriller Rag*; *When I Leave The World Behind*; *Weary Blues*; *Franklin Street Blues*; *Blue Bells Goodbye*; *Big Chief Battle Axe*; *Sobbin' Blues*; *Dusty Rag*; *Yaaka Hula Hickey Dula*; *Shine*; *Sometimes My Burden Is So Hard To Bear*; *Sobbin' Blues No. 2*.

Personnel: Johnson, trumpet; George Lewis, clarinet; Albert Warner, trombone; Walter Decou, piano; Lawrence Marrero, banjo; Chester Zardis, bass; Edgar Mosley, drums.

brilliant compared to the mechanical two-note grunts of trombonist Albert Warner.

After Johnson's death, Lewis became the darling of that curious segment of the jazz audience that collects "folk" artists. Blue Note, who also recorded Lewis with Johnson, has just issued a 1954 concert that caught Lewis and his New Orleans Stompers in relatively fine form. The almost uncontrolled degree of enthusiasm in the rhythm section seems to ignite Robinson and Lewis, whose contributions, if measured by energy units rather than musical criteria, are exciting indeed. The nondescript vocals by Kid Howard and Joe Watkins add nothing more than playing time to the record, however.

Lewis has gained a bit of poise and harmonic know-how since his first confused dates with Johnson, but he is still a remarkably naive musician who has learned barely enough of the jazz language to express his modest musical thoughts. Because he seems to have no need for going beyond that—and probably could not if he would—Lewis deserves the respect due an untutored but honest man. He is effective when he pulls all the stops because total involvement does not alter the identity of his music, as it does that of his imitators (Kenny Davern is one), who have to **hold back** their minds and fingers to restrict their melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic tool to the rustic style of Lewis. This artless music, valid for Lewis because there is no suppression of musical knowledge, usually ends in inhibited and self-conscious failure for the imitator.

Kid Howard's playing style is rather like Red Allen's, sometimes even sounding closer to a primitive Roy Eldridge when he uses scale-like runs sprinkled with minor thirds and fourths. Howard is apparently unconcerned about his instrument's role in the ensemble, for he repeatedly smothers Lewis and Robinson in **tutti** passages. The most charitable way to dismiss Robinson is to point out that he is an improvement on Albert Warner.

With the widespread distribution of

GEORGE LEWIS:

"Concert!" Blue Note 1208. Ice Cream; Red Wing; Mama Don't Allow It; Burgundy Street Blues; Bill Bailey; Over The Waves; Just A Closer Walk With Thee; Canal Street Blues; Walking With The King; Gettysburg March.

Personnel: Lewis, clarinet; Kia Howard, trumpet; Jim Robinson, trombone; Alton Purnell, piano; Lawrence Marrero, banjo; Alcide Pavageau, bass; Joe Watkins, drums.

CHRIS BARBER:

"Here Is Chris Barber." Atlantic

1292. Hush-a-Bye; Everybody Loves My Baby; Tishomingo Blues; You Don't Understand; Magnolia's Wedding Day; Doin' The Crazy Walk; Diga Diga Doo; Bill Bailey; Willie The Weeper; Trombone Cholly; Papa De-Da-Da; Tuxedo Rag.

Varying personnel include: Barber, trombone; Pat Halcox, Ben Cohen, cornets; Monty Sunshine, clarinet; Lonnie Donegan or Eddie Smith, banjo; Jim Bray or Micky Ashman, bass; Ron Bowden or Graham Burbidge, drums.

Lewis' recordings, bands attempting to capture the rough excitement of his New Orleans crew have broken out everywhere, notably in England and Australia.

Chris Barber imported the Lewis pattern into England, using it to interpolate various early jazz styles, mostly gathered from records cut in the 'twenties. His new Atlantic lp displays a band that is probably superior to any of its American counterparts, and in some ways even better than Lewis' own. Barber is a skilled, if unoriginal, ensemble trombonist; clarinetist Sunshine (that's really his name) catches some of the winsome ingenuousness of his hero without going out of tune (as Lewis frequently does), and all members seem to enjoy what they play immensely. Applying the same basic ensemble formula to each tune, the band stays on safe, though frequently barren, musical ground. In this, as in most revival jazz bands, the **tune** and the **arrangement**, as symbols of other men in other times, are all-important and the performance is the almost mechanical means of preserving them. Most revivalists are, in short, musical curators who hope to keep the properties of early jazz alive for others to enjoy. A harmless pastime, to be sure, but not one that produces much music to be admired, for itself.

Barber's men, incidentally, seem to be more conscious of complementary harmony than were the Lewis or Johnson bands. The New Orleans groups seldom produced three-dimensional ensemble jazz, holding instead to a pattern of simultaneous, occasionally clashing, variations on the original melody; Barber, Sunshine, and trumpeter Halcox attempt to relate to each others' parts vertically as well as linearly. Only Halcox, however, demonstrates any capacity for logical and symmetrical melodies of his own.

Persistent rhythmic emphasis on the first and third pulse, a chronic symptom of revival bands (although oddly, it was Johnson and Lewis who led many traditionalists away from the drop-forge two-beat of Watters and friends), is caused by the inability of Barber's rhythm sec-

tion to get off the ground. They act as a straightjacket on the horn players, who are forced to place their accents at the most conspicuous points.

Southland's "**Dixieland Down South**" is a collection of faded trivia featuring some of New Orleans' current store of second-rate jazzmen, most of whom have little to offer other than a limp rehash of stock "Dixieland" gimmicks. Most interesting performer on the date is trombonist Bob Havens from Illinois, who arrived in New Orleans while playing with Ralph Flanagan's band. He phrases more like Jack Teagarden than any imitator I have heard. Aside from Havens, there is no one on this record with much feeling for blues, ensemble playing, melodic invention, or rhythmic drive. The rhythm section, which is considerably below Lawrence Welk standards, suffers from the most lethargic pianist I have heard since Sunday School days.

Pianist Armand Hug, leading essentially the same group on one side of another Southland release, at least demonstrates that one moderately good pianist can improve a drooping band. The music brightens, but the same limitations preclude our measuring this music by any other than amateur standards. Side 2, though, moves closer to a professional level with the addition of drummer Monk Hazel and tenorman Eddie Miller. Miller is a first-rate jazzman under ideal circumstances, which these are not. He is basically a soloist, but this endeavor to showcase his rollicking solo style is impeded by a clanging rhythm section—most of the trouble seems to come from Hazel's nagging after-beat—that fails to stimulate Miller or even to give him fair odds. Still Miller tears into **Butter and Egg Man** with gusto and grit. His distinctive use of sixths and ninths, though less imaginative than Russell's and generally restricted to passing tones, lends a contemporary quality to his solos. Only his rhythmic accents (usually placed on the "strong" beats) keep Miller in an "old time" category, and even that seems to be undergoing change. He has discarded many of the clichés that marred his work in the

JOE CAPRARO:

"Dixieland Down South." Southland SLP 220. *Sidewalks of New York; A Good Man Is Hard To Find; The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise; Nobody's Sweetheart Now; Pagan Love Song; The Bucket Has A Hole In It; You Tell Me Your Dreams; Rose Room.* Personnel: Capraro, guitar; Charlie Cardilla or Ray Burke, clarinet; Mike Lala, trumpet; Bob Havens, trombone; Jeff Riddick, piano; Sherwood Mangiapane, bass; Paul Edwards, drums.

ARMAND HUG/EDDIE MILLER.

Southland SLP-221. *Easy Goin' Blues; Mr. Jelly Lord; A Dixie Jam Session; Mad; Buzzard's Parade; Butter and Egg Man; When Irish Eyes Are Smiling; Darkness On The Delta.*

Personnel, side 1: Hug, piano; Mike Lala, trumpet; Harry Shields, clarinet; Bob Havens, trombone; Ray Burke, harmonica; Joe Capraro, banjo; Emile Christian, bass and trombone; Johnny Castaing, drums. Personnel, side 2: Miller, tenor; Armand Hug, piano; Joe Capraro, guitar; Chink Martin, bass; Monk Hazel, drums.

BOB SCOBAY:

"The Scobey Story, Volume 1." Good Time Jazz L 12032. *Pretty Baby; St. Louis Blues; Coney Island Washboard; Some of These Days; Beale Street Mama; Dippermouth Blues; South; Sailing Down Chesapeake Bay; Wolverine Blues; Chicago; Melancholy; That's A Plenty.*

Varying personnels include: Scobey, trumpet; Darnell Howard, Albert Nicholas, or George Probert, clarinet; Jack Buck, trombone; Burt Bales or Wally Rose, piano; Clancy Hayes, banjo, guitar, and vocals; Squire Girsback or Dick Lammi, bass; Gordon Edwards or Fred Higuera, drums.

"thirties and has recently adopted a more hard-hitting tone. It is still a warm sound, though, especially on **Darkness on the Delta**. (Miller shares the Condon coterie's penchant for unhackneyed ballads too.) This man deserves a good rhythm section.

Bob Scobey has worked his way from second trumpeter with Lu Watters to acceptance in Hollywood ex-Bob Crosby studio circles as a capable jazzman who wants to, and occasionally does, swing. However, the records that Good Time Jazz has just repackaged were recorded in 1950-51 immediately after the break with Watters, when Scobey was still wielding the trumpet like a sledge hammer. There are a few peppy tracks featuring Darnell Howard or Albert Nicholas on clarinet, but Scobey was still agonizingly musclebound at that time. Howard, an accomplished jazz clarinetist in some respects, is not a particularly sensitive ensemble player, deliberately breathing in unison with the trumpet and skittering all over the horns in the course of each phrase. Al Nicholas, on the other hand, is a level-headed musician who seldom blows a note out of place. His sensuous tone, together with his unhurried respect for order, compensate for his limited imagination (Nicholas' solos are almost always built on arpeggios that take in only the most expected intervals), and for the stylized embellishments that constitute his approach to collective improvisation.

Scobey, according to annotator Ertegun, was seeking simplicity and rhythm in his new musical environment. He found both, but neglected to refine them with syncopation or dynamics. Listening to the old Watters-dominated Scobey is like holding one's head under the hood of a Model T at full throttle, but he has improved since these recordings were made.

Clancy Hayes, who sings like a man with sinus trouble, parades his tarnished hokum and gaslight humor in and out of the music with the swaggering audacity of a burlesque headliner. Going Hayes one better, pianist Johnny Maddox, on a new Dot release, attempts to drag a band of upstanding musicians

with him into the arena of musical dishonor. Neither humorous enough for slapstick nor subtle enough for satire, these caricatures of traditional jazz are what millions of otherwise intelligent people accept as "real" Dixieland—prepared piano, banjo and tuba (Red Callender!), three horns alternating between barnyard effects and staccato jokes. It is embarrassing to read the names of the talented participants: Matty Matlock, Nick Fatool, Moe Schneider . . .

The thirteen records just examined, all of which will be tossed in retailers' bins marked "Dixieland," cover a range of music broad enough to render the label useless. Behind the parade wagons and striped blazers, beyond the booze and musical backslapping, one may find serious artists, gifted amateurs, buffoons, innovators, imitators, charlatans, hustlers, pioneers, novices, geniuses, has-beens, or craftsmen. I suppose counterparts can be found in any art that must operate as entertainment in order to stay alive.

These records reveal how Eddie Condon took brilliant jazzmen in need of jam session therapy and turned them into a high-priced act that "creates" on cue. They show us the faltering musicians who were left behind in New Orleans when the money went north. And they demonstrate what became of the undated players—men like Al Nicholas, Jack Teagarden, Benny Morton, Ernie Caceres, Red Callender, Billy Butterfield, Eddie Miller, and Darnell Howard—who were forced by the economics of post-war jazz to become "Dixielanders." Most of all, these records give us some idea of the conceptual diversity and musical latitude encompassed by a single term as meaningless as some of the music it designates—"Dixieland."

JOHNNY MADDOX:

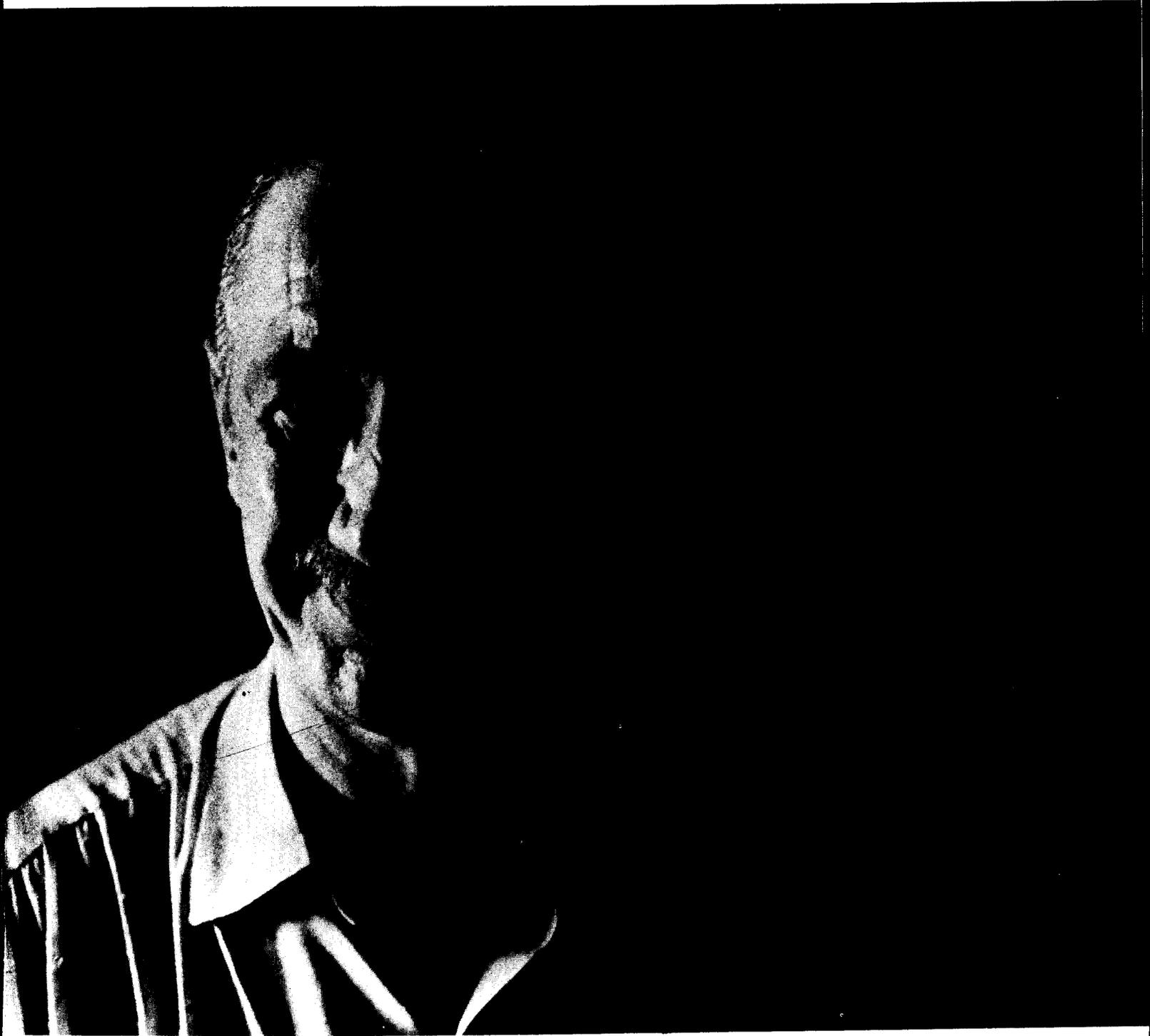
"Dixieland Blues." Dot DLP 3131. **Bluin' The Blues; Strut Miss Lizzie; Beale Street Blues; Wolverine Blues; Memphis Blues; Royal Garden Blues; St. Louis Blues; Friday Night Blues; Bow Wow Blues; Jelly Roll; Basin Street Blues; Tishomingo Blues; Yellow Dog Blues.**

Personnel: Maddox, piano; Matty Matlock, clarinet; Mannie Klein, trumpet; Moe Schneider, trombone; Nappy LaMare, banjo; Bobby Hammack, piano; Red Callender, tuba; Nick Fatool, drums.

BOB CATO

FOOTNOTES

1. This statement excludes those musicians who were caught in the post-World War II middleground between "Bop" and traditional jazz and turned somewhat reluctantly to Dixieland to make money—men like Joe Thomas, Vic Dickenson, Red Allen, Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines, Roy Eldridge, and others. Obviously, had such artists been truly fascinated by Dixieland, they would have done something along those lines before it became economically prudent to do so.
2. Keepnews, Orrin. "Charlie Parker." **The Jazz Makers**. Edited by Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff. Grove Press, 1957. Page 209.
3. Copyright 1922, Leo Feist, Inc. From **Bix Beiderbecke Trumpet Transcriptions**. Edited by Jay Arnold. Robbins Music Corp., 1944.
4. Transcribed from Commodore FL 20,016, **Horn A-Plenty**; Bobby Hackett and his orchestra.
5. Transcribed from Dial 203, **Charlie Parker**; Charlie Parker Sextet. The same opening statement occurs again in **Quasimado**, which is based on the chord structure of **Embraceable You**.
6. Included on Camden CAL 339.
7. **Bunk's Blues**, included in **Great Trumpet Styles**, edited by Billy Butterfield. Capitol Songs, Inc., 1945.
8. **Swaz It**, included in **Louis Armstrong 50 Hot Choruses for Cornet**. Melrose Brothers.
9. Included on Columbia GL 520, **Bunk Johnson**.





The Style of Coltrane

by Zita Carno

Part I

The only thing you can, and should, **expect** from John Coltrane is **the unexpected**; that is what makes listening to his tenor style hard for **people** who **look for** the familiar and the conventional, for **clichés**. They are puzzled when they fail to find such things. They are thrown off by his frequently a-rhythmic phrasing. **His** unusual harmonic **concept baffles them. They** are forced to **listen** with both **ears** and an alert **mind**. Many are **not accustomed** to having to do this, **and they give up.**

I have been asked, goodness knows how many times, how I would compare Coltrane to Sonny Rollins, the other leader on the hard blowing school. My answer has always been that you cannot compare Coltrane with anyone else. He has a completely personal style.

Even the least informed in the ways of the "hard cookers" could fail to notice the influence he has

exerted upon many other musicians. Benny Golson, and to a lesser extent, Hank Mobley and Junior Cook, have been most strongly affected. Especially interesting is Golson because until recently he sounded like a cross between Lucky Thompson and Coleman Hawkins, with other elements thrown in. Such a complete switch as this is as clear an indication as any of Coltrane's influence. Cannonball Adderley is by now a classic proof that you can't play with Coltrane without being influenced by him. Even Miles Davis and Horace Silver have picked up a few things from him and have been working around with them.

Just what is it he's doing that has such an effect?

A lot of people may be moved to think of Charlie Parker as the widespread influence. Everyone tried to imitate him as much as possible, to sound as nearly a carbon copy of him as they could—which was only natural when you consider that he revolutionized jazz.

But what Coltrane has been doing is to get the ones he has influenced into the "hard" groove and then stimulate them to think for themselves, to work out ideas of their own within the framework of this style. For one there's Wayne Shorter, a tenor man from New Jersey whose style is as close to Coltrane's as any, yet doesn't sound like his.

Coltrane's style is many-faceted. There are many things to watch for in his playing, and the fact that he is constantly experimenting, always working out something new—on and off the stand—leads to the conclusion that no matter how well you may think you know what he's doing, he will always surprise you.

To begin my discussion of the various aspects of Coltrane's playing, I would like to elaborate a bit on the remarks I made above concerning the failure of listeners to find anything "familiar"—any clichés—in his solos.

He does have a few pet phrases that he will use in his solos. But you could hardly refer to them as clichés. They are his own, and he never even plays them exactly the same way twice. True, I have heard other instrumentalists—tenor men, trumpeters—pick them up and try to play them, but there is a certain inflection in the way he plays these phrases that no one could ever hope to duplicate.

Perhaps the most familiar of these phrases is the one shown in Example 1a.

But very often he will employ it sequentially in the course of building up a solo (or reaching the climax of one), and he is an expert in the subtle use of sequences for this purpose. Notice what he does with that same phrase towards the end of his solo

on **Bass Blues**. Example 1b. Notice how he alters the phrasing. You will find the same sort of thing in tracks like **Straight No Chaser** and **Soft Lights And Sweet Music**.

Another phrase that recurs frequently in his playing is this one, which undergoes even more alterations: example 2a gives it in a portion of his solo on **Blue Train**. Example 2b shows what happens to that same phrase at the beginning of his second chorus on **Bakai**.

Before I go any further, I would like to discuss a most controversial aspect of Coltrane's playing: his technique. It is an excellent one—one of the finest. His command of the instrument is almost unbelievable. Tempos don't faze him in the least; his control enables him to handle a very slow ballad without having to resort to the double-timing so common among hard blowers, and for him there is no such thing as too fast a tempo. His playing is very clean and accurate, and he almost never misses a note.

His range is something to marvel at: a full three octaves upward from the lowest note obtainable on the horn (concert A-flat). Now, there are a good many tenor players who have an extensive range, but what sets Coltrane apart from the rest of them is the equality of strength in all registers which he has been able to obtain through long, hard practice. His sound is just as clear, full and unforced in the topmost notes as it is down at the bottom.

That tone of his, by the way has been, and doubtless will continue to be, a subject of debate. A result of the particular combination of mouthpiece and reed he uses plus an extremely tight embouchure, it is an incredibly powerful, resonant and sharply penetrating sound with a spine-chilling quality. There are many who argue that it is not a "good" saxophone sound. Exactly what is a good saxophone sound? Are we to go along with those who hold that the only really good sound is of the Lester Young or of the Coleman Hawkins variety and therefore assume that none of the younger "hard" tenor players has a "good" sound? Lester Young's sound suited Lester Young, and Coleman Hawkins' sound is great for Coleman Hawkins. A sound is good if it suits the player's style and conception. So it is with Coltrane.

A word about his intonation. Those listeners who say that he doesn't play in tune have been deceived by that sharp edge in his sound. Of course, I don't mean to imply that his horn is immune to weather changes—no instrument is. And there are days when he has some intonation difficulties. But he plays in tune.

Example 1a. MOMENT'S NOTICE

Example 1b. BASS BLUES

Example 2a. BLUE TRAIN

Example 2b. BAKAI

Example 3. GOLD COAST

Note: The division in the first two measures is an arbitrary one. It is almost impossible to divide such a phrase into groups of so many notes here and so many notes there really accurately because of the speed of the playing.

Example 4. RUSSIAN LULLABY

Musical score for Example 4, Russian Lullaby. The score consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music features a melodic line with various ornaments and a bass line with chords. The second staff continues the melody and accompaniment. The third staff concludes the piece with a double bar line and a final chord.

Example 5. STRAIGHT, NO CHASER

Musical score for Example 5, Straight, No Chaser. The score consists of ten staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music features a melodic line with various ornaments and a bass line with chords. The second staff continues the melody and accompaniment. The third staff continues the melody and accompaniment. The fourth staff continues the melody and accompaniment. The fifth staff continues the melody and accompaniment. The sixth staff continues the melody and accompaniment. The seventh staff continues the melody and accompaniment. The eighth staff continues the melody and accompaniment. The ninth staff continues the melody and accompaniment. The tenth staff concludes the piece with a double bar line and a final chord.

I mention all these things because they have a direct connection with a good many things that Coltrane does. A technique like his seems essential to his approach, as we shall see.

There is far more to Coltrane's style than "hard drive." Hard drive is only one aspect of it, and even then it is an entirely different kind from that of, say, Sonny Rollins. Coltrane seems to have the power to pull listeners right out of their chairs. I have noticed this terrific impact on the various rhythm sections he has played with; he pulls them right along with him and makes them cook too. An interesting phenomenon is what happens to rhythm sections when Coltrane takes over from another soloist. Say Miles Davis is the first soloist. Notice that the rhythm section doesn't push. They are relaxed behind him. Now Coltrane takes over, and immediately something happens to the group: the rhythm section tightens up and plays harder. The bass becomes stronger and more forceful, as does the ride-cymbal beat; even the pianist comps differently. They can't help it—Coltrane is driving them ahead. This is most noticeable on medium and up tempos where he is most likely to cut loose. (It would be most interesting to see what would happen to a typical West Coast rhythm section should they find themselves having to play behind him.)

Coltrane's kind of "funk" drives, rather than swings. And it is less obvious. Listen carefully to his solos on such tracks as **Blue Train** and **Bass Blues** and you will hear some excellent examples. But listen carefully, because it won't be as easy to spot as Horace Silver's kind. That solo on **Blue Train** is such a revealing example of so many facets of his style and conception that I will transcribe it in its entirety, with accompanying explanatory notes.

Coltrane's harmonic conception is perhaps the most puzzling aspect of his style, inasmuch as it is so advanced. For one thing, he really knows what to do with the changes of the tunes he plays. This is apparent not only in his playing, but also—as we shall see—in his writing. He knows when to stick with the basic changes and when to employ those unusual extensions and alterations that a lot of people refer to as "blowing out of the changes" because they don't quite hear just what he is doing. He is very subtle, often deceptive—but he's always right there.

An excellent insight into these harmonic devices of his can be found in that weird phenomenon which has been variously referred to as "sheets of sound," "ribbons of sound," "a gosh-awful lot of notes" and other things. These are very long phrases played at such an extremely rapid tempo that the notes he plays cease to be mere notes and fuse into a continuous flow of pure sound. Sometimes they do not come off the way he wants them to, and that is when the cry of "just scales" arises. That may be, but I dare anyone to play scales like this, with that irregular, often a-rhythmic phrasing, those variations of dynamics, and that fantastic sense of timing.

But more often they work out the way he wants them to, and then one hears things. There is an unbelievable emotional impact to them, plus a fantastic residual harmonic effect which often is so pronounced that in many instances the piano wouldn't be missed if it weren't playing. A perfect example of this occurs halfway through Coltrane's solo on **Gold Coast**. (Example 3)

The piano plays the changes behind this, but it seems that just drums and bass would be sufficient, because in this section the changes are right there, as you can see.

An example of implied changes occurs in the unaccompanied run he plays in the tag of **Russian Lullaby**. (Example 4) Look at the transcription carefully, and you will be able to pick out a definite chord progression. It is probably the one Coltrane had in mind.

Some fantastic things happen when he plays on blues changes, the most basic ones. Example 5 is his first two choruses on **Straight No Chaser**. The changes are regular blues in F. Keeping that in mind, notice the way Coltrane subtly plays all those extensions and alternations of the chords. It does seem at first as if he were "blowing out of the changes". Actually he is not. That is a very important part of Coltrane's harmonic concept: his awareness of the changes and what to do with them. The same sort of thing occurs with telling effect in the middle of his solo on **Blue Train** as we will see. You will also notice it in certain portions of his solo on **Bass Blues** if you listen carefully.

Coltrane's sense of form is another source of wonderment. He has very few equals at building up a solo, especially on a blues—and building up a good solo on a blues is not easy.

(This is the first of two articles on John Coltrane. The second will appear in the November issue of the *Jazz Review*.)

THE BLUES

SPIDER MAN BLUES

Early in the morning, when it's dark and dirty outdoors,
Spider man makes a web, and hides while you sleeps and snores.
Never falls asleep; mean eyes watching day and night.
Gets every fly as fast as she can light.

That black man of mine sure has his spider ways,
Been crawling after me all of my natural days.
I'm like a poor fly; spider man, please let me go—
You've got me locked up in your house, and I can't break down your door.
Somebody please kill me, and throw me in the sea;
This spider man of mine is going to be the death of poor me.
(Sung by Bessie Smith on Columbia 14324-D.
Transcribed by J. S. Shipman.)

I LEFT MY BABY

I left my baby
Standin' in the back dor cryin'.
Yes, I left my baby
Standin' in the back door cryin'.
She said baby, you got a home,
Just as long as I got mine.

When I leave you baby,
Count the days I'm gone.
When I leave you baby,
Count the days I'm gone.
Where there ain't no love,
There ain't no getting along.

(Credited to Gibson. Sung by
Jimmy Rushing with Count Basie
on Epic LN3168)

DARK MUDDY BOTTOM

I walked down so many turn roads,
I can see them all in my sleep.
I walked down so many turn roads,
I can see them all in my sleep.
Share croppin' down here in this dark muddy bottom
With nothing but hardtack and sourgums to eat.

At four-thirty I'm out in the barnyard,
Tryin' to hook up my poor beat-up raggedy team.
At four-thirty I'm out in the barnyard,
Tryin' to hook up my poor beat-up raggedy team.
My stock is dyin' of starvation
And my boss is so doggone mean.

There's got to be a change made around here people,
I'm not jivin' that's a natural fact.
There's got to be a change made around here people,
I'm not jivin' that's a natural fact.
I'm gonna jump up on one of these old poor mules and start ridin'
And I don't give a durn where stop at.

(Sung by Mercy Dee on Specialty SP-481.
Transcribed by Larry Cohn.)



Count Basie Orchestra
New York 1943
Freddie Greene / Guitar
Ed Lewis / Al Killian / Harry Edison / Trumpet
Lester Young / Jimmy Powell / Earl Warren
Buddy Tate / Rudy Rutherford / Saxes
Eli Robinson / Dickie Wells
Louis Taylor / Trombone

ED LEWIS' ***STORY***

AS TOLD TO FRANK DRIGGS

This is the second of two articles on Ed Lewis. The first appeared in the May, 1959 issue of the Jazz Review.

I remember the first time Bennie Moten came East to New York to play the Lafayette Theater and double at the Savoy Ballroom. The people never heard anything like it. It really upset New York, and from that time on we were known as the international band. Before that we were just known as a Midwestern band.

That was the first time we went to Camden to make the next batch of records. I remember that day because Bennie got a check for \$5,020, and that was a lot of money around 1929 or so. Bennie always wanted to please the guys and he cashed the check, but he wouldn't pay anybody until we were all on

the train and had been under way a little while. We had a whole pullman to ourselves, and once we got rolling, Bennie announced payday and pulled out all that money and split it right down the middle. Boy, that seemed like all the money in the world then!

There were around three hundred social clubs in Kansas City then, and they all had dances in every part of the year, and these things kept us and all the other bands pretty busy. When those slowed down, we'd always play the Pla-Mor Ballroom or Fairyland Park in the country-club district.

You had your own territory to play in and you didn't play anywhere else unless you got permission from the leading band in that territory. Around Oklahoma City, Wichita, Kansas, and places like that, Walter Page's Blue Devils was the leading band. If Bennie wanted to play dates in that territory, he had to get in touch with Walter Page. He and Bennie would swap dates every now and then.

Around Omaha in later years, Nat Towles had the best band. Buddy Tate was with them then. They had other bands around there, too, just like in Kansas City, like Red Perkins and Hunter's Serenaders, but Nat Towles was the man you had to do business with if you wanted to play around there. Down in Texas there were T. Holder, Troy Floyd and Alphonse Trent who were all great, and Bennie would exchange dates with some of them. Herschel Evans played with both T. Holder and Troy Floyd then.

Jesse Stone was from Kansas City, but his band usually played out in the wilderness, as we called it, around Sioux Falls and Lincoln, Nebraska, etc. He usually got a bunch of college kids to work with him. I remember Eddie Tompkins played trumpet with him. Eddie's father wanted him to be a doctor, but he didn't care anything about that. He used to follow Jesse all around that part of the country, when his father thought he was in college. George Lee also booked around the same territory a lot because those cities didn't have any bands. Bennie was very strong politically in those days. Pendergast was for him, and so was Judge Holland and Tommy Gershwin, the prosecuting attorney. His word meant a lot, and he was a big influence among a lot of people. Bennie never held any office, but whichever way he went, so did a lot of other people. He was so popular at one time that he had a second band, but I don't remember who was in it, and he didn't do it too often. The people around Kansas City used to accept band number two as long as it had Bennie Moten's name in front of it.

The second trip we made East proved to be disastrous, because the first time Bennie upset the town,

and his rhythm was unknown to that part of the country. When he returned, though, he had bought up a lot of eastern arrangements and had started playing them in Kansas City. Well, the people around there accepted it because it was Bennie Moten, but the real mistake he made was when he went East and played the same stuff the eastern bands were playing and had been playing for years! He was a flop, because the people expected the same western music he was famous for, and in fact we almost got stranded. It was the saddest thing he ever did . . .

That was one of the factors that caused the band to split up. Bennie give notice to four guys: Vernon Page on tuba, Woodie Walder, Harlan Leonard, and Booker Washington. There was a clique of guys in the band that wanted to bring their friends in, and Bennie went along with them. The older guys couldn't see what was happening. Bennie replaced Vernon Page with Walter Page, Woodie Walder with Ben Webster, LaForest Dent for Harlan Leonard, and Joe Keyes for Booker Washington. After that, Thamon Hayes and I quit. It was one of those things. He replaced me with Dee Stewart, and I think George Hunt replaced Thamon. That was around February, 1932.

We couldn't sit around after that, and it was decided that all of us should form a band, and Harlan Leonard's mother-in-law, Mrs. Inez Pennington, financed the project and bought us uniforms, etc. We called the band Thamon Hayes' Kansas City Rockets, and it was the surprise band of that year. We gave the leadership to Thamon, because he was very popular around Kansas City and he had a good business head. We had all the guys I mentioned plus Jesse Stone on piano, Richard Smith on trumpet (he's head of the union now), Vic Dickenson on trombone, and Herman Walder and Baby Lovett, who came from George Lee's band. At the battle of bands that year we were given the spot next to Bennie Moten, which meant next to last, because the best band always played last. We had just about a dozen numbers rehearsed for that night, and if we'd been asked to play any more, we would have had to repeat. We had a specialty which was a preaching act that I did on trumpet with the band, and it brought the house down. In fact, when we left the stand, most of the crowd left with us. It was sad to see the hall nearly empty for a band as great as Bennie's.

We started touring and we got a good job in Chicago and were just starting to go over when the union told us to get out of town. We had our four-week period and that expired, so we had to leave and come back again. This was the time when Earl

Hines was king of the Grand Terrace and whatever he said was law. He had the backing of the gangsters then, and they came in one night and told us we weren't going to play around town any more. We tried very hard to make a go of it in Chicago and tried to get some record dates, but the town was tight to us, and we had to hit the road. We didn't make out too well after that, and Thamon quit the business and went back to Kansas City. Harlan Leonard took over the band then and kept it going until 1937.

Bennie died on the operating table in 1935. He had a wonderful surgeon, Dr. Bruce, who was one of the finest in the Midwest. A lot of people blamed Bruce for Bennie's death, but it wasn't his fault. Bennie was a nervous type of person, and they had to use novocaine because he wouldn't let them put him to sleep. He got frightened when he felt the knife, and jumped, severed an artery and bled to death. It really wasn't Dr. Bruce's fault, but people in Kansas City were so hurt over it that the poor fellow had to leave town. He had one of the largest practices in the Midwest and he had to give that up. He's in General Hospital in Chicago today and is still a fine surgeon.

There were several people around Kansas City who used to take care of the musicians. The Chief, whose name was Ellis Burton, used to operate the Yellow Front Saloon. He was a fine fellow and loved musicians, especially those who were married. If you were a married musician with children, and he had a single musician working in his place, that fellow lost his job and you got it. He was a strong politician and he sold whiskey in Prohibition days when no one else did. The police would close him up one night and he'd be open the next day. If you weren't straight with the union, he'd work you anyway and see that your dues got paid. He fed and paid more musicians than he possibly could use, and he'd always have a pot of beans in the back. On payday all the married fellows got paid first, and the single boys would have to wait if the money ran out, because he'd tell them that we had families to feed. He was a great humanitarian, and we all loved him for what he did for us.

Elmer Bean was a competitor of Ellis Burton's and he also used quite a few musicians when they were out of work. He was in the rackets and had a club on 18th and Harrison where the great Pha Terrell got his start singing.

Piney Brown was another great, giving musicians food and clothing and keeping up their appearance. He ran the Sunset on 12th and Highland and also operated the Subway Club on 18th and Vine, an after-hours spot. That place was the school for

musicians then, and he gave them a chance to learn their horns. A lot of them who came in couldn't blow their nose, but they got up on the stand with guys who were better than they were and they improved themselves from it.

There were so many great musicians in those days . . . Eli Logan was one of the fastest men on sax I ever heard. I would rate him the Art Tatum of the sax at that time. He played like lightning. Around Kansas City they rated him a genius. He wouldn't work with any of the bands but with two or three other musicians as accompanists. He died early.

Tommy Douglas was another sax man who was well regarded, and he still has small combos playing around Kansas City today.

Walter Knight and I, from the old Jerry Westbrook days, played at the Sunset with Pete Johnson, the great boogie piano player, and a drummer named Murl Johnson. Walter had a wonderful style and a nice big tone. Why he didn't get any further than he did, I'll never know. He was easily satisfied and never left town, because he had all the qualifications for success if he had left Kansas City. The last I saw of him was when I went back home for the first time with Basie's band.

Buster Smith was a great blues man and had a good tone. He was very original in his ideas and could write successfully when few others I knew of could. Eddie Durham and Smitty used to write together, and a lot of their stuff was used by Basie. Smitty didn't like to travel and went back to Dallas. He has one of the greatest aggregations around there today, but nobody can get him out of there, not even John Hammond. John offered to fly him to New York for Count Basie's testimonial dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria, but he said he couldn't spare the time. He's well fixed now, owns some property, and if you're ever in Dallas, don't leave until you've heard him play. The world should know about guys like him, because he's one of the finest.

I started working around town with Jay McShann and Murl Johnson for about five months. Johnson never had but one cymbal, just a snare drum and a bass drum, but he was all rhythm. Jay was always dreaming about the day when he'd have his own band, which he eventually did. I was talking then about joining another big band, so we got to be best of friends during that time. He's a fine musician and still plays around Kansas City today.

I joined Count Basie in 1937 and stayed with him for ten years. By this time I was playing first chair because they felt I added so much to the band as section leader. That was a great band, and Basie was a great leader. I only played a few solos with

Basie, like **Blue and Sentimental** and **Evil Blues** and confined my work mainly to the section, because we had so many stars like Buck Clayton and Harry Edison. Basie added another man because the work was beginning to wear me out. He got Al Killian, one of the best men in the game. We called him "Powerhouse," and he took a lot of weight off my shoulders. He died about eight years ago.

When Basie broke up his band, I was so disgusted that I quit playing and put up my horn for six years. When he reorganized, he changed to a semi-bop band. Why he changed I'll never know; you'd have to ask him; he had the best band playing commercial blues and swing and had the field practically all to himself. His band has improved a lot and it's wonderful now and he has some great musicians in it today.

I didn't have that much pride that I couldn't see when my horn wasn't going to support me, so I eventually got a job driving a cab and later changed to a steady job with the subway. Starting at night as a porter, I eventually rose in seniority and passed the exams and became head conductor, and have now reached the qualifications for motorman. I'm waiting for my appointment.

I was persuaded to play again by my good friends, Buck Clayton and Andy Gibson, who convinced me to get out the old battle-ax and get my lip in shape, because there was still room for me in the music game. I organized a twelve-piece band of other veteran musicians who have migrated to day jobs for a means of living: Paul Webster, Sandy Watson, Hilton Jefferson, Herb Thomas, Stretch Ridley on tenor, Henry Webster on baritone, Sam Saunders on piano, and one or two others. Betty Roche and Walter Page sang and played with us at different times. We rehearse every week, which keeps us in fair shape to play social dances on the weekends, which is the only time most of us can play because of our day jobs. We may have a possibility of a record date soon, and have built up a nice library of originals which might become hits.

When jobs come in, they are usually for anywhere between four and eight pieces, so we rotate the jobs as much as possible. Jobs these days for a twelve-piece band are pretty scarce, but fortunately most of us don't have to depend on music any more in order to make a living.

It's a shame that there are so many musicians like us going to waste millions of dollars' worth of experience and talent. One of these days I hope the business will change so that some of the great musicians will be allowed a chance to enjoy their profession once again.

If I get a chance to record again, I'm going to

dedicate some of the numbers to the late Joe Smith. He could play almost like a human voice, and he had so much soul. When he was playing with the Cotton Pickers he wasn't given much solo space, only four or eight bars, and maybe a sweet solo now and then. He married a girl in Kansas City, and she led him such a dog's life that he was heart-broken and drank heavily, which contributed to his death. That's a hard thing to say about a musician as great as he was, but that's the truth. He was very slight and never very well. His records should be brought out so everyone could hear them. I remember hearing Joe Oliver when I was very young. A circus came to town, and his band was playing with them. He rehearsed during the morning, and every musician in town was there listening. He was one of the greatest, and I can appreciate what Louis was trying to do then.

Jabbo Smith was another great trumpet player. We heard him around Chicago a lot when Thamon Hayes was trying to make it in the thirties. He played like Oliver and Louis.

Dewey Jackson's feet always used to hurt him. If you came close to his feet, he'd jump a mile, but he could play some blues that you never heard before. He was great. Charlie Creath was another blues man, something like Johnny Dunn. But around St. Louis the best territory band was Johnson's Crackerjacks. That's just what the name meant—crackerjack! Talk about playing, you never heard such music in your life! Every time we went to St. Louis to play, they'd wash us right down the drain. As great as Bennie Moten was in those days, it was something terrible when they got through playing. After they finished, there wasn't anything left for us to play. That's when I first met Harold Baker. That's another band that nobody knows about, and they had great musicians.

Around Kansas City, Hot Lips Page was one of the best. So were Joe Keyes and Sam Auerbach, who played with George Lee. Big Jim (Harry Lawson) used to play a lot with Andy Kirk then, and others like Paul King, Eddie Tompkins, Paul Webster, and Herman Walder, before he had his accident, were all great and all had original styles.

Musicians of Ed Lewis' varied background and experience are legion throughout the United States and are, for the large part, unnoticed since the advent of modern jazz in the past fifteen years. Those who have taken care of themselves are still playing good jazz in an individual style. They should be brought to the attention of record and night-club executives while they are still in full command of their horns.

by NAT HENTOFF

INTRODUCING BILL EVANS

Bill Evans—along with Cecil Taylor—is one of the two most important younger jazz pianists. Last summer he taught piano at The School of Jazz in Lenox. He started a trio this fall.

"I want to be able to be free to go in my own direction without having to drag other people into my way of thinking. Ideally, I'd like to play solo piano, but from a practical standpoint, in terms of establishing a reputation and the kinds of rooms one can play, a trio makes more sense. And actually, there is almost as much freedom in a trio and certainly a stronger rhythm base."

"I'm hoping the trio will grow in the direction of simultaneous improvisation rather than just one guy blowing followed by another guy blowing. If the bass player, for example, hears an idea that he wants to answer, why should he just keep playing a 4/4 background? The men I'll work with have learned how to do the regular kind of playing, and so I think we now have the license to change it. After all, in a classical composition, you don't hear a part remain stagnant until it becomes a solo. There are transitional development passages—a voice begins to be heard more and more and finally breaks into prominence."

"Especially," Evans continued, "I want my work—and the trio's if possible—to sing. I want to play what I like to hear. I'm not going to be strange or new just to be strange or new. If what I do grows that way naturally, that'll be O.K. But it must have that wonderful feeling of singing."

Evans went on to talk of the half of 1958 he spent with Miles Davis. "It was a personal as well as a musical experience, and probably brought me back to myself quite a lot.



Bill Evans



BOB CATO

I had felt the group to be composed of super-humans, and it helped my perspective to know how human they are and to experience the real and beautiful ways in which they deal with musical problems.”

“There wasn’t much said in Miles’ band,” Evans continued, “but things happened. I finally left because I was mixed up. Miles wanted me to stay, but my dad was sick, and I also wanted to try playing solo. Then too I felt, in a way, inadequate in the group. It’s a feeling I’ve been hung with for a few years. One of the main things the group did for me in time was to help me lose my hesitancy and that lack of confidence.

We never had a rehearsal. Everything was done on the job. On the record dates, half or all of the material might be all new and had never been rehearsed before. We’d talk

it over, run through certain changes, and often we’d use the first take. Even though the performance might not have been perfect, it had something else.

A beautiful thing about that band was how little was said about the music. That makes you rely on yourself; it makes you a person. It was a good social lesson, and pointed up how good a way that is for a person to live.” “About accompanying Coltrane,” Evans answered a question, “he builds everything on the basic changes. In other words, like the others, he had agreed on a common ground that everyone has to consider in group improvisation. In accompanying him, therefore, you could play the basic changes and they’d fit. It’s something like the situation in strict counterpoint where you have passing tones and even dissonances and

they don't sound dissonant because they come between consonances. I felt though I could have complemented Coltrane better. I kept looking for something else to do.

As for Miles, he aims at the most direct simplicity. If you're thinking harmonically, you can clutter-up completely. If, however, you want to work to really free melody, you have to get back to beginnings again. For example, you can take one mode and stay in it. Then, when you do change, the change is very significant."

A reader had written a letter about Miles' comments in the December, 1958 issue of **The Jazz Review** on his preferences for building improvisations around scales. "I dig," wrote Joe Kaercher of St. Paul, "how Khachaturian uses different modal and oriental scales, but he also uses harmony. I also dig George Russell's method of writing lines with the Lydian mode, but he still uses changes. Could you get a fuller explanation from Miles on these points and specially how he plays **My Funny Valentine** 'like with a scale all the way through.'"

An answer from Miles will be forthcoming, but Bill entered the discussion when told of the letter. "Miles sometimes gets away from chromatic harmonization and stays within the mode itself. **My Funny Valentine** is based on a three-flat scale. He could make his whole melodic improvisation on that scale without any chromatic notes. In my accompaniment to him, however, I might play some chromatic notes but that wouldn't affect him if he wanted to stay within the scale only. Or take **Young and Foolish**. The melody is all in the C scale—no chromatic notes in it. Yet you can harmonize it chromatically and the mode nonetheless remains the same, and you can stay within just that mode when improvising. Asked about influences on his playing, Bill said, "There are so many. You hear musicians all your life. Including 'unknowns.' I've been influenced by players in New Orleans, Chicago, St. Louis, and I don't know their names. Bud Powell was an important influence for me; the way Lennie Tristano and Lee Konitz started thinking structurally; all classical music; Woody Herman's big band. Actually, all musical experience enters into you."

Evans was next asked about the possibilities of atonality in jazz. "I don't know who can do it. If you experience music and develop naturally that way, I suppose it's possible, but if you want to go out and be atonal, where are you going to draw from? Unless you have that conception to begin with, how can you avoid past experience, past relations to tonality? And for group improvisation, where will you be able to find in atonality the common ground the members of an improvising group need?

"Perhaps," Evans added, "I'm using the term 'atonality' too strictly. In my last Riverside album, I could have been said to have been playing atonally in **Young and Foolish**. It's in C. A half chorus later, I went into D flat and wound up in E major. But it doesn't sound atonal to me because it's based on traditional harmonies."

About the impressive original, **Peace Piece** in the same album (Riverside 12-291), Evans noted: "It's completely free form. I just had one figure that gave the piece a tonal reference and a rhythmic reference. Thereafter, everything could happen over that one solid thing. Except for that bass figure, it was complete improvisation. We did it in two takes. Because it was totally improvised, I so far haven't been able to do it again when I've been asked for it in clubs."

Twenty-six months passed between Evans' first album as leader (Riverside 12-223) and his second. "I didn't feel I had anything particularly different to say that I hadn't done the first time. And maybe the second wasn't all that different except that I do think some of the things were different in terms of feeling."

Bill doesn't expect twenty-six months more to elapse before his third which will probably be with his trio; nor should his next solo recording take that long to develop. He's growing fast—in confidence as well as musically—and as a leader actually working as such in clubs, his rate of growth should increase. At thirty, he's already arrived, but there are still major developments' ahead.



small ensemble rehearsal in a tent

BOB CATO

A Letter from Lenox, Mass.

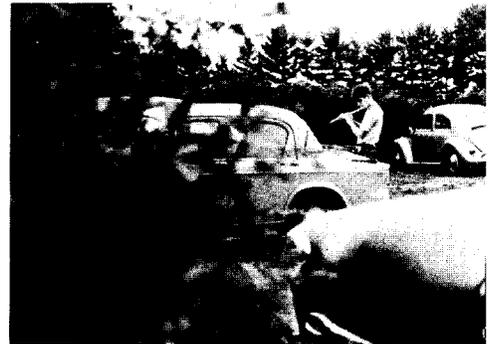
by MARTIN WILLIAMS

August 31

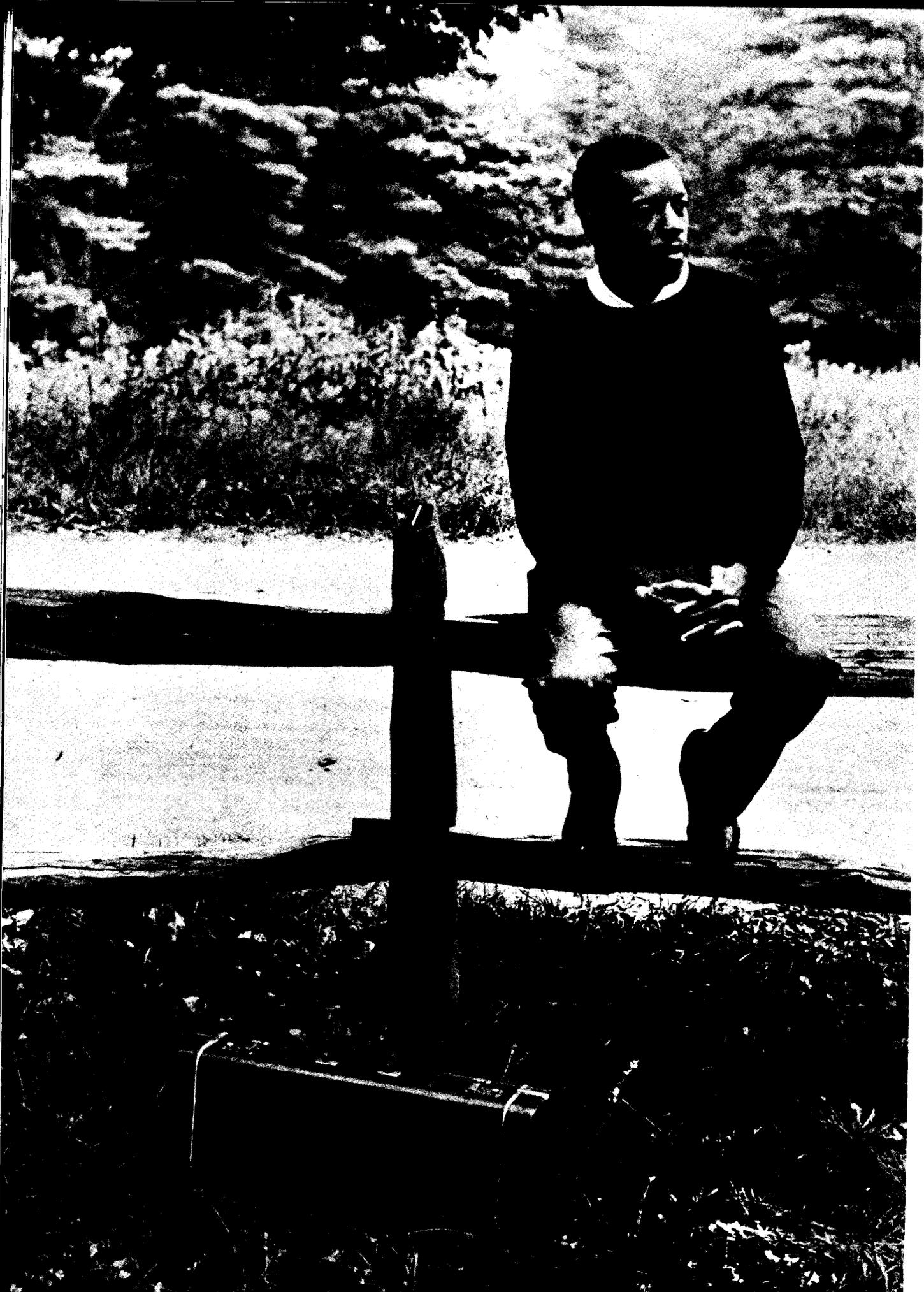
From the first day of this year's session of The School of Jazz there was undeniably something in the air, and it was not long before one realized exactly what it was: in its third year The School was coming of age. It was probably possible in past summers to overhear a student bull session on whether life or art is more important, but it would hardly have seemed so appropriate—and for most of the people involved this year they were really the same thing. Perhaps Jack Duffy, an auditor and classicist fresh from Tanglewood, caught it best when he said that these people seem to think and feel as one action, and that here the whole idea of work was different. He was right. Work was pleasure, thought, freedom, discipline, passion, self-discovery. One could say that of jazz itself—and in our time one can say it of few other human activities. There were several reasons for this new atmosphere at Lenox but as one reflects on them, he realizes they don't explain it all. The mysterious and natural process of growth is simply a part of it—and perhaps the mysticism of 3 is too. The faculty has matured as a faculty; musical disagreements being granted, now most of its



faculty children



practice session



Ornette Coleman

members seem to know better exactly what they are about and how to work at it, and the new members (Bill Evans, Gunther Schuller, Herb Pomeroy) are decidedly part of the new atmosphere.

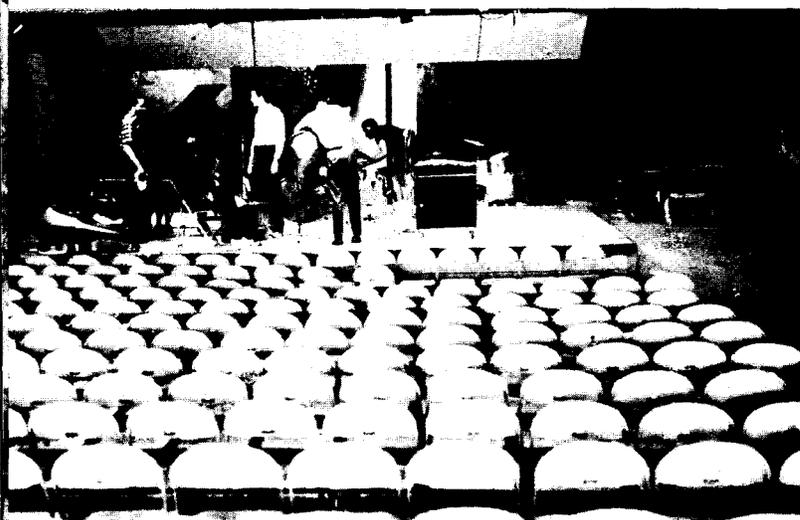
Another part of it was a generally superior student body—superior in talent, in outlook, and in experience. They were ready for a faculty generally ready for them. There were far fewer “teach me the changes and just let me wail”, for whom “self-expression” is inevitably a string of hip clichés, and there were far fewer Ivy League dabblers, buying their way into a world they may secretly think they should feel superior to. The Schaeffer Brewing Company scholarships did not bring in such types from the twelve schools where they were awarded, but brought good students. And even students who do not intend to become professional jazzmen contributed to the purposeful tone and musical achievement of the School. (Let us have more lawyers and engineers in American life who know what jazz is and can play that well!) For me to add that trumpeter Al Kiger (see Gunther Schuller in the August issue) recorded with the MJQ at the end of a session is in a sense for me to slight several considerable talents. Let me put it this way: the concert at the Music Barn on August 29 was one of the best concerts I have ever heard and a credit to everyone involved. Even when nothing happened there was rare honesty, and most of the time plenty happened.

There were five small groups coaxed, cajoled, encouraged, taught, and finally led, by Jimmy Guiffre; by Max Roach and John Lewis, by Bill Evans, Connie Kay, and Jim Hall; by Gunther Schuller; and by Kenny Dorham. And there was the big band led by Herb Pomeroy. Student composer-arrangers contributed to the repertory of the small groups. Some of the results were phenomenal. For example, one ensemble had a group feeling that some professionals seldom get; Max Roach had taught one very young drummer how to drum musically in three weeks; a composer who had previously produced rather hip pop tunes discovered a real compositional talent for instruments; several who had arrived with heads full of fashionable phrases and turn-arounds, had learned to make real music. And certainly the donors of scholarships—BMI, the Harvey Husten Memorial Committee, United Artists Records, Associated Booking Corporation, Dizzy Gillespie, Norman Granz—can be very proud of their association with such an enterprise. But perhaps the most significant fact was the presence of Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry—on scholarships from Atlantic Records, I hasten to add. If the School of Jazz can teach them (and it did), it has surely made a significant contribution to American culture quite beyond what anyone has a right to expect of any school.



Kenny and Max at play

I honestly believe (not that I am alone or particularly original in believing it) that what Ornette Coleman is doing on alto will affect the whole character of jazz music profoundly and pervasively, and that the first consideration is that what he plays can be very beautiful. (I had better say that I have not heard that first recording and hear mixed reports of it as a picture of his talent.) When he stood up to solo on the blues with the big band on the first day of school, I was taken. It was as if he opened up something in one's soul and opened up the way for jazz to grow. His music makes a new sensibility for one's ears and heart and mind, all the while including the most fundamental things in jazz. It seems impossible for Ornette Coleman to talk about music without soon using the word “love” and when he plays one knows that, undeluded, it is love of man his music is talking about. As is so necessary with an innovator in the beginning he is not afraid of what his muse tells him to play: “I don't know how it's going to sound before I play it anymore than anybody else does”. The step he is taking, like all great steps, seems inevitable only when someone has taken it and Coleman is taking it with a sublime stubbornness: if you put a conven-



rehearsal in the Music Barn

tional chord or rhythm under my note, you limit the number of choices I have for my next note; if you do not, my melody may move freely with far greater choice of directions.

Chaotic and a-harmonic? No. Sonny Terry is a-harmonic, but Coleman is not for he can work through and beyond the furthest intervals of the chords. For John Coltrane, is it not simply because he quite naturally still hears and plays off of those orderly chords that everyone uses, that, like a harassed man in an harmonic maze, he must invite the melodic disorder of running up and down scales? Somebody had to find the way out of that passionate impasse; it has fallen to Ornette Coleman to do it. When he is really creative (and inevitably he must still do plenty of mere searching), his melodies are unusual, but never jarring and one noticed at the concert, they can reach out and affect each individual in an audience.

There are problems. Musical ones: he may still

have to discover and work out much of it for himself; he must find others to play with besides Don Cherry, who breathes as he breathes musically. And formal ones: it is quite true and inevitable that I don't necessarily need eight bars to develop a line that it took me eight bars to state (the blues is not a strict twelve-bar form to a Clarence Lofton or Sonny Terry), but can a group follow me? But to say that his variations sometimes do not have the usual relationships to his melodies is not to say that they have none. On **The Sphinx** (the one mature composition of his in the concert, I think, and a beautiful one) his solo at one rehearsal seemed based on a constant rhythmic development of his theme.

I have said that the School taught him. When he arrived, he was (through lack of experience) no kind of large ensemble player. In the concert, with the big band and with the group of six, he had become one. And the school taught him about something about which, since he taught himself, he can learn still more: technical mastery of the saxophone. And there was a great lesson for others in his presence at the School: that music has its ultimate basis in the human soul and human feelings, not in keyboards, musical devices, or skills.

Several of the faculty justly hoped that "the critics" would not fill him full of wrong ideas about his duty to be "the next thing"—or whatever. Somehow, one has the feeling hearing him play or talk that he will simply do what he must do, not taking credit for his talent but simply feeling a duty to explore and use it, so long as he can work not deluded about "recognition", that he will play the music he hears, obey his muse, and fulfill his destiny as an artist, perhaps listening to what advice seems just and helpful but forgetting the rest, and resign himself patiently to the fate that any innovator must have. If he does that, he will be one of the very few American artists who has ever followed his talent without letting himself be somehow exploited by his "public" or his "notices". But, honestly, I really think he will.

Ornette Coleman is exceptional, but perhaps his presence at The School was not so much an exception as another evidence of the growth it has had. Watching those enlightened faces as Gunther Schuller played and analyzed the intricacies of **Grandpa's Spells** ("of course some of these breaks seem funny but they are also very beautiful"), I remembered John Lewis's opening speech three years ago: "we will teach you only about the jazz of the past ten years. We cannot show you how Jelly Roll Morton played because we don't know."

Marshall Stearns had played his records before, but now there was also room for a comparison of the music of Morton, Ellington, Monk, and John Lewis. And there was room for Ornette Coleman.

RECORD REVIEWS

OPUS DE BOP. Savoy MG 12114

Stant Getz, Hank Jones, Curly Russell, Max Roach. Sunny Stitt, Kenny Dorham, Bud Powell, Al Hall, Wally Bishop. Fats Navarro, Leo Parker, Tad Dameron, Gene Ramey, Denzil Best. **Opus de Bop**, Running Water, **Don't Worry About Me**, And the Angels Swing, **Fools Fancy**, Bebop in Pastel, **Ray's Idea**, Bombay, **Eb Pob**, Going to Minton's, **Fat Girl**, Ice Freezes Red.

IN THE BEGINNING . . . BEBOP.
SAVOY 12119.

I have never believed bop was the work of a small group of musicians who desired to create a private musical language. Valid creation is never the result of extra-musical impulses of that kind, and a new idiom is produced by gradual innovation upon established practice rather than by artificial contrivance. Even so, a high proportion of the pioneer modernists were exceptionally gifted and they did evolve a style of great complexity that made a number of new creative and technical demands. Thus bop did become a kind of clique music but the clique was of the best sort in that unusual ability was the only way to admittance. Two of the most obvious difficulties were the new rhythmic complexity resulting from the sub-division of the beat, and improvising creatively on the dense harmonic sequences. The 'cool' phase that followed bop was a reaction against this complexity and traces of it can be seen even today in the attitude of some musicians: e.g. Miles Davis's concern with melodic rather than harmonic entities (see *The Jazz Review*, December 1958).

A certain division was evident from the outset between the actual bop musicians, whose work incorporated most of the more valuable innovations of the new jazz, and what personal taste leads the present writer to call the lesser moderns. This was less obvious at the time than it is now but the matter is put into some kind of perspective by the two Savoy issues listed above. Five of the six sessions represented were recorded in 1946, a year after modern jazz had begun to be recorded in any quantity.

Only one of these sessions has a properly integrated bop group presenting the music at something like its best. This is a Bud Powell date with Kenny Dorham, Sonny Stitt, Al Hall and Wally Bishop. Powell is perhaps the greatest musician represented here and is at his best, the piano solo on **Ray's Idea** being one of the finest things on the two discs. Something of his greatness is suggested by the authority of his playing, a quality difficult to define but which is not very evident

in much of the other playing here. As I hope to devote more space to Powell in these columns in a later issue I will only comment on one feature of his playing: the remarkable impression of urgency it conveys. The musical relationship between Powell and Parker is not unlike that between Armstrong and Hines. The music of both Powell and Parker has an at times almost harsh directness of expression that is partly the result of their ability to absorb themselves in a performance from the first beat.

At the time this session took place Stitt was just gaining a reputation as the first altoist able to reproduce at least some of the elements of Parker's style. The truth is that at this time his conception differed from Parker's more than it does now, although this may be because he was then insufficiently accomplished to follow all of Bird's methods. On each of the four titles here his tone is lighter, and also less consistent, than Parker's. He runs the changes in the Bird manner and his melodic style is very similar, but his improvisations betray some uncertainty in their organisation and lack the seeming inevitability of so much of his exemplar's work. Dorham plays better than on some of the records he made later in the 'forties, e.g. the Clef session with Parker in 1949. Melodically his style is based on Gillespie, but is less virtuoso in conception. His tone is well-rounded, if rather small, and is related to Howard McGhee's 'closed' sound. A notable point is the fluidity of Dorham's line that derives partly from his technique but more from the character of his ideas. The best trumpet solo of this session is in **Bombay** and it also serves as a good illustration of the use of double-time. Two of the titles, **Fool's Fancy** and **Bebop in Pastel**, are almost identical in theme and arrangement with **Wail and Bouncing with Bud** recorded by Powell for Blue Note three years later in 1949 with Fats Navarro and Sonny Rollins. Only the intros are different.

In those early days the new men were often recorded with musicians playing in older styles. This does still happen, though less frequently, and the resulting incompatibility always prevents fully integrated performances being produced. Fats Navarro, one of the most brilliant of all the early moderns, can be heard here with two rather unsuitable groups. In the more satisfactory in-

stance he appears with Tadd Dameron, Gene Ramey, Denzil Best and Leo Parker. Leo is not at his monstrous worst here (for that one must hear **The Mad Lad** recorded with Sir Charles Thompson on Apollo). He has an enormous tone but his ideas are commonplace formulae arbitrarily strung together and punctuated with sudden dives into bottom register. Still, all this serves to emphasize the discipline and logic of Navarro's melodic construction. On all four titles he offers typical trumpet solos. Among his consistent qualities were the fullness of his tone, the intense conviction of his playing and a vein of melodic invention surprisingly individual in so young a musician. (Navarro died in 1950 at twenty-six.) His sense of logical musical development is clearly illustrated by his use of the high register. He had an impressive command of the upper reaches of his instrument but reserved it for climaxes that were always the result of increasing musical intensity. The **Eb-pob** solo also shows how, once a climax was reached—in this case just before the chorus's half-way mark—he would release the tension gradually. Although the musical language is very different it is instructive to compare this solo, from the point of view of construction, with Bix Beiderbecke's on **Jazz Me Blues** in which the same leading away and down from an early climax is beautifully handled. **Goin' to Minton's** has a somewhat more discursive solo but here a well chosen variety of ideas are happily organised into a fully cohesive utterance. Again, the sure-footed articulation of the opening idea recalls the Beiderbecke of **Royal Garden Blues** or **At the Jazz Band Ball**. Such comparisons should not be taken too far, but Navarro's explosive opening in **Ice Freezes Red** does remind one of the way Bix's **Since My Best Girl Turned Me Down** solo bursts into life.

The other Navarro tracks find him in an Eddie Davis group. While there are no honks or squeals, Davis's jivey tenor is sometimes hot in an obvious kind of way—like Wild Bill Davison's trumpeting—but generally fails to stimulate excitement very convincingly. Navarro takes lithe, forceful solos in **Spinal** and **Red Pepper** and puts in a few excellent bars on **Just a Mystery** before Davis comes along with a **Yankey Doodle** quotation. The short, filigree muted solo on **Maternity** sounds much like Gillespie.

The rhythm section is badly recorded—one can hardly hear Al Haig—and includes a guitar. With the piano, bass and drums fulfilling their tasks in rather different ways from in the swing era, the precise function of this instrument in bop rhythm sections was never determined. The kind of continuous 4/4 it had provided with, say, Basie would have been a handicap harmonically and rhythmically and there never seemed any real justification for its presence. On Parker's **Night in Tunisia/Ornithology** date and his **Cheers/Stupendous** session neither Arv Garrison nor Barney Kessel was able to do more than alternate their chording with that of Dodo Marmarosa at the piano. On this Davis session Huey Long did not advance the problem nearer a solution. The other music on these records is not bop but often tries to be. More fundamental here than the Parker/Gillespie influence, however, is the example of Lester Young. Of all the tenors who used Lester's music as a kind of quarry from which to hew a style of their own Stan Getz is probably the most creative. It is the more surprising that his first session should hardly exhibit that influence at all. In many respects he sounds like—of all people—Dexter Gordon. (Although Gordon's records do not appear to be a very positive contribution to modern jazz in themselves he has affected a surprising variety of artists. To mention only one very different from Getz, Jackie McLean has named him as a formative influence.) Getz's swing on this 1946 date is far more aggressive than on his later, more characteristic work and his tone is like Gordon's too. Soon, in the solos with Herman, Lester was to become virtually the sole influence but the fact Getz attempt to come to terms with the more recent innovations is shown by **Opus de Bop** and **Running Water**. **Opus** is a definite attempt to write a bop original and **Running Water** seems to be in emulation of those very fast Parker performances such as **Bird gets the worm**. Yet it has nothing of Parker's rhythmic structure and here and in **Opus de Bop** Getz moves around the beat in Young's manner. **Don't worry 'bout Me** is less hectic and gives some indication of the shapely melodic invention, if not the harmonic subtlety, for which he was to become famous. **And the Angels Swing** is similar but has an odd, inappropriate intro and is rather more formal

and deliberate. Overall Getz's melodic construction is here more fragmentary than it later became.

That the rhythmic qualities of bop were—and have remained—the most difficult to assimilate is also suggested by four Allen Eager titles. **Mr. Dues** and **O-Go-Mo** have tricky intros, abrupt, fragmentary melodies, horn chords echoed by the piano and other features that suggest further attempts to produce originals like **Shaw 'nuff** or **Groovin' High**. The solos are completely out of character with this. Eager has the tone and some of the melodic grace of Lester in his **Taxi War Dance/Twelfth Street Rag** period, if not the rhythmic resiliency or such imaginative construction. A sign of the stylistic disunity of this session is Shelly Manne's cymbal playing behind Eager on **Mr. Dues**. This is a world away from the atmosphere of Lester's music and is more in keeping with the theme. Winding does not really have a style at all here. His line is choppy and discontinuous most of the time and he is very hesitant in the latter part of the **Oh Kai** solo. Modern jazz trombone was only given form and definition by J. J. Johnson and although by this year (1946) he had made some characteristic records—also for Savoy—he had not yet made his mark on others. Marty Napoleon has well-conceived piano solos on **Saxon** and **Mr. Dues** and Safran's bass playing is excellent throughout.

Brew Moore is once supposed to have said, "Anyone who doesn't play like Lester is wrong!" and certainly there are no bop overtones at all in his four titles. The strong accents rest firmly on the beats, e.g. the last chorus of **Brew Blew**, and there is no suggestion of the bop splitting-up of the beat. Having mastered what might be termed the mechanics of Lester's vocabulary Moore seems content to move around within it without attempting much that is new. Sometimes a phrase is given an unfamiliar twist but it is usually the kind of twist Lester might have given it himself. Nonetheless within this area Moore works with ease and skill. 'Invention' would hardly be an accurate term to use but his melodic continuity is impressive, particularly when he is aided by a fast tempo, as in **More Brew**. He also achieves something like real eloquence on **No More Brew**, a blues. Each of his solos, however, remains a series of twelve or thirty-two bar episodes without

any real overall shape. This is the more obvious when they are compared with, say, **Lester Leaps In**. There the tenor work, for all the breaks and piano interludes, has true form and development, at least as far as the over-extended coda. This music is of variable worth, with the Powell and Navarro solos easily outdistancing the rest, though all of it is worth getting to know. And both lps are helpful in separating the different paths along which modern jazz was travelling ten of more years ago.

Max Harrison

EUBIE BLAKE: "The Wizard of Ragtime". 20th Fox 3003.

Blake, piano and vocals; Noble Sissle, vocals; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Bernard Addison, guitar; Milt Hinton or George Duvivier, bass; Panama Francis, drums. **Jubilee Tonight**; Eubie's Boogie Rag; **The Dream Rag**; Mississippi Rag; **Maple Leaf Rag**; **Ragtime Rag**; **Mobile Rag**; I'm Just Wild about Harry; **Carry Me Back to Old Virginny**; Maryland, My Maryland; **Carolina in the Morning**; Sunflower Slow Drag; **The Ragtime Millionaire**; My Girl is a High Born Lady; **Good Morning Carrie**; Bill Bailey Won't You Please Come Home.

If Blake really recorded these numbers at the age of 75, as the album notes say, he performed an uncommon physical feat. But, wholly apart from the performer's age, these are very pleasant numbers.

Apparently Blake thoroughly enjoys himself, running through such dandies as I'm Just Wild About Harry, **Jubilee Tonight**, **Bill Bailey Won't You Please Come Home** and an up-tempo version of **Carry Me Back to Old Virginny** which seems singularly un-reminiscent of the Old Dominion of Senator Harry Flood Byrd and Governor J. Lindsay Almond.

Also, in the fascinating **Dream Rag**, Blake reveals that he is not mere fun and games, but a solid, creative musician with rich ideas, wide musical resources, imagination, capable of restraint as well as exhilaration. All of this is put out under the name of "ragtime." I think that the term ragtime is most useful if it is restricted to a certain body of music within which Blake's does not fall. His style is the ancestor of James P. Johnson's, Willie the Lion's, Fats's

Cliff Jackson's and by second-hand, an important force in all subsequent jazz piano. This is a different root from the ragtime of Joplin, James Scott, Turpin and the others. The music of Eubie Blake followed a different trail; it never cultivated the discipline and tradition of Joplin's ragtime. It never reached for the stars. Instead it swings out, more free-wheeling, more improvisational, more flexible to innovation. When Eubie plays **Mississippi Rag**, **Maple Leaf Rag** and **Sunflower Slow Drag** on this lp, I would call him a jazz pianist playing ragtime.

Not that semantics are important. I am not denying the 'album notes' characterization of Eubie as "the real thing", I am simply trying to keep clear which thing.

The important point is that this is a remarkable exhibition of continuing vitality and swing in a most remarkable 75-year-old. It is rather startling to realize that this man was playing professionally in the Nineteenth Century.

Guy Waterman

BILL EVANS: "Everybody digs Bill Evans". Riverside 12-291.

Bill Evans, piano; accompanied on tracks 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 by Sam Jones, bass, and Philly Joe Jones, drums.

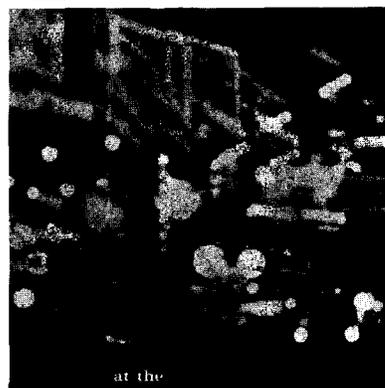
Minority; Young and Foolish; **Lucky to Be Me**; Night and Day; **Epilogue**; Tenderly; **Peace Piece**; What Is There to Say; **Oleo**; **Epilogue**.

Probably Bill Evans would be an important jazzman if only because he functions so well in the East in the midst of all the funky hollering, and shows that there are other ways to convey emotion and other emotions to convey—indeed, by implication he reminds us that real hollering may convey emotion, but that it isn't art. But he is important for a lot of reasons that go beyond the delight of his touch and the message of feeling that his touch alone might convey.

Whatever Evans has learned from Lennie Tristano, he has one capacity that Tristano does not, a really exceptional, relaxed, rhythmic imagination and flexibility, and with it he has absorbed and even supplemented the rhythmic basis of bebop. All that technique, and every note of it, function as one: rhythmically, harmonically, and linearly; a man might earn the title of artist for having done less.

blue note

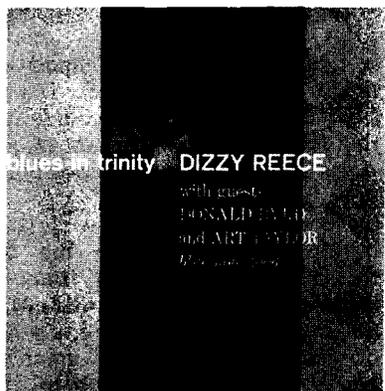
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And Evans would be an important jazzman at the moment if only because he is a leading member of the movement which moves emphasis away from the thick and rapid chord-shiftings of bop. And within it Evans uses those "advanced" intervals of his and his scales to improvise continuous and original melodies.

Since I'm obviously calling this an lp by an important musician, I hasten to add a few things. It seems to me that Evans' ad lib performances like **Lucky to Be Me** may be a mistake: they show only his technique and touch, and they may sustain a mood, but we know of those things anyway and know of them without the languidness these excursions constantly risk. And a man with Evans' rhythmic capacity should use them. **Peace Piece** on the other hand is a remarkable ostinato tour de force, an improvisation as good as some of the carefully wrought French impressionistic compositions which in part inspired it. Does it swing? The answer is, of course, that rhythmically only the jazz pianist named Bill Evans could have played it.

Quite a record. But there is something missing on even the best tracks: **Minority, Tenderly, Oleo**. The resources and the possibilities of his playing are here, but there is a kind of relaxed variety with emotional and melodic concentration in some of his other recordings that one misses here. It is present in his work on "**Cross Section—Saxes**" (Decca DL 9029), is even on a gimmick record like "**Guys and Dolls Like Vibes**" with Eddie Costa (Coral CRL 57230) and of course in his excellent **All About Rosie** solo (Columbia WL 127). Obviously a conclusion is at hand: there is an easy but forceful terseness in the playing of Evans the sideman that Evans the leader is not always in touch with.

Martin Williams

ART FARMER: "Modern Art".

United Artists UAL-4007.

Farmer, trumpet; Benny Golson, tenor; Bill Evans, piano; Addison Farmer, bass; Dave Bailey, drums.

Mox Nix; Fair Weather; Darn

That Dream; The Touch of Your Lips; **Jubilation**; Like Someone in Love; **I Love You**; Cold Breeze. The stylistic balance on this record is particularly happy. Of the three

solo voices, Farmer's is notable for its well-mannered, self-contained, exquisitely adjusted social tone. Golson, most of the time, plays a dilution of the wailing, whirling declamation most often associated with John Coltrane. Bill Evans has made a style of the displaced accent, the kind of sprung rhythm that can augment the drive of a fast number or, at slow tempos, produce languishing suspensions, delightfully and validly romantic. The blending of these three unlike talents is perfect on this record. I can hardly recollect, for comparison's sake, such another ensemble.

Unfortunately, this chamber-music-like unity is the chief distinction of the record. The harmony has been achieved, and maintained, at the expense of the unexpected. What the record amounts to is a tasteful display of the amenities. Each soloist applies his favorite devices to each number, and graciously yields to the next. But this is to characterize the record in the most severe way. From another point of view, it would be maintained that these musical good manners are uncommon in jazz, and gratifying. And one must grant that each soloist, in applying his devices, does so with great skill.

So overpowering and contagious is the atmosphere of gentility, however, that it has led me into near-Jamesian nuances in trying to describe it. And more pertinently, it results in music that is frequently so reticent as to be meaningless. Golson's tune **Fair Weather**, an attractive tune in a rather Victor Herbert way, is explored—rather, ignored—in a series of choruses so empty that one can hardly wait for it to have done. Yet the men are not coasting; they have been, rather, diverted from their jobs by too much self-awareness.

Nothing else on the record is so null as this. Anybody not already sated by churchy numbers will like **Jubilation**. Quite reasonably, the politeness that holds sway throughout is most meaningful in the ballads. Farmer's solo in **The Touch of Your Lips** is most effective: it makes much of the interval of the major third, but is deceptively consonant because frequently the implied chord is at odds with the true one. That is nothing new, of course, but it is peculiarly refreshing here, perhaps as a series of malapropisms in the midst of so much well-adjusted discourse. **Like Someone in Love** is a handsome piece, to say the least, and for more than Golson's lovely, breathy

opening chorus. But the record's best moments do not scar very high, and were perhaps not intended to. One does not expect a prophet to turn up at tea-time, nor a seer at a soiree.

Glenn Coulter

EDMOND HALL: "Swing Sesion". Commodore FL 30,012.

Downtown Cafe Boogie, **Uptown Cafe Blues**, The Man I Love, **Coquette**.

Sextet: Hall, clarinet; Emmett Berry, trumpet; Vic Dickenson, trumpet; Eddie Heywood, piano; Al Casey, guitar; Billy Taylor, bass; Sidney Catlett, drums.

Caravan, **It's Only A Shanty**, Where or When, **Night and Day**, I Want to Be Happy, **Show Piece**, It Had To Be You, **Sleepy Time Gal**.

Quartet: Hall, clarinet; Teddy Wilson, piano; Billy Taylor, bass; Art Trappier, drums.

Edmond Hall is one of those professional musicians who has been around at recording time for a hundred or so nondescript bands that needed a clarinet. For these many adequate contributions as a sideman, the Commodore people evidently saw fit to put out this album featuring Edmond Hall as soloist. The project falls somewhat short of unqualified success. There were, it seems, good reasons for Hall's long apprenticeship as a sideman.

To being with, he has nothing that could properly be called an idea, much less an extended, cohesive series of thoughts. At all times he generates simply a series of unrelated phrases, some bright, some dull.

Then too, Hall is about as lacking in a **personal** touch as any solo clarinet could be. His sound is completely faceless.

The selection of tunes is as uninspired as the playing—**Where or When**, **The Man I Love**, **Night and Day** and other tired chestnuts. It may be that non-musicians with a taste for this period of jazz will find it relaxing, enjoyable listening. It is nothing more.

On the quartet numbers, the effectiveness varies with the type of tune. Hall apparently has no feeling for what a clarinet should do in a quartet in which it is the only melody instrument. The most pathetic illustration occurs on the well-known climax to **Where or When**. The passage is plainly bad jazz.

Incidentally, where or when on earth

the album notes came up out of this with "that sadness that D. H. Lawrence called the most beautiful ingredient of art" escapes this reviewer's understanding.

The up-tempo quartet numbers don't come off. Hall, of course, plays too many notes; he sounds like he is striving to fit in both melody and dixieland-type clarinet fill-in accompaniment also pushes too hard, coming on as he would if he had a full orchestra behind him. All he has is an unusually reticent three man rhythm section. On his part, Teddy Wilson lacks drive on the up-tempo numbers.

Particularly forceless are **Caravan**, **Shanty-Town**, and **I Want to Be Happy**. The same would be true of **Show Piece**, were it not for one bright spot, the first chorus after entry of bass and piano, after an extended duet of clarinet and drums alone. On the other hand, the relaxed medium-tempo tunes go pretty well—**Night and Day**, for example.

Sleepytime Gal is superb, largely due to Teddy Wilson's flash of real brilliance. Wilson does as much in this number as I have ever heard him do. Even before his very capable, relaxed, economical solo, he has already outdone himself on the opening chorus. This bears close listening.

Every phrase of the melody, as played fairly straight by Hall, is either echoed or **anticipated** (as in bar 11), by Wilson. Yet regardless of the extraordinary aptness of every phrase, the accompaniment is continuously flowing and swinging. This is the surprisingly difficult job of the jazz trio pianist—and it is so seldom done as well as Wilson does it here. The job is to maintain a consistent and appropriate rhythmic-harmonic background for the melody instrument and **still** get in a **fully** complementary and intelligent second melodic line. (It was Jelly Roll Morton's gift for this demanding assignment which made the trio his foremost vehicle and set him head and shoulders above the crowd. In this opening chorus, Wilson, in his different style, exhibits the same kind of skill.) Note some particularly good spots—the closely compatible piano and clarinet phrases around the middle of the chorus, the timely piano trill buried behind a Hall run on the fourth beat of bar twenty-four, and the preparation for the final bars in bar twenty-eight. Also note the thorough consistency of touch

throughout. This is Teddy Wilson at his best, and it is very good—the high-point of an otherwise undistinguished series of numbers.

The other four numbers are done by a workmanlike 'thirties-type band, in which Hall does not particularly stand out. Actually the performer in these numbers, as one would expect, is Sid Catlett. His presence on these four tracks is perhaps the only important thing on this lp, aside from Wilson's good moments. However, Big Sid can be heard better elsewhere.

Guy Waterman

**JOHN LEE HOOKER AND STICKS
McGHEE: "Highway of
Blues". Audio Lab AL 1520.**

This record is not easy listening, and for those who insist on high fidelity and modern sounds, this may not have much appeal, because it is archaic in every respect. However the blues in their raw, rough, and often crude form are not over-represented on lps and in my opinion this \$1.95 disc would make a very worth-while investment.

Side 1 is devoted to the average, run-of-the-mill blues-and-jump singer Sticks McGhee who is backed by a typical jump band of the tenor sax, drums, guitar, piano, and bass variety heard on almost every r & b record about eight years ago. He sings pleasantly but unconvincingly, **Whiskey, Women and Loaded Dice; Sad, Bad, Glad; Head Happy with Wine; Dealin' From the Bottom; Get Your Mind Out of the Gutter; and Jungle Juice**. As the label states, Audio Lab is a production of the King Record Co. and most of these sides, like those by John Lee Hooker, appeared as singles about ten years ago. The recording quality of the Sticks McGhee side is average for this type of material and could pass for what the cover inevitably calls "High Fidelity," but under no stretch of the imagination can this be said about the John Lee Hooker side. **Moaning Blues** and **Late Last Night** especially sound as if they were recorded on a home recorder, but this side warrants further comment.

John Lee Hooker was born in Birmingham, Alabama, and is today only in his middle forties; I say **only** because his style is a truly archaic one, and it has changed very little since he first began recording about ten years ago. His



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electric guitar has a very distinctive, droning sound and his foot tapping becomes part of the overall sound created by John Lee's sometimes moaning sometimes chanting voice, accompanied by the fantastic sound of his guitar. John Lee Hooker literally moans the blues in a manner reminiscent of the men on some of the recordings made by Alan Lomax in Southern prisons. Inevitably one comes to compare John Lee with Lightning Hopkins, because both are rather well-known blues singers of relatively recent vintage, but very much in the traditional vein. However, essentially Lightning plays in a very loose and flowing style and his guitar is part of his voice; on the other hand John Lee Hooker's guitar is not part of his voice but a rather metronomic accompaniment perfectly matched with his vocal expressions. The sarcasm, bitter humor, and often running commentary which form part of Lightning's blues singing, and which in my opinion makes him one of the greatest blues singers of all times, is unfortunately lacking in John Lee Hooker and his recordings tend to become a bit monotonous.

The recordings on the lp are among John Lee's first and many of the titles appeared on the King label under the pseudonym of "Texas Slim." **Don't Go Baby** is the traditional blues **Baby, Please Don't Go** and on this track all sorts of background noise can be heard—perhaps some of these sides were recorded at some music store or under similar primitive circumstances. **Nightmare Blues** and **Moaning Blues** are very slow and, as the second title indicates, very moaning. **Thinking Blues** is a pleading number and **Late Last Night** is another real tough moaner. Finally **Devil's Jump** is an up-tempo boogie played in the style to which Lightning Hopkins refers to on his record of **New York Boogie**: "John Lee Hooker told me one day, if you don't get it like this, you're wrong."

Today John Lee Hooker still records for the Vee-Jay label, but in general his career is somewhat parallel to Lightning's and he reached what was probably the peak of his popularity between 1950 and 1955. The recordings on the lp are very good examples of John Lee Hooker at his most primitive best. Time has changed his style little as his recent Vee-Jay recording of **I'm in the Mood** (V-J 308) will show.

Chris Strachwitz

MILT JACKSON: "Bags' Opus".

United Artists UAL 4022.

Jackson, Vibraharp; Benny Golson, tenor saxophone; Art Farmer, trumpet; Tommy Flannagan, piano; Paul Chambers, bass; Connie Kay, drums.

Ill Wind; **Blues for Diahann**; **Afternoon in Paris**; **I Remember Clifford**; **Thinking of You**; **Whisper Not**.

Essentially this is an unpretentious, low-keyed blowing session with solos from all concerned within a framework provided by Benny Golson's rather perfunctory arrangements. There is a danger in this sort of session that it will collapse into a soul-baring contest with everyone bent to demonstrate their possession of the greatest possible quantity of this much-talked-about substance. But none of the men here has ever been guilty of this sort of thing, although Milt Jackson has come close on his records with Ray Charles, and none of them are here. The rhythm group of Flannagan, Chambers and Kay functions well, with Kay's work a real delight. He has been rather unjustly neglected by the press. He is an exceptionally sensitive musician, and his support, while never obtrusive, is always there. Its subtlety often makes it pass unnoticed. His work behind Jackson on **Ill Wind** is rare.

Flannagan and Chambers play competently but with little of the **brío** that Kay demonstrates. Chambers' solos here are not among his best and Flannagan does little but offer his own version of Bud Powell.

Milt Jackson is a musician taken for granted in contemporary jazz. He is generally acknowledged to be the best vibist around, but after this acknowledgement little else is said of him. Actually, Jackson has been the only vibist to be able to combine the percussive swing of Hampton with the gentle lyricism of Norvo in a style of his own. This is not to say that Jackson has copied these men or has even been influenced by them. But he has developed a style which encompasses many of the qualities of these men, although his basic approach owes nothing to them. Rather his idea seems to be to approach a line with a distinct drive which is transmuted by the delicately controlled vibrato into an essentially lyrical statement. For example, his work here on **Ill Wind**, particularly the second

eight bars and the release of the first chorus which are beautifully constructed in these terms, and on **I Remember Clifford**.

Yet, as good as he is here, I feel that Jackson functions best within a more tightly controlled unit such as the MJQ or the various Monk groups with which he has recorded. I realize that this is something of a heresy—Jackson is often supposed to be an essentially wailing musician who is held back by the MJQ. But, despite all of Jackson's own comments about soul and his many fine performances on recordings such as this, I think that the more tightly organised groups give him a support and background which strengthen rather than diminish his lyricism.

Except, oddly enough, on **Thinking of You** where his is the only major solo voice, Art Farmer plays with his usual quiet excellence throughout the lp. I have never heard Farmer play badly and, while he is not at his very best here, his almost Bixian solo on **Afternoon in Paris** and his wonderful entrance after Golson on **Blues for Diahann** are most persuasive statements. It is difficult to say what went wrong on **Thinking of You** as Farmer usually excels on ballads, as in the remarkable **The Very Thought of You** on Contemporary 3554, but little of significance develops.

As an instrumentalist Benny Golson still seems to be trying to establish his own voice. He often seems torn between the poles of a Thompson-Webster approach and a Coltrane approach. On the **Bags'-Grooveish Blues for Diahann** he begins with a fine Thompson-ish solo which soon degenerates into a series of empty Coltrane-isms, and this sort of difficulty is present throughout the recording. I think that Golson may well have something important to contribute on his instrument once he has found a way in which to do it. His solo on **Whisper Not** is a fine one, owing more to Ben Webster than to Coltrane, but with enough originality in its construction to allow one to wager that Golson may soon remind us only of himself. My attitude is further borne out, I think, by his much more successful fusion of the two styles on Art Farmer's recent lp (United Artists UAL 4007). In the writing for the session, Golson, like Gigi Gryce, seems to be limiting himself to slight but often attractive themes for blowing and to devising equally slight arrangements of these and other tunes—

extremely conservative arrangements which allow for little or no development. Hear **Whisper Not** and **Afternoon in Paris**. It would be interesting and, I think, worthwhile if someone would commission an album from Golson which would demand much more than was demanded here.

The recording is well and tastefully done and, if nothing really outstanding occurs, there is still enough excellence of performance here to make it worth listening to with attention and appreciation.

H. A. Woodfin

"THE MODERN JAZZ QUARTET: At Music Inn, Vol. 2. with SONNY ROLLINS". Atlantic 1299.

Milt Jackson, vibes; John Lewis, piano; Percy Heath, bass; Connie Kay, drums. Tracks 5, 6, with Sonny Rollins, tenor. **Medley** (Stardust, I Can't Get Started, Lover Man); **Yardbird Suite**; **Midsummer**; **Festival Sketch**; **Bag's Groove**; **Night in Tunisia**.

Gunther Schuller wrote liner notes for this lp. They are the kind of notes which will make one listen with more attention and understanding (and any other kind will be either puff or pap), but therefore are also the kind that may leave a reviewer with much less to say.

The first point about the Quartet is, of course, that it began as a collection of fine players. Its forms (whatever their source) came as the best way for the group to express (and improve) itself individually and collectively. Most group forms in jazz have ultimately come from the needs and potentials of the players in them. That the Quartet's formal sense is also one of the most outstanding in jazz is a tribute to its members. No doubt the 17th and 18th Centuries were Lewis's idea, but, as now transmuted by the group, they are both MJQ and Lewis, Jackson, Heath, and Kay. Has such wholesale borrowing from Europe previously produced anything but musical foolishness, between ragtime and the Quartet?

So, a record by four of the most expressive players around in a uniquely integrated and responsive group. A joy! What more to say? At least this: the beautiful distillation and re-building of **Yardbird Suite** is excellent, and—the difficult thing

in what might have become stilted or mechanical—it is always kept in beautiful musical movement. I can quite easily do without the out-of-tempo "concert hall" paraphernalia of **Midsummer** and all it represents, or I would be able to do without it if the jazz sections of the piece weren't so good. And **Festival Sketch**, granted its rhythmically interesting opening motive, seems to me lower drawer Lewis.

Then Sonny Rollins. Schuller says he is, alternately, "whimsical and sardonic" and really creative, which is really to say that he is alternately only personal and then really artistic. Undeniably, there is a delight in hearing Rollins' own mood, more delight in hearing the coaxing conversations among the players and the confident saxophonist who implies with such little effort. But if jazz (as some contend—not Schuller) is really the art of the passing emotions of the moment, then it is either a very minor art or no art. And, despite the note of orneryness involved, Rollins' handling of the theme melody on **Bag's Groove** shows one thing that can save an artist from the chaos of the moment and the very subjective. Like the Quartet, he has his sense of form.

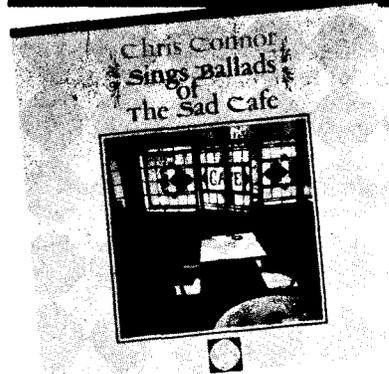
The kind of form that each has evolved is different and was differently arrived at. A previous meeting on records (on Prestige 7029) is pretty dreadful. All were already very good players, but none had arrived at a sense of form. There was no basis for the meeting except perhaps the fact that both Jackson and Rollins obviously liked to blow, and that is not much of a basis. All of the differences in basic musical sensibility between Rollins and the Quartet were glaringly dramatized, and they clashed. Here, they meet after each has achieved a maturity and sureness and meet on just that basis, and therefore their different approaches to music and musical feeling do not clash—or when they are about to, one now more mature man can modify his ways for the moment to bring them together.

There is another thing that can save from the transient and subjective, the point we began with: when real creativity simply overtakes one and dictates its own form. You have to be ready for that. Jackson was on **Night in Tunisia** and Lewis was on **Bag's Groove** and, my goodness, the results are something to hear.

Martin Williams



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DICKY WELLS: "Bones for the King." FELSTED FAJ 7006.

Bones for the King; Sweet Daddy Spo-de-O; You Took My Heart.
Dicky Wells, trombone;
Vic Dickenson, trombone;
Benny Morton, trombone;
George Matthews, trombone;
Skip Hall, organ;
Major Holley, bass;
Jo Jones, drums.

Hello, Smack, Come and Get It; Stan's Dance.

Dicky Wells, trombone;
Buck Clayton, trumpet;
Rudy Rutherford, clarinet and baritone sax; Buddy Tate, tenor and baritone sax; Skip Hall, piano; Everett Braksdale, guitar;
Major Holley, bass;
Jo Jones, drums.

Here are two types of instrumentation, one unorthodox and one conventional. Which succeeded? The first one, the one that defied the conventions of the riff-ridden format and come up with its own concept. Wells offers choice blends of instrumental tone color, and his selection of George Matthews, Vic Dickenson and Benny Morton made a solid yet flexible front line for the beautifully executed ensemble choruses and side-remarks of this four-part trombone choir. Their superbly agile harmony was at all times controlled and resonant. And, to keep this foursome from becoming stodgy, Dicky supplied Hall's impish organ caulking and the leaven of Jo Jones' marvelously paced percussion. Binding all this together was the plangency of Major Holley's walking bass, in the tradition of the late Walter Page and Wellman Braud.

On Side 1 solo, the recording engineers achieved a balance of tonal mass that helped the performance immeasurably and in contrast to the second where certain rhythm members seem far too distant to be effective. The solos on the **Bones for the King**, are probably a matter of taste, I think that in the matter of: 1) content, and 2) appropriately expressive phrases for the instrument at hand, George Matthews and Dicky come off best. Both men make eloquent use of the sliding quality inherent in the trombone. Matthews has that multi-dimensional, cavernous sound to each note; with a little more exercise of imaginative phrase-making he would be among the best on this instrument. Dicky Wells, himself, is an amazing package of the jazz gamut. On these blues he is much like Kid

Ory in that he is very economical with notes, using plenty of glisando, while later on the side (in **Heart**) he has amalgamated to this the whole Prez Young pre-bop lyricism of simplicity, revealing at once that the man is a keen student and practitioner of total jazz and gives to his trombone a considerable stylistic amplitude. There is never a blues played without a modicum of hope buried within it. This is the converse: not a blues of protest, but a happy expression with only an inkling of despair seeping through some of Wells' statements and those of Matthews. Indeed, it would be impossible to paint this canvas differently with a mountebank like Skippy Hall loose in the studio; his good-natured organic grimaces are a cure for any blues. Jo Jones' cymbals sound very nice on **Bones**, thanks to astute mike placement. His snares also point up the soloists rhythmically. The tempo is expertly maintained.

The four trombones exhibit a very good ensemble sonority in the opening chorus of **Heart**, setting an exhilarating stage for the four solos that follow, with Dicky Wells bringing up the rear after leading off in his easy, idiomatic manner.

At the outset it was apparent that the quality of the rhythm section would match that of the soloists. It is entirely to the credit of organ, bass and drums, that they kept the areas between the solos emotionally heightened. Of course, if some of the soloists failed to keep up their end of the bargain (the case on side 2), the whole surcharged effect was dissipated. Good jazz is like that—a true aural democracy, with each solo and rhythm man pulling his own weight in sound. And inside that democracy, three trombones contributed their individual statements in their own way. Dicky's first solo was pure jabberwocky; Benny Morton (he of the unforgettable **Shim-me-shawabble**, Red Allen, Decca) ushered in a good solo that more in trumpet than trombone style. And it is always news when a man exceeds himself: Vic Dickenson's on-the-beat-type of trombone, replete with rips and tremolos, surpassed many of his previous efforts. Finally, the muted solo of Dicky brought out the history of the many years that he had spent in the company of Lester Young. This particular kind of phrase-making always seems to be trying to **negate** the inexorable four-four dance pulse, and Dicky's ideas as herein contained the tremendous interest gen-

erated in this number, which closes on a flexible four-part chorus by the horns.

The tribute-to-Fletcher piece, **Smack**, begins with a rhythm section monitored out of audibility, buried under riffing reeds, the whole atmosphere of this ensemble is Kansas City and the regional style which its name represents. Briefly, the moments that count are Buck Clayton's and Dicky Wells' part-choruses, and Buddy Tate's easily played solos of evenly-detached notes. The letdowns shall not be mentioned; they are too evident. **Get It** is a fabricated blues: sincere in intent, but of cerebral-sounding manufacture in structure. Barksdale has a good solo here and so does Buck: a searing, molten one that is marred, however, by unfortunate recording balance. Best moment of the entire side comes when Dicky Wells gives his all in a memorable essay on the blues over stop chords by his men; the leader has an ample fund of nuanced notes and other pitchless impedimenta needed to carry it off with distinction.

Notable in **Stan's Dance** are a piano solo in which the capable ideas of Skip Hall teem forth in all their coruscation, followed by an earthy, well-articulated open-horn solo from Buck Clayton, whose conception has scarcely changed since the days in which he made the Kansas City Six and Seven sides for Commodore. The mood is broken by the unfeeling clarinet work, and from the one the record is just bits and pieces, with background suppliers sticking close to the tonic, a la Glenn Miller and Kansas City. But return to the other side.

Charles Payne Rogers

THE GAY SISTERS: "God Will Take Care of You," Savoy MG 14021.

God Will Take Care of You;
I'm Gonna Walk Out in Jesus' Name;
I'm a Soldier; Oh Lord, Somebody Touched Me; **Only Believe;**
God Is on our Side; **We're Gonna Have a Time;** God Shall Wipe All Tears Away; **He Knows How Much We Can Bear;** It's Real; **The Little Church on the Hill.**

Evelyn and Mildred Gay still have a few rough edges left, enough to make a very lively album. One sister's voice is soprano, the other's is a deep alto. When not in

duet, the soprano part often detaches from the main body of song to break into excited upper register cries. Intensifying the "in-church" atmosphere of the album is the song **We're Gonna Have a Time**. The male chorus joins to answer with the title refrain each statement sung by the Gay Sisters, who string together traditional lines from scattered song stanzas:

"Let's go rock an' roll."
 "The bell's gonna ring."
 "There's two white horses."
 "Shout around the floor."
 "I'm gonna sing, sing, sing."
 "There's a good, good, good time."
 "Ride, ride, ride."
 "Come and go with me."

The appearance of lines like Ride, ride, ride, Let's go rock an' roll, and, in **Somebody Touched Me**, "I knew I love that man" have curiously paradoxical overtones of secularity, not inherent in the songs themselves, and not intentional on the part of the artists involved, but rather due to the listener's previously experienced contact with these phrases in contexts other than sacred. However, the instrumental accompaniments, introductions, and interludes provided by the Gay Sisters, on piano and organ, with periodic appearances of the tambourine, are so embedded with "hot" elements, that, regardless of the intent of the performers or the context of the music, the listener finds it difficult to separate the musical identities of Negro secular and sacred music.

The piano practically barrelhouses on **Somebody Touched Me** and **I'm a Soldier**. A boogie-ish chorus introduces **I'm a Soldier** and a boogie bass pervades **Somebody Touched Me**, while Garner comes to mind in **The Little Church on the Hill** and **"We're Gonna Have a Time."**

The sister on piano plays in a style more individual than most gospel pianists; she breaks out of "gospel clichés" and resorts to some of her own imaginative ideas; and whatever she does is heavily couched in jazz. (These "gospel clichés"—the stock harmonic patterns and voicings and the skipping little rhythmic melodies—would make an interesting study in themselves; the same instrumental figures recur on all the records and in all the churches, and there seems to be a definite way of playing gospel music, a tradition with specific patterns and formulae which is being passed on around the country.)

This is an album of more than routine interest.

Mimi Clar

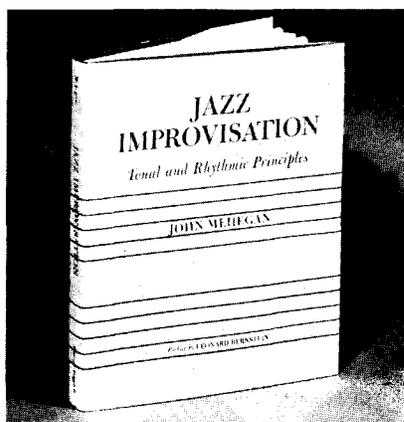
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BOOK REVIEW

THE JAZZ SCENE by Francis Newton. Macgibbon & Kee (London) 1959.

"Francis Newton" is the pseudonym of an English scholar of distinction who has become increasingly interested in jazz during the last few years and has for some time now conducted a column in the *New Statesman & Nation*. His first book on the subject, *The Jazz Scene*, is a highly intelligent but oddly uneven work. It makes great demands on us by setting out tables of census classes, occupations of jazz fans, and other sociological matter in which few readers of books on music are likely to be interested. And it attacks out patience from the opposite side by insisting on explaining words and events which every reader of a jazz book is bound to know by heart. In two separate glossaries—one at the beginning and another one at the end—Newton explains words like "combo," "pop music" and "sideman." When men like Prez, Bean or Weely are mentioned, he finds it necessary to explain that these are nicknames for Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins or Billy Strayhorn. He calls *pod* "pot," translates *in there* as "somewhere," and perpetuates the old howler about *Jack the Bear* being a "cryptic title" based on Harlem rhyming slang for **not anywhere**. Titles like *Little Posy* and *Portrait of the Lion* are similarly described as "esoteric jokes . . . expressed in the Harlem slang of the hipster." The resultant sensation is rather like being alternately snubbed and nudged in the ribs.

He defines jazz as "what happens when a folk-music does not go under but maintains itself in the environment of modern urban and industrial civilization." True, but surely too wide? If we are to take this literally, then flamenco is jazz, and so is naga-uta in Japan, Hardanger fiddle music in Norway, or the Tutelo Fourth Night Spirit Release Singing at home.

"Nothing like the conservatoire," he says, "or like the classical ballet school has ever existed in jazz." Is that really true? What about Tio's clarinet school in New Orleans? Tristano? The School of Jazz at Music Inn? Jazz at Juillard?

Most jazz terms, he claims, "dupli-

cate existing but unfamiliar ones" from the field of legitimate music; for instance, "slapping for pizzicato playing." But this, too, is surely a muddle. Jazz players follow legitimate technique when they **pluck** their strings. But is there any such thing in legitimate music as **slapping**? If so, dare we call it **pizzicato**? In a long passage on the political indifference of jazzmen, he claims that there is no such thing as a "political refugee" from McCarthyism among jazzmen. Is that true? What about Artie Shaw?

He is a bit ungenerous to his European colleagues. "The French," he says, "patently know too little to write full-dress books, as was the case with M. Panassiés *Le Jazz Hot* (1934), virtually all of which was abandoned by its author within five years." Now I've had all sorts of disagreements with Hugues over the years, but I hate to see him shrugged off like this. He "abandoned" very little; he added a great deal; he was the progenitor of serious jazz criticism; and he remains the best of the critics in one simple sense: he has the best ear.

The difference between Hugues and Newton is this: Hugues writes about music—Newton about the background of music and its impact. Newton's book says very little about jazz as **music** that hasn't been said before, but it says things about the jazz audience, the mentality of jazz musicians, and the economics of the jazz business that haven't been said anywhere else. Hugues hardly ever theorized—but the moment he did, he became fallible. Newton theorizes a great deal and becomes fallible the moment he gets down to music proper. In this sense, Panassié seems part of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of criticism, Newton of the Continental one. In fact, *The Jazz Scene* has much more in common with the German jazz books of Joachim Ernst Berendt (misspelt Behrendt throughout Newton's volume) than with anything written by an English or American critic.

The book's main weakness, in spite of its title, is its remoteness from the living Jazz Scene. A scrupulous writer, Newton makes no bones about the fact that he has met next to none of the people about whom he writes. He hides neither the fact that his information has reached him largely through books and records, nor his lack of practical experience in the dance band world. He knows that these are no shortcomings, for many of us who have spent years of

our lives in daily association with the founding fathers of jazz failed, precisely because of our closeness, to see the wood for the trees. Thus Newton's book, as a study in perspective, is a genuine eye-opener.

But he employs a technique which is often disconcerting—a deliberate effect-before-cause approach which starts with the consumer and treats the producer more or less as though he were the consumer's creature. Coming from a man who is at least acquainted with Marxism, this sounds very odd indeed. The world of jazz, he says, "consists not only of the noises which emerge from particular combinations of instruments played in a characteristic way . . . The fact that British working-class boys in Newcastle play it is at least as interesting as . . . the fact that it progressed through the frontier saloons of the Mississippi Valley . . . You who read this page, I, who have written it, are not the least unexpected and surprising parts of the world of jazz. What business have we, after all, with what was not so long ago a local idiom of negroes and poor whites in the Southern states of the USA?"

What indeed? The question becomes pertinent at the end of chapter 2 where a list of basic jazz records is given which is so oddly slanted towards Europe that the answer should probably be "none." As a foreigner living in England, I've learnt to respect the quirks of the natives—but to find "Spike Hughes' Negro Orchestra" mentioned among the best forty jazz records available in England is carrying local patriotism to the point of paranoia; and to pick "Dickie Wells in Paris" as one of the fourteen best records of mid-period jazz is symptomatic of the astigmatism which has afflicted Europeans ever since they discovered America. I, too, admire Dickie, but even Panassié's not inconsiderable powers of salesmanship have failed to persuade me that Dickie's accompaniment on this particular disk is even mildly competent.

There follow three historical chapters in which Newton sides largely with Feather. New Orleans jazz did **not** trigger off the jazz era but merely contributed to it. Jazz didn't spread north from Storyville but grew up simultaneously all over the U.S.A. "At most, New Orleans accelerated whatever tendencies towards jazz existed locally . . . The subsequent movement of jazz musicians reflect not only the traditional touring routes of vaudeville artists and minstrel

shows but . . . the routes of migration of ordinary negroes. (Throughout the book, Negro is spelt negro, though Jew isn't spelt jew, and Indian is spelt Indian). For this mass migration, rather than the temporary purity drive in New Orleans, pushed even the New Orleans musicians northwards."

Sociological commonplaces like these are always useful as antidotes to the racial romanticism of Goffin, Blesh and Mezzrow, but Newton himself is not entirely free from it, for in his next chapter he quotes, of all places, South Africa as "the most flourishing centre of creative jazz outside America." I can understand how amused he must have been when he first discovered that there was any such thing as jazz among Johannesburg Negroes. But this kind of discovery usually works out as a subconscious confidence trick: the very fact that Africans should be playing jazz at all tends to encourage one in overrating the quality of their music. Let me predict that Mr. Newton, with the passing of time, will find out that South African jazz, in spite of the players' skin colour, is as derivative as its English counterpart.

The next chapter, **Transformation**, distinguishes between "jazz evolution up to the end of the middle period" (which is or was "the product of unself-conscious popular musicians playing for an unself-conscious public") and modern jazz which is "the product of self-conscious musicians playing for a self-conscious public." Nothing, says Newton, "is less resistant than folk art, for its artists and public practise it not only because they have a strong preference for it, but because it is the only art they know." This change from folk music to minority art, or from old jazz to new, is paralleled by a change in repertoire from blues to ballads. "Even when playing the blues, a modern trumpeter like Miles Davis thinks automatically in terms of the way a 'ballad' is played." (Words like ballad are always hedged in by quotation marks in **The Jazz Scene**). With the advent of a self-conscious jazz audience, the player's task thus defeats itself: "The specialized jazz lovers themselves become a commercial public, demanding the impossible, to hear the spontaneous, unplanned jazz of the jam session played to order on a concert platform." The true jazz lovers' search for truth thus "tends to strangle the music they wish to embrace."

Brilliant and largely true.

The next four chapters (**Blues and Orchestral Jazz**, **The Instruments**, **The Musical Achievement and Jazz and the Other Arts**) are sketchy. Well written and at times neatly epigrammatic, they add little to our store of jazz knowledge, for in contrast to his courage on social matters, Newton seems afraid here of putting forward any ideas of his own. "There is some argument about the characteristic blue scale and its harmony," he says and goes on muttering under his breath for half a dozen sentences or so. Which is rather like writing a book on 17th century music in Italy and passing over Palestrina with the casual note that "there is some argument about the characteristic use of polyphony in his madrigals."

Surely, if I buy a book on jazz by a distinguished scholar, this is precisely the sort of question on which I would seek his authoritative verdict. And this is not an exceptional incident of shirking the issue: it's the kind of thing that occurs throughout the book whenever the discussion turns to purely musical matters. "I owe . . . this and the next chapter to Charles Fox," says Newton at one point; and a little later: "Throughout this chapter I have greatly relied on [Finkelstein's **Jazz, a People's Music**]. My account of the modern transformation of the ballad is also based on this book." All of which speaks highly for Newton's honesty—but it makes us wonder why he ever thought of writing a book on jazz.

If it were a question of field work as opposed to interpretation, or of pioneer work as opposed to currently possible research, such deference to other writers might be taken as part of the normal process of academic work. But if a highly intelligent man, in a book on music, stops thinking for himself the moment music *qua* music is being discussed, one naturally wonders why he doesn't turn his talents to a subject more congenial to them. This process of making things easy for himself extends at times even to extra-musical matters—blues lyrics, for instance. Next to none of the samples which Newton quotes here are new to us; almost all have appeared in print before. When he contrasts a blues with a pop song (to show how down-to-earth the one is and how wishy-washy the other), he uses the same juxtaposition of the same two lyrics which appeared in **Jazz, A People's Music** eleven years

ago. Naturally, he gives Finkelstein full credit—but that isn't good enough. If a man is capable of originality, as I know Newton to be, he cheats us by withholding his gifts.

The rest of the book is solid sociology, broken down into chapters on **Popular Music**, **The Jazz Business**, **The Musicians**, **The Public** and **Jazz As Protest**. Steep up-hill work, all of it, laid out in paragraphs that sometimes cover three pages without a break, and followed by an appendix on the social and economic background of the British jazz fan, a glossary of **Jazz Language**, a **Guide to Further Reading** and an **Index**.

Even here, alas, the book bears the marks of haste and uncertainty. Names that pop up half a dozen times or more in the text may occur once, twice or not at all in the index. Source material to which we are directed by reference numbers in the text, turns out to be non-existent. Chapter 4, reference 23 (p. 70), and chapter 8, reference 5 p. 145), thus simply don't exist. Other references lead us into blind alleys. Chapter 6, reference 1 (p. 99), deals with Blind Lemon Jefferson, but refers us mysteriously to the Jazz Messengers' version of **Hard Bop**. Chapter 7, reference 1 (p. 122), deals with Ellington's **Concerto for Cootie**, but refers us bafflingly to "Behrend's diagrams which are as good as any." Chapter 9, reference 1 (p. 148), deals with Constant Lambert's **Rio Grande** but refers us, of all things, to "Rex Harris **Jazz** (Pelican Books)."

The **Guide to Further Reading** contains Hodeir and Bruynoghe, but nothing by Ramsey, William Russell, Gene Williams or Charles Edward Smith. Of Panassié's many books, only the **Dictionary of Jazz** is mentioned. Ulanov on Ellington is there, but Boyer isn't. Raymond Horricks, of all people, crops up twice, but Winthrop Sargeant is missing. **They All Played Ragtime** is in, but **Shining Trumpets** is out. Naturally, a bibliography like this must be selective, but it is precisely the selection that makes us wonder whether Newton's standards can really be relied on. If there is room for **The Fabulous Phonograph**, how can the absence of **Jazz: New Orleans 1885-1957** be justified?

The style, on the whole, is more literate than one has come to expect from jazz writers, though even here the occasional hyperbole creeps in: "**It's Tight Like This** takes us into the emotional realms of Macbeth's

soliloquies" (p. 139). There are awkwardnesses that bewilder us in a writer of Newton's accomplishments—the word "classical" (p. 17) employed not as an antonym to **romantic** but in the sense of "non-jazz." Other phrases hurt like a faint toothache: "The most usual use" (p. 16), "I daresay a number of, say," (p. 17), "took against jazz" (p. 70), "Ellington has been visibly troubled by the loss of Barney Bigard" (p. 142), "only two things remains of his former self" (p. 220), "jive talk puts a premium of linguistic creativeness and slipperiness" (p. 292).

These are blemishes so small that one would pass them over in most other writers without wishing to comment. But Newton is so capable, and the practice of dashing off jazz books in a few months is getting to be so prevalent among men of intelligence, that the time has come to draw attention to the inevitable debasement that will creep into jazz literature if the critics don't treat their tasks with greater respect. The more books of his kind that are written, each of them quoting and sub-quoting the same stock of facts and interpretations, the more difficult will it be to persuade readers that anything worth saying about jazz remains to be said.

As the pile of jazz books grows, so will the reader's distrust of the lot of them. Cynicism on the author's part breeds cumulative cynicism on the reader's. Thus, if the blessed event should come about one day that someone writes a jazz book which really breaks new ground, he may well find himself preaching in a wilderness.

Ernest Borneman

THEATRE REVIEW

THE CONNECTION by Jack Gelber. Directed by Judith Malina. Original music composed by Freddie Redd. Jazz and junk go together like ham and eggs in the world of Jack Gelber, whose play **The Connection** opened at the Living Theatre last August. Obviously, Mr. Gelber has been "on the scene" and he shows us a literal picture of junkys that catches one's attention the way a photograph

might.

The play's setting is the squalid loft of an addict, and the characters include four jazz musicians who, like all but three peripheral roles, are attracted or addicted to heroin. The play is in two acts, the first of which has as its passive action the long wait for "Cowboy" to bring the longed-for drug. In the second act Cowboy arrives bringing the heroin which paralyzes not only the characters but the play, for now there is no **raison d'être**. The characters are a group of inconsequential men, without aspiration, without history, who talk in disjointed phrases, have petty arguments, listen to jazz without enthusiasm or comment, and just wait to get high.

Woven into this atmosphere of malaise is music written by Freddie Redd and played by a quartet with Mr. Redd on piano and Jackie McLean on alto. I think it a fair example of Mr. Gelber's confusion between naturalism and realism to tell you that these musicians appear on stage as junkys in the context of the play, play jazz and, astonishingly enough, use their real names. One What are these musicians in the convention of the proscenium in the context of a play using their real names? Actors? Themselves? What? And if this is a new documentary technique, to what purpose, since it is inconsistent with the other fictional characters? This distortion smacks of the gimmick and it serves to distill Mr. Gelber's slight stage reality. One wonders, "Are these men **really** junkys and are we seeing here a playing out of a personal nightmare? It may be "true to life," but it is not true to theatre. There is no illusion, no space in which the audience may co-create, and without the quickening of a spectator's thinking-feeling, there is no art.

It is this basic formlessness and naturalistic content which colors all my criticism of the play and which makes discussion of acting, set design, lighting impossible. The actor, director, designer, etc. are in the service of the play and I do not think Mr. Gelber wrote much of a play. A great deal was said in its favor by reviewers—that it shows junkys as they really are, that it strips the glamor from this hidden society, that Mr. Gelber is an innovator.

What I saw was the deterioration of the modes of "epic theatre" into sensation-seeking devices. The form that gives an art its dignity and meaning may be fluid, allowing for many internal variations, but it must

in itself have limitations and the manner of treatment within form can elevate the starkest content. But Mr. Gelber wants to shock.

To this purpose he has employed a series of devices (the **connection** might well be called **Waiting for Cowboy**), entrances from the house, voices from the back of the house, players who are both "in" and "out" of the play—all techniques which draw on Commedia dell'Arte, Moliere, Shakespeare and vaudeville and all revitalized by Orson Welles in his Mercury Theatre productions, Thornton Wilder, the Group Theatre's **Waiting for Lefty**, and which The Federal Theatre's **Living-Newspaper** used extensively. Mr. Gelber apparently has also been attracted to the presentational theatre of Bertolt Brecht, but his attraction is mere flirtation—he has not become intimate with the subject of his affection. It would seem that in an effort to remove the cobwebs from theatre Mr. Gelber has torn down the walls.

Not only does Mr. Gelber confuse us with the position of the four musicians, he drags in other gifted men implying some complicity in this black world. Twice he has a vague character, a queer meaningless person take stage simply as a means of bringing on a phonograph which he plugs in and then uses to play a Charlie Parker-Miles Davis record in the stony silence of the junky's room. That done, he tucks his phonograph under his arm and wordlessly exits. What is the implication? Or is that what Mr. Gelber means by a "jazz play"? Is there some illumination in this oddball behaviour which reveals anything about the nature of either jazz or junk? Or does he suppose that an accumulation of disjointed acts and inferences will result in the image of a junky?

He has shown us the shell of a junky and not engaged our sympathy or increased our understanding more than a sensational newspaper account or a cliché-ridden movie. More important he has abused our sensibilities and made a virtue of his crudity. He has depicted a series of violent brutal acts in street language and his excuse for showing them to us is, "That's the way it is, man . . . that's the way it really is." Perhaps Mr. Gelber would do well to listen to a good blues singer reveal great depths of misery, within the limits of a modest and infinitely fluid form and still make one remember the beauty and endurance of the human spirit.

Hortense Geist



by NAT HENTOFF

A compact, valuable series of paperback discographies is being issued by Ole Vestergaard Jensen of Brande Boghandel, Brande, Denmark. Those received so far include three volumes of Ellington from 1925 to the present; Miles Davis; Stan Kenton; Count Basie. All have biographical notes by Knud H. Ditlevsen.

George Pitts of The Pittsburgh Courier says in a letter: "About the Dick Clark thing—latest reports have it that a few Negro dancers have been seen on the show periodically, simply because of the load roars of protest. I wrote several letters to Clark and was 'assured' that no discrimination existed, but for the record, Negro viewers are still far from satisfied." The excellent Baby Dodds Story as Told to Larry Gara is now available in paperback, published by Contemporary Press, part of Contemporary Records. It's \$2.50 and is available by writing to Contemporary, 8481 Melrose Place, Los Angeles 46, California. Parts of it appeared a few years ago in the British Jazz Journal and I made heavy

JAZZ IN PRINT

use of it in my chapter on Baby for The Jazz Makers. There are photographs and an index. Newly published by Gollancz in England is These Jazzmen of Our Time. Raymond Horricks wrote nine of the profiles, and there are pieces by Charles Fox, Benny Green, Max Harrison, Ed Michel, Alun Morgan, Martin Williams and this writer. Willard Rhodes had a piece, Western Influence Diluting African Music, in the Sunday New York Times music section: "In his indomitable drive to advance himself and improve his condition of life the African has accepted the externals of Western culture, which he regards as symbols of civilization and to which he attaches a prestige value. Nowhere is this trend more evident than in the contemporary music that reflects so vividly the detribalized state of the urban African. The indigenous music that was so intimately and functionally integrated in the tribal culture is rapidly displaced by the new music modeled after American jazz, 'jive,' and rock 'n' roll. Saxophones,

trombones, metal clarinets, accordions guitars and bass viols merge into heterogeneous combinations to provide music for dancing in the African beer, halls and parks. In Mpopoma Bulawayo (Southern Rhodesia), a dance plaza designated 'Jive Klub' has been dedicated exclusively to that style of dancing." A new paperback edition of the extremely hard to find Songs of Leadbelly is now out via Folkways Music Publishers, 10 Columbus Circle, New York, N. Y. John A. Lomax's controversial introduction is not reprinted, and several songs not contained in the original are included. Carl Haverlin, head of Broadcast Music, Inc., contributes in a letter a new etymological theory in re ofay: "Some Negroes who worked for white families aped the ways of the white folks. Among other things, they picked up the phrase which was quite common in French-speaking New Orleans, au fait. Since some had great affection for the families for which they worked, they tried to get their children to do things which were au fait and not gauche." The theory goes on that white and au fait became synonymous in the argot, and later generations turned it into ofay." A. L. Lloyd, editor of the excellent British magazines, Recorded Folk Music, writes: "I was particularly interested in your interview with Miles Davis, and smiled at his admiration of Bill Evans' skill in being able to play in 5/4 (a rhythm first used in art music by Chopin, I believe, probably

as a borrowing from folk music). Still, one sees what Mr. Davis means, and indeed it might well be something of a liberation for jazz musicians to break out of their 2/4 and 4/4 fetters (not that some of them don't do plenty in those fetters!) It is possible that intelligent jazzmen may learn from an acquaintance with southeast European folk music, where musicians play the most complicated rhythms with a fabulous sense of beat without ever getting fussy. On the other hand, when one sees what happens to jazzmen who try too self-consciously to learn from African folk music, one wonders whether the attempt to absorb exotic elements can ever be more than a gimmick. Still I'd like to hear the reactions of an intelligent jazz musician like Davis to some of the music in my album of Bulgarian music which American Columbia has just released as part of its World Library of Folk Music series."

The Bulgarian album will be played for Miles, and his comments will be noted.

If you're looking for rare records, transcriptions, jazz literature, etc., while in Chicago, contact John Steiner, 1637 N. Ashland, Chicago 22, Illinois.

Chicago Negro composer Ed Bland told Don Henahan of the Chicago Daily News: "Jazz is exhausted as an art form. Bop did for jazz what Bach did for the fugue—took it to the limit of its potentialities. Jazz doesn't interest us any more." Henahan concludes the interview: "One of the features peculiar to jazz,

says Bland, is that hard-to-define 'swinging' quality. And this, he says, is the precise quality that jazz can best contribute to contemporary serious music. He feels a swinging beat in contemporary music would solve all its problems of appealing to audiences."

Questions from Ernest Borneman: "What makes musically illiterate people buy modern jazz? It's easy enough for a man who can't read music to follow simple Dixieland music. But almost the whole of the modern school is obviously unintelligible to all except those who have a reasonably good schooling in harmony. So what do they get out of it if they haven't got that schooling? Is it all a fraud? Is it snobbery? Is it fashion? Or do they get a vague echo of what the musician is trying to do? I'd like to see this investigated by someone with real sociological experience. Other questions:

What kind of music was played in New Orleans between the end of the Congo Square dances and the Buddy Bolden band? Are there any spirituals with French or Spanish lyrics? Did any spirituals ever arise on plantations owned by Catholics? What did jazz musicians earn, year by year, in any given location? What's the chronology of the jazz dances and who really invented them? What influence have the Puerto Rican immigrants had on Harlem music? Facts, please, not just a repetition of the obvious statement that they influenced the "Afro-Cuban" school."

The Jazz Review would welcome answers to any or all of Mr. Borneman's questions in letter or article form.

The new Italian jazz magazine, Jazz Di Ieri E Di Oggi continues to be the most handsomely produced in the world. It was with its permission that Fran Thorne's Newport and Great South Bay was printed in this journal's July, 1959 issue. Address is Firenze S. Reparata 97, Italy.

The death of Boris Vian is too painful for me to try for the right words. Vian was a novelist, recording director, trumpet player, playwright, translator of contemporary American literature, recording executive, and a marvelous deflator of pomposity and phoniness. He died at 39 on June 24, 1959, as he was attending a private showing of a new film based on his novel, "I'll Spit on Your Tombs." I hope Charles Delaunay will think of issuing a pamphlet collecting Vian's Revue de Presse columns for Jazz-Hot. Boris' comments on jazz writing here and in Europe contained some of the funniest, most stingingly true writing in jazz history.

The June Jazz-Hot has material on Sidney Bechet, Clifford Brown and Kenny Dorham. The July-August on Bechet, Lester Young as a clarinetist and Martial Solal. If you can read French at all, this magazine is indispensable.

A lot of comic strips at one time or another try to use "jazz" as part of the plot or as the idiom of a particular character. The only one that works jazz in with accuracy and wit is Gus Arriola's Gordo.

RECONSIDERATIONS/ Billie Holiday

I Can't Get Started, Columbia 37484, by Billie Holiday—recorded September 1938. No longer in print.

In its beginnings, the swing style of such bands as Fletcher Henderson's was a purely instrumental approach which paid little or no attention to the possibilities of a complementary vocal style.

Earlier vocal styles such as the music hall blues of Bessie Smith or the florid virtuosity of Armstrong were simply not suited to the driving 4/4 rhythm and section interplay of the swing band. Besides the material itself had changed. The typical swing themes were, for the most part, drawn from or influenced by the thirty-two bar popular song form, except for the Midwestern blues which Basie brought to the East with Jimmy Rushing.

It was not until the appearance of Billie Holiday in 1935 that the swing idiom found a vocal style. Even in her earliest recordings, Billie's voice was completely suited to the swing medium. A Holiday vocal is a solo in the same sense as a Lester Young improvisation with the Basie band is. It is not only that she treats her voice as an improviser does his horn but also that her voice, particularly in her recordings from 1935 to 1940 is not superimposed upon the other instruments, but acts as one of the instruments. In those recordings, she is not the dominant voice although she is the most important one. Rather she interplays with the other horns.

This interplay is nowhere as striking as in those of her recordings made with Lester Young. As has been pointed out often, her style in the late 'thirties was derived directly

from Young's at that period. We note the controlled vibrato and dazzling vocal runs away from the melody which were so characteristic of Young at his best. But even more important is that Billie (with Young and the Basie band) changed the entire structure of jazz rhythm and the soloist's relation to it. The 4/4 rhythm became one in which the weak and strong beat distinction no longer held; instead, the pulse became equally accented, and against it the soloist, in essence, improvised both melodically and rhythmically. This is immediately apparent in **I Can't Get Started** in which the only soloists are Billie and Lester. We can observe how they work in, around and on the beat with a freedom seldom before present in jazz. Young's introduction is immediately followed by Billie's first chorus in which she continues to develop the melodic content of the theme with a constant awareness of the rhythmic possibilities; and when Lester follows with sixteen bars, we hear immediately that they are both dealing with the theme in the same way. Nevertheless, no amount of discussion of the ways the jazz vocalist treats voice as horn can deny the fact that the vocalist must deal with an additional problem which is not of concern to the instrumental soloist. The problem, of course, is that of words and their meanings. The vocalist is working with the lyrics of a song and must adapt the words to his or her own uses. And the lyrics of the standard popular song are seldom stimulating in themselves. The emotions described are generally shallow. The jazz vocalist must make these words meaningful and deeper.

No one is a greater master of this difficult art than Billie Holiday. Time

and again with such vapid lyrics as those for **What A Little Moonlight Can Do** and even **Me and My Shadow** she has succeeded in enlarging the emotional scope and depth of what she sings. In **I Can't Get Started** she fails with honor and it is interesting to speculate about the reasons. In terms of vocal accomplishment, the recording is in no way inferior to others of the same period. Yet the listener seeks in vain for that sense of deep emotional involvement that is so much an effect of Billie's best work. If **Me and My Shadow** is emotionally moving, why does **I Can't Get Started** seem unconvincing?

I suggest the reason is to be found in the lyrics themselves. Those popular songs into which Billie projects the most intense meaning, no matter how foolish the lyrics, are those dealing with sexual emotion under any of its various guises. Ostensibly **I Can't Get Started** is such a song. But the lyrics are only apparently connected with such an emotion. The song really functions as a flippant exercise in which the words connect the emotion of love with various topical events. The result is that the connection with the erotic theme is lost, and the song degenerates into a collection of clever references. Not even Billie can make it seem important.

In short, **I Can't Get Started** is interesting in that it grants us, even by its failure, an insight into the strange relationship between jazz singers and the lyrics in which they must become involved. Each singer must solve the problem of metamorphosing lyrics in a personal way. **I Can't Get Started** demonstrates that some material is intractable to certain methods.

H. A. Woodfin

FLETCHER HENDERSON ON RECORDS

by ERWIN HERSEY

To those of us whose interest in jazz was nurtured by reading Hughes Panassie's **Jazz Hot** in the late 'thirties, an interest in Fletcher Henderson was natural; Panassie had awarded Fletcher the highest honor by placing him with Ellington at the summit of the big bands. This sent many of us scurrying to Commodore, the Hot Record Shop, the juke-box dealers, and Salvation Army warehouses in a frantic search. The records were as good as Panassie had said.

There can be little doubt that every big band from Jimmie Lunceford's to Johnny Richard's owes an incalculable debt to the man from Cuthbert, Georgia, and almost every musician who has arranged for a large band will acknowledge it.

In the course of putting a sizable record collection, accumulated for the most part in the late 'thirties and early 'forties, on tape, I had occasion to listen closely once again to some sixty sides made by Fletcher from 1925 to 1937 which bridge the gap between the "jazz" and swing eras. These records, almost all of them unavailable today, provide evidence of just what it was Fletcher Henderson did for jazz, and many of them sound as good today as they did twenty years ago.

There has probably never been another band which, over a comparable period of time, employed so many top-ranking soloists. As one of the earliest road bands, Henderson had a tremendous personnel turnover, but he kept out a well-trained ear, knew who was doing what where, and, when a replacement was needed, found the best man available. Many of today's best-regarded musicians of the older generation first came to prominence with Henderson: trumpet: Louis Armstrong, Russell Smith, Joe Smith, Tommy Ladnier, Rex Stewart, Bobby Stark, Red Allen, Joe Thomas, Mouse Randolph, Roy Eldridge, Dick Vance, Emmett Berry; trombone: Charlie Green, Jimmy Harrison, Claude Jones, Benny Morton, J. C. Higginbotham, Sandy Williams, Dickie Wells, Keg Johnson, Ed Johnson, Ed Cuffee; tenor: Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Chu Berry; alto: Don Redman, Benny Carter, Edgar Sampson, Hilton Jefferson; clarinet: Buster Bailey, Jerry Blake; bass: John Kirby, Israel Crosby;

drums: Kaiser Marshall, Walter Johnson, Sid Catlett. And the roster of those who appeared on a record date or two, or filled in with the band for a few days or weeks, would read almost like a discography's index.

Thus, Henderson's records cannot be entirely uninteresting. Except for the very earliest (when the band was making an effort to be "commercial") a recording, no matter how dated or how corny it may sound, invariably provides at least a few bars of first-rate solos.

It is interesting to note that Fletcher, roundly condemned by many for diluting the purity of the early jazz by eliminating the improvised ensembles and taking the perfectly natural step of orchestrating them, should have utilized so many traditional New Orleans tunes and early published blues; the music the band played during these years stemmed from the music of New Orleans. There was very little else that could be utilized by a band of the type Fletcher had organized, and the presence of such New Orleans musicians as Louis, Tommy Ladnier and Big Green in the band inevitably led to the use of things with which they would be familiar: **Shake It and Break It, Aunt Hagar's Blues, Oh Sister Ain't That Hot**, etc.; and a few years later the band was playing **Dippermouth Blues** (as **Sugarfoot Stomp**), **Fidgety Feet, Sensations, Snag It**, etc.

More interesting, some of these titles suggest that during these formative years Fletcher was more than a little influenced by white, rather than Negro, New Orleans music, and often at second-hand. Certainly the Memphis Five seems to be peeping out from behind the shadow of the earliest recordings, and this may partially account for their comparative blandness.

Fletcher was the first to attempt to orchestrate material of this kind for a larger jazz band. The band was organized in the early twenties, probably in late 1921 or early 1922, and by 1922 was already recording for Black Swan.

During this period, Fletcher seemed to be feeling his way. It was not until Big Green joined the band in 1923 that it had an outstanding soloist, and its repertoire in the early days consisted primarily of watered-down versions of the blues, many borrowed from the Memphis Five's book. Panassie speaks of "commercial concessions" at its debut; certainly the band appears at its best during this period in many of the blues accompaniments, freed from the early arrangements. Little by little, however, it improved, and in 1924, Fletcher

reached into the King Oliver band in Chicago for Louis Armstrong. The band's character changed. In a few short months, musicians and the public jammed the Roseland Ballroom to listen.

There was little change in the arrangements, except that they became a little hotter and this major new voice gave the band a swing, warmth, and vitality it had lacked previously. Even the worst arrangements and the sloppiest ensemble passages were now more than compensated for by the sound of the brasses, with the voice of the young Louis ringing loud and clear—and, of course, by his exciting solos, capable of bringing even the dullest record to life.

There has been argument over just how good an arranger Fletcher actually was. Certainly the scores from this period offer little evidence of any outstanding talent aside from the initial genius which led to his belief that jazz could be orchestrated at all. What is important in this period is the beauty of a virtuoso Louis solo coming after one of the corny clarinet trios so much praised by early writers; the rowdy swing of Big Green's trombone; and the rough-hewn efforts of a young Coleman Hawkins — remarkably similar to those of an equally young Bud Freeman a few years later — to achieve the style which seemed to emerge fully almost overnight around 1930. A good example of what the band sounded like during the Louis period may be found on the first **Sugarfoot Stomp**, May 29, 1925. A four-bar intro leads into a hideous (by today's standards, at least) ensemble sax chorus, punctuated by oom-pahs from the brasses, and aided not at all by a plodding rhythm section. A fair-to-middling brass chorus follows and is succeeded by two corny choruses by the clarinet trio, replacing the traditional clarinet solo. Then comes a good solo chorus by Big Green, followed by Louis playing the three traditional choruses. The band rides out after the "Oh, play that thing!" exhortation, enters one of the lightly arranged, pseudo-New Orleans touches resorted to so frequently in early arrangements, and concludes with a rather grim sax section tag, also typical of the period. A record which does not have too much to offer to the modern ear; still worth listening to for the solos and for the indication as to what Fletcher was striving for. **Meanest Kind of Blues, Copenhagen, Everybody Loves My Baby and Money Blues** are other typical examples of the band's style during the Armstrong period.

In just a year, Louis was gone, re-

placed by the sensitive Joe Smith, who brought a completely different style—light, warm, pure. A vastly under-rated musician little talked about today, Joe's work with the Henderson band grows more and more impressive as one listens to the recordings.

Why not complement the pure, fluid style of Joe Smith, Henderson must have reasoned, with that of another trumpeter, one whose style was almost diametrically opposed? And so first Rex Stewart, and later Tommy Ladnier, joined the band. The effect is electric. Almost any one of the numerous records made by the band during this period indicates the excitement it must have generated; the contrasting solo work of Joe and Rex or Tommy, of Jimmy Harrison (who joined late in 1926) and Big Green, added to those of Hawkins and Buster Bailey, make one wish the lp had been invented years earlier so that one could hear the chorus after chorus solos that must have been played at Roseland.

The first-rate Henderson records from this period are numerous: **The Stampede**, with a beautiful Joe Smith chorus in his purest style, and some remarkable breaks and a fiery sixteen bars by Rex; the amazing **Feelin' Good**, with Rex; **Sensation** and **Fidgety Feet**, which, perhaps more than any other records from this era, demonstrate with remarkable clarity the band's style on New Orleans-type tunes, as well as an indication of internal cutting contests; **Snag It**, which provides Joe Smith with an opportunity to demonstrate how the famous choruses from this war-horse should be played; **Wang-Wang Blues**, with a Dukish feeling aided no end by a visit from Cootie Williams; and many more.

It is difficult to say when the Henderson band acquired the modern sound (that is to say "modern" by the swing standards of the thirties, at least) which is a highlight of its recordings beginning in 1930. Some evidence of it can be found as far back as 1927, on such sides as **Variety Stomp** and **St. Louis Shuffle**; many of the corny touches of the earlier recordings are gone; Bean is at least part of the way toward the style which identified him (and the band itself) a few years later; and the ensembles are less sloppy and have improved intonation. On the basis of recordings, there can be little doubt that this change was evolutionary rather than revolutionary, and spread out over several years. By 1930 the band was swinging; **Talk of the Town** (featuring Hawkins at his best), **King Porter Stomp**, **Yeah Man**

and similar sides offer evidence of the band's sound during this period. (This is the music Goodman must have heard and enjoyed, and recalled at a time when he was seeking a top arranger.) Arrangements that swung of themselves and were given momentum by the propulsive beat of a great rhythm section; ensemble passages which were no longer mere fills but advanced the development of interesting new compositions and were well played; and, inevitably for a Henderson band, the exciting solos, now by Red Allen and Bobby Stark, a developed Coleman Hawkins; Jimmy Harrison and, later, Claude Jones, Benny Morton and Higgy, Benny Carter, Buster, and others.

But the band was changing again. Bean dropped out and decided on Europe for a few years; Jimmy Harrison had gone to join Chick Webb in 1931; etc. However, now came what may well be the great set recordings, the series made for Decca in the mid-thirties, with Red Allen, Buster and Ben Webster prominently featured in versions of many of the compositions later made famous by Goodman—**Down South Camp Meeting**, **Big John Special**, **Wrappin' It Up**, etc.—as well as a truly superb group—**Stealin' Apples**, **Blue Lou**, **Christopher Columbus**, **Back In Your Own Back Yard**, etc.—made for Vocalion a few years later, with Roy Eldridge, Choo Berry, Buster and Jerry Blake.

The Decca recordings provide a startling contrast with their Goodman counterparts. Rougher in tone, not quite so slick, not nearly so well rehearsed or recorded, they nevertheless present the band in its flower—playing the identical arrangements with an infinitely greater swing and power than that ever generated by the Goodman band, and featuring solos which make those of the Goodman versions sound pallid by comparison. The excitement generated by a Red Allen, playing as well as he ever has, by Ben Webster getting his first real opportunity to be heard on wax, and by Buster's jazzy clarinet, overwhelms that produced in the more effete, swing-type work of Benny, Harry James, Art Rollini et al.

The Vocalion sides, and a few Victor recordings from the same period, are possibly even more interesting. They shout less, are more relaxed, swing a bit more, and are played better. By this time, most of the old stand-bys are gone, replaced by a group of newcomers on their way to fame: Roy—testing his marvelous agility, range and singing tone in fanciful flights into the stratosphere

(**Jangled Nerves**) or tastefully using a mute to build exciting choruses (**Stealin' Apples**)—and the fresh sound of Choo—based on Hawkins, but using a soft-voiced, whispering, effortless style, a strong contrast to the more lush, emotional outbursts of Bean and Ben but still capable of generating enormous warmth in carefully designed choruses at all tempos (**Jangled Nerves**, **Blue Lou**, **Christopher Columbus**, **Back In Your Own Back Yard**, etc.).

These records, even today, stack up well against almost any band sides ever made for swing, power, and excitement. In fact, there are few, if any, records as perfect, within their own frame of reference as **Stealin' Apples**, a simple little riff tune which has Choo coming out of the ensemble first chorus with a magnificent tenor solo, followed by an equally fine chorus by Roy, as thrilling an exchange as the Louis-Johnny Dodds set-to on **Wild Man Blues**. Compare the solo room on all of these records, for example, with the four and eight-bar bits allotted to soloists on the Lunneford records. Even Duke seldom did more to help his soloists in the arrangements.

By 1938, the Henderson band was eclipsed by the rising new stars of swing—Lunneford, Chick Webb, BG, TD, etc. Fletcher joined Goodman briefly in 1939, tried to reorganize his band in 1940 but failed, and never regained for himself the place his band had held for so many years. He tried a final band in 1951, failed once again, and died of a heart attack the following year at 53.

During a period when almost anybody and his brother can have a record date practically for the asking, it is shocking to find that so little of the Henderson band's best work is available on lp. Aside from an occasional track on some omnibus histories of jazz, there is almost nothing. Nor is this the only gap in present-day record catalogues. With big bands now a thing of the past, one searches in vain for McKinney's Cotton Pickers, Luis Russell, Don Redman, and some of the great (although little known) Southwestern bands of the thirties. An lp made of the best sides recorded by any of these groups could provide far more value and enjoyment than ninety per cent of what passes for jazz in each week's crop of new releases.

Such recordings as Henderson's are part of the jazz heritage, and a part which has to a large degree been overlooked by many of our younger musicians in the search for roots which seems to occupy so much of their time these days.

WOODY HERMAN IN BRITAIN by MAX HARRISON

For many years American jazz musicians were not allowed to perform in Great Britain. During the past three years, however, a carefully-regulated series of exchanges have enabled us to hear a considerable number of the outstanding figures. After being viewed for so long in the deceptive (if not romantic) haze of distance, contact with live jazz performances has often proved in the event disillusioning. The most frequently made complaint about visiting American groups has been that their repertoires have been too limited and their programs unduly stereotyped.

Ellington was the biggest disappointment of all. When a band is travelling on a tight schedule some limitation of repertoire is inevitable. Several times while he was here Ellington remarked that he had a book consisting of several thousand pieces and that he never decided what he was going to play until he was on the stand and saw what kind of audience he had. Despite this he gave the same bland, medley-laden program at one concert after another and, although the band was on a few occasions allowed to show what it could do, by the time the tour was over many of the audience felt as bored as the musicians looked.

It is typical of the paradoxes and absurdities of the jazz world that a comparatively minor figure like Woody Herman should provide concerts that, if infinitely less rich in potential, were more satisfying in fact. This is the more remarkable because the band with which Herman toured this country in April was a pick-up group.

It was a pick-up group of a special kind because unlike most of our other American visitors Herman attempted something new. His band was in fact an Anglo-American one. It has long been argued in the more optimistic British jazz circles that while our hornmen approach the quality of the best Americans they are nearly always hamstrung by our lagging rhythm sections. From the point of view of musical value this, of course, is untrue. Non-American jazz is always at least one step behind the original; we may follow closely but we never innovate. As far as executive ability goes there may be little to choose between average sidemen on both sides of the Atlantic but creatively the gap between the best American and best European is

apparently unbridgable. One can only assume the local optimists who believe otherwise don't spend much time listening to American records. Even so, it is true that rhythm sections are the weakest point on the local scene and the chance to hear some of our better hornmen with American support was welcome.

The American contingent Herman brought with him consisted of Reunald Jones, Nat Adderley, Bill Harris, Charlie Byrd, Vince Guaraldi, Keeter Betts and Jimmy Campbell. To these were added Les Condon, Kenny Wheeler, Bert Courtney (trumpets), Eddie Harvey, Ken Wray (trombone), Don Rendell, Ronnie Ross, Art Ellefson and Johnny Scott (reeds). This is a rather curious miscellany and one suspects that musicians were engaged at random on both sides of the Atlantic from among those who happened to be free. Herman had just two days to shape this assemblage into a band before the opening concert. Aided no doubt by the long experience of Jones and Harris, he did a surprisingly good job. At the opening concert at the Festival Hall in London the brass was able to tackle **Caledonia** with confidence, and while no one expected them to approach the first Herd they executed the celebrated difficult passages with impressive cohesion. That the saxophone section should be the best integrated was natural for it consisted entirely of local musicians who were already acquainted. The trombones had generally a less prominent part to play but achieved a good internal balance. Campbell proved to be a loud, unsubtle drummer but one who managed to swing the band nonetheless. This was apparently Bett's first big band engagement and although he played with appropriate power and swing the rhythm section would surely have benefited from a more experienced bassist. As far as ensemble playing was concerned the band was more impressive in its parts than as a whole, although the climatic final choruses of several items had most of the fire and attack associated with Herman. It was notable that they even swung on a very slow blues (called **Like Some Blues, Man, Like**).

The repertoire was as one would expect from Herman with pieces like **Early Autumn** and **Apple Honey**. We also heard an amusing original by Adderley called **The Deacon and the Elder** that was played by the American contingent alone, and Horace Silver's **Opus de Funk** and **The Preacher**. **The Deacon** and **The**

Preacher seemed to be rather closely related. The medley in these concerts was quite welcome for in it Herman geyed his past successes in a charming manner.

In view of his reputation it was to be expected that Harris should be given the most solo space, but it is difficult to account for the enthusiasm with which his work is regarded. Certainly his style is his own creation and is consistent within itself. On a feature like **Gloomy Sunday** he built a melodic line that was inventive and fully characteristic of that style. Yet Harris's idiom is not so much original in the sense of presenting new musical discoveries as ingeniously freakish. Angular phrasing is common enough in jazz but Harris's is jagged and somehow inconclusive. It is as if he is not quite able to control his ideas and is uncertain of how best to present them. Adderley was the soloist from whom most could be expected but he was given little to do. He played some swinging, clean-toned phrases now and again but much of his solo work tended to eccentricity. Guaraldi was the musician to show the greatest improvement during the course of the tour. At the first concerts his solos lacked direction and had a sometimes tenuous connection with the beat, but latterly he played much better, producing a fine solo on **Opus de Funk** on the band's last day. Of the local men the tenor saxophonist Don Rendell acquitted himself best and played a very agreeable version of **Early Autumn**. Ronnie Ross, easily one of our best musicians, never seemed to hit his stride with the band and was not really at home in its context.

After its debut the band began a tour in which it played twenty-five concerts in sixteen days. With the travelling involved there was little time left for further rehearsal and in the closing concerts of the series the quality of its ensemble playing was not noticeably advanced.

Herman's Anglo-American experiment, then, didn't prove anything for several reasons. The visiting contingent contained no genuinely outstanding soloist from whom the local musicians could gain new musical insights, and the rhythm section did not approach the superlative standard of the American best. The musicians were no doubt the best that could be found for the time and place, but it was too hurried an affair altogether. The band was in existence for too short a time and worked too crowded a schedule for much real musical contact to be established.

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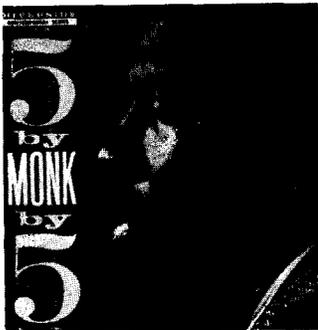


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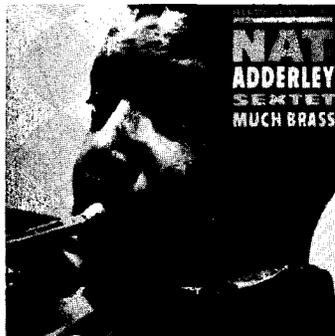
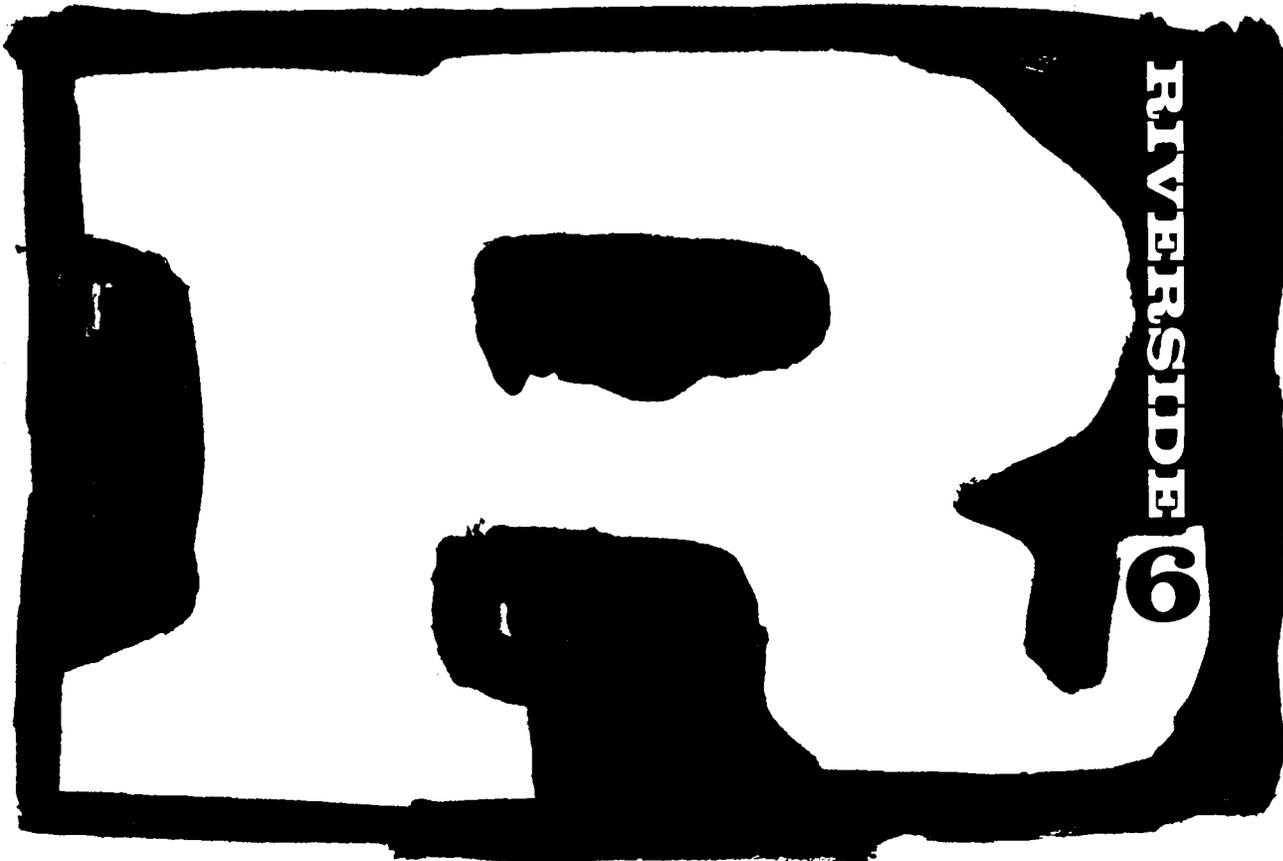
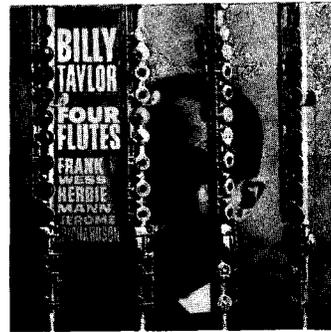
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