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The Jazz Review

FIFTY CENTS

Walter Page's Story
as Told to Frank Driggs

Sonny Rollins and the Challenge
of Thematic Improvisation
by Gunther Schuller

A View of Criticism
by William Russo

THELONIOUS MONK by Gunther
Schuller; MILES DAVIS by Dick Katz
and Bob Brookmeyer; KING OLIVER
by Larry Gushee; JOHN LEWIS by
Bob Brookmeyer; SONNY ROLLINS
by Art Farmer; BILLIE HOLIDAY
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HORN" by Orrin Keepnews; A selec-
tion of Blues Lyrics; Blues singers by
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Martin Williams; Jazz in Print by
Nat Hentoff; Reconsiderations I.

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Dear Nat and Martin:

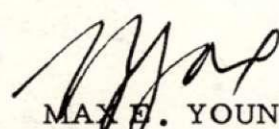
All of us at UNITED ARTISTS RECORDS extend our warmest congratulations on the arrival of your much needed magazine to the scene. We wish you a long and successful career.

We are pleased to be on hand for the first issue of THE JAZZ REVIEW, and also to tell you about the wonderful jazz catalog that is being assembled on UNITED ARTISTS RECORDS. As you know, JACK LEWIS and MONTE KAY, who have both been responsible for so many fine jazz projects, will be in charge of our recording program. They are following one simple guide; only the most important and original jazz will be presented on UNITED ARTISTS RECORDS.

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Sincerely,



MAX E. YOUNGSTEIN, President
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The Jazz Review

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Sonny Rollins and the Challenge of Thematic Improvisation

by Gunther Schuller

Since the days when pure collective improvisation gave way to the improvised solo, jazz improvisation has traveled a long road of development. The forward strides that characterized each particular link in this evolution were instigated by the titans of jazz history of the last forty-odd years: Louis Armstrong; Coleman Hawkins; Lester Young; Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie; Miles Davis; collectively the MJQ under John Lewis' aegis; and some others in varying but lesser degrees. Today we have reached another juncture in the constantly unfolding evolution of improvisation and the central figure of this present renewal is Sonny Rollins.

Each of the above jazz greats brought to improvisation a particular ingredient it did not possess before, and with Rollins thematic and structural unity have at last achieved the importance in *pure* improvisation that elements such as swing, melodic conception and originality of expression have already enjoyed for many years.

Improvisatory procedures can be divided roughly into two broad and sometimes overlapping categories which have been called *paraphrase* and *chorus* improvisation. The former consists mostly of an embellishment or ornamentation technique, while the latter suggests that the soloist has departed completely from a given theme or melody and is improvising freely on nothing but a chord structure. (It is interesting to note that this separation in improvisational techniques existed also in classical music in the 16th to 18th centuries, when composers and performers differentiated between ornamentation [*elaboratio*] and free vibration [*inventio*].) Most improvisation in the modern jazz era belongs to this second category and it is with developments in this area that this article shall concern itself.

In short, jazz improvisation became through the years a more or less unfettered, melodic-rhythmic extemporaneous composing process in which the sole organizing determinant was the underlying chord pattern. In this respect it is important to note that what we all at times loosely call "variation" is in the strictest sense no variation at all, since it does not proceed from the basis of varying a given thematic material but simply reflects a player's ruminations on an *un-varying* chord progression. As André Hodeir put it in his book *Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence*, "freed from all melodic and structural obligation, the chorus improvisation is a simple emanation inspired by a given harmonic sequence."

Simple or not, this kind of extemporization has led to a critical situation: to a very great extent, improvised solos—even those that are in all other respects very imaginative—have suffered from a general lack of over-all cohesiveness and direction,—the lack of a unifying force. There are exceptions to this, of course. Some of the great solos of the past (Armstrong's *Muggles*, Hawkins' *Body and Soul* [second chorus], Parker's *Ko-Ko* etc.) have held together as perfect compositions by virtue of the improviser's genial intuitive talents. (Genius does not necessarily need organization, especially in a strict academic sense, since it makes its own laws and sets its own standards, thereby creating its own kind of organization.) But such successful exceptions have only served to emphasize the relative failure of less inspired improvisations. These have been the victims of one or perhaps all of the following symptoms: (1) the average improvisation is mostly a stringing together of unrelated ideas; (2) because of the *independently* spontaneous character

of most improvisation, a series of solos by different players within a single piece have very little chance of bearing any relationship to each other (as a matter of fact, the stronger the individual personality of each player, the less uniformity the total piece is likely to achieve); (3) in those cases where composing (or arranging) is involved, the body of interspersed solos generally has no relation to these non-improvised sections; (4) otherwise interesting solos are often marred by a sudden quotation from some completely irrelevant material.

I have already said that this is not altogether deplorable (I wish to emphasize this), and we have seen that it is possible to create pure improvisations which are meaningful realizations of a well-sustained over-all feeling. Indeed the majority of players are perhaps not temperamentally or intellectually suited to do more than that. In any case, there is now a tendency among a number of jazz musicians to bring thematic (or motivic) and structural unity into improvisation. Some do this by combining composition and improvisation, for instance the Modern Jazz Quartet and the Giuffrè Three; others, like Sonny Rollins, prefer to work solely by means of extemporization.

Several of the latter's recordings offer remarkable instances of this approach. The most important and perhaps most accessible of these is his *Blue 7* (Prestige LP 7079). It is at the same time a striking example of how *two* great soloists (Sonny and Max Roach) can integrate their improvisations into a unified entity.

I realize fully that music is meant to be listened to, and that words are not adequate in describing a piece of music. However, since laymen, and even many musicians, are perhaps more interested in knowing exactly how such structural solos are achieved

ed than in blindly accepting at face value remarks such as those above. I shall try to go into some detail and with the help of short musical examples give an account of the ideational thread running through Rollins' improvisation that makes this particular recording so distinguished and satisfying.

Doug Watkins starts with a restrained walking bass-line and is soon joined by Max Roach quietly and simply keeping time. The non-committal character of this introductory setting gives no hint of the striking theme with which Rollins is about to enter. It is made up of three primary notes: D, A-flat and E.¹ The chord progression underlying the en-

tire piece is that of the blues in the key of B-flat. The primary notes of the theme (D, A-flat, E) which, taken by themselves, make up the essential notes of an E seventh chord thus reveal themselves as performing a double function: the D is the third of B-flat and at the same time the seventh of E, the A-flat is the seventh of B-flat and also (enharmonically as C-sharp) the third of E, the E is the flatted fifth of B-flat and the tonic of E. The result is that the three tones create a bitonal² complex of notes in which the blue notes predominate.

At the same time, speaking strictly melodically, the intervals D to A-flat (tritone) and A-flat to E (major

third) are about the most beautiful and most potent intervals in the Western musical scale. (That Rollins, whose music I find both beautiful and potent, chose these intervals could be interpreted as an unconscious expression of affinity for these attributes, but this brings us into the realm of the psychological and subconscious nature of inspiration and thus quite beyond the intent of this article.)³

This theme then—with its bitonal implications (purposely kept pure and free by the omission of the piano), with its melodic line in which the number and choice of notes is kept at an almost rock-bottom minimum, with its rhythmic simplicity and segmentation—is the fountain-

¹ The notes C, D-flat and A in bar 5 are simply a transposition of motive A to accommodate the change to E-flat in that measure, and all other notes are non-essential alterations and passing tones.

² Bitonality implies the simultaneous presence of two tonal centers or keys. This particular combination of keys (E and B-flat—a tritone relationship), although used occasionally by earlier composers, notably Franz Liszt in his *Malediction Concerto*, did not become prominent as a distinct musical device until Stravinsky's famous "*Petrushka—Chord*" (F-sharp and C) in 1911.

³ It should also be pointed out in passing that *Blue 7* does not represent Rollins' first encounter with these particular harmonic-melodic tendencies. He tackled them almost a year earlier in *Vierd Blues* (Prestige LP 7044, *Miles Davis Collector's Items*). As a matter of fact the numerous similarities between Rollins' solos on *Blue 7* and *Vierd Blues* are so striking that the earlier one must be considered a study or forerunner of the other. Both, however, are strongly influenced, I believe, by Thelonious Monk's explorations in this area in the late forties, especially such pieces as *Misterioso* (Blue Note LP 1511, Thelonious Monk, Vol. 1).



Leroy McClucas

head from which issues most of what is to follow. Rollins simply extends and develops all that the theme implies.

As an adjunct to this 12-bar theme, Rollins adds three bars which in the course of the improvisation undergo considerable treatment. This phrase is made up of two motives. It appears in the twelfth to fourteenth bars of Rollins' solo, and at first seems gratuitous. But when eight choruses later (eight counting only Rollins' solos) it suddenly reappears transposed, and still further on in Rollins' eleventh and thirteenth choruses (the latter about ten minutes after the original statement of the phrase) Rollins gives it further vigorous treatment, it becomes apparent that it was not at all gratuitous or a mere chance result, but part of an over-all plan.

A close analysis of Rollins' three solos on *Blue 7* reveals many subtle relationships to the main theme and its 3-bar sequel. The original segmentation is preserved throughout. Rollins' phrases are mostly short, and extended rests (generally from three to five beats) separate all the phrases—an excellent example of how well-timed silence can become a part of a musical phrase. There are intermittent allusions to the motivic fragments of his opening statement. At one point he introduces new material, which, however, is also varied and developed in the ensuing improvisation. This occurs four bars before Max Roach's extended solo. A partial repetition of these bars after Max has finished serves to build a kind of frame around the drum solo.

In this, Rollins' second full solo, thematic variation becomes more continuous than in his first time around. After a brief restatement of part of the original theme, Rollins gradually evolves a short sixteenth-note run which is based on our ex. 1, part a. He reworks this motive at half the rhythmic value, a musical device called diminution. It also provides a good example of how a phrase upon repetition can be shifted to different beats of the measure thus showing the phrase always in a new light. In this case Rollins plays the run six times; as is shown in ex. 3 the phrase starts once on the third beat, once on the second, once on the fourth and three times on the first beat.⁴

Another device Rollins uses is the combining and overlapping of two motives. In his eighth chorus, Rollins, after reiterating ex. 2, part a, continues with part b, but without notice suddenly converts it into another short motive (Ex. 4) originally stated in the second chorus. (In ex. 5 the small notes indicate where Rollins would have gone had he been satisfied with an exact transposition of the phrase; the large notes show what he did play.)

But the crowning achievement of Rollins' solo is his 11th, 12th and 13th choruses in which out of twenty-eight measures all but six are directly derived from the opening and two further measures are related to the four-bar section introducing Max's drum solo. Such structural cohesiveness—without sacrificing expressiveness and rhythmic drive or swing—one has come to expect from the composer who spends days or weeks writing a given passage. It is another matter to achieve this in an on-the-spur-of-the-moment extemporization. (Ex. 6)

The final Rollins touch occurs in the last twelve bars in which the theme, already reduced to an almost rock-bottom minimum, is drained of all excess notes, and the rests in the original are filled out by long held notes. The result is pure melodic essence (Ex. 7.) What more perfect way to end and sum up all that came before!

This then is an example of a real variation technique. The improvisation is based not only on a harmonic sequence but on a melodic idea as well.⁵ It should also be pointed out that Rollins differs from lesser soloists who are theme-conscious to a certain extent but who in practice do not rise above the level of exact repetition when the chords permit, and when they don't, mere sequential treatment. Sequences are often an easy way out for the improviser, but easily become boring to the listener. (In fact, in baroque music, one of the prime functions of embellishment techniques was to camouflage harmonically sequential progressions.) In this respect Rollins is a master since in such cases he almost always avoids the obvious and finds some imaginative way out, a quality he has in common with other great soloists of the past, e.g., Prez, Parker, etc.

On an equally high level of structural cohesiveness is Max Roach's aforementioned solo. It is built entirely on two clearly discernible ideas: (1) a triplet figure which goes through a number of permutations in both fast and slow triplets, and (2) a roll on the snare drum. The ingenuity with which he alternates between these two ideas gives not only an indication of the capacity of Max Roach as a thinking musician, but also shows again that exciting drum solos need not be just an *unthinking* burst of energy—they can be interesting and meaningful compositions. Behind Rollins Max is a fine accompanist, occasionally brilliantly complementing Sonny's work, for example eleven bars after his drum solo, when he returns with a three-bar run of triplets followed a second later by a roll on the snare drum,—the basic material of his solo used in an accompanimental capacity.⁶

Such methods of musical procedure as employed here by Sonny and Max are symptomatic of the growing concern by an increasing number of jazz musicians for a certain degree of intellectuality. Needless to say, intellectualism here does not mean a cold mathematical or unemotional approach. It does mean, as by definition, the power of reason and comprehension as distinguished from *purely* intuitive emotional outpouring. Of course, purists or anti-intellectualists (by no means do I wish to *equate* purists with anti-intellectuals, however) deplore the inroads made into jazz by intellectual processes. Even the rather reasonable requisite of technical proficiency is found to be suspect in some quarters. Yet the entire history of the arts shows that intellectual enlightenment goes more or less hand in hand with emotional enrichment, or vice versa. Indeed the great masterpieces of art—any art—are those in which emotional and intellectual qualities are well balanced and completely integrated—in Mozart, Shakespeare, Rembrandt. . .

Jazz too, evolving from humble beginnings that were sometimes hardly more than sociological manifestations of a particular American milieu, has developed as an art form that not only possesses a unique capacity for individual and collective expression, but in the process of ma-

turing has gradually acquired certain intellectual properties. Its strength has been such that it has attracted interest in all strata of intellectual and creative activity. It is natural and inevitable that, in this ever-broadening process, jazz will attract the hearts and minds of all manner of people with all manner of predilections and temperaments—even those who will want to bring to jazz a roughly 500 year old musical idea, the notion of thematic and structural unity.

And indeed I can think of no better and more irrefutable proof of the fact that discipline and thought do not necessarily result in cold or unswinging music than a typical Rollins performance. No one swings more (hard or gentle) and is more passionate in his musical expression than Sonny Rollins. It ultimately boils down to how much talent an artist has; the greater the demands of his art—both emotionally and intellectually—the greater the talent necessary.

A close look at a Rollins solo also reveals other unusual facets of his style: his harmonic language for instance. Considering the astounding richness of his musical thinking, it comes as a surprise to realize that his chord-repertoire does not exceed the normal eleventh or thirteenth chord and the flatted fifth chords. He does not seem to require more and one never feels any harmonic paucity, because within this limited language Rollins is apt to use only the choicest notes, both harmonically and melodically, as witness the theme of *Blue 7*. Another characteristic of Rollins' style is a penchant for anticipating the harmony of a next measure by one or two beats. This is a dangerous practice, since in the hands of a lesser artist it can lead to lots of wrong notes. Rollins' ear in this respect is remarkably dependable.

Dynamically too, Rollins is a master of contrast and coloring. Listening to *Blue 7* from this point of view

is very interesting. There is a natural connection between the character of a given phrase and its dynamic level (in contrast to all too many well-known players who seem not to realize that to play seven or eight choruses played resolutely at the same dynamic level is the best way to put an audience to sleep.) Rollins' consummate instrumental control allows him a range of dynamics from the explosive outbursts with which he slashes about, for instance, after Max's solo (or later when he initiates the fours) to the low B-natural three bars from the end, a low note which Sonny floats out with a breathy smoky tone that should make the average saxophonist envious. Rollins can honk, blurt, cajole, scoop, shrill—whatever the phrase demands without succumbing to the vulgar or obnoxious. And this is due largely to the fact that Sonny Rollins is one of those rather rare individuals who has both taste and a sense of humor, the latter with a slight turn towards the sardonic.

Rhythmically, Rollins is as imaginative and strong as in his melodic concepts. And why not? The two are really inseparable, or at least should be. In his recordings as well as during several evenings at Birdland recently Rollins indicated that he can probably take any rhythmic formation and make it swing. This ability enables him to run the gamut of extremes—from almost a whole chorus of non-syncopated quarter notes (which in other hands might be just naïve and square but through Rollins' sense of humor and superb timing are transformed into a swinging line) to asymmetrical groupings of fives and sevens or between-the-beat rhythms that defy notation.

As for his imagination, it is (as already indicated) prodigiously fertile. It can evidently cope with all manner of material, ranging from Kurt Weill's *Moritat* and the cowboy material of his *Way Out West* LP (Contemporary 3530) to the more familiar area of ballads and blues. This accounts no doubt for the fact

that to date his most successful and structurally unified efforts have been based on the blues. (*Sumphin'* for instance, made with Dizzy Gillespie [Verve 8260] is almost on the level of *Blue 7*; it falls short, comparatively, only in terms of originality, but is also notable for a beautifully organized Gillespie solo.) This is not to say that Rollins is incapable of achieving thematic variations in non-blues material. Pieces such as *St. Thomas* or *Way Out West* indicate more than a casual concern with this problem; and in a recent in-the-flesh rendition of *Yesterdays*, a lengthy solo cadenza dealt almost exclusively with the melodic line of this tune. His vivid imagination not only permits him the luxury of seemingly endless variants and permutations of a given motive, but even enables him to emulate ideas not indigenous to his instrument, as for instance, in *Way Out West* when Rollins, returning for his second solo, imitates Shelly Manne's closing snare drum roll on the saxophone!

Lest I seem to be overstating the case for Rollins, let me add that both his live and recorded performances do include average and less coherent achievements. Even an occasional wrong note as in *You Don't Know What Love Is* (Prestige LP 7079)—which only proves that (fortunately) Rollins is human and fallible. Such minor blemishes are dwarfed into insignificance by the enormity of his talent and the positive values of his great performances. In these and especially in *Blue 7*, what Sonny Rollins has added conclusively to the scope of jazz improvisation is the idea of developing and varying a main theme, and not just a secondary motive or phrase which the player happens to hit upon in the course of his improvisation and which in itself is unrelated to the "head" of the composition. This is not to say that a thematically related improvisation is necessarily better than a free harmonically-based one. Obviously any generalization to this effect would be

(Continued on Page 21)

⁴ It is also apparent that Rollins had some fingering problems with the passage, and his original impulse in repeating it seems to have been to iron these out. However, after six attempts to clean up the phrase, Rollins capitulates and goes on to the next idea. Incidentally, he has experimented with this particular phrase in a number of pieces and it threatens to become a cliché with him.

⁵ In this Rollins has only a handful of predecessors, notably Jelly Roll Morton, Earl Hines, Fats Waller and Thelonious Monk, aside from the already mentioned Lewis and Giuffrè.

⁶ A similarly captivating instance of solo thematic material being used for accompanimental purposes occurs in the first four bars of John Lewis' background to Milt Jackson's solo in *Django* (Prestige LP 7057).

Ex. 1 X = primary notes

Ex. 2

Ex. 3

(repeat of previous bar)

Ex. 4

Ex. 5

Ex. 6

Ex. 6 is a musical score for a piano and drum solo. It consists of 32 measures. The piano part is written on a single staff, and the drum solo is indicated by a 'Drum solo' marking. The score is divided into sections labeled 'a' through 'g'. The piano part includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte) and 'mf' (mezzo-forte). The drum solo is written in a simplified notation. The score is in 4/4 time.

Ex. 7

Ex. 7 is a musical score for a piano and drum solo. It consists of 8 measures. The piano part is written on a single staff, and the drum solo is indicated by a 'Drum solo' marking. The score is divided into sections labeled 'a' through 'g'. The piano part includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte) and 'mf' (mezzo-forte). The drum solo is written in a simplified notation. The score is in 4/4 time.

a is derived from our Ex. 2, part a;
b from Ex. 2, part b; c from Ex. 1;
d from Ex. 4; f from Ex. 1, motive
a; and g comes from the same, using
only the last two notes of motive a;

e is derived from the new material
used in the "frame" passage around
Max's solo.
Measures written in small notes use
non-related material.

Bar 26 in this example is an approxi-
mation; Rollins delays each repeti-
tion by a fraction of a beat in such
a way that it cannot be notated
exactly.

About My Life In Music

by Walter Page, as told to Frank Driggs



Bob Parent, courtesy Mrs. Walter Page

... I learned to play bass horn before I learned string bass ... in the neighborhood brass bands. There were three brothers next door to me who played bass horns ... one played bass horn, one played baritone horn bass clef, the other played baritone treble clef. On the other side of the street there were two other brothers, Joe, who played cornet, and Frank, who played bass horn. I learned how to play bass horn from them and by the time I was in high school I was playing bass horn and bass drum in their band.

Major N. Clark Smith was my teacher in high school. He taught almost everybody in Kansas City. He was a chubby little cat, bald, one of the old military men. He wore glasses on his nose and came from Cuba around 1912 or 1914. He knew all the instruments and couldn't play

anything himself, but he could teach. DePriest Wheeler, Eli Logan and LeRoy Maxey were all in school with me, although they were a few grades behind me. Major Smith really used to drill us and one day he was looking for a bass player and no one was around, so he looked at me, and said, "Pagey, get the bass." I said, "But," and he repeated, "Get the bass." That's when I got started. He used to have us sing the cantatas like *Elijah* and we'd play arrangements for the brass band ... it was very inspiring.

I used to get a lot of inspiration from the rhapsodies, 2nd, 3rd, 10th, 11th ... because they were what you called *trepidoso* movements. I've always had an appreciation of music ... used to listen to the pop concerts when six and eight bassists would sound like one, way back in

'17. ... There were two theatres in Kansas City then, the Orpheum and the Century where the burlesque shows were put on. They both had pretty good bass players, but they had no drive or power. My inspiration was Wellman Braud. He came to Kansas City with John Wycliffe's band from Chicago for the five day circuses put on by the Elks and Shriners. Wycliffe was the drummer, Clarence Lee was there on violin, Tommy Ladnier, Long Boy (Charlie Green) on trombone, and I think Willie Lewis on piano. I was sitting right in the front row of the high school auditorium and all I could hear was the oomp, oomp, oomp of that bass, and I said, that's for me. I was just getting started with Bennie Moten then, perfecting my beat. Braud is my daddy. That's why I have the big beat. There were a lot of good bass players, but he had the power. There was a guy from New Orleans named Buck Stoll who had a little French bass, and he had lots of rhythm and tone, but no power. When Braud got ahold of that bass, he hit those tones like hammers and made them jump right out of that box. Smitty (Jimmy Smith of the Missourians) taught me some fine things on bass horn that I didn't know before. He had a wonderful technique of rolling his notes on tuba, with just the right vibrato, so as to make the tune sound pretty. He went with Cab later on.

I finished a three-year course on gas engines, but I wanted to stick with my music and harmony courses, etc. One of my best friends' father was principal of the high school and he encouraged me to go on and take the teacher's course. My mother said it would be ok if I was able to pay my own way. She wanted me to be a teacher or a minister, and she was doing very well with a 14-course beauty treatment.

Fridays and Sundays I played with Bennie Moten and Saturdays with Dave Lewis who was paying me \$7.00 a night. Bennie was paying for my food and transportation, so when I'd be finished a weekend I'd made me \$20.00 and had a ball. I

had a ROTC commission as 2nd Lt. and Chief musician and if the war lasted another six months, I'd have gone. I filled out a questionnaire and was qualified an A-1 cook, cabinet maker, carpenter, musician, and mechanic. I had it made anyway the tide turned . . .

I took the teachers' course at Kansas University at Lawrence and in one semester finished a three-year course with good grades. I took piano, voice, violin, sax, composition and arranging. It cost me \$79.00 every nine weeks. We had to pay \$2.50 for each concert course. Mischa Elman and many other fine concert artists used to come through . . . it was a wonderful foundation. All during this time I was still working with Bennie Moten and Dave Lewis, and during vacations I worked in dining service with the Union Pacific. That was one of the reasons I quit college.

With the Union Pacific I'd travelled as far as Denver and Cheyenne but never as far as California and I'd always wanted to go there be-

cause I heard so much about it. This road show was headed for California and the violinist, Roland Bruce was a good friend of mine. He persuaded me to go with them.

I joined Billy King's road show on January 1, 1923. Ermir Coleman was the leader, on trombone. Others in the band were William Blue, clarinet, Lawrence Williams on cornet, Eric McNeill on drums and myself. Willie Lewis on piano had come out of Polytechnic school in Peoria and had a fast, powerful left hand that really jumped. He'd learned to write like I had. All the musicians in the band were top men. We played the "tab" shows for T.O.B.A. We got so we wouldn't play anything without music. I used to write from ear at one in the afternoon and by seven that night we'd have a complete arrangement. We had three arrangers, which meant thirty dollars extra, which we all drank up. We had a ball, lots of fun, but the band broke up the next year in Texas. We'd gone on to a little theatre in Oklahoma City and one of the co-owners fell

in love with me. She wanted me to go on the road with her as her assistant. She had big ideas and wanted to form a band in the cadet corps in the school in town with me as the director. Down in Texas we ran into the road company of *Shuffle Along* and it turned out that our overture was the *Shuffle Along* overture, which we played by heart and it killed them. That was our last appearance before going up to Oklahoma and disbanding. Ermir Coleman wanted to go into politics, so I was asked to take over the band when he left. The touring company folded up, so I formed a small group and played around the same part of the country for a while.

We used to run into some fine outfits down in Texas. Gene Coy and his Happy Black Aces were out of Amarillo with seven or eight pieces and they were really jumping. Gene played drums and his wife played piano like a man. Another good group was the Satisfied Five, led by Carl Murphy. They were playing the oil fields then.

We were playing in the silent picture houses a lot for movies like the *Ten Commandments* with appassionatas, andantes, pianissimos and all those things. I had cued in cello parts. We only had five pieces, but sometimes we sounded like ten.

The top band then was Alphonso Trent's. He was famous at the Adolphus Hotel with musicians like T. Holder and Chester Clark, two of the sweetest trumpet players I ever heard.

I had to scuffle around for a while trying to keep my family together, and I decided to get together with some of the influential men I knew around Oklahoma City. I got a bunch of them in a hotel room and told them I wanted to organize a big band, and that I needed money to get them together all in one place. One of the men put them up in a large room and fed them all.

The men in my band were James Simpson, Jimmy LuGrand and Lips Page on trumpets; Eddie Durham and later on, Dan Minor, on trombone; Buster Smith, Ruben Roddy and Ted Manning on reeds; Turk Thomas on piano, Reuben Lynch on guitar, Alvin Burroughs on drums, and myself on bass horn, baritone sax and bass violin. Jimmy Rushing and Count Basie both joined later on, in 1928.

We started working around El



Walter Page's Blue Devils, Oklahoma City, Okla. 1929

Left to Right: Seated—Leonard Chadwick or Leroy White, trumpet; Druieboss, trombone; Water Page; Lips Page, trumpet; Buster Smith, alto; Unknown; Standing—Unknown; Doc Ross, tenor; Unknown; James Simpson, trumpet; Charlie Washington, piano; Ernest Williams, vocal.

Reno, Shawnee, Chickashay and all the little towns in a fifty mile radius with just ten pieces. In Shawnee we played a little club called the Riverside for dime-dance affairs for about four months. When the summer was over, we did so well, we went out and bought a Stoddard-Dayton, a great big touring car, and drove through Texas for a couple of weeks before coming back to Oklahoma. We were beginning to make good money then and worked upstate in Enid and over to Emporia, Kansas and to Joplin, Mo. The National Orchestra Service in Omaha heard about my band and started booking us, and I cut both George Lee and Jesse Stone out then. I was boss of that territory.

The regular pianist, Turk Thomas had been with the Satisfied Five in Texas, and played what we called "galloping piano"—no equilibrium. He cut out one night in Dallas, and it was 102 degrees that night and I had to look all over town for another piano player. I ran into Count Basie playing in a little club, and thought he was the greatest thing I ever heard in my whole life. That was July 4, 1928, and Basie made his debut with the band that night. He fell in love with the band, said he'd never heard anything like it in his life.

They all used to watch me when I directed my band. I never gave any signals but they all knew when to come in. They all used to ask "What signals are you using?" I'd say, "No signals, just the same ideas." We travelled all around the country by bus and we'd improvise all the way out, no signals or nothing. We got to playing the book by numbers, 119, 74, 16, 95, etc. If the name of the tune was called, we wouldn't have been able to play it.

We had the choice of all the bookings around the Oklahoma City area, and I wanted a battle with Bennie Moten in the worst way, because I knew I could beat him. He never would give me one, and we never did get the chance.

It wasn't long before he started raiding my band, because he was much better set than I was, and better established. He took Basie, Durham, Rushing and Lips, so I broke up the band a while to keep my family together. Basie was the first to join Bennie, because we got the record date for Brunswick that fall (1929) and I had to use Willie Lewis on the piano. After laying

around for a while, I decided to get the band together again and got some very good replacements. Harry Smith, my 3rd cousin, replaced Lips on trumpet. He'd been with the Gonzell White show, and was one hell of a man on a horn in those days. I got Druie Bess from Jesse Stone's band on trombone, and Charlie Washington on piano, and Ernest Williams as director and vocalist.

We got better and better and by 1931 I felt it was time to make the big time. We made up our minds we were going to make it to New York and we started out that way, but something happened. I had big ideas then, and wasn't asleep, because we put aside money in the treasury, had two new touring cars, two dress uniforms, good instruments and a great band. We played a fifteen week engagement for National Orchestra Service and then I worked a gig at the White Horse Tavern in Kansas City. I was having some trouble with one of my trumpet players. He was a half-breed and used to get juiced a lot. I used to teach him his music every day, until he became like my son. I drilled him on trumpet and he had a beautiful tone . . . taught him accents and I never played trumpet in my life. I put him in 1st chair and he made it. We all used to date white girls up in Sioux City because there wasn't much discrimination and he got in some trouble with one of them. I wanted to take him out of the band and get a replacement and was trying to get Jim Youngblood, a great piano player away from T. Holder's Clouds of Joy, who were playing in Des Moines at the time. This trumpet player caused me to lose Youngblood because he couldn't get along with him and when I sent a wire telling Youngblood to forget about the job, he turns around and goes to the white local in Des Moines and files a complaint through the national headquarters. After I finished up my stay at the White Horse I report to local 627 in Kansas City, and what was staring me in the face, international blackball . . . \$250.00 fine. With the money I was sending home to my wife and three kids back in Oklahoma City plus paying off the fine, I didn't have any money left, so I turned the band over to Simpson and told him to fill our engagements all the way to Norfolk, Virginia. He took the band out and got stranded with it and came back broke.

I struggled around with some four

and five piece combos in the hotels there and finally got a big offer to join Bennie Moten when he was reorganizing the next year. Bennie wasn't doing so good himself when I joined, although his new band was better than his other one. He had Joe Smith, Joe Keys and Lips on trumpets; Durham and Minor on trombones; Ben Webster, Jack Washington, Eddie Barefield, and Sax Gill on reeds; Basie, Buster Berry, and Mack Washington in the rhythm section. Even though Moten raided my own band before, he had one of the biggest hearts I knew of. When Basie joined the band, Bennie practically quit playing music, and sometimes didn't even direct anymore. Basie was more modern than Bennie, but Bennie played very well himself. Whenever we played any of the big towns we come on stage with two pianos set up and Basie and Bennie would play together. Just before the first intermission Bennie would slip out and get lost. Towards the end of the night he'd come back on stage again and close the set. People wanted to see Bennie because his name was big, and lots of times they'd come up to the stage after Basie finished playing the whole night and ask, "which one is Basie?". That was the funniest thing I ever heard . . . James P. Johnson and Luckey Roberts were the ones who taught Basie, and Fats Waller was his daddy.

Joe Smith and I were roommates. He married a distant relative of mine, who later on married a very wealthy guy from Muskogee, who was so rich that he had a kingdom in his basement. That's a fact. He had a purple robe, crown and all, and gobs of whiskey and food. He fed me all the time and took me down to get some of that needle whiskey for twenty-five cents a pint, and it was better than Seagrams Seven or any of that stuff. Joe didn't stay with Bennie very long, because he didn't want to go back East, and Dee Stewart took his place for a while. We made *Moten Swing*, *Toby*, *Lafayette*, and a lot of other numbers, and Basie was playing a whole lot of piano on them. I still like to listen to those sides.

Along towards the end Moten was playing in the Cherry Blossom and there were two brothers in the band, Jessie Washington on alto and his brother on guitar. They both drank a lot and ran up a big tab, which

most of us thought was padded. We got up a petition to pull out and signed our names to it. I was the only one brave enough to sign at the bottom of the page. Instead of me getting the band when we left, Basie took over. That was in 1934.

I remember Duke coming through on his way West that year. They were playing the Main Street Theatre and some of the boys in Duke's band wanted to go to hear Basie. Braud was in the band and he acted big-gety, didn't want to go, said, "What's he got?" We were playing at the Sunset Club and finally Duke and the rest crept around the scrim and started sitting in. I was playing right on top of Duke and he told Basie he was going to steal me out of the band. Basie told him I owed him \$300.00 and that's how I didn't get to join Duke during all those good years he had. It was the smartest move Basie ever made . . .

Finally Basie opened up, he had Carl Smith, Lips on trumpet and a good drummer. We'd start around ten that night and work straight through until five in the morning and never repeat a number. We'd play nothing but heads and all the pretty numbers. After we'd finish a set some of the smaller groups around town would start in . . .

I left Kansas City that fall to join Jeter-Pillars band in St. Louis. They were working for Tom Strapella who owned the Club Plantation in St. Louis, and he loved me, gave me everything I wanted. I could really drink then and he'd fill up my glass with solid whiskey. I was up around 260 then, sharp, and a prince. His brother Jim was the trigger man, and I never said more than ten words to him during the whole time I was there. Wilbur Kirk was playing drums and harmonica in the band. He had the same set of drums that Sonny Greer used to carry around. We were playing shows most of the time, but that was a pretty nice band. Hayes Pillars was a big star, just like he'd been with Trent a couple of years earlier.

When Bennie died early the next year, Tatti Smith, Mack Washington, Jack Washington, Buster Smith and some others formed the nucleus of the band Basie had in the Reno Club. Jo Jones didn't come in until the next year after that. He was with Bennie Moten for a while but didn't feel he had enough experience, even though we all tried to convince him to stay.

He went back up to Omaha and worked with Lloyd Hunter.

Basie didn't have it any too easy for quite a while, because he had to scuffle for a couple of years before he started getting big. We were playing mostly heads too in those early years, that's why those records jump so much. The arrangements made a lot of the bands stiff, especially when you came in to record. You didn't want to make any mistakes so you'd tighten up . . . if you were a breath off, the mike would have you. Basie's band was a great experience and everyone in the band always knew when to come in, no signals either, just a common understanding . . .

I could have been doing the same thing that Blanton did with Duke in 1939, because Duke explored his men, and if they had anything to offer, he'd spot them, which Basie didn't do. Now that I'm doing it, they say I'm copying Jimmy, and I say I'm playing Walter Page. But here's something, I love Basie . . . all I want is credit where it is due me.

After Basie broke up his band in the late 40's, I went into Eddie Condon's and had some big concerts and record dates. Braud came around. He quit music and was running a pool hall and a meat store. I used to have drinks with him and tried to get him back into the music business. I helped him get inspired to start playing again. Now he's with Kid Ory, been to Europe and everywhere.

The young musicians all respect me and love me. When I was up at Newport this year, I came home with Wendell Marshall and he was happy to be with me. We opened up at Jazz City with Ruby Braff just a while back and Milt Hinton came backstage to tell Ruby he was lucky to have the daddy with him on bass. I don't want praise, all I want to know is that they appreciate what I'm doing. I know what's going on. But I want to know that it's going home. I know it is . . .

Every year at the Apollo they have an all-night session for charity. I went up with one of my old friends for a few drinks and felt I wanted to get in one of the ad-lib sessions and play a little. I felt good, but my friend dragged me back to talk some more. A bunch of the young kids came up to us and said, "Hey, old man, why don't you get back and give us youngsters a chance?" I told them, "Look, man, I made mine, you make yours . . ." They laughed

at me and I told them they ought to be in their rooms learning their instruments, woodshedding. I bet them they didn't know why they were playing bass. I told them I had my music foundation and that they should get theirs.

I learned the history of the great masters, Gluck, Beethoven, Wagner, Schuman, Liszt, Bach, Brahms, Puccini, Verdi, etc. I used to play *Bohemian Girl* in concert with the horn and bass violin. I played bass violin in a concert brass band for the first time anywhere, and I used to fan that horn with a derby thirty years ago the way the trumpet players do today. I'm not just a bass player, I'm a musician with a foundation.

If the record companies could just get to a joint when a band is feeling right and slide the machine in and set it up in a corner they'd really get the band as it should be heard. On the job, you're natural, but in the studio you tend to hold back some things you do when you are in a club.

We've got plans for a Blue Devils LP that Atlantic wants me to do. I'm trying to get Buster Smith to come up from Dallas, but he won't fly. I'll get him here by train. I'm going to use Vic (Dickenson) and Buddy (Tate), and probably Sir Charles on piano. We're going to do all the numbers we made famous way back then, and some originals that Buster will write. . .



The Negro Church: Its Influence on Modern Jazz

by Mimi Clar

The influence of the Negro church on traditional jazz is obvious in the very sound of the music. Traditional jazz is still close enough to the roots of the work songs, blues, and spirituals so that the church elements rise to the surface of the playing. To study the history of jazz is to take the church background for granted and to be cognizant of it.

However, as the folk roots have been gradually overshadowed by European elements and urban sophistication, the church sound is less and less apparent in jazz. Today, the idea of the church's continuing to retain a strong influence in modern jazz doesn't occur to many people.

The influence is there, nevertheless, and exists to a greater degree than we realize. Stop and think of the backgrounds of well-known Negro musicians. A great percentage mention going to church, performing in church—either in choir or with an instrument—or hearing parents singing or playing spirituals at home. The church is an integral part of the Negro musician's background, whether he takes it seriously or not; even if he never sets foot in a church, he is exposed to and aware of what

Negro church music sounds like. It is a part of his everyday life and environment. He hears church music during his childhood, absorbs it consciously or unconsciously, and its musical sound and emotional expression become part of his sum total being.

I maintain that a Negro musician, on turning to jazz, brings this background to it and invests his music with it, not necessarily deliberately, for he may not be conscious of its influence upon him. He becomes a jazzman and his jazz is phrased, intoned, constructed, and swung in ways evolving from and within the traditions of Negro church music. These traditions, this approach toward and feeling for music, is in turn passed on by the Negro musicians to the white ones, who, while not having the Negro church background themselves, obtain it through the osmosis of association with the Negro musicians.

It goes without saying that the church is only one of many influences on modern jazz today. Obviously the blues is an influence. Then there is the tremendous amount of investigation by musicians into the modern classical idiom and its technical pos-

sibilities. There is also Negro folk music of other kinds, and the musicology of other ethnic groups as well as the return to early forms of jazz itself. To talk of the Negro church influence is not to bypass any of these other fields; it is merely to peer into a single contributing factor of modern jazz, which seems more oblique than the rest, and to discover that perhaps it is not so oblique after all. A study of the Negro church and its effect on modern jazz is but one more piece to fit into the puzzle of the entire jazz idiom.

Backing up the thesis of the Negro church's having more relationship to modern jazz than is first evident are the statements of many jazz musicians themselves who comment on the influence and interchange between the two musics, and who reveal that their music background included performing experience in church. As far as they go, these declarations emphatically carry out my thesis. But to understand just how the process is accomplished, we have to examine one by one the rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, and emotional components of both idioms, compare them, and obtain more conclusive evidence.

Rhythm

Existing at the core of both modern jazz and Negro church music is the phenomenon known as *swing*. Basically a rhythmic entity, swing may be thought of as a relaxed, loose, flowing musical force—a liquid movement. This movement is achieved in two ways: first, by retarded entries and delayed attacks of notes (in other words, the performer plays a shade behind the strict metronomic beat of the music so that this beat becomes an exterior force which pulls the music after it;¹) second, by the simultaneous presence of tension and re-

laxation in the player—that is, the player makes an effort to relax in order to maintain the loose flow of the rhythm, yet at the same time he is on edge in order to avoid a structural disintegration of the rhythmic and melodic phrases (which would occur were he to play too far behind the beat or were he to anticipate it).

The framework most conducive to the swing of Negro church music and modern jazz is that of a steady metric pulse over which have been superimposed rhythmic and melodic patterns of a syncopated nature. Ideally,

the tempo of this metric beat should not be too rapid. The more it is increased the less swing will result. At faster speeds, relaxation becomes overbalanced by tension; so, too, do delayed note attacks and entrances become more difficult for the performer to execute.

Swing, however, is more than a technical matter. It is vitally concerned with the state of mind of the player—the feeling and inspiration within him which he is able to communicate to the listener. Were swinging merely a mastery of a rhythmical

exercise, the performer would be able to perfect this exercise until it was well within his grasp, much in the manner that a pianist practices and eventually excels at scales. But because a performer swings one night does not guarantee he will do so again the following evening. There is an interplay of the emotions of the player—with those of the listeners, with those of the other musicians, and with the conditions under which the music is being presented—that produces this intangible and elusive quality of swing. When a performer does manage to swing, the rhythm, melody, harmony, timbre and phraseology of his music unite through emotional inspiration to form a coherent whole. During this time, execution becomes effortless and the single elements of the music seem to integrate naturally and logically by themselves.

Apropos of the above is the following statement by jazz trumpeter Roy Eldridge:²

"What was it about Louis [Armstrong]? 'It was feeling. It's always feeling when it's right. It's also building, giving your solo shape, going somewhere.'

"The feeling Roy looks for doesn't occur more than four or five times a year in his own playing, he insists. 'When it's there, nothing matters. Range, speed, sound—they just come. It's nothing I use; I can be cold sober. From somewhere it comes.' He describes an intuitive process, in which everything he has ever learned spills over into his music, finding structure and meaning. 'Afterward I sit up in my room and try to figure it out. I know I haven't cleaned my horn, but the sound was "gone!" I know my lip isn't in that good shape, but I made altissimo C as big and fat as the C two octaves lower. It just doesn't figure.'"

This discussion of swing will help the reader gain an insight into how the emotional drive which creates swing may in turn inspire a common denominator between Negro church music and modern jazz. Let us now focus upon general rhythmic concepts, frameworks, purposes, and forms which are relevant to both idioms.

Fundamental to both modern jazz and Negro church music is the concept of rhythmic exchange between one or more instruments or voices. This exchange can be between individuals, between leader and group (preacher and congregation, solo instrument and sections), or between

groups (brass section and reed section in jazz, male and female choruses in the church). Sometimes an exact repetition of rhythms will occur as in Count Basie's *Cherry Point*:

(Musical example 1: *Cherry Point*) or as in sermons where the audience repeats the preacher's words:³

[God's going to] "Take you in Kingdom; see after you. No rain; [The audience intones each of the statements.] no bad weather; no trouble, no sorrow; no crying; Lord . . . !"

Sometimes a rhythmic conversation takes place, as in *Every Day*, where members of Count Basie's orchestra make comments after each statement Joe Williams sings, or as in a service from the White Rose Church of God in Christ of Los Angeles⁴ where the preacher makes a statement and receives response from not only the congregation, but from the accompanying instrumental combo (piano, trombone, guitar, tenor sax, and drums with cowbell) as well. In the latter case, the "Amens," "Yehs," and "Yes Lawds" of the congregation are mingled with quarter-tones whines and slurs from the guitar, single off-pitch notes from the horns, and short rhythmic patterns from the drums: ♩ ♪ ♪ ♪ .

The effect of these instrumental replies to the preacher illustrates yet another concurring aspect of Negro church music and modern jazz: the concept of playing tones which function rhythmically rather than melodically. The individual statements of both the tenor sax and the guitar during this same White Rose service:

(Music example 2: A. tenor; B. guitar)

play a role which is decidedly stronger in rhythmic proportions than in melodic character. On paper, the tenor figure (A.) appears to be an actual melodic fragment; however, as it is repeated at regular intervals after the preacher's statements, its melodic significance becomes nullified by the rhythmic impact of sheer repetition.

Also fitting into the idea of rhythmic tones is the "holy laugh," occasionally heard in present-day churches, with its counterpart in jazz cropping up in the trumpet style of Charlie Shavers. As described by Lydia Parrish,⁵ " . . . the mirthless staccato . . . [holy laugh] . . . is unobtrusively introduced to carry on a rhythmical phrase . . . " In the course of service in the Southern Missionary Baptist Church of Los Angeles, holy laughs

are used for rhythmic extension of lines by a guest speaker in the following manner:⁶

(Music example 3: Holy laugh) (In this example, the last two notes are rhythmically "laughed-out," half-sung, half-sobbed.) In his rendition of *Stardust* with Lionel Hampton, Charlie Shavers accomplishes the same thing as he laughs out the end of a phrase with his trumpet.


The concept of the minutely divided beat enters into both Negro religious songs sung at a slow or medium tempo and modern jazz ballads or slow tunes. The former are characterized by a melismatic style of execution in which each beat contains a great number of notes. In this way, syllables and words can be stretched to cover as many beats or measures as desired. As the ear waits to hear the text carried forward, a certain amount of tension comes into play; and, as the words are juggled into place at the last instant, this feeling of tension is relaxed momentarily—only to be built and released once more. How the Negro embellishes a basic melody and how he breaks up the beat may be observed in this arrangement by W. C. Handy:

(Music Example 4: W. C. Handy) This conception of the divided beat is found in modern jazz ballads in which the slow main pulsation is mentally broken into two, four, even six parts. By this token, the jazzman imagines two beats for every one actually played by the rhythm section; he can then conceive a solo in a tempo more conducive to swinging. This procedure is an integral part of Erroll Garner's piano style. His recording of *Penthouse Serenade* (see below) features four staccato left-hand chords per measure, over which he improvises with his right hand as many as six notes to each pulsation:

(Musical Example 5: *Penthouse Serenade*)

In the past few years in jazz there has developed what is called a *funky* style of playing. This style is described by one of its leading exponents, Horace Silver, as "a sort of lowdown blues feeling."⁷ It is a style in which the roots and older traditions of jazz have been translated into modern language. Technically speaking, the concept of the *funky beat* is common to the funky style of jazz and to the music of the Negro church.

In funky jazz, single beats are divided into two equal parts. The two

notes played per beat are straight eighths, and the resulting figure is notated . Funky lines are composed mainly of eighth notes plus periodic interjections of triplets and sixteenths. Upbeats are stressed continuously. The downbeats are played *ppp* in order to direct attention to the *f* upbeats. A typical funky jazz line looks like this:

(Musical Example 6: funky line)

Further understanding of the funky beat comes from an examination of the role of the rhythm section. In funky jazz, the bass player maintains the steady beat. The drummer, besides heavily accenting beats two and four on the high-hat cymbal, plays repetitious patterns which closely conform to the basic pulsation. The pianist "comps" or "feeds" the soloists and uses melodic patterns as well as rhythmic chord patterns behind the horn. A good, active, pulsating rhythm section in funky jazz is said to be "cooking," a particularly apt term in view of the heat generated by the players.

The funky beat—the "cooking" rhythm section, the solo lines of straight eighths with accented upbeats—may be found abundantly in the music of the Negro church. The same waggish, almost eight-to-the-bar quality present in funky jazz prevails in such Negro gospel recordings as The Caravans' *Give Me That Old Time Religion*, The Original Gospel Harmonettes' *You'd Better Run*, and The Boyer Brothers' *He's My Solid Rock*.

The concept of polyrhythm occurs in both jazz and Negro church music. The Modern Jazz Quartet's *Bluesology* is an excellent example of how four different instruments (piano, vibraphone, bass, and drums) can each play different rhythms, yet all manage to swing together. In a version of *Once In a While* with the Art Blakey Quintet, there is an instance of polymeter when trumpeter Clifford Brown improvises lines in 4/4 time over a rhythm section in 3/4 time. In the field of Negro church music the delegation of various rhythms to the soloist, the chorus, the piano and drums, can be heard in The Davis Sisters' *Jesus Steps Right in When I Need Him Most*, in The Jewel Gospelaires' *Somebody Knockin' at the Door*, and in The Golden Gate Quartet's *Didn't That Man Believe*.

The concept of breaks represents still another area of similarity between Negro church music and modern jazz. A break is a brief period

— usually two measures long — in which all instruments but one cease playing. The single instrument then makes a short, but significant statement in the time allotted to it. In this period the beat is implied, not stated; an actual *break* in the steady pulsation occurs: hence the name "break"

is applied to this technique. Breaks usually come in the last two bars of a song section or verse, or just before the text or music moves on to a new idea.

This is the first of a series of articles. The section on "rhythm" will be continued in our next issue.

¹ See Rudi Blesh, *Shining Trumpets* (New York: Knopf, 1946), p. 207.

² Barry Ulanov, *A History of Jazz in America*, (New York: Viking Press, 1952), p. 239.

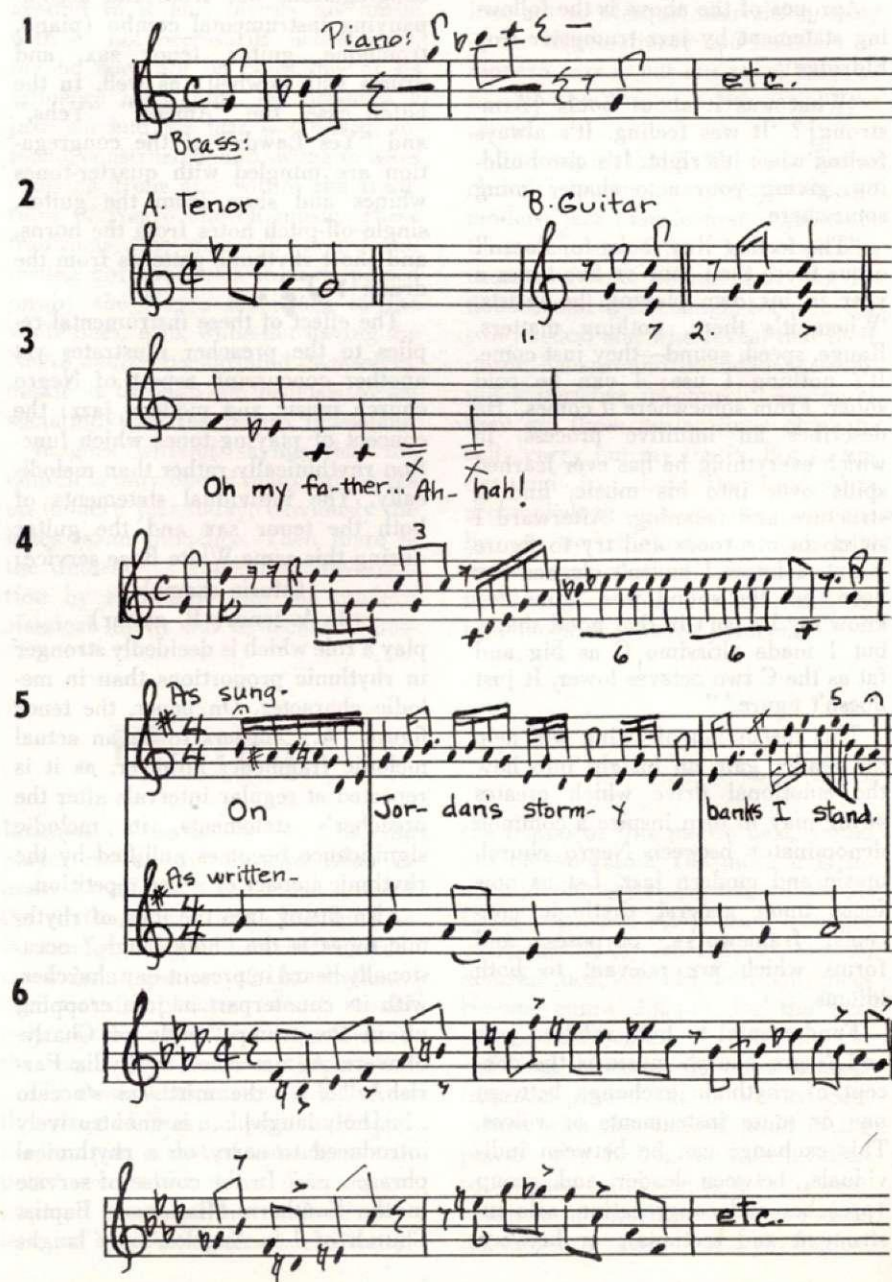
³ William H. Pipes, *Say Amen, Brother!*, (New York: William Frederick Press, 1951), p. 116.

⁴ KFOX, Sunday, April 29, 1956, 9:30 P.M.

⁵ Lydia Parrish, *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*, New York: Creative Age, 1942), p. 36.

⁶ KPOP, Sunday, September 23, 1956, 10:30 P.M.

⁷ *Down Beat* 23:22 (October 31, 1956), p. 17.



The Missing Moderns: Some Interim Notes

by Martin Williams

When this series began a couple of years ago in *The Record Changer*, one of its initial points was that, although transitional and early "modern" jazz was not well-represented (because of AFM recording bans, the second World War, etc.), a surprising quantity did get on records albeit obscure records with fragile surfaces and small distribution. Some kind of re-iteration of the information in those earlier accounts is probably appropriate here, but I see little point in recounting the early Charlie Parker records (except perhaps for *Lonely Boy Blues* with Jay McShann, since it has never been reissued) or the slightly more obscure early Gillespie's—most of them well-enough known by now. To the former's list, we should add the rumor (reported by *Record Research*) that Parker recorded on a local Ohio label with Les Hite before the McShann sides; and to the latter's, sides—supplied by Frank Driggs—with Wilbur Baranco on *Black and White* (McGee and Mingus were also in the band), playing *Night and Day*, *Weep in' Willie*, *Everytime I Think of You* and *Little John Special*, recorded for Decca but apparently issued only in England.

Similarly, there is probably little point in relisting J. J. Johnson's early work with Karl George on Melodisc—any discography can supply information. But Frank Driggs supplies an even earlier Johnson recording, done with Benny Carter for Capitol (and Regis) in 1944-45, with a solo definitely on *Love For Sale*. The band also included Max Roach, Shorty Rogers, and, a man we shall get to in a moment, Freddy Webster. Johnson has often said that one of his early influences was Fred Beckett, who played on several of the Harlan Leonard Bluebirds (*My Gal Sal*, *400 Swing*, *A La Bridges*) and whose solos with Lionel Hampton on the latter's Decca series have not yet been sifted out. Beckett (who died during the war) was probably more a technical than stylistic influence on

Johnson if the solos with Leonard are typical. Incidentally, among the scores which Tadd Dameron supplied for the Leonard band are the aforementioned *400 Swing*, and *Rock and Ride*, *My Dream*, and *Dig It*.

We also listed records by Buster Smith, whom Charlie Parker himself acknowledged as (as Jo Jones put it) his "musical father." Smith's earliest records are the 1929 Walter Page Blue Devil Vocalion sides which have Jimmy Rushing and which also provide the evidence of an embryonic swing away from the Moten conception (which was carried on by such groups as Lunceford's) toward the Basie "riff" style. The titles are *Squablin'* and *Blue Devil Blues*. Smith is on the Benny Moten *Moten's Swing*, *Toby* date for Victor, but his most celebrated work was, of course, the Eddie Durham Decca of *Moten Swing* and the Pete Johnson-Joe Turner Vocalion of *Baby Look At You*. While he was in New York about that time, Buster Smith recorded with Snub Mosely on Decca (*Blues At High Noon*, etc.), with "Hot Lips" Page (*Gone With The Gin*, etc.), with singer Bon Bon on Decca, playing clarinet (*I Don't Want to Set The World on Fire*, *Sweet Mamma Pappa's Gone*, *Blow Gabriel Blow*, etc.). John Redmond Kelly adds these Vocalions of 1939, identified by their issue numbers, to the Smith discography: *Bitin' on Me* and *Mountain Baby Blues* (05348), *You Don't Have To Tell Me* and *That Same Cat* (05274), *Just Give Some Away* and *Carry My Business On* (05166).

Another man often mentioned as an early influence on Parker is altoist Tommy Douglas, and Driggs reports that he can be heard on Julia Lee's Premier date (1945) and with Jay McShann on his 1944 *Moten Swing*.

The other major "discovery" of the series was, of course, Freddy Webster, a magnificent lyric trumpeter whose harmonic conception was apparently quite advanced from his earliest days. Anyone who has heard

his splendid counter-melodic solo on Sarah Vaughan's *You're Not My Kind* (Musicraft, Royale, et al) can attest to a fine talent on that performance alone. He has a moment on *If You Could See Me Now* from the same series. Webster has solos on *The Man I Love* and *Reverse the Charges* on Duke under Frank Socolow's name (a rare item indeed), and an earlier version of that latter title, which makes an interesting comparison, was done with Webster by Sonny Boy Williams on Decca along with *The Rubber Bounce* in 1942. Webster was with Lucky Millinder in 1941 and can be heard solo on (at least) *How About That Mess* and *Let Me Off Uptown*. Webster's chorus on the Savoy Cozy Cole-Viola Wells *I Fell For You* is comparable with the *Not My Kind* masterpiece. He shares a solo with Dizzy Gillespie on Georgie Auld's *Co Pilot* (Musicraft, Royale, et al), and the difference in their conceptions is striking even there.

To those Webster items, we can now add a few more. John Redmond Kelly reports his presence in a Sammy Price Decca date of *Don't Be Late* and *Mad About You* (48051), *In The Wee Small Hours of the Morning* and *Just Call Me* (48020). To the earlier Carter date, Driggs adds that it may be Webster on Earl Hines *Windy City Live*, *Yellow Fire* (Bluebird) and *Swinging on C*. Webster also spent some time in the Lunceford band and these sides should certainly be sifted for solos. Webster's was a magnificent, perhaps major, talent with such a classic melodic conception that makes speculation on what his influence among the younger boppers might have been had he lived fascinating to indulge in.

Jim Dean of Toronto writes, "In answer to your query about Kenny Clarke with Edgar Hayes, I do have . . . *In The Mood* and *Caravan* . . . to me, it sounds like conventional swing drumming."

The places where one *does* hear reverberations of the nights at Minton's (or their equivalent) can be fascinating: another of John Kelly's discoveries is an Al Cooper Savoy Sultana side, *Sophisticated Jump* (De 3274) in which the trumpeter (either Pat Jenkins or Sam Massenberg) briefly but quite clearly uses some

(Continued on Page 21)

I would like to outline five positions of art criticism.

The first position is subjective. It is rarely seen in its pure form, however, as I understand it, it holds that the ultimate reality of an art object resides within the beholder; that the beholder can formulate ideas or opinions about the object which have validity for him but are not necessarily valid for others. This position is not often seen in such starkness because, logically, the strictly subjective beholder would not bother to communicate his views about the object to others (except as "fine writing").

In operation, however, the subjective critic often defines, delineates, establishes a hierarchy of values, and attempts to submit others to his views. He will often admit that his views have at least the value of a moment for others or that his views are applicable to others with similar cultural backgrounds, etc.

Sometimes the subjective critic makes real sense. He is dealing with an object and talking about it; in so doing, if he has sufficient sensitivity and equipment, it is possible for his judgments to have value beyond himself whether or not he wishes them to.

The real problem is that he rarely speaks with authority and that his position is often utilized as a mask for deficiencies in background or sensitivity.

The second position is the absolute

Don Hunstein, courtesy Columbia Records



A View of Criticism

by William Russo

position—the rigid absolute position; it can be illustrated by the Roman Catholic attitude toward a lie: a lie is immoral—a priori and before the fact.

The absolute position is particularly unfashionable today and few dare to state it even when they subscribe to it. We see it frequently in the academy: a chord with a seventh always needs resolution; the second subject in a sonata form must always return to the original key in the recapitulation.

These pets of pedantry are usually evolved (after the fact) from monumental sources: the music of Bach and Beethoven, for example. They often have great value (although their use today is strangulating to "concert" music) but they are no first principles and they are not inviolable. They are observations of practise and they can be revoked.

The partial absolute position holds that truth about art is attainable in portions: First, that technical aspects of performance and composition can be measured (intonation, attack and release, orchestration, etc.). Second, that the intent of the artist establishes the goals of a work; that if the artist fulfills these goals he is successful, i.e., he is good.

Yes, technical aspects are measurable, but they have validity only insofar as they implement the content—the message of the work. And intent plays a role in criticism if by intent we mean to say that the dimensions of the work itself categorize it and alter the critical viewpoint; a piece for children will accomplish its aims differently than a choral symphony. But—if a man attempts a bad work of art and succeeds he has not created great art, and this is what the "intent-conscious" critic would be forced to hold.

The historical or dialectical view of art criticism provides some basis for evaluation but is replete with inanities and absurdities. According to this view, an artist can be evaluated in terms of his influence upon other artists. Bach's influence was almost non-existent for a century after his death. Consequently, in 1780, it could be said that Bach's

music was not great; in 1880, though, it was great again.

There are great artists who left virtually no impact on other artists. Also, there have been artists who have had enormous influence but have contributed bad art and have stultified growth in their effect on others. (Schoenberg is one I feel, although if you wish you may substitute some one else.)

The historical critic also maintains that the continuation of the art in the culture as a whole can justify it, e.g.: Beethoven is good because so many people have thought so for so long. Well, it can be observed that Bach's eclipse was popular as well as professional.

The historical view precludes evaluation of the present, since we cannot foretell influence and continuation and herein lies its greatest handicap; current art can only be upheld inasmuch as it embodies ideas and tools of earlier and accepted artists.

I submit a fifth position with hesitation; I am trying to formulate it. It seems difficult and more rigorous than the others, solitary and out of step with today's thinking.

If it needs a name, it can be called a relational-absolute view. Its main premises are: (a) there is a scale of judgment between good and bad; (b) that the position of an art object can be so evaluated by qualified people—who would be called "critics;" (c) that these critics would evaluate on the basis of some large ideas about the nature and purpose of art and an adequate knowledge of the particular art and of the arts generally; (d) that art should illuminate the world for those of us on it or in it—not only reflect what exists; (e) that art should express some basic "truth;" (f) that art says what it says in a number of ways—in music, through the organization of sounds into a formal and complete statement (not necessarily the sonata form; there are many perfect sonatas which are imperfect art and the 24 bars improvised solo of Miles Davis on *Israel* is a formal and complete statement) through the creation of

perfect objects which can give us an image of what life may be, through man's mind and soul, conquering and organizing sounds and rhythms into an ultimate unity.

I do not want to fit music onto the Procustean bed of a system. I am asking that we look (as we must) at an object and try to find out what can be said about it, what its point is, what quality it has.

It is probably obvious that many aspects of the above five positions overlap. Elements of the relational view are seen in the other four: a subjectivist does indeed judge, the historian does employ some selectivity and does make comments, the absolutist is often forced to view the object in its total context, the partial absolutist is sure but is not certain of how much he can be sure. If we can presume that there is some truth in the position I submit, or in the position I submit as it is contiguous with the other above positions, I suggest the following qualifications for music criticism:

1. The critic must be trained as a musician. Not only must he play or have played but he must know the compositional aspects of music since these are present in all parts of music, including performance. The jazz critic, especially, must have an ear of well-developed proportions, since he must be able to know what the improviser is doing; there is no printed score of the jazz solo and it often occurs once, in a club or at a concert, not to be repeated. If he cannot know all that he hears he is like a man criticising Chaucer without having studied middle English; he gets the idea and the feel but he doesn't really know the object.

2. The critic must have some larger view of life against which he can place the work of art. If life is only tactile sensation to him he cannot talk about Lester Young, for at times Lester talks with the gods.

3. He must be able to express his ideas clearly; his writing must be an adequate vehicle for his thoughts. (How many critics can resist a cute remark or a clever observation—even if untrue?)

4. The critic must know the arts generally. This is connected with the large view spoken of above and also with the fact that the parallels between the arts are numerous and helpful.

5. The critic must have a soul. What is this? Well, let us make a vague pass at definition: he must have sensitivity; the art must communicate to him; he must be enraged and saddened and glad and tearful when he hears music.

6. He must operate primarily to aid and direct the artist. He must free the artist from tyrannical arbitrary public opinion.

7. He must aid the audience in understanding and evaluating the music.

Of course, the jazz critic is faced with serious problems. He must deal with the ephemeral quality of improvised music and this is very difficult, even after the music is recorded. He cannot use the standards of European music by themselves (although the ideas that underlie these standards are operative) and there has been very little codification of thought in jazz criticism. In fact, there has been very little real criticism in the jazz world.

At present the "jazz critics" are completely inadequate. They are not technically trained; they are journalistic; they reflect general opinions rather than create them; they are not aware of the process of creating or performing; they are disposed towards language tricks and elegance and jokes. They have weakened the strength of critical magazines and critical thought. They have so corrupted the reader that real criticism will stand little chance of being recognized as such.

(This paper was originally delivered at the first critics Symposium at Newport in July of this year.)

MODERNS

of the "new" passing tones in his solo.

At this point, I am tempted the further re-iterations of reminding of Earl "Bud" Powell's youthful work with Cootie Williams, say, or Thelonious Monk's in 1944 with Coleman Hawkins. But it might be more to the point for an interim report like this one to list a few other men who are frequently called transitional figures: the later Clyde Hart, Ken Kersey, pianist Julius Monk (did he ever record?), Russell Procope, Don Stovall, Eddie Barefield, Dud Bascombe (a fascinating trumpeter with Erskine Hawkins, 1940-42), Frankie

Newton, the later Bob Zurke. For that matter, play a Miles Davis record for an older musician and he will almost inevitably mention Johnny Dunn's changes. And there are things like *Kinklets* (1906), *Shreveport Stomp* (1925)—not to mention either Scott Joplin's later work or Ellington's middle period at all.

And have you ever noticed that rather unusual chord in the last few bars of Earl Hine's 1928 solo of *57 Varieties*? It's a flatted fifth.

ROLLINS

unsound: only the quality of a specific musician in a specific performance can be the ultimate basis for judgement. The point is not—as some may think I am implying—that, since Rollins does a true thematic variation, he therefore is superior to Parker or Young in a non-thematic improvisation. I am emphasizing primarily a *difference* of approach, even though, speaking quite subjectively, I may feel the Rollins position to be ultimately the more important one. Certainly it is an approach that inherently has a potential future.

The history of classical music provides us with a telling historical precedent for such a prognosis: after largely non-thematic beginnings (in the early middle ages), music over a period of centuries developed to a stage where (with the great classical masters) thematic relationships, either in a sonata or various variational forms, became the prime building element of music, later to be carried even further to the level of continuous and complete variation as implied by Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique. In short, an over-all lineage from free almost anarchical beginnings to a relatively confined and therefore more challenging state. The history of jazz gives every indication of following a parallel course, although in an extraordinarily condensed form. In any case, the essential point is not that, with thematically related solos, jazz improvisation can now discard the great tradition established by the Youngs and Parkers, but rather that by building *on* this tradition and enriching it with the new element of thematic relationships jazz is simply adding a new dimension. And I think we might all agree that renewal through tradition is the best assurance of a flourishing musical future.

Reviews: Recordings

HARLEM JAZZ, 1941, Esoteric 548.
THELONIOUS MONK Genius of Modern Music, Vol's 1 & 2, Blue Note 1510-11
MILT JACKSON (with the MJQ and Thelonius Monk) Blue Note 1509
THELONIOUS MONK Trios, Prestige 7027
THELONIOUS MONK Quintets, Prestige 7053
THELONIOUS MONK, Prestige 7055
THELONIOUS MONK plays Duke Ellington, Riverside RLP 12-201
THE UNIQUE THELONIOUS MONK, Riverside RLP 12-209
THELONIOUS MONK, Brilliant Corners, Riverside RLP 12-226
THELONIOUS HIMSELF, Riverside RLP 12-235
MONK'S MUSIC, Riverside 12-242
MULLIGAN MEETS MONK, Riverside RLP 12-247
SONNY ROLLINS, Vol. 2, Blue Note 1558
ART BLAKEY'S Jazz Messengers with Thelonius Monk, Atlantic 1278

In recent years Thelonius Monk has begun to exert considerable influence on younger musicians, in sharp contrast to earlier years when he was either ignored or misunderstood by all but a few musicians and even fewer critics. It took almost a decade for the legend of the "High Priest of Bop" with all its mystical and cultish fripperies to die down. And today it is much more possible to evaluate Monk purely and squarely on a musical basis, minus all the extra-musical bop-hokum. The sober, understanding approach of Riverside Records, the company for whom Monk has been recording since 1955; the significant critical appraisals by men as far apart (geographically) as Martin Williams and André Hodeir; Monk's increasing successfulness in terms of a career; and now even this magazine's first-issue cover picture, sans glasses and cap and for a change not underexposed—all these are indications that the appreciation of Thelonius Monk has reached a stage where a reassessment of his unique contribution to jazz would seem germane.

His recorded work, made over a span of seventeen years, divides itself into three periods: the early formative years, the first breakthrough of the full original talent (in the late forties to early fifties), and lately a degree of leveling off and matured consolidation. For me the second period is the most exciting because it displays Monk's talent at its freshest and most direct. Compositions like *Criss Cross*, *Eronel*, *Evidence* and *Misterioso* are pure, un-

cluttered musical emanations. They are completely original, remarkably concise,¹ and rather well performed. They are available on Blue Note and Prestige, who have collected the 1947-54 recordings on half a dozen LP's. Many of these recordings still stand up very well on repeated rehearsals. Certainly none of them seem dated, largely because Monk never was the bopper so many people thought he was; and he never was "cool" in the bop sense. One searches in vain for the atmosphere and clichés of the bop era (particularly in its late forties stages), and one finds only Monk—original, daring, blunt, occasionally crude, and witty.

Criss Cross (Blue Note 1509) stands out as perhaps the Monk masterpiece of this period. It contains all the by now familiar melodic-harmonic characteristics, his innovations in shifting rhythms and accents, but is above all important because it is a purely instrumental conception. It is not a "song", a term so many jazz musicians apply to all the music they work with, it is not a "tune"—it is a composition for instruments. In this respect it is in the tradition of such masterpieces as Jelly Roll Morton's *Kansas City Stomps* and Ellington's *Ko-Ko*. But its most radical aspect is that *Criss Cross* is in a sense an abstraction. It does not describe or portray anything specific, it does not attempt to set a "mood" or the like; it simply states and develops certain musical ideas, in much the way that an abstract painter will work with specific non-objective patterns.

Eronel and *Evidence*, the latter with a stark and tonally oblique introduction, do likewise, but *Evidence* suffers from a poor Monk solo. It consists almost entirely of clichés, although admittedly Monk clichés,—like the whole-tone scales and *diddledee* repeated triplet figures. Both *Misterioso* and *Four In One* are represented on Blue Note 1509 in alternate masters, the other versions being included in Blue Note 1510 and 1511. Actually all four versions are excellent, but of *Four In One* I prefer the 1509 since it features slightly better solos, some superb Monk accompaniment behind Jackson, and a better balance between Sahib Shihab's excellent alto, Jackson's vibes and Monk's piano. Such a balance is important because, as in so many Monk compositions, the witty answers by the piano need to be at the same level as the "horns" and not in the background.

In the case of *Misterioso* the preference goes definitely to the Monk Vol. 1 (Blue Note 1510) version. (Both incidentally are in a much brighter tempo than the 1957 Rollins-J. J.-Monk performance on Blue Note LP 1558.) *Misterioso* has been one of Monk's most influential recordings, and small wonder. It is a summation of Monk's work up to that time, and, in both composition and solo a wondrous example of his artistic maturity and his awareness of the challenge of discipline and economy. One chorus of walking parallel sixths sets the mood. Behind Jackson's solo Monk then plays a series of melodic sevenths that in their bluntness are so striking that one can hardly concentrate on the vibes. Monk's own solo sustains this level. It is based on a series of minor second clusters (I will return to these later) and an imperious upward figure. When the "head" returns, instead of mere repetition, Monk enlarges upon it. In an almost Webern-like manner he spreads the pattern of sevenths used earlier over two or three octaves. The resulting dramatic skips, rhythmically oblique to the main theme, are the last link in the chain of heightening intensity that generates this piece.

Incidentally, this idea of varying the exposition when it returns as a final recapitulation was a rather unusual procedure at this time, and is still rare. In thousands of bop and modern jazz performances, opening and ending were identical, and even orchestrating them in harmony rather than unison was thought to be unusual. Monk was a real pioneer in this respect, generally slightly altering his basic thematic material through revoicing, reorchestrating or—as in *Misterioso* and *Evidence*—superimposing upon it previously stated ideas. In both examples these superimpositions are harmonically so unusual that they considerably obliterate the original tonal centers.

Many of the forty-odd titles recorded at that time are only partially successful and some are indeed quite bad. I shall single out only a few. There are (on Blue Note 1510) a very spirited *I Mean You* with good Milt Jackson; *Humph*, one of the many Monk compositions that experiments with parallel chords and tritone (i.e. flatted fifth) melodies, and which features some excellent Idrees Sulieman trumpet; the one-note theme of *Thelonious* with an interesting interpolation of pure stride piano; a fair *Epistrophy* and *In*

Walked Bud; an indifferent and out-of-tune *'Round about Midnight* (the later solo version is much more personal); and a whole trio date including *Off Minor* and *Ruby My Dear*, which seems to have been a hopelessly listless affair, I think, primarily because of the stiff rhythm section. Ramey's plunky bass and Blakey's dull swing-era drumming are like a blanket of fog. (Blakey, of course, has since then been Monk's most constant partner and developed so individually that in the recent Atlantic LP 1278 on some tracks he almost steals Monk's thunder.)

Blue Note 1511 ranges from poor to good. *Suburban Eyes* and *Evonce*, both terribly recorded, are perhaps the closest Monk ever came to bop orthodoxy. The tunes, of course, are not his (the contrast to his own material is a revelation), and in them we hear some fair Danny Quebec and Suleiman, with Monk mostly killing time with clichés. Four other tracks bring Lucky Thompson, Kenny Dorham and Max Roach into the fold with excellent results. *Carolina* in 6/4 time is beautifully orchestrated, has some good Lucky, Dorham, and lively Roach double-timing. *Skippy* is quite unusual: a 32-bar piece in which the first 24 bars (piano and rhythm alone) consist almost exclusively of tritones in parallel progressions, while the last eight measures suddenly bring in the three "horns" in a four-bar chromatic scale (voiced in tritones!) and a four-bar fanfare-like phrase (again tritonic). *Let's Cool One* has an interesting moment in the bridge where on an F-chord Monk has trumpet and alto on unison B-flat and the tenor on an A, a ninth below. This is one of the first instances of Monk's use of isolated naked ninths (or sevenths). That he really cherished this sound is further substantiated when, during the entire bass solo on the bridge, Monk remains silent except to throw in on the F-chord that same bald minor ninth. Both *Skippy* and *Let's Cool One* feature fair to good solos by Lucky (listen to how he literally "eats up" the changes). Dorham (very close to the Clifford Brown of a few years later) and a fledgling Lou Donaldson. The haunting *Monk's Mood* is spoiled completely by some inexplicably wobbly out-of-tune (almost hotel-type) Shihab alto. *Straight, No Chaser* not only has good Shihab and Milt Jackson but also some driving bass by McKibben. Both this and *Who Knows*, by the way, are excellent examples of fluent, technically proficient and at times even mellow Monk piano—a good answer to those who say Monk *can't* play that kind

of piano.

That kind of piano, it so happens, would be out of place in most of Monk's music. (Imagine his angular and blunt lines played by a Billy Taylor—or even a Tatum or John Lewis.) The tone, the touch, and if you will, even the crudity, are part and parcel of Monk's personality, and in it the components composer-pianist are as inseparable as the elements of an alloy.

Incidentally for those who still tend to doubt Monk's ability to play technically fluent piano, listening to his almost Teddy Wilson-like work on the 1941 Minton's Playhouse

LP (Esoteric 548) in *Swing to Bop* and *Stompin' at the Savoy* can be a revelation. Of course there is also the testimony of Mary Lou Williams who says: "While Monk was in Kay-see he jammed every night, really used to blow on piano, employing a lot more technique than he does today. Monk plays the way he does now because he got fed up. I *know* how Monk can play." "He told me he was sick of hearing musicians play the same thing the same way all the time."

1952 to 1954 Monk recorded for Prestige (7075, 7027, 7053). The latter two LP's are superior to 7075.



Lawrence Photo

but on none of the three is Monk able to add basically to the impression established by *Criss Cross* and other earlier works. On Prestige LP 7027 there are eight tracks, many of which reflect the two influences of Monk's formative years: Harlem stride piano and Kansas City blues-based piano. The latter is especially evident on his famous *Blue Monk*, recorded in 1954. Of special interest are *Little Rootie Tootie*, a latter-day train-song with imitations of a train whistle; *Monk's Dream* with its bridge in minor seconds; *Trinkle Tinkle*, derived from a right-hand embellishment figure quite common among the more florid boogie woogie pianists and which illustrates the "tinkling" suggested by the title; *These Foolish Things*, sardonically dressed in clashing minor seconds; and *Bemsha Swing* in which, during Max's solo, Monk throws in isolated variants of the main theme—a fascinating touch. (Incidentally Prestige should be ashamed of itself for allowing a record date on such a bad piano; it sounds like a tinny, out-of-tune barroom upright.)

Some of the 1953 and '54 recordings did not come off too well. I find the ill-fated *Friday the Thirteenth* in terms of performance quite dismal, with so-so solos by Rollins and Watkins and a lousy rhythm section. *Work*, recorded a year later, rambles too much, but *Nutty* has a colorful Blakey solo, a distinctive brightly chorded theme, and an over-all optimistic feeling about it.

On Prestige 7053 we fare much better. *Let's Call This* could only be Monk's with its fascinatingly dogged ghost-note melody. *Think of One* (presented in two versions) is another one-note theme with unisons occasionally flaring out into major seconds. The solos by all concerned, especially Julius Watkins, are better on take one. *We See* is another bright optimistic piece with fair solos. *Locomotive*, a distant cousin of the "train blues", is a superb example of Monk's ability to vary and develop a theme, not just improvising on a chord progression. His entire solo here is based on the opening motive. (Neither Ray Copeland nor Frank Foster seem to have tried to do likewise.) *Hackensack* is another witty piece, interestingly orchestrated. In the last bridge it almost seems as if Monk cruelly imitates Ray Copeland's high-register "clam".

A real revelation for me was Monk's rendition of the Kern tune *Smoke Gets in Your Eyes*. Here Monk deliberately turns it from a tune into a composition by means of instrumentation and chord alteration. He achieves this by splitting up the

melody between piano and "horns" and by beautifully altering one chord: A instead of E-flat against which he plays a D-flat C-major seventh in the right hand²—one of the most beautiful spots in all of Monk.

We turn now to the six Riverside LPs. Monk's first two albums there were based entirely on music other than his own,—Ellington on the first and in "The Unique" a variety of standard hits. I cannot agree entirely with Nat Hentoff's position⁴ about the first set that Monk's "technique pianistically isn't always adequate for what he wants to express in his own personal language; it is less adequate for this variegated program". It is also misleading to read the implication that Monk is incapable of "building organic variations on Ellington's initial themes", when Monk is actually one of the few musicians who can do just this, as I've indicated in other parts of this review. But why this Ellington LP did not turn out as fruitful as one might have been led to expect is hard to say. It does suffer—and Nat is certainly right about this—from an over-all dullness. But I suspect that Monk felt somehow psychologically stifled—not technically hampered—by the Ellington tunes. This would explain why the one great track, *It Don't Mean a Thing*, and to a lesser extent *Caravan* are the only pieces on which Monk masters the material. Both pieces are more than tunes; they are instrumental compositions, and in *Thing* there was the added challenge for Monk of the one-note theme, something he had already experimented with in his own *Thelonious* and *Think of One*. In Monk's hands *Thing* becomes a harmonic variation on one note (B-flat) with ever fresh surprises. Both *Caravan* and *Thing* also contain fascinating bass solos by Oscar Pettiford, especially the three-part chords in *Thing*.

I think it was an illusion on the part of Orrin Keepnews to think that he could get Monk to reach a wider audience through the use of standard tunes. A musician of Monk's individuality and artistic integrity is never easily accepted by a large audience, and it seems fruitless to try to achieve this—at least on the audience's terms. Moreover, it is fallacious to think that people can be lured into accepting Monk if he plays *You Are Too Beautiful* or the like, because such people want to hear those tunes in more orthodox versions. Those who can appreciate Monk's concept of these tunes don't need the tunes as a crutch in the first place. (Mr. Keepnews seems to have realized this himself as indi-

cated by his liner notes for a subsequent Monk LP.)

The "Unique" album flounders on this false premise, and somehow deep within himself Monk may have sensed this. The album seems at times to suffer from over-preparation. In any case, he again seems a prisoner of the tunes with fortunately some exceptions.

Honeysuckle Rose and *Tea for Two* attracted Monk's wry satiric humor. In *Tea*, after a Zex Confrey-type introduction and some rather stiff bowed bass by Pettiford, Monk launches into purposely stiff old-fashioned piano that lampoons the kind of piano playing his illusory mass audience probably would dig. But while Monk makes fun, he does so on a high musical level, couching his satire in daring bitonal chord-distillations. Likewise in *Honeysuckle*, which is further enhanced by much use of parallel chords of minor sixths, echoed brilliantly by Blakey's tomtoms tuned similarly in D-flat, C and F. *Liza* is marred by a seemingly endless stereotype ending, whereas *Just You, Just Me* is quite superior if only for a long thematic-melodic variation and a good Blakey solo.

In "Brilliant Corners" (Riverside 12-226) the problem seems to have been primarily that of performance and insufficient familiarity with the material. While effortless, smooth playing would probably seem amiss in most any Monk opus, I find the saxes (Rollins and the late Ernie Henry) needlessly harsh and out-of-tune. Monk himself does not play anything that he had not already done somewhere earlier and much of it seems routine. As a matter of fact, I found some of this set emotionally depressing (especially *Pannonica*), which is understandable perhaps in view of the many rather lean years Monk has had. The album does come to life again with *Bemsha Swing*, mostly by virtue of a rather light airy rendition, a fine Pettiford solo and Max Roach's pulsating work on timpani. On *Blue Bolivar Blues-are*, the disparate elements of Henry's wailing alto, Monk's stride-ish piano, a strongly Monk-influenced Rollins solo, some overly busy Roach, and a clean highly expressive Pettiford solo never quite jell into a unified performance.

Perhaps, as Martin Williams has said⁵, "one may well despair of assimilating" all the "suggestions about future possibilities" contained on this record. It is clear that the musicians who perform with Monk must also be given a chance to assimilate the music they are playing more thoroughly. Orrin Keepnews in his excellent liner notes touches upon the problem,

when, in comparing Monk to other more easily accessible composers, he says: "What he [Monk] offers is not smooth, public-relations-conscious artifice or surface skills, but merely the music that is in him". He is one of "those non-benders and non-conformers who doesn't happen even to seem easy to understand". But precisely because this is so, the performances must be better prepared, or else the obstacles to a broader assimilation are too great. What is left in "Brilliant Corners" is a feeling of the potential strength and immediacy of Monk's work but not its realization.

Similarly "Monk's Music" (Riverside 12-242) brings into focus the same problem, further aggravated by the inclusion of Coleman Hawkins on the date. One has to say, with great reluctance, that Hawk has considerable trouble finding his way around Monk's music. The record starts with the nineteenth century hymn tune *Abide With Me*, Monk's (and incidentally Fats Waller's) favorite. It is played in a solemnly intoned, straightforward manner, much like putting a motto at the head of a chapter.

All of Monk's own playing on this record is very, very good; it is strong, lucid, and aggressively leading—a little like Ellington's or Basie's approach with their hands. If all the playing were on Monk's level this would be a great record. As a matter of fact, Blakey and Wilbur Ware are consistently imaginative, but Coltrane—despite his unquestionable though still experimenting talent—doesn't fare too well on the bridge of *Well, You Needn't* with its difficult-to-be-interesting-on-parallel chord changes. (Gryce gets badly hung here, and Copeland manages to skate through with plain up-and-down arpeggios). The odd changes of *Epistrophy* also hamper Coltrane so that his solo emerges in many tiny (and I think unintentionally) disconnected fragments.

Hawkins shows clearly that he is of an earlier generation. Aside from two shaky or false starts—on *Well, You Needn't* and *Epistrophy*, the latter beautifully covered by Blakey, Monk and Ware—Hawk seems often to be thrown by Monk's oblique accompaniments and sparse angular lines. In *Ruby, My Dear* Monk's insistence on using an E-major chord with both an A and a C-natural in the right hand confuses and stiffens Hawk every time. He does, however, relax ultimately on this track and brings off some strikingly characteristic phrases. On both *Off Minor* and *Epistrophy* Hawk plays with a dashing, slightly annoyed "ah-the-hell-with-it" attitude, pretty much dis-

regarding Monk's altered harmonies.

The only new composition on this septet record has the whimsical title of *Crepuscule with Nellie*, dutifully explained in the liner notes. It is a moody piece, cast in the usual 32-bar AABA-format. The second bar of the A-phrase has a typically unorthodox Monk touch: an E-flat chord with not only the minor seventh and minor ninth, but also the major sixth and major ninth; thus producing a bitonal combination of E-flat and C. Nor does Monk use this dissonance as a passing chord or try to hide it in some way; on the contrary with his characteristic weighty touch he trumpets it out six times.

"Thelonious Himself" (Riverside 12-235) is a real success. Unhindered by other players and beholden only unto himself, Monk ruminates thoughtfully and caressingly in free tempo on the eight pieces, three of them his own. As Keepnews says, much of the album has a quality of "thinking out loud". Monk makes these tunes completely his own, continually extracting and paring down to the essence of each melody and harmony. They all have a beauty and haunting lyricism, especially *April in Paris*, *I Should Care*, and *All Alone*. Other adjectives that come to mind are "mournful" and "nostalgic". *'Round Midnight*, Monk's own classic, is intensely personal. The wonderfully delayed upper-register thirds are a kind of delightful torture as one awaits them expectantly. *I Should Care* is worth many rehearsals, as Monk towards the end—after a sort of private double-time passage—plays four chords in which, after first striking all the notes hard and sharply, he quickly releases all but one. This kind of chord distillation is one of the most radical aspects of his music, i.e., the idea that one note above all others can most succinctly represent a chord—not a new idea in music, but almost untried in jazz. In the last half of *Care* Monk is especially exciting in terms of free tempo playing. His a-rhythmic, unexpected moves create a tremendous tension.

Monk's Mood, now in free tempo as opposed to the 1947 version on Blue Note, is a fitting finale to the album. Starting as a piano solo, Monk later adds bass and tenor (Ware and Coltrane). Coltrane's poignant, almost altoish tenor exactly fits the plaintive mood of the piece.

My one complaint is that Monk here allows too many of his favorite piano "noodles" (all pianists seem to have them). There were so many and they interrupted the continuity at times so much, that I began to count them. There are fourteen of

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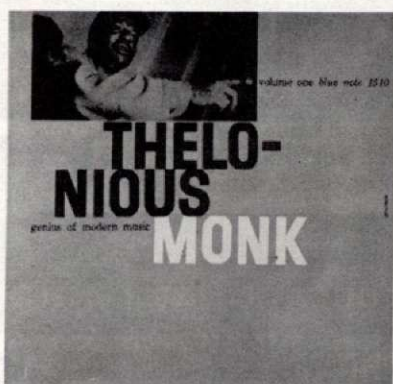
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the five-octave descending whole-tone scales and thirty-four (!) of the cock-tail-piano-type ascending figures. Significantly they are absent *completely* in *Functional*, a long blues that despite many modern dissonances and angular lines is as earthy and basic as a Broonzy folk blues. It ends on three notes typical of late Monk (he has also used them on the record with Mulligan and in the *Blue Monk* on the Atlantic LP): a low B-flat, and four octaves above a minor ninth B-natural and C—another characteristic chord distillation, all other notes being implied.

The "Mulligan Meets Monk" album is on the surface a good one. Everybody plays well and the five Monk compositions, one tune by Mulligan, and a standard make good points of departure. But probing more deeply one finds that *basically* Mulligan and Monk don't hear music the same way. It's a little like trying to mix oil and water. There are numerous instances of this difference. Where Gerry, especially in up-tempo pieces, improvises primarily in triadic harmony, adding only sixths and an occasional final flattened fifth, Monk's ear constantly takes him into the furthest reaches of the chords. If I may put it very simply, Gerry always plays the "right" notes, whereas Monk more often than not plays the "wrong" notes that are right! Gerry's rhythm, basically a late swing-era feeling, is also quite far from Monk's wholly original time relationships. With all his musicianly talent, Gerry too often is a man *playing* at playing a solo.

A convincingly clear example of these basic harmonic and psychological differences is the very end of *Sweet and Lovely*. Here Monk plays a highly chromatic odd-patterned ascending figure, partially based on the tune, and Gerry answers in an all-too-familiar regular pattern of descending fourths and fifths—each passage is an exact mirror of its creator's musical ear.

Monk is at his best throughout, especially in his superb accompaniments to Gerry, where he often works with thematic material. Ware turns in beautifully timed and inventive solos, with Shadow Wilson always in firm but discreet support.

The remaining record was made for Atlantic, featuring Monk with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. Martin Williams' excellent liner notes are about the best thing so far written on Monk in an analytical vein. Except for one minor error, the notes give an informative, clear-thinking insight into the nature of Monk's work, and I heartily recommend them

to all who are puzzled by the phenomenon of Thelonious Monk.

Except for John Griffin's *Purple Shades* all the compositions are by Monk and all re-orchestrated, extended versions of pieces recorded earlier. Throughout the record Blakey's drumming is outstanding, both in his solos and in his support of Hardman and Griffin (especially when he kicks them off in double-time). Blakey adds so many imaginative touches, perfectly executed, that it would be futile to attempt to describe them. Listen especially to *I Mean You*. Some of the highlights of the record are Monk's pointillistic solo (like isolated spurts of sound) on *Evidence*, a solo based on the stark main theme; his theme-derived solos on *In Walked Bud* and *I Mean You*; a very dramatic (mostly low-register) improvisation on *Blue Monk*; and his low barking sounds behind Griffin in *Purple Shades*. Only his solo in *Rhythm-a-ning* is disappointing because it is too derivative of things Monk has done before. Hardman, Griffin and DeBrest are very young and must go some in terms of control and discipline. Nevertheless Griffin's solos on *Rhythm-a-ning* and *Purple Shades* show great promise.

In listening to all these records, several characteristics of Monk begin to stand out. Since some of these are points about which there is often discussion among laymen and musicians alike, I would like to touch upon them briefly in closing.

The first regards the rapid whole-tone scales to which Monk is so addicted. While I would agree that Monk overdoes them, they are nevertheless logical within his harmonic thinking. Whole-tone patterns first make their appearance on the 1944 recordings Monk made with Hawkins. It was in those years that the flattened fifth chords began to be generally used by modern jazz musicians. Now it so happens that the most direct line between the flattened fifth and the tonic is a whole-tone pattern of four notes. Add two more notes and you have a whole-tone scale. Furthermore, when one realizes that a whole-tone scale is, in effect, a straightened-out horizontal version of an ordinary augmented-ninth chord with a flattened fifth (in F for instance: F A C-sharp E-flat G B-natural), one can see how easily one thing led to the other. This whole area of tritones (flattened fifths) and altered-tone chords opened up once musicians discovered the altered bass line. Instead of going directly from E-flat to A-flat, for instance, they began to interpolate an A-natural!

(tri-tone from E-flat) and soon a whole complex of new key relationships became apparent.¹ And it is in this melodic-harmonic area that Monk has been one of the most imaginative innovators.

Much has been said about Monk's technique or supposed lack of same. Beyond what I've already said (and coming back also to the cluster c and D-flat I described earlier in *Misterioso*), I've formed the following opinion or theory. Monk uses his fingers not in the usual arched position pianistic orthodoxy requires but in a flat horizontal way. This determines a number of characteristics in Monk's music. Aside from the tone quality it produces, it makes, for instance, the playing of octaves very hazardous. In playing an octave of two E's, let us say, it would be easy to also hit by accident the D (a tone below the upper E) and the F (a tone above the lower E). I imagine that Monk soon discovered that he could exploit his unorthodox finger positions, and began to make use of these "extra" notes which others would have heard as "wrong" and tried to eliminate.² The old tradition of approximating blue notes by playing a minor second also fit in here. In this respect Monk went even further. The clash of a minor second became so natural to his ear that on top of one

blue note he began to add another right next to it, as in *Misterioso* where the D-flat—already a blue note—has another blue note, the C attached to it, like a satellite.

Also Monk plays more large intervals in his right hand than most pianists. Again this is traceable, physically to the way he plays. His fingers reach these intervals very naturally; and while this is true of half a dozen other pianists, I think this factor takes on added importance for Monk because of one striking feature of his talent. Where many pianists less original than Monk are exclusively concerned with playing the "right" (or acceptable) notes, Monk, at his most inspired, thinks of *over-all* shapes and designs or ideas. His hands to a large extent determine these shapes, and, because he is a man of great talent, or perhaps even genius, he does play the *right* notes, almost as a matter of course. This is to make a fine distinction—a distinction, however, that we need in order to separate the genius from the good musician.

One point remains, the point of Monk's belated influence. First let it be noted that this influence affected almost entirely instrumentalists *other* than pianists. As I've indicated, Monk's music, engendered largely by

his unorthodox pianistic approach, resists effective imitation, always the starting point for any overt influence. To play on the piano some of the things Monk does the way he does them—even his whole-tone scales, not to mention his more adventurous flights—is virtually impossible for anyone else. Especially in regard to the tone quality Monk gets—a rich, full-bodied, "horn"-like sound, not unlike Ellington's tone!³ It is therefore natural that he influenced primarily "horn" men (like Rollins and Griffin) who could absorb his musical ideas without coming to grips with his technical idiosyncrasies—such men could simply transfer the essence of these ideas to their instrument.

That this occurred years after Monk first set forth these ideas is not only normal but fitting. His ideas were both advanced and unorthodox. They would have been neither had they been immediately absorbed by dozens of musicians. Originality is rare and precious and resists easy assimilation. And in these times of standardization and bland conformism we should be grateful that there are still talents such as Thelonious Monk who remain slightly enigmatic and wonderful to some of us.

—Gunter Schuller

¹ Their conciseness is actually to some extent the indirect result of recording for a ten-inch disc, and today when not all musicians have learned that the greater freedom of the LP also requires greater discipline, the confinement of the three-minute time-limit sometimes seems in retrospect like a blessing.

² In *Hear Me Talkin' To Ya*, ed. by Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff.

³ This is as good an example as I can find of the fact that *what* Monk actually plays is not so startling. It is the juxtaposition of notes within a given context that is so highly original.

⁴ Down Beat Jazz Reviews, 1956; p. 162.

⁵ The American Record Guide, Vol. 24, No. 5; January 1958; p. 231.

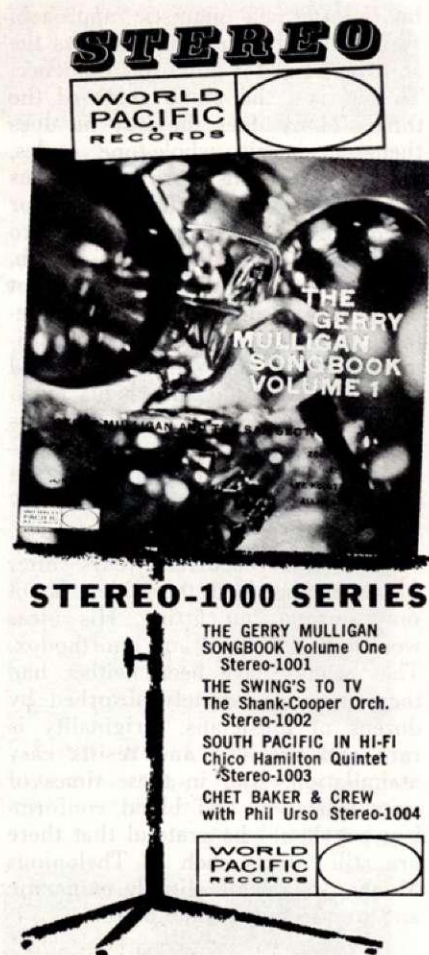
⁶ I say "with great reluctance" because, aside from the obvious fact that Coleman Hawkins is one of the great enduring historical figures of jazz, he was one of the few musicians of his generation who looked with a kindly eye upon the "modern jazz" newcomers, and was in point of fact one of the very few who gave Monk work in the forties. The 1944 engagement on 52nd street led to Monk's first record date.

⁷ As in the example from *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes* described earlier.

⁸ Since this review is not intended to be a harmony lesson, I must forego further explanation on this score.

⁹ The alternative of relearning piano technique in an orthodox manner would hardly have occurred to a man of Monk's temperament.

¹⁰ It should go without saying, but is often forgotten, that a man's tone on his instrument is inseparably related to the nature of his music.



MILES DAVIS:

Bags' Groove, Prestige 7109
Walkin', Prestige 7076
Bemsha Swing, Prestige 10" 196

The current concept of "all-stars" has its origin in the frontier days of hop in the forties. It was not unusual then to find extraordinary talents like Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Max Roach, J. J. Johnson, Bud Powell, Al Haig, Miles Davis, Kenny Clarke, Oscar Pettiford, Fats Navarro, Don Byas, Lucky Thompson, Art Blakey, Sonny Stitt, George Wallington, Thelonious Monk working together in various combinations. Solo playing had reached new heights and it became a pre-occupation; the Ensemble concept was losing out and group rapport receding. Since almost all of the above-mentioned players had had extensive experience in big bands, working as a part of a group was not much of a problem to them. They were able to execute the intricate unison lines cleanly and to a younger musician who heard them, that seemed to be all there was to ensemble playing.

Since those eye-popping days, all of the above people have gone their separate ways. Parker and Navarro

are dead. Byas emigrated to Europe. Bud Powell is ill. The others all have emerged as strong individual personalities. Along with some outstanding jazzmen in the idiom who have arrived more recently, like Sonny Rollins, Kenny Dorham, and later Horace Silver, they all lead their own groups or function mainly as soloists. It gradually became economically unfeasible for them to work together steadily. And as the all-star concept had grown, so had the problems. Things like "prima-donna-ism" appeared, and it rarely worked out. Too many chefs "cooking" at the same time, and the stew will boil over, or worse—the fire will go out.

The albums reviewed here are notable exceptions, musically, an exciting glimpse of future possibilities. And certainly *Walkin'*, *Blue and Boogie*, and *Bags' Groove* are among the outstanding jazz releases of the past ten years.

Everyone involved in *Bags' Groove* is individual. Miles Davis has an economical, fragile, but powerful emotional style, devoid of superfluities. His only problem seems to be an occasional technical lapse. Indeed, he (remarkably) converted his limitations into assets, the true mark of the creator, as opposed to the player who interprets others' ideas. Much of the same applies to Thelonious Monk, who is truly a "hand-made" artist. Milt Jackson is a virtuoso with a relatively symmetrical and less abstract approach. Kenny Clarke revolutionized the concept of rhythm playing. He and Percy Heath, an extremely graceful player, came to the studio already a finely developed team as members of the Modern Jazz Quartet, and this fact turns out to be the cornerstone of the success of these recordings.

The theme is a choice example of Jackson's gift for creating unique, memorable blues melodies. When played properly as it is here on take 1, it insures the perfect mood and point of departure for the soloists. The balance between trumpet and vibes is very effective and is enhanced by their juggling of the parts. Miles' solo is near perfect—a beautiful, unfolding set of memorable ideas, each a springboard for the next. His sound or tone has real vocal-like quality of expression. The human element in his playing defies analysis. His interpretation of the blues here is powerfully convincing, and it is without exaggerated "funk". He establishes a mood and sustains it. His purported rejection of Monk's services as an accompanist is irrelevant. The end result is superb. And

when Jackson enters with Monk behind him, the contrast is strikingly effective. Milt constructs an impeccable and soulful solo complete with "long" sustained lines and many interesting effects. Monk's unorthodox accompaniment hinders Milt not at all—on the contrary—it provides him with just the right color. Curiously, Jackson sounds relatively straight and formal here when contrasted with Monk whereas in the context of the M. J. Q., he appears more angular with John Lewis' more formal style of playing. Monk's solo on this piece is one of his best on record. By an ingenious use of space and rhythm, and by carefully controlling a single melodic idea, he builds a tension that is not released until the end of his solo. Every drummer could learn from him here. His sense of structure and his use of extension is very rare indeed. And it sounds good. It could be called, almost paradoxically, a series of understatement, boldly stated. Miles returns to stroll another solo and the theme returns and the piece ends cleanly. An extraordinary performance by all.

The ensemble in the beginning of Take 2 is not as clean. Davis' solo contains several "pops" which sound like saliva in the horn, and which mar an otherwise fine solo. Also, this version is not as concentrated as Take 1, but Jackson's solo maintains the high level of the first—take your pick. Monk surprises with a completely different solo—different in approach and feeling. Here he is more concerned with playing the piano, less with developing a motif, and is much more extravagant with his ideas. A fine solo, but Take 1 was exceptional. During the rest of the take there were obvious technical defects in the performance.

I'm reviewing *Bemsha Swing* here because it is from the same session as *Bags' Groove*. It has a typical Monk melody and harmonization—direct, and with a slightly oriental flavor rhythmically. This performance apparently preceded *Bags' Groove*, because Monk plays behind Davis. Miles seems quite distracted by Monk and it breaks the continuity of his solo. His discomfort is finally expressed by his quoting a couple of well-known Monk phrases. Monk in turn acknowledges Miles' sarcasm (or compliment?) and, lo and behold, they end up by playing a duet. Jackson follows Miles for a set of variations on the melody of the same quality as *Bags' Groove*.

Note how Monk's pieces almost demand a constant awareness of the melody; one can't rely on "running

the changes". Monk's solo is a fine example of his ability to construct variations on a theme (in this case his own), rather than discard it and build "lines" on the chords as is the style of improvising of the majority of contemporary jazz players. In this respect, Monk resembles such earlier jazz men as Art Tatum and other "stride" oriented pianists and horn players, Johnny Hodges, Armstrong, Ben Webster, to mention a few. Miles Davis also has this gift of embellishing an existing melody, but he also utilizes the "running the changes" technique. Sonny Rollins, too, uses both approaches. Virtually all the superior players are never chained by the chord structure of their material. The chords are merely signposts. The sophistication in Monk, Rollins and Davis lies in the fact that after years of "making the changes" they now often only imply them, leaving themselves free to concentrate on other aspects of improvisation, such as expression, rhythm, etc.

In some ways *The Man I Love* is the most fascinating piece on the date. After a lovely Jackson introduction, Miles unfolds an exceedingly lyrical abstraction of the melody. His use of rhythm and completely original manner of phrasing here should continue to enrich a listener for years. Jackson doubles the tempo with a four-bar break and takes a fine solo which does not quite sustain interest all the way, probably because of its length. Monk follows with the *piece de resistance* by getting carried away with his own self-made obstacle course. He tries to rearrange the melody rhythmically by extending the sequences over a number of bars. However, he gets lost, (or so it sounds to me) and comes to an abrupt halt about the 28th bar, or so (long metre). What follows is a model duet between Heath and Clarke which could serve as a lesson in graceful walking for anyone. Along about the 14th bar of the bridge, Miles leads Monk back on the track, and he comes roaring in in his best 1947 style. Miles comes in on his heels with a delightful bit and then surprises by quickly jamming a mute into his horn and continuing—an electrifying effect. A return to the original tempo at the bridge halts this discussion between Monk and Miles and the piece ends on a note of agreement. This performance would be absolutely impossible to repeat. God Bless Thomas Edison. (This 10" LP has not yet been transferred to a 12".)

Airegin (on 7109) is a rhythmically interesting melody by Sonny Rollins. Miles plays more conserva-

tively here, possibly due to Horace Silver's presence and style. Davis is extremely sensitive to other players and, consciously or not, adapts himself to prevailing circumstances. His solo here is a little drier, and is rather formless by comparison to the others considered here, but his time is perfect. Rollins also almost plays it safe and shows little of what evolved in him not long after this session. Bird's influence is very strong in this particular solo. However, Rollins does attempt to build to a climax. An uncertain return to the theme ends an unrealized performance.

Oleo is a very good Parker-style melody, reminiscent of *Moose the Mooche* and other compositions based on one of the points of departure of so much jazz: *I Got Rhythm*. Davis and Rollins state the theme cleanly and with conviction. What distinguishes this performance is the intelligent work of the rhythm section. Only Heath supports the front line until Silver and Clarke enter at the bridge. During the solos, Silver plays only the bridges. The pattern is repeated on the last chorus, except that Clarke remains in. This device proves extremely effective and was and is used with variations by Miles in his subsequent working groups—but "strolling" in its various forms is, of course, as old as jazz. Miles makes effective use of a mute here and thereby previews his current style. (The device even became a commercial asset when he combined it with some of Ahmad Jamal's ideas about playing rhythmically in "two".) This solo is beautifully integrated and concentrated—with delicious time and taste. Miles' playing is elegant—I can think of no better word for it. Sonny Rollins is thoughtful and straightforward in his variations—almost as if he were reviewing and reminding himself what he had absorbed before embarking on the daring course he is on now. He seems a bit uncomfortable with Clarke's pure, even and unbroken cymbal line, so Kenny obliges on Rollins' second chorus by emphasizing the 2nd and 4th beats—and does it tastefully and unobtrusively. Silver follows Sonny with a typical solo . . . percussive and with a powerful beat. However, his ideas sound overstated—at least in comparison to Rollins and Miles in this context. Kenny Clarke is superb on this piece. He truly accompanies each soloist so as to enhance the feeling each is trying to project. He has a beautiful cymbal sound, and propels a warm, very strong pulse, without ever being too loud. His sense of dynamics and volume is acute. Notice how he switched to

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This song is not the type that readily lends itself to the kind of perfunctory interpretation evidenced here. Miles respects the melody and embellishes it carefully—and he would have been even more effective in a more sensitive setting.

Rollins sounds like one of his imitators here, a good solo, but not up to his usual standard. Silver makes a very good entrance on the break and he develops it nicely, but is out of character with the song. His percussive, so-called "angular" style



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seems to clash with Miles' particular brand of lyricism in this type of song. His strong individuality, which makes him an important jazzman, works against him here, because he bathes Rollins and Davis in all pervading percussive atmosphere. One might say, "But what about Monk?" —he's percussive and 'rough', too." I think it's important to remember that Monk's redesigning of a song is so complete that he establishes his own point of reference. And his role above with Miles and Jackson was mainly that of a soloist—his accompaniments were usually behind Jackson—not Davis. Note also, that in *Oleo*, Silver plays only on the bridges, leaving Miles and Sonny free to create their own moods. Silver's style is not unorthodox enough to create his own point of reference—in other words, his conception is not "far out" enough for him to escape comparison with some other so-called mainstream pianists, and a few of them would be more compatible with the various subtleties in Miles Davis' playing, particularly on ballads. The *content* of Silvers' playing often fits well, but his *manner* of playing is not always right for Davis.

In the last chorus here, played by Miles, the rhythm is undistinguished, and the ending is rather sloppy.

Take 2 is taken at a slower tempo, as if Miles sensed this would help lessen the harshness and it does somewhat. Miles' solo is characteristic and a moving melodic statement. Rollins is less successful and sounds a little indifferent. Silver does not match his solo on Take 1; but he accompanies intelligently though with the same hardness. The rest of the take is uneventful, and releasing both takes has the effect of heightening the defects in each and dulling their good points.

Doxy is a light spiritual-like sixteen-bar melody by Rollins stated in "two" by Miles and Sonny in unison. This piece comes off rather well and in this instance Horace fits like a glove—this type of piece is his forte and he has written similar ones himself. After an informal, almost casual, solo by Davis, Rollins constructs a very straightforward line completely in character with his tune.

It's fascinating to see how Rollins has now absorbed the elements he used at this stage of his development (1954) into the much broader palette he utilizes now. Silver's solo is typical of the many he has recorded in this vein. I guess it's called "funky", a really rather accurate description, even though by now the *word* desperately needs a long rest. (I hereby challenge anyone to coin another de-

scription—"soul" is also disqualified.) Out of side 2 of this album, *Oleo* stands out in every respect.

Walkin' and its companion *Blue 'N' Boogie* are acknowledged to be classics. To me they represent a sort of summing up of much of what happened musically to the players involved during the preceding 10 years (1944-54). It's as if all agreed to get together to discuss on their instruments what they have learned and unlearned, what elements of bop (horrible word) they had retained or discarded. An amazing seminar that took place.

If this seems a sentimental idea, think of the countless recorded jam sessions where nothing was discussed—musically or verbally—and resulted in the players mumbling to themselves on their horns (and knees). Relatively little of the jazz being played today qualifies as art, mostly because the level of communication is so low—between the players and between the player and listener. Much of it resembles sport—even to its terminology—but that question needs an essay of its own.

This record is artistic and of lasting value.

The main theme is unusually strong and the use of the flatted fifths and the way they resolve should remain as a particularly good example which one could point to twenty years from now to illustrate that otherwise much overworked device. It is played in unison—and this particular combination of sonorities, trumpet-tenor-trombone *sounds* good and feels good because of the specific players involved.

Miles' solo is as good as any he has recorded, before or since. His sound ideas and execution, and the feelings he projects are prime examples of his art. I think one of the tests of a jazz improviser is how well one can remember what they have played. Every idea that Miles states here is clearly formed and will remain with the listener afterwards. (How many times have you listened to a long "exciting" jet-propelled "cooking" solo — another doomed term — and gone away without being able to recall a single thing the man played?) Johnson's solo is also superior, but it is slightly marred by intonation trouble, perhaps due to a "cold" horn—I am judging this by J. J.'s own very high standards. But he sounds completely at ease in this setting and his playing is convincing. Lucky Thompson shows his wonderful sense of structure in a beautifully formed solo, which also demonstrates how he has absorbed some of Ben Webster's ability to

build to a dramatic climax. He is helped when the other horns back him with the theme. Silver's solo contribution is overshadowed by his role as an accompanist. He provides a series of variations behind each soloist that creates a moving backdrop—and just the right feeling. Heath and Clarke are superb.

Many of the things said above apply to *Blue 'n' Boogie*. The controlled intensity contained both in solo and ensemble is remarkable. The Gillespie theme remains as fresh as it did when first recorded in 1945—a real tribute to his talent. Miles' solo in this instance is less introspective and more extroverted — compatible with the forceful playing of the rhythm section. His variations are more elaborate and his agile use of neighboring tones and chromatic scale passages is very effective. Also, he contrasts these with the wider spaced intervals and diatonic ideas he often favors to insure variety. Miles' spelling out of triads and general diatonic approach is reminiscent of early and middle Armstrong. Further, his precise, split-second sense of timing and swing also are not unlike those of that early master. Also, each is a master of economy — few, if any of their notes are superfluous. Of course, there the comparison stops. The feelings and conception each projects couldn't be more different — for obvious reasons—age being one and Miles' much larger musical vocabulary being another. It appears that Freddy Webster also influenced Miles, especially in regard to sound or tone quality.

J. J. Johnson's solo is good, but unfortunately intonation still seems a problem here. That he conquers this distraction and creates a moving solo is an indication of his stature. Many lesser trombonists would have collapsed in a pile of clinkers.

Lucky Thompson doesn't match his solo on *Walking*, and sounds a little forced at times, but he maintains his taste, control, and sense of melody nevertheless. The figures played by Davis and Johnson behind Lucky's solo are a kind of anthology in themselves.

Horace Silver's solo is rather tense, if exciting, and his accompaniment is once again peerless. Clarke and Heath couldn't have been better.

This record date was an important one and the kind from which the dividends to the listener continue to multiply.

The date on the reverse of 7076 is a different matter. Davis and the rhythm section are in good form, but saxophonist Davey Schildkraut

sounds ill at ease, and there is a lack of rapport between the two horns.

Solar opens with a nice Davis melody stated by him alone with the rhythm section. His variation is nice, but indifferent in comparison to his work on many other records. Schildkraut's alto solo is characterized by a lonely, but pure and beautiful sound. His ideas are interesting, but not integrated, and here he lacks authority. After a fair Silver piano solo, Miles returns to stroll a chorus before ending the piece. A rather aimless performance.

You Don't Know What Love Means begins with a beautiful, muted Davis solo rendition of this poignant song. Miles concentrates on probing the melody and again demonstrates his unique interpretive gift. I would have preferred a more legato accompaniment than Silver plays here. Schildkraut does not play on this track.

Love Me or Leave Me is played at a fast tempo. Very good Horace Silver solo kicked off by a sloppily played figure by the horns. Pretty good Miles, but Schildkraut has his troubles. His ideas are quite disconnected—it's hard to determine if his lagging behind is intentional toying with the meter or inability to keep up with the precise, almost anticipated articulation of the beat by the rhythm section. Silver relieves him to churn out another two choruses.

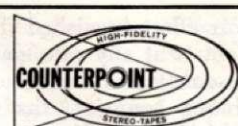
The session is notable mainly as a superb example of Kenny Clarke's brush-work.

And the unifying element in all these performances is Kenny Clarke. He literally held them together and at the same time animated each player as few, if any, other drummers could. With playing of this calibre on the part of the horns, any lesser drummer would have destroyed these performances almost entirely. The other gratifying factor in these recordings is a total lack of the tricks and "hip" devices that have marred the work of some of Davis' recent groups (such as trying to make a small band sound like a big one). There is musical honesty here and usually a mutual respect among the players all too rare these days.

—Dick Katz

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- The Blues Are Brewin', Decca DL 8701
- The Lady Sings, Decca DL 8215
- Holiday Classics, Commodore FL 30008

LANGSTON HUGHES: with Red Allen, Charlie Mingus: The Weary Blues, MGM E 3697

"Lady in Satin" is the name of a new Columbia record of twelve more or less insipid songs done by Billie Holiday against the neon arrangements of Ray Ellis. It is very nearly total disaster. The fault is not wholly that of the arranger, though one is tempted to say so. Still, the ideal accompaniment for a jazz vocal is a many-noted commentary which does not interfere with what the singer is doing, but rather provides a texture of the utmost contrast and a springboard of rhythm. Ellis provides the hit-record approach, slow, sleek, insufficiently subordinated counterpoint, as rugged as reddiwhip and so continuous that Billie's timing is thrown off, for want of anything to brace itself against. The instrumental richness (to say nothing of the heav-

enly-choir effect furnished from time to time: it is at any rate simply *aah*, not *doo-aah*) also cancels out her own unique sonority, that rasp or snarl which in itself preserves her from expressing mere self-pity.

It is a burden to hear the Ellis arrangement systematically frustrating Billie's intentions through every measure of *Easy to Remember*, which might have been, in any but this chenille setting, a real accomplishment. But whoever selected the material for this date is as much to blame as Ellis. True, Billie (like Armstrong, and Toscani, and most established performers) usually prefers to handle the same few numbers over and over. Doubtless someone designed this record to introduce her, as the phrase has it, to a wider audience, and also to a broader repertoire. The results are not happy. At best, Billie must contend with songs for the most part of indifferent quality, on which her grasp is too uncertain to allow any exercise of power or insight—anything that might make them worth attention. At worst, she has not even taken the trouble to find out how they go: *Glad to be Unhappy* (and it is the most substantial tune in the set) is a discreditable travesty which should never have been released.

With these stimuli to unease, it is no wonder that Billie's voice fails her. Nowadays, whenever she has to fight undesirable circumstances—inappropriate accompaniment as here, or uncongenial surroundings as at Newport II—she mistakenly responds by forcing, with a result that must make every listener's throat ache sympathetically. (On the other hand, when there is no untoward pressure, as at Lenox in the summer of 1957, her voice is intact. Critics lately have praised her for showing "flashes of the old brilliance" so frequently that one might well mistake hers for the eternal fire of the Arc de Triomphe.) It is no pleasure to describe most of these performances, the gritty tone, the wavering pitch, the inability to control an instrument that is nothing without control; many times one can't name with any certainty the notes she is striving for. Billie's superiority (I am sure it remains, and will remain after this record has been deleted) has always rested in transcending her materials: hacking off melodic excess, and attacking the words with, alternately, deeper conviction and greater contempt. The ambiguity is, in her best performances, elusive and unpredictable, gives even rather foolish songs a startling resemblance to real existence, and, since the process is just

as musical as it is verbal and operates like opposing mirrors, results in fascination rather than monotony. Naturally, when sheer articulation becomes difficult, none of this can come into play. It does, in this set only once: *You've Changed* is remarkably free of flaws, and one is likely to play it over several times in delight without realizing how absurd the text is.

In a better world than this, Columbia, on its side, would have reissued more of the Wilson-Holiday masterpieces, now more than twenty years old. On her side, Billie might better have stayed with Granz. For the last of her Verve records to be released, "Body and Soul," is a better product in every way. Here are eight tunes suited to Billie, and in place of the heavenly choir Webster and Edison supply obligatos and solos. Webster is particularly good; his sonority alone is music to read F. Scott Fitzgerald by. Billie's voice is as clear as it can be these days, though there is a straining after high-lying passages, as in the title song, and the amplification of her voice, though necessary, is excessive, yielding a sound darker and coarser than the reality. *They Can't Take That Away From Me* demonstrates the advisability of having the instruments get out of her way early: she begins like the guillotine blade in slow motion, and Webster, when his turn comes, has a solo that is all jaunty nostalgia. Billie teases *Comes Love* along; just imagine how arch another singer would be, or how self-consciously sultry. (Next to Billie, others singing of love sound like little girls playing house.) It was not to be expected that Lady should surpass her 1944 *Embraceable You*, but she has. Her second chorus is more than an embellishment of the melody; it is a new melody, a sort of inversion of the original or shadowy melody that offsets its descent by overleaping the climactic note. It is a striking line indeed, and her commanding manipulation of it exceeds the ability of every other active singer of jazz.

Billie Holiday's desire to phrase like a horn, not just to sing, enhances words as well as music. It is a strategy that involves attacking each note separately, a vocal approximation of the instrumentalist's bowing or plucking or whatever it is, and stifling the voice's natural vibrato in favor of one that is rare and eccentrically placed. These characteristics of her style mean that each syllable seems unnaturally distinct, as if each were a stone plopped into a pool of still water, and, because she delights in staying well behind the beat, critics

have been fooled into dismissing her as a kind of precious *disease*, momentarily interesting but not to be compared with a real jazz artist, like, say, Sarah or Anita.

This misunderstanding might be most readily cleared up if such critics would try listening to Lady's voice as they would to a horn, to the way it burns through *Fine and Mellow* (when Blesh ridiculed this he must have been too busy beating time to notice how the angry wail blazes throughout—or does he think the tone of a buzz-saw enervated?)—but then, it would be too bad to overlook what happens to the text.

Fine and Mellow is one of twelve songs done for Commodore now newly reissued on LP. Even God gets tired of too much alleluia, and it would be fruitless to invent fresh ways of commending performances which Commodore rightly calls classic. Among others which are better known, I would single out two: *My Old Flame* is done with a jauntiness not often associated with Billie and beautifully in keeping with the spirit of the text. It would be difficult to imagine an emptier song than *How Am I To Know*; yet Billie seems to charge it, from the release on, with some fleeting but true significance.

A jazz collection without these performances would be a poor thing indeed.

Billie Holiday's work for Decca (1946-49) has been transferred to LP, and two of the records which make up this praiseworthy venture afford an amusing and instructive contrast. As might be expected, the last issue, "The Blues Are Brewin'," is the least in merit, the bottom of the bin. Two tunes linked to the name of Bessie Smith—*Gimme A Pigfoot* and *Do Your Duty*—remind us of what Billie's work lacks: informality, joy, spontaneity. A pair of duets with Louis are well sung but disfigured by stale ad libs. None of these should be taken seriously anyhow; they are music-hall material, only incidentally jazz. The rest of the set contains mediocre pop tunes performed with due (but unintentional) insipidity—except for a Leonard Bernstein tune which it would be better to deal with further on.

Most of the backing for both sets is supplied by sizable bands. Brasses make the kind of din that is, science tells us, fatal to mice yet the arrangements are not bad as support and they are idiomatic.

"The Lady Sings" is the other Decca, and indeed she does. It seems wasteful to attempt any description of these performances: anybody of a

certain age must have taken cognizance of them when they were first issued. (The sound, incidentally, has paled in the transfer.) What was not so apparent when they were released two by two was their expressive variety: the cold dismissal of *No More*, the contorted pathos of *You Better Go Now*, the perhaps excessive virtuosity of *Ain't Nobody's Business. I'll Look Around* is a lesson for all who would be jazz singers, the line sustained from first to last, the approach to it just suspenseful enough to make it live, the words forced to generate real meaning. But there is no pat explanation of how Billie can make a quite common interval, say a major third, seem an unusual and difficult leap, nor of how she can isolate and break down for analysis the counterwords in her lyrics.

This unique method—of course the word is misleading; I do not suggest any gnawing consciousness that the words are trash—of battling the weakness of the material is only intermittently successful. So are the attempts of writers to break away from the greeting-card accomplishments of the ordinary popular song and create something the average intelligent adult can stomach. No escape has been devised so far, save into a pretentious rhetoric (see *Deep Song*), or a supper-club smartness the only true merit of which is an unintended status: the payoff is Mabel Mercer. Worst of all, perhaps, is a text like Bernstein's *Big Stuff*, a post-Freudian attempt to evoke the blues, only less insulting than the deplorably successful *West Side Story* because it is, happily, brief.

The failure of lyricists to keep pace with the refinement and development of jazz may be one reason why so few singers of jazz exist. It is the more surprising when one considers the affinity of jazz with poetry or with any sort of spoken word. Jazz instrumentalists are complimented for making the horn talk, and the two arts are alike in their approach to rhythm: they both delight in stress variation and in substituting length for accent. It is not necessary to glance at Hopkins' sprung rhythm (which of course he didn't say he invented) to understand this relationship; even the heroic couplet, in the hands of Pope, becomes a flexible measure, and one can hear that a line like "lulled by soft zephyrs through the broken pane" needs to be declaimed like Bill, not Roy, Harris. Classical music, at least that century and a half of it represented on most concert programs, derives rhythmic complexity from the varied

length of phrases and from the timing of instrumental entrances; it seeks to establish a larger structure than jazz does and is less concerned with instantaneous excitements. For this reason classical songs that have a care for poetic declamation appear more fragmentary than songs that merely use the texts to suggest a mood: more fragmentary, but more venturesome.

This digression attempts to hint at a possible reason for the most recent experiments in combining jazz with spoken poetry. The experiments need not be faddy, though it is tempting to dismiss them as that. On the contrary, they seem a seasonable way of trying to cope with the suggested difficulties.

MGM's release of "The Weary Blues" with Langston Hughes (the title could have been spared) is the first recorded fruits of the idea. It comes off easily, perhaps too easily. The poetry of Hughes (his reading is too offhand) never strays far from the blues form and the blues idea, though occasionally it attempts, with success, to reflect a conscious social attitude with an oblique delicacy that is no part of the intention of a real blues. Since William Empson, we have learned to call this a form of pastoral poetry; it is really a defensive type of ghettoism, the in-group counterpart to which is, say, a Perelman burlesque. The trouble with such verse is that it does not attempt to do much more than jazz already can do; a Hughes reference to Lenox Avenue, or to Count Basie, is equivalent to such things as the Hot Seven *Squeeze Me*, in which Louis beautifully interpolates a phrase from *High Society* or to a hundred such interpolations. Poems which mean to evoke a jazz expressiveness are even less likely to be enhanced by competing with the very source of their inspiration. *Six Bits Blues*, accompanied by a boogie-woogie train piece, cancels itself out, and the music behind *Weary Blues* suffers from being talked about—more accurately, the listener suffers in both instances from having his own response anticipated and confined.

The blues I have mentioned form a part of the less effective collage, in which Hughes goes snacks with a "traditional" group—Red Allen, Dickenson, and so on. Hinton has a good solo, the best moment on the side, as well as the most imaginative use of words and music. It was an excellent idea to bring in a contrasting group—the Mingus unit—for the other side, even if the results show us nothing new. There has been more of an attempt to integrate the words and

music, though in no mimetic way: "the boogie-woogie rumble of a dream deferred" is not accompanied by anything of the kind, and the brief reference to Basie is really witty, not a misguided literalism. The requirements of the situation appear to curb Mingus somewhat, though his *Double G Train* figure is a good thing, reminiscent of Ellington as the notes suggest, and once or twice everybody gets hot.

There are bound to be many more recordings of this sort in the future, but it seems doubtful that either poetry or jazz will benefit from the association. After all, no art can feed on another this way, however many successful momentary matches are arranged. It would be interesting to try reading some highly formal verse to jazz accompaniment; the French stanzas or even the complicated syllabic patterns of Welsh verse which have occasionally been tried in English. And someone ought to try cueing in the spoken words as another rhythmic instrument. But however it is done, the words will have to be subordinated to the music, as they are in the few classical experiments of this kind: the Sitwell-Walton *Facade* and the Ramuz-Stravinsky *Histoire du Soldat*. Perhaps, after all, jazz will be obliged to assimilate new expressive devices and instrumental techniques, and the speaking of poetry in this context will disappear having served its purpose.

—Glenn Coulter

THE JOHN LEWIS PIANO, (Atlantic 1272)


In case the reader has a limited amount of time I shall say initially that, without reservation, this is a superb album, front, back and middle. Well paced, sensitive, subtle, accessible and, befitting its leader, it contains a gentle nobility that seems to pervade the soul of almost everyone who plays with him. The instrumentation varies but the continuity stays for dinner. Participants are Percy Heath, Connie Kay, Jim Hall and Barry Galbraith.

The first piece, *Harlequin*, appears to be a completely improvised duet between piano and drums and was recorded at the Music Barn (Lenox, Mass.), complete with a few pianissimo cricket chirps. Alternating between a repeated, percussive pair of eighth notes and a rolling, legato

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phrase, John weaves a totally beguiling composition. *Little Girl Blue* is done with bass and drums and is almost cameo-like in its simplicity. Opening with a single piano line that sounds very pure, he creates a sympathetic portrait, classic and yet with that joy and wonder toward such a precious thing as music that pervades all of John's work that I have heard.

The Bad & The Beautiful brings alive an attractive theme, hitherto suffocated in the orchestral masses that the moguls that be see fit to waste upon every movie issuing from Sunland. I noted that on this and the other songs with guitar that John automatically chooses a register that is impeccably spaced with the accompanying instrument—orchestration come alive! It also demonstrates to the hardheads that Jazz can and should be multi-faceted, with a place for chamber groups as well as large and small orchestras. Had Mr. Lewis decided to use 100% of the available and normally used instruments, the total effect would have been much more common and equally less intimate, the necessary quality that must accompany the term "chamber music."

It Never Entered My Mind and *Warmeland* also use Barry Galbraith

to best advantage and he responds admirably, both in melodic phrases and in some lovely rhythmic strumming. I should say, if asked to be brief, that the chief characteristics of the aforementioned are: very skilful transitions in and out of strict meter; telling use of the single line, both in piano and guitar (normally chordal instruments;) rich, heady voicings in the low register by John and a poignancy that is pathetically rare in these warlike days. In the service of brevity I shall say about *D & E*, a medium blues, Uh-huh, and Mmmmm.

The *Two Lyric Pieces* are just that with Jim Hall replacing Galbraith. *Pierrot* has a beautifully constructed theme and once again achieves a wonderful blend with the rolling, almost lute-like guitar accompaniment. Since Hall tunes his strings down a fourth from the conventional low E, I found the added bass gave John an even better chance to blend and naturally, he ain't one to pass that by. *Colombine* has a surprisingly sinister beginning that dissolves into a pastoral, clarion melody that would be quite suitable for some old shepherd to practice on when he feels the need to relieve those lonely hours. Also, it has a good dramatic sense, almost Grecian in its lifelike duality. You could sling verbs and adjectives around for weeks if you had a mind to, but as I said in the beginning, if you haven't heard it, it's your loss.

—Bob Brookmeyer



MILES AHEAD: Miles Davis and Gil Evans. (Columbia CL 1041)

For this, as for the John Lewis Piano album, I say (and will continue to do so in future reviews) that it is a superior and important album and for my money that's all you need to know. However, when a record says something new to you, there is naturally a need to translate this impact into words. After all, not

everyone speaks good music but all of you can read and that's how *The Jazz Review* came up the river.

For a starter I shall state that Mr. Evans is the most influential, revolutionary writer (that is, one who used the dance band for a medium of expression—the only one open to composers until the advent of super-sonic sound) since Duke Ellington and his lovely orchestra broke fallow ground in the thirties. His work for the lamented Thornhill band was purely a delight to play and it is a pity that so much worthwhile music has to lie about rotting in a trunk in someones cellar. However, to be succinct, he has succeeded in translating the Berg/Schoenberg/Webern idiom into practical, personal expression as successfully as did Ralph Burns and Neal Hefti for Woody Herman's 1946 Stravinsky-influenced group. His exotic textures, use of internal doubling to create sheen and his humanist sophistication all remind me strongly of the expressionist composers and their allied companions—i.e., it may be doomed and dying world but it sho' is purty with the right brand of opium. Ah well, onward.

Maids of Cadiz begins with a faintly sinister, "haunted house" passage until a more All-American influence takes hold and continues to alternate throughout the piece. Miles plays fluegelhorn exclusively in the album and its diffused quality perfectly complements both the arrangements and his own, unique brand of wistful yearning for the better life upstairs. They have a self-acknowledged mutual admiration society and no wonder! Immediately one becomes aware of waves and waves of gorgeous sound, an almost Oriental sensuality with a basic logic that is the essence of musical expression.

All of the pieces are connected in some manner, either gradually merged or abruptly mated and I found the result quite pleasing. *The Duke, Springsville, My Ship* (with some accurate mid-Atlantic sounds) and *Miles Ahead* (what if they had christened him Irving?) round out the first side.

At the beginning of *Blues For Pablo* I was overcome by a sense of wide, desolate, endless plains; hollow and lonely with a very Spanish flavor, not the *Latin From Manhattan* variety, currently used as a crutch by some fellows. I must, in all honesty, say that by this time the highly stylized writing became evident to me but that is in no sense derogatory, lest I be misunderstood. *New Rhumba*, composed by Ahmad Jamal, (a Chicago pianist who has had, I un-

derstand, considerable influence upon Miles) is best characterized by the term "exquisite simplicity" and pits the solo horn against the varying combinations of instruments for a prolonged question-&-answer period. Mr. Davis plays extremely well which, for him, is very well indeed.

A quote from the 2nd movement of Berg's *Violin Concerto* segues into *The Meaning Of The Blues*—along about this time I glanced at the liner notes and was struck by the word "seductive"—I concur and would add "shimmering, limpid & nocturnal"—Gil's use of inner dissonance to create that moonlit effect is awful nice indeed. A sterling performance of J. J.'s *Lament* moves surprisingly into a humorous, almost giggling *I Don't Wanna Be Kissed*, a relief from romance for a while. The bizarre, rich orchestration was beginning to wear a little thin on me by then but I could easily attribute it to many things other than the music, though there is some validity in the "too much cherry pie" reaction. The record ends with Berg upside down, resolving to a more consonant chord and there you have it.

—Bob Brookmeyer

JIMMY GIUFFRÉ 3: *Travelin' Light*, Atlantic 1282

In the broad, overall contemporary jazz scene this album may be classified in a general way as belonging to the folk jazz movement. Within the Folk Jazz idiom it falls into a category which Giuffr  himself introduced with his "Tangents" album, and which, if it must be labeled, and it must, (labeling and defining being a vital factor in the process of expanding human knowledge) then it might be called "backwoods impressionism." Correspondingly I'd say that Giuffr  is in the "backwoods impressionistic" period in his creative cycle.

By no means should this imply that Giuffr , in this or any of his albums, is merely a tone poet writing music in which the thematic structure is the arbitrary result of his desire to capture the color of a cloudless blue sky on a hot summer day etc. (see *Quiet Time*, Teddy Charles Tentet). However, here he seems to have been more concerned with conveying one overall mood that dominates the emotional content of all the music.

This mood, the mood of the hill people, prevails during the entire album, and even *Forty-Second Street*.

We are allowed to know the hill people more intimately through vari-

ations of the overall mood which Giuffr  introduces in the music from time to time. For instance as they rest and contemplate (*Green Country*.) Their vigorous activities are captured in the camp meeting chants of *Sucamp People*. Brother Giuffr  is taken with the holiness tongue and utters in his ecstasy some phrases of remarkable rhythmic virility. Brother Brookmeyer can't contain the spirit any longer on *Pick 'Em Up* and starts preachin' an unaccompanied jump and shout sermon that would render any deacon's deliverance of "Dry Bones" to a chittlin' fed congregation as downright inhibited.

What this album has to say, it says superbly. Listening to it, especially while watching green things on very late summer afternoons or again in the A.M. one is apt to be transported to the folk country where this music has its origins.

But people have a tendency to get bored even with the best of their friends if they see them in the same context all the time, especially if this context is essentially uncomplicated.

Complexity is a necessary quality of growth. Simplicity prevails when we have settled at a certain level. Therefore, I think that there is not just one overall simplicity but many levels of complexity.

For instance, Bartok used the folk themes of Hungary but he rejected the idea of recreating folk music in a newer idiom. Rather he chose to exalt them in highly complex tonalities and rhythms and forms. Nevertheless, his music has a simplicity and clarity relative to its own high level of technical complexity.

Bartok is more worthy of our attention and respect for having successfully accented the challenge of establishing a profound and harder-to-come-by simplicity. John Benson Brooks, an extremely talented but essentially unknown composer (Vik 1083 and a forthcoming Riverside album) is now doing and for years has done very interesting things in the folk lore jazz idiom.

Giuffr , a totally dedicated composer of enormous integrity and talent, will probably abandon the security of his present level and head outward for distant uncharted shores. It is a question of whether he can maintain the simplicity he cherishes while searching or whether he will have to sacrifice some of it for a new beauty.

As for the groups lack of a rhythm section, Jim Hall plays a rhythm instrument doesn't he? And all three "soul brothers" are great supporting players.

Hall is really marvelous both in solo and support. Listen to his backgrounds of minor sevenths played chromatically or his quasi-bass lines.
—George Russell

HORACE SILVER: *The Stylings of Silver*, Blue Note BLP 1562

HORACE SILVER: *Further Explorations*, Blue Note BLP 1589

Horace Silver's two latest Blue Note albums, *The Stylings of Silver* and *Further Explorations* by the *Horace Silver Quintet*, present his group during Art Farmer's residence with it. Art is the shining light of both albums, playing with a warm singing tone and rich imagination. His strong lyrical sense dominates the minor *Pyramid* and the bluesy *Soulville* and his ballad choruses on *My One and Only Love* and *Ill Wind* are especially beautiful. He plays his parts on the arrangements with superb taste, making ordinary melodies sound extraordinary, and giving an extra richness to good ones.

Of the twelve tunes on these two albums, ten are originals by Horace. His medium tempo melodies are attractive, and some of the things he has done with meter are logical and interesting. I don't enjoy his conception of up tunes. A rigid chop-piness exists both in his writing and playing at those tempos; fast tunes should be relaxed and should soar. On *The Outlaw* and *Home Cooking* he plays more smoothly, but in general his writing shows more imagination than his improvising. He keeps a certain rhythmic sparkle going, but seems to be satisfied with melodic banalities much of the time. His ballad conception is strange: he plays a separate fragment of melody on each chord with little interconnection other than what naturally comes with the progression.

Hank Mobley plays competently on the *Stylings* album. There is a lack of conviction in his solos that robs his playing of the life it should have. His ideas are nice, but I never feel that he is completely involved in his playing.

On the *Explorations* album Cliff Jordan is the tenor player. His style is blatant and calculated at times, but he has a fresh straight-ahead approach to melodic invention that I like very much.

Teddy Kotick and Louis Hayes support the group with taste and feeling. I wish Teddy had been balanced better; he plays a good line and you can hear all the pitches, but a little more volume would have added the true resonance that exists between

bass and horns. Lou's choruses and fours are played with a nice tap-dancy feeling, but often sound like an avalanche of cordwood.

The time limitations imposed by an album give a better proportion to Horace's group than it usually has in person. In clubs he often plays a tune for forty minutes. No matter how much cooking is going on, an unchanging tempo for that length of time becomes monotonous, and interminable choruses by even the most interesting soloists suffer from lack of contrast. The tunes in these albums are quite long enough (three to a side) to give the composer and each soloist plenty of time to say what he has to say, and are arranged with a reasonable balance between the elements of the group. The result is an interesting program for both the musician and the listener.

—Bill Crow



William Russell photograph

LOUIS ARMSTRONG 1923: with KING OLIVER's Creole Jazz Band, Riverside RLP 12-122

The title of this album may be commercial good sense; musically, however, it is simply nonsense. There have been blessed few bands that have ever played together like Joe Oliver's, and Louis's presence is but one of many elements responsible. And his contribution is, in a sense, a negative one, for he is rarely heard in the role in which he found real greatness, that of genial, poignant, triumphant soloist, set off by subordinate, if not run-of-the-mill, musicians. Here and there we hear a phrase, sometimes only a single tone, played with the warm, slightly irregular vibrato so different from Joe Oliver's. We know it is Louis and are thankful for that knowledge.

If a band can be said to have a clearly recognizable and highly original sound, it must consist of some-

thing more than the arithmetic sum of a certain number of individual styles. I suspect that the *sine qua non* is discipline, which chiefly finds expression as consistency and limitation. Individual talent and skill do not even come into question here, at least as they are generally thought of, for one of the paradoxes of style is that poor musicians can create a fine sound (Unconscious Poetry of the People Dept.). Begin with a group of musicians out of the common run, and who are guided by some dominant principle or personality, and the resultant sound will be truly unique, pleasing to the ears because it is musical, to the soul because it is integral. This is what makes the first records of Bird with Diz, the Mulligan Quartet, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, stylistically great, as well as musically pleasing.

And so these recordings, in their way, are a norm, and object lessons of what a jazz band needs to be to be great. Unfortunately, it is not quite possible to say to the infidel, "Listen and believe," for so much of the music escaped the acoustical recording technique. Happily, the imagination will gradually supply much of what the ear cannot perceive, much as it can fill in (indeed, is expected to fill in) the gaps in a figure, incompletely sketched.

Our idea of how this band really sounded, however, will always contain one element of uncertainty, barring the discovery of time travel, since the recorded sound of the Creole Band depended to so great an extent on the company that recorded it. On this reissue the sides made for Gennett (all except 3 on side 2) must have been cut in marshmallow—with Johnny Dodds crouched inside the recording horn. It seems to me that the Paramounts (the above-mentioned exceptions) must sound more like actuality: clarinet is toned down, cornets are strong, with the second part actually being heard, the piano chording does not run together in an amorphous droning, and the bass line is generally clearer, the more so since it is reinforced by Stump Evans' bass sax.

Still, the Gennetts are in the majority here, and assisted by Riverside's remastering, they sound fine. Chiefly they sound fine because Oliver, like Jelly Roll in his happiest days, knew the sound he wanted, and had the brass and the guts and the prestige to run a band his way. Whether the tempos, so often felicitous, were Joe Oliver's independent choice, or determined by prevailing dance style I cannot know. The fact remains that the Creole Band (and the New Or-

leans Rhythm Kings) played a good deal slower than bands like the Wolverines and the Bucktown 5, which recorded only a year later. The tempos they chose never exceeded their technical limitations, while, for instance, the Wolverines and, especially, the later Chicagoans, often played too fast for comfort (theirs and ours.) I am sure that this accounts for much of the superb swing of the Creole Band.

But even more important is the manner in which the separate beats of the measure are accented. Here we tread on thin ice, the subjective conditions of hearing being difficult to verify objectively. Different people must hear the relative amplitudes of the beats differently—how else to account for the fact that many contemporary emulators of this style seem, to my ears, to accentuate the secondary beats far too much, rather than playing a truly flat four-four as did Oliver's rhythm section? You see, though, that I already beg the question. On the other hand, some of the so-called revival bands manage to reproduce the effect of the Creole Band's rhythm, while failing in other respects. The trouble is, I suspect, that the horns sound as if they are working too hard, and any suggestion of laboriousness immediately sets a band apart from the relaxed assurance and ease of the older group.

The truly phenomenal rhythmic momentum generated by Oliver is just as much dependent on continuity of rhythmic pulse—only reinforced by uniformity of accentuation in the rhythm section and relaxed playing. One never hears the vertiginous excitement of Bix, or Tesch; one never feels that, with a little less control, a break or an entire chorus would fall into irrationality or musical *bizarrie*. Oliver's swing is exciting after a different fashion: it is predictable, positive, and consistent. Only rarely is the total effect *manqué*, as in *Fraggie Moore*, where the stop-and-go character of the tune makes consistency more difficult to achieve.

Its consistency is, as I have said, largely the result of Oliver's personal conception of a band sound. How much he molded the musicians to fit the ideal pattern of his own imagination, or how much he chose them with the knowledge that they would fit in, without trying to change their personal styles, is something we can't determine since we lack recordings by New Orleans bands before 1923. We have no record of how Louis sounded before he came to Chicago—we know he is full of the spirit of King Joe, although their ideas of instrumental tone were di-

vergent. Dodd's rare gift of phrasing, his ability to bridge the gap between trumpet phrases (generally those of the tune itself) and to place the final note of his own phrase on the beginning of a trumpet phrase, we know from many other records, but none of them antedate these sides. And the rhythmic approach, too, is initiated by the Creole Band, with due note taken of Ory's 1921 *Sunshine* date; we hear it again but infrequently, perhaps a bit in NORK, certainly in the Tuxedo Band, in Sam Morgan's Band, and in many of Bunk's records, and other more recent ones in that tradition.

The impression of consistency is made all the stronger by the refusal of the musicians to permit themselves too much freedom. In successive choruses of a tune Oliver's sidemen often play the same part note for note, or with only slight variation—notice Dutray in *Froggie Moore*, especially; Dodds in the same tune and in *Snake Rag*. The ODJB did this too, but there is always an undertone (overtone to some) of the ludicrous—visions of tiny mechanical men playing chorus after chorus identically come to us, and one wonders how or why they go on . . . Dutray, to be sure, often plays a pretty strict harmony part, as if from an orchestration, but there is a good deal more besides, and his mannerisms, his agility and grace, are strictly his own and not from the public domain.

A riff produces somewhat the same kind of excitement as does Oliver's "consistency," stemming ultimately from the irritation born of sameness, and expectation of change unfulfilled by the riff itself, but heard in a superimposed solo. The excitement of riffs, however, is bought too cheap, and works best in the immediacy of ecstatic suspension of our normal listening habits, most effective in the physical presence of a band. The Creole Band's way is less obvious, more complex, and, in the long run, makes a *record* that remains satisfying for year after year.

All these words will never convince someone against his will, and perhaps some will never feel or know why the Creole Jazz Band is so great and sets the standard (possibly, who knows, only because of an historical accident) for all kinds of jazz that do not base their excellence on individual expressiveness, but on form and *shape* achieved through control and balance.

My panegyric tone admits of modification in some instances. The Paramount *Mabel's Dream* is too

slow—in fact, the tempo is an exception in the group of tunes on this record, neither as slow as the *andante* *Southern Stomps* and *Riverside*, nor as fast as the rather relaxed *Chimes Blues*. The latter is too relaxed for its own good, the tricky chimes effects are dated and special, and Louis solos better elsewhere (*Riverside* and *Froggie Moore*).

But all of this is trivial. I love this band and its myth, the perfection it stands for and almost is, its affirmation and integrity, the sombre stride of *Riverside Blues*, the steady roll of *Southern Stomps*, the rock of *Canal St. Blues*, the headlong sprint of *Weather Bird*; I love the musicians in this band, too, although my affection is tinged with sadness to think that, with the exception of young Louis, already himself but not yet complete, none of them ever again realized himself so well within a band. This is no reproach to them; it is only the result of the paradoxical fact that this band, recorded only a generation ago and marking the beginning of consistent recording of jazz, was one of the very best that jazz has ever known.

—Larry Gushee



SONNY ROLLINS: Freedom Suite, Riverside 12-258

I listen to this record the way a fan would, and that's what I am at this stage since I don't have the music and this is the first time I'm hearing it.

It's a very interesting composition, and the playing is equally interesting in that it's very full-sounding despite there being just three people involved. It seems when I hear Sonny and Max together that they express the joy of life. I mean the combination of Sonny's sound and Max's different drums and cymbals—the feeling seems to be communicated especially when those two are together.

I liked—in the slow part, for example—the way Sonny's ideas were regulated by the tempos of the piece. In the slow section, even when he doubles up, he has the pattern of the slow tempo in mind.

Notice the way Oscar backs up Max's solo. The first part is almost a duet for bass and Max.

Sonny has a way of implying the chords and comping for himself at the ends of eights and going into bridges. He implies modulations that a pianist might be making. He sort of sets up the coming frame himself and then he fills it up.

The composition sounds like it would be a challenge to play. It's a real jazz composition. It doesn't lose any of Sonny's feeling—the way he usually plays. Sometimes such pieces have a tendency to make you lose something of your personality when you cope with them, but that isn't the case here.

This was a perfect trio. I wouldn't say that you couldn't find three others just as good with this instrumentation, but this is about the best possible choice for this grouping. All three are inventive, and each has the capacity to express his inventiveness and still play with the others.

Max plays very intricately, but he never loses me. I can still count 1-2-3-4. I can always keep time with him. Some of the drummers who came after him lose me. For example, when some have a chorus to play I try to keep up so I can make my entrance on time when they're through. But in the course of some of those solos, it's doubtful whether 1 is 1 or 1 is 2. With Max there isn't any doubt.

I liked the second side but not as well as the suite. There seemed to be a different recording balance there. I couldn't hear the cymbals as well as I could on the other side. On that first number, *Someday I'll Find You*, I wondered why they went into 4/4 after playing the first chorus in 3/4, since Sonny sounds very much at ease playing in 3/4. On the same number, Max sort of comps on cymbals behind Oscar Pettiford's solo. The cymbals sort of imply the chord. To me, anyway. The way the cymbals ring, there's a lot of notes and if the soloist plays anything—if there's just a soloist with cymbals behind him—you can just about hear the chord.

On these standards, Sonny sounds very natural. He plays the melody like he really does feel it. He doesn't struggle to convey something he doesn't feel, and he puts in a little bit of humor sometimes that I find to be in very good taste and that

doesn't take anything away from the song.

On the *Shadow Waltz*, Sonny goes into a sort of rhythm pattern on his second chorus where he leaves out beats every now and then. After he does it for a few bars, Oscar does it too. It's interesting and amusing to follow that.

These three play very freely on this record, but they don't get in each other's way. It seems that the only restrictions they have are good taste and musical value. This is another example, then, of the fact that you can do anything in music so long as it sounds musical: instead of regarding melody, harmony and rhythm as prisons, they use these elements for freedom.

These three have reached the level of jazz musicianship where they are not imprisoned any more.

— Art Farmer



Riverside Records

JELLY ROLL MORTON: The Library of Congress Recordings, (12 volumes), Riverside RLP 9001-12

JELLY ROLL MORTON: Classic Piano Solos (1923-24), Riverside RLP 12-111

For those who are not already familiar with these records, all twelve volumes are worth attention. Anyone who is seriously interested in jazz should have some acquaintance with the Morton Library of Congress series since New Orleans jazz in general and Jelly in particular constitute such a significant and enjoyable branch of the music. For those already familiar with the series, however, the personal recollections and reminiscences have little permanent appeal.

On the basis of the more strictly musical contribution, these twelve records are divided in three parts. Albums numbered 2, 5, 7, and 11, have little or no musical worth. Numbers 1, 8, 9, and 12, are only occasionally interesting. Numbers 3, 4, 6, and 10, contain excellent jazz piano.

The better records in this series present Jelly in good form. Piano solos and vocals alone cannot reveal all facets of this musical genius, of course; any complete view of Jelly's musicianship must include his achievements as a band leader and arranger with the Red Hot Peppers and, still more, his playing with other instruments, especially clarinet. But there is a lot of listening to be gained from the best of his piano solos. The quality of playing on the Library of Congress series is naturally uneven but, as mentioned, at least four records are well worthwhile.

As might be expected, Jelly's best piano in this series is found in the medium tempo, three-strain tunes, for which Jelly's style is so appropriate. In contrast with more normal recording sessions, Jelly feels no requirement here to state simply the theme of each strain before developing it. In a sense, he assumes that the listener is already familiar with the tune. This is not true throughout the series but is notable in much of the best playing. It is true, for example, of both versions of *Original Jelly Roll Blues* (on #1 and #10) and *The Pearls* (on #6). Jelly is playing for himself on these tunes—not merely in the sense that any creative jazz musician always plays for himself, but also in the immediate sense that he does not carefully state fundamental ideas before developing them.

The Pearls, in #6, is a masterpiece, one of the best Jelly solos ever recorded. From the introduction on, it is an incredible thing, if you know the idiom. It has beauty. It swings, especially on the final strain. The very active left-hand is completely integrated, more so than the left hand of perhaps any other jazz pianist until Thelonious Monk.

The phrasing on *The Pearls* is marvelous. Listen to bars 9 through 12 of the opening chorus, especially in context (disregarding, if possible, the false notes). Also listen to the equivalent passage in the second chorus—or rather the entire last half of the second chorus. And, again, listen to the same passage in the third A chorus (the fifth in the tune)—or rather the whole of that chorus (again, disregarding, if possible, the false notes).

The other tunes on #6 are interesting. *Pep* and *Bert Williams* are very fine tunes. *Jungle Blues* is not outstanding but does exhibit a remarkable capacity for understatement in deliberately not relating the breaks to the succeeding chorus, a restraint which is particularly severe after the second broken break. *Ain't Misbehavin'*, casually tossed off, makes very good listening; at times the phrasing is delightful, as when a little phrase at the end of the bridge in the second chorus is extended to become the basis for the entire remaining eight bars of the chorus.

As these observations indicate, #6 is one of the outstanding records in the series, musically. Volume 3 is also worthwhile with good performances of *Kansas City Stomps* and *King Porter Stomp*, a swinging "transformation" of *Maple Leaf Rag* and an exquisitely beautiful fragment of sweet-slow jazz, unnamed but resembling the verse of Mr. Jelly Lord.

Record #4, with the Spanish tinge, is very fine.

Record #10 contains *Sweet Peter*, one of Jelly's most underrated tunes, a real two-handed number belonging in a class with *The Pearls*, *King Porter Stomp*, *Wolverine*, and the others. *State and Madison* is a very nice, relaxed tune with plenty of music (note the phrasing on the final chorus). *Freakish* is also an interesting tune. There are really no uninteresting spots musically on either side of this record. Much could be said on *Original Jelly Roll Blues*. *My Gal Sal* is a beautiful number, "transformed" or not. *King Porter Stomp*, as mentioned above, is played without deference to Jelly's customary care for stating themes before developing them; note even in the introduction the deliberate omission of the expected third beat in the fourth measure.

One thing is especially worth noticing in the first four strains of *King Porter Stomp* (AABB), namely, the lead-in phrase to each chorus. First, note the lead-in from the first to the second chorus; then, note the strict parallel at the end of the second chorus—leading, however, not back to the A theme but into the B theme; then, applying what is always the test for a great musician, follow through by noting the complete contrast of the lead-in to the second statement of B; then, the crowning touch—the ending of the second statement of B, which suggests a reference back to the figure used in the first two lead-ins.

Note also, in these same passages, the left hand. The first time it ascends to the A-flat, just as the right

hand does. (Actually, it must be conceded that this makes for pretty sloppy harmony as between left hand and right hand—parallel octaves, too.) The second time the left hand descends from A-flat moving in contrast to the right hand instead of in the same direction (and with excellent harmony this time) to establish immediately the relative minor chord (though not key, of course.) The third time, instead of descending chromatically from A-flat to F a more complicated series is used with the chord entered from its dominant.

Without any question, these four records—Numbers 3, 4, 6, and 10—provide the great bulk of the worthwhile music in the series. There are other bright spots, however, notably *Wolverine* in #8 and *Miserere* in #9.

Incidentally, after an afternoon or evening of digging the best music in this series, turn abruptly to the fourth band on side 1 of #3. Dig the discussion after the first minute or so of what jazz should be (the glass of water principle and the rest) followed by the marvelous fragment of "sweet jazz music."

Riverside 12-111 contains twelve first-rate Jelly tunes. The remarkable fact about the consistent high quality of these tunes is that they represent only a portion of the fine music which Jelly produced at his peak.

The selections may be criticized as containing an overdose of the same general type of tune. Of the twelve numbers, nine are built on the general three-strain structure, with the C-strain modulating to the original key's sub-dominant. Interestingly enough, no two of the nine are exactly identical in structure, however, each varying the general model ever so slightly.

Among the many facets of these twelve tunes as a group, are the excellent breaks, the complete integration of Spanish tinge into his style, and the energy and force that are so important to this music.

This record demonstrates what the notes for the first of the Library of Congress series refer to as "that special quality of excitement, completely articulated, never frenzied, of which Morton was a master."

Many of the tunes here, which represent recordings of 1923 and 1924, afford interesting contrast with the far different versions of the same tunes recorded in the Library of Congress series and other late 1930's recordings. There is far greater vigor and range to the Jelly of these earlier years, but perhaps not the complexity, particularly in harmony.

—Guy Waterman

THE GREAT BLUES SINGERS (Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Ida Cox, Sara Martin, Trixie Smith, Mary Johnson, Hociel Thomas, Chippie Hill), Riverside RLP 12-125

BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON, Riverside RLP 12-121

JIMMY RUSHING: If This Ain't the Blues, Vanguard VRS 8513

The Best of MUDDY WATERS, Chess 1247

The Best of LITTLE WALTER, Chess 1248

In a society where the arts tend to increasingly private meanings and complex techniques, the vocal blues remain firmly fixed to two roots of musical art—in play and in courtship. Today blues survive as the last artistic remnant of the strophic song game, in verses sung or chanted, that serves so many functions in so many cultures: the Inga Fuka ceremony of Indonesia, the Eskimo trial at law, Kwakiutl lullabies, West African songs of derision, even the "field hollers" of Silvana Mangano in *Bitter Rice*—are all examples of a basic cultural form that we hear today in certain street games of city children, in barroom customs like the dozens, and especially in blues.

Basic blues show in turn all the traits of both game and courtship—its riddle-like form suggest its origins in play; so do such blues breaks as Joe Turner's

"Start from the left, go to the right.
Piano player goin' to swing all night."

while a thousand choruses of lyrics stress the importance of the courtship motive, with examples as direct

as "Baby if You Love Me" or as perverted as "If You Can't give Me a Dollar."

The closeness to function of vocal blues has, I suspect, a particular appeal to the sophisticated and rootless. Certainly a pastoral strain runs through writings about the blues, whether praising their realism of vision, the special charm of their harmonic climate, or most often the plain amplex of humanity of the great blues performers. The apostolic tone comes easily to followers of jazz, so the names of the hagiology have come to resonate with a wild significance.

Except for Bessie Smith who has been well represented on LP, the blues singers of the twenties have been available only to collectors until the current Riverside Jazz Archives series. These handsomely produced and packaged selections from the Paramount and Gennet catalogues, provided with solid discographical information and richly evocative notes (but I wish the composer credits from the original labels had been given) now enable us to compare the legend and the reality.

One quickly sees that the Great Blues Singers of RLP 12-121 were all working within a highly cohesive style, and that the style is not, as we might have supposed, a primitive or an unself-conscious one. Certainly the style predates the attitude that T-Bone Walker stated so vehemently, "You know, there's only one blues, though. That's the regular twelve bar pattern." None of the three Ma Rainey performances here are twelve bar blues. *Oh My Babe* for example is a sixteen bar piece with a lyric of ABACCA form. Trixie Smith's *He Likes It Slow* (one of the classic

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themes of the "steady roll" school of blues lyrics) is on blues changes, but is phrased 8-4-8-12-4, over three choruses and sounds as much like a patter song as it does basic blues. This resemblance to patter song is suggestive, for all these singers were vaudeville performers, and the show business tinge is strong in all their material. There is first a strong tendency to narrative, as opposed to the direct address of both more primitive and more sophisticated blues—many of these blues can be set, in the imagination, into a sort of vaudeville skit, though none of the situations are as circumstantial as the first half of Bessie's version of Handy's *Yellow Dog Blues*, or so succinct as her "Twenty five cents! I wouldn't pay twenty five cents to go *No-where!*" Another sign of the show biz influence is the extreme explicitness of most of these lyrics. For all their use of double entendre, these stanzas are straightforward and literal-minded, tending toward the mechanical. There is nothing here of the often revelatory juxtapositions that a cross-country search for rhyme often arrived at in country blues, nor of the sensitive imagery, nor the minor key melodic echo for that matter, of folk tinged blues like Leroy Carr's *How Long*; at least not until we come to the sides made in the forties by Hociel Thomas and Chippie Hill which show more than one hint of K. C. influence. Both literal-mindedness and the narrative tendency weaken the immediate emotional impact of blues, and they flaw not just these records, but the style of the entire period: of the fifty odd tracks of the Bessie Smith series all but a short dozen are similarly weakened. Bessie's triumphs of emotional projection, as much as those of Billie Holliday, are triumphs of performance over repertory.

In performance too there are some characteristic weaknesses of style, principally a tendency to drag the beat for pathos until the performance loses all tension, and in the cases of several of these singers, a symmetry of phrasing until the mind rebels, but it is mostly the performances in these records that hold the interest. There is a surprising range of expression among these tracks, though it is a range that varies less with the message of the song than with the style of the singer. Ma Rainey is stately and almost majestic while she sings:

"Take me to the basement, that's the lowest I can go!"

And Ida Cox maintains a hard boiled city chick skepticism while she praises (mock-praises really) the pastoral pleasures of Southern life.



Ma Rainey
from a contemporary engraving

The value of these performances vary greatly with the sensibilities of the singers. Ma Rainey is the most impressive in emotional projection, handling of sound, variety of phrasing, and especially, a craftsmanlike fitting of the words to her melodic lines. Listen for example to the nice sense of form she shows on *Trust No Man*, one of the few musicianly examples I know of the dropping-back-into-speech that is so common in blues of this period. Bessie, who had the best vocal equipment, is ruined by the incredible kitsch arrangement (from a movie sound-track) perhaps the earliest example of the "with strings" turn of mind. And the structural interest of Trixie Smith's *He Likes It Slow* is overbalanced by her regularity of accent. Range of expression runs from the melodramatic but affecting *Death Sting Me* of Ida Cox to the meretricious r&b *Around The Clock* of Chippie Hill, who vulgarizes an ancient and tawdry routine with a series of increasingly flippant treatments of the phrase "steady roll."

All of these singers are accompanied by instrumental groups who play introductions, obligatos, and an occasional eight or twelve bars of solo. Many of the accompanists are among the great players of the era, but the best work here is the piercing introduction and bits of growl that King Oliver plays on *Death Sting Me*. Neither Joe Smith nor Tommy Ladnier are at their best on these sides, though Smith plays some very pretty phrases. Strangely, trombonist

Ike Rodgers, who shows neither elegance nor urbanity, does manage an accompaniment perfectly matched to the singing of Mary Johnson's *Key To The Mountain*.

Blind Lemon Jefferson is presented with some sides recorded for Paramount during the period 1926-29, and though he is roughly a contemporary of the singers on RLP 12-121, he represents a rather older tradition. Like many figures of the country blues, he accompanies himself on a guitar, and he is a man who lived with all his five senses, well four, anyway, in contrast to the conventional and almost abstract emphasis on the set of social relationships that center on sex. Though rougher and less dramatic than the singers of RLP 12-121, he is richer in both jazz feeling, and, if you can dig through his villainous opaque slur, in poetic feeling. There is nothing on RLP 12-121 to match in either poetic feeling or rhythmic surprise, Jefferson's:

"A woman rocks the cradle; a man should use a hoe,
A woman rocks the cradle, like a man sh'd use a hoe,
Bad man rock 'nother man's baby,
oooh, back to rockin' they go!"

More than any other singer considered here, he belongs to the West African vocal tradition: the ragged meter, the constant shifting of pitch that allows no sustained note without a waver, the hard attack, even the slurred diction that suggests a lack of concern for the sense of the words, though he has a sensitivity to literary quality that his female contemporaries certainly lacked.

He is a master of the colloquial tone of the blues, that feeling of direct speech and an absence of rhetoric, that even so straightforward a blues singer as Big Bill Broonzy does not always manage. It is this directness of address, and the nagging, haunting quality of his voice that recalls (are they related?) the instrumental blues sound that Jo Jones has called the South-west twang that make his performances so impressive here.

Not quite a contemporary of these singers, Jimmy Rushing was old enough, or at least mature enough, to hang out with Chippie Hill toward the end of the first blues boom, became a formative figure in K. C. jazz, and has survived to develop into the most consistent blues singer of the LP era. It is a surprise to report that his most recent Vanguard LP is a disappointment. It is another of John Hammond's efforts to recreate the feeling of K. C. jazz (in which he should be encouraged as long as

others are still trying to recreate New Orleans with K. C. musicians), but this time it runs solidly into another Hammond obsession: the endless search for jazz talent in obscure places. An accurate title for this lp might read, "A Vanguard Jazz Showcase introducing Roy Gaines and featuring Jimmy Rushing."

Even at best, the "Jazz Showcase" idea can conflict with the sense of dramatic unity that Rushing shares with several other K. C. musicians, (hear Lips Page's *Gee, Baby* or Rushing's own *How Long*), the long solos if less than perfectly sustained can exert a centrifugal force that will destroy the unity of a performance. The combination almost comes off here in *Oh Love*, where the mood of Rushing's singing is sustained by Buddy Tate's sympathetic solo, and survives Emmett Berry, but is dashed against Vic Dickenson's astringent wit, that breaks up the fairy tale suspension-of-disbelief that Rushing had induced, and cannot quite re-establish.

Gaines, the latest Hammond discovery, is a guitarist who is featured on all the blues sides, sometimes playing rhythm, often as a voice opposed to all the horns, and endlessly in solo chorus after solo chorus. It would be pleasant to say as one English critic has done, that Gaines is the best blues guitarist since Christian. It is not true. He does have the fundamental blues feeling, and a nice rhythmic precision, but his solos in no way match the flexibility of Christian's way: the marvelous contrasts of short staccato phrases against long-drawn melodic lines that Kessel has since refined to elegance, and which Burrell exploits today with such skill, technical daring, and feeling. Certainly Gaines has neither the harmonic and melodic freedom of Christian nor a grasp of a structural unit larger than a twelve bar chorus.

Rushing sings well on all the sides except *Dinah*. There is an all-instrumental *If This Ain't The Blues*. On *My Friend*, the stop time is a little wearing. His vocal choruses are separated by two-chorus instrumental solos—a little like the swing-sing records of the thirties, in which the continuity of feeling among Teddy Wilson, Billie, and Prez gave such an airy and luminous charm. Here all the soloists play well. Dickenson is interesting, even arresting, but is prevented from an appropriate creative effort by his overpoweringly personal style—surely a problem only the best jazzmen face. But the net effect is not one of unity. Incidentally, on *Sometimes I Think I Do* and *I Can't Un-*

derstand, Rushing shows that same dadaist strain of K. C. blues that got Santy Claus into *Good Morning Blues*, made the last two choruses into *Piney Brown*, and strung together all the irrelevancies of *Going To Chicago*.

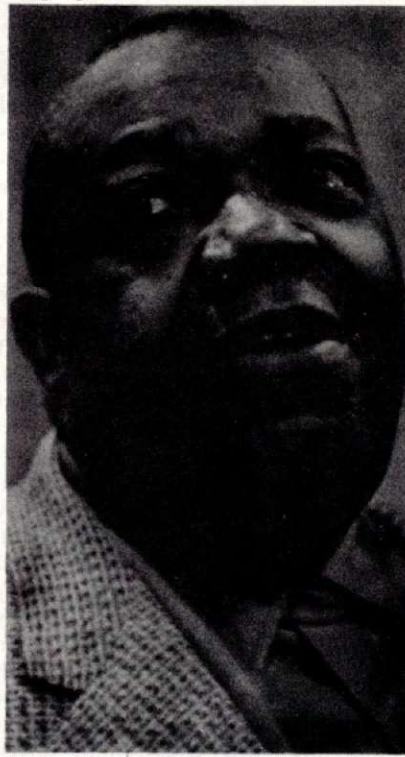
Muddy Waters (born McKinley Morganfield) and Little Walter (Jacobs) are representatives of a later development of blues singing than Rushing: while Charlie Parker was taking the high road from K. C., they and their colleagues were taking the low road, a split that often gave juke boxes in Negro neighborhoods a strong schizoid overtone. They are late fruits of the r&b era, and their two records are in fact collations of their juke box successes made since 1953. Like those of most r&b men, their styles are always hot, often intensely swinging; characterized by a tendency to phrase in short discrete bursts of sound and by blues that derive structurally from gospel songs or pop songs as much as from basic blues, and often of less than solid thematic interest. Muddy is a singer who plays guitar, while Little Walter is a harmonica player who also sings. Little Walter also appears as an accompanist on Muddy's sides.

Muddy has a much stronger blues voice. He can whoop like Turner, with all Turner's strength, though he does not drive straight ahead like Turner, contrasting instead flat recitatives against sudden swoops and dramatic retardations. His worst vocal fault is a melodramatic trick of pushing his voice down below the point where he loses all color. Luckily that style suits such material as the early choruses of *Still A Fool*, in which he is magnificent, and the tongue-in-cheek *I'm Ready*. On several of the sides the repetition of his favorite devices does get dull.

Little Walter, despite his vocal disadvantages, has produced a better LP. One reason might be that r&b blues are usually at slow and medium tempo, and collected into an LP can become deadly monotonous. The four harmonica solos on Walter's LP break the monotony. Walter (who sounds exactly like the Jimmy Reed who recorded on Vee-Jay) has a restricted dynamic range and a less piercing timbre than Muddy, but he has a fine rhythmic accuracy, and his flat voice can create intense feeling on plaintive slow blues like *Mean Old World* or *Last Night*. Apparently he feels ill at ease singing at up tempo; he drops into blues *sprechstimme* on *Tell Me Mama*, and on parts of *Watch Yourself*. His sense of time makes a slow rhythm piece much more swinging than Muddy's *She*

Moves Me. (This last is surely the only example of a verse of the Christian era that presents a lover in the allegorical form of Christ, though the reverse procedure is familiar from Bach cantata 140 through Crashaw.)

The accompaniment on these two records is extremely erratic. On several of Jacobs' sides, the rhythm is excellent, especially the drummer on *Off The Wall*. Jacobs plays his harmonica well on Muddy's record and even better on his own. When he breaks out of pure rhythmic playing, as he does on two separated choruses of *Off The Wall*, the result can be pure jazz invention. Muddy has been more unfortunate: his drummer is both chunky and involved, and the dominant of the two guitars (his own?) is deplorably lacking the swing and the relaxation of his singing.



Don Hunstein, courtesy Columbia Records

It is unfortunate for the purpose of this review that there is no vocal equivalent to the developments in blues playing of the last fifteen years to make a fitting ending. Efforts like those of King Pleasure and Jon Hendricks are not yet up to the quality of the music they use nor to the seriousness of the blues tradition. Perhaps the rhythmic complexities distract the attention from the content. All the same, the music *should* inspire a vein of almost metaphysical wit, with its sudden contrast, twists, and ambiguities, that might, combined with a certain directness of address, achieve a new quality of blues feeling.

—Hsio Wen Shih

Reviews: Books

THE HORN, by John Clellon Holmes
Random House, 1958

It is possible that this is not a bad book. That is, if you read it for its possible value as Entertainment or as commentary on Life and Art in general, without worrying too much about the jazz, maybe it won't hurt or bother you. But on second thought, people who don't know jazz and read this book are bound to get badly misled about jazz, while those who are even modestly hip are (unless their patience is much longer than mine) apt to become pretty annoyed. So, on second thought, it is a bad book.

One of the most distressing elements of the stereotyped public attitude towards jazz is the feeling that jazz is some sort of dark emotional jungle and that therefore it is properly within the province of what I suppose is still called the *avantgarde* novelist. Jazz, according to this viewpoint, is all caught up with murky, turgid thoughts (you know: how to hit that big unattainable note, the one that killed Kirk Douglas in the movie) that ordinary people wouldn't understand anyway. Of course jazz, being practically by definition a part of the non-conformist world, is forever being adopted as a sort of tag-along side-issue by one cult or another (from the Jazz Age speakeasy crowd, through the American Communist Party, on down to the Beat Generation). All that can be pretty hard on jazz, but rarely is it any rougher than on those occasions when a youngish novelist stakes out a claim and comes up with another of those "authentic and powerful" books about jazz. Now, when young novelists try to invade other kinds of specialized fields (like *Time, Inc.*, or atomic science, or hoboing, for examples), either the publishers' offices are full of people who know all about it (*Time*) or they send the manuscript to an expert or two (atomics) or everyone probably agrees that it really isn't supposed to be taken as reality (On-the-Road-ism) and all is more or less well. But the dark continent of jazz is something else: bright young authors are popularly supposed to know more about the mysterious music than almost anyone, and I daresay that the bright young authors' bright young editors would scarcely admit to being so square as to need help in making a jazz novel authentic. So, the manuscript

gets into print unimpeded, and as a result we have books like *The Horn*.

It is bad primarily because Mr. Holmes doesn't know and think he does know. Few things are worse than the hipness of the ignorant. In this novel, Mr. Holmes gives us a central character who is closely modelled on Lester Young. On the surface, that is. He wears the sort of clothes Pres does; used to hold his horn at that strange angle; was very tight with the character in the book patterned very closely on Billie Holiday; and is now considered to be over the hill, although still an idol. This sort of thing is known as *roman à clef*—literally a "novel with a key"—the key being that such a book involves real people, more or less disguised, and half or more of the fun is in figuring out who they really are. The purpose is usually satire, mockery or scandal-mongering (it's tough to apply the libel laws to fiction). In the past such books were used for things like poking fun at Disraeli; at present it is well-known that you can increase sales greatly by letting the word get out that the magazine publisher in your novel is really Henry Luce. I am not accusing Mr. Holmes of any low motives: for all I know, in this instance we may have an author who feels that by using fictional counterparts of Pres and Lady he is really helping himself to make his big emotional and aesthetic points. But I very much doubt that there is any value in what he is doing here.

The reason I doubt him is simply that this happens to be the first time I've ever read a *roman à clef* that includes a character based on someone I know well. Pres and Billie, as it happens, I've barely met. But there is one character in these pages who wears dark glasses and lives a pretty secluded life and writes weirdly angular tunes and is named Junius Priest. But it wasn't until I came to the bit about this fellow having Billie's picture on his ceiling (only it isn't Billie here; it's one of the modelled-after-Billie character, if you follow me) that I remembered this as an anecdote I'd once heard about Thelonious Monk and realized that Priest was supposedly Monk (don't blame me: I'm just reporting the facts). My point here is that I know Thelonious fairly well, and so the surface devices used by Holmes never registered with me, because I never for a moment even suspected any real

connection between this character and Monk. There just isn't any. And I feel justified in using this to support my immediate doubts that the Lester and Billie similarities here are anything other than aggravating window-dressing and red herrings (now *there's* a combination for you.)

The sophomoric, over-simplified main characters in this book are like *no* real people, let alone real musicians, let alone the real people the author so strongly implies they are. And I find it offensive that Mr. Holmes surely wants people to accept that implication as valid.

I won't spell out the plot, except to note that the down-hill tenor man gets cut in a session (on the basis of one tune, to be precise) by a previously undistinguished younger player, and this helps carry the older man over the thin edge, past the breaking point, etc. There is also a tendency to drag about a dime's worth of Charlie Parker into the characterization of Edgar Pool (who is "the horn") as the book progresses. This is done via a narcotics habit, a Kansas City childhood, some freight-train riding, a youthful session at which our hero plays badly and knows only one tune (it's *I'm Comin' Virginia*, no less), and a coming-apart-at-the-seams scene in a night club kitchen. But this hardly helps matters; for Pool is, if possible, an even less accurate reflection of Bird in his last days than he is of Pres.

The structure of the book is strange: various friends of Pool remember him as they knew him at various times, and these episodes are supposed to add up to a full-scale picture of the man. I found them fragmentary and inconsistent. It tended to make the book disjointed and lopsided by going in for much detail about each of these friends in turn for one chapter and then relegating him to the sidelines, so that the whole book is a series of partial and fragmentary portraits. (Among those friends, incidentally, is a painfully superficial impression of a band-leader something-like-Dizzy, presented as a clown who plays the Uncle Tom bit to get ahead in business, which is being kind of hard on old Diz, I feel. However, that chapter does contain a description of a band rehearsal that is, as interesting and convincingly-detailed observation, possibly the high spot of the novel.)

The knowledge of jazz here is dubious; by which I do not mean the dark-emotional-surgings-thoughts-of-musicians stuff, but simply that Holmes has his men playing six bar and three bar breaks while jamming on a standard tune. This I'd like to hear. And the dialogue! All the musicians in the book talk a jargon, but it appears to be about 75% beat-generation, and maybe 15% out-of-date musicians' slang (when last did you hear anyone talk about getting "lushed"?—and I guess the rest can pass for authentic.

Also, with a couple of minor exceptions, all of the people in this book are Negroes. This means that the major encounters between characters are between Negroes when no whites are on hand. I cannot claim, obviously, any better first-hand knowledge of such situations than Mr. Holmes or any other white man, but I have known and worked with Negro musicians long enough to state without hesitation that I do not consider Mr. Holmes, on the evidence of this book, at all qualified to handle so sensitive and difficult a novelistic task as this one.

I can by now go on to generalize that I do not consider Mr. Holmes qualified to write a novel about jazz at all. I don't think he understands the music, or the people who play it, or their attitudes towards music, or towards anything much else in life. I do not think readers of a magazine like this one will be entertained or enlightened, or moved by this book, and I know of no other reasons for voluntarily reading a novel. So unless you are a real easy mark for books in which there is a singer who wears a fresh rose in her hair all the time (a rose, not a gardenia—get it?), let this one go.

I hope no one thinks I am trying to be personally nasty to Mr. Holmes. I am not. My firm feeling that he is no kind of novelist is merely a literary opinion, and of secondary importance in a jazz magazine. My real purpose is to do the cause of jazz a service: I am hoping that readers who have friends or relatives contemplating writing "an authentic and powerful novel about the world of jazz" (to quote the jacket of *The Horn*) will cut out this review and mail it to them, or pin it on their bulletin board, and maybe it will scare them off. If so, it might conceivably scare off a potential good jazz novel, and if that should happen I'd be truly sorry. But I know that if it scares off any, it will surely scare off some bad ones. The odds are with that bet.

—Orrin Keepnews

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THE JAZZ MAKERS, edited by Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff. Rinehart & Co., 1957. Evergreen Books, 1958

Few writers on jazz appear to enjoy their task. Most of these represented in *The Jazz Makers*—a collection of twenty-one articles—choose to ignore musical considerations in favor of biographical detail, sociological observation, and mere gossip, but the reader may not care to be diverted. Of what value is a book that treats of four trumpeters—Louis, Bix, Roy, Dizzy—without any attempt to compare sonority or inventiveness, except for a few sentences quoted from Hodeir? What is the use of an article about Ellington that overlooks Cootie, Ivie, Tricky Sam and the rest?

First of all, the writing suffers from being excessively up to date. (I wish I could say as much for the discographies.) The major defect of journalism is that its practitioners meet deadlines, not standards. Its practitioners are too much involved in the daily fluctuations of their subject, with the result that they reflect common opinion rather than mold it. Only the naive will see any dishonesty in this, or deny that it has its own merits and rewards. Nevertheless, a book should claim to do more than echo contemporary attitudes, most of all a book on jazz, which has roused violent, unstable responses. *The Jazz Makers* has nothing permanent to offer; those who come off best are the musicians most in favor at present. At any rate, I

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see no other explanation for Louis' being given less space than Tatum, and most of that space devoted to a defense of his recent decline. And Jelly Roll Morton appears to be no more than piano-playing cousin to the Kingfish.

The critical uncertainty from which most of the articles suffer is reflected in other ways. Who is going to read the book? Is it for those who already know the music, or for those who are simply curious about it? A collection need not display a united front in this respect; it is even desirable that it should not. But the writers should make up their minds. Here most of the recommendations have a faint-hearted air: you should listen to so-and-so, but of course you've known it for years. Perhaps readers don't truly care for music at all. In that case, they will prefer Waller's drinking schedule to his other accomplishments: these writers certainly don't number the streaks of the tulip—they preserve them in alcohol.

Probably these uncertainties of taste and treatment accurately reflect the situation of jazz today. The Lorillards have their Newport and college boys have their Garner, and such widespread attention—which the longest study could scarcely document adequately—demands an exercise of discrimination and interpretation for which no proper vocabulary has yet been invented. These critics eschew cant terms and shun, rightly or wrongly, the slangy approach of Otis Ferguson, but few of them have been able to come up

with anything better. The result is a stylistic vacuum, in which Madison Avenue jargon ("lusty satire showcasing Green's incomparable dirty tone") jostles the newspaperman's adjective-hunting, which seems so often a sort of condescension ("a dozen sides which remain among the most exhilarating small group work on disks"). The jazzmakers themselves are treated with a standard brand of tight-lipped sentimentality. But of course it is difficult to avoid the Ernest tone, even if it estranges the subject instead of bringing it closer.

Along with what is weak or irritating, the book offers much that is good, especially when the musicians speak for themselves. Baby Dodds and Roy Eldridge sound off at length. Hentoff shepherds critics, promoters, musicians, and Lester Young through a most illuminating panel discussion of Lester Young. Charles Edward Smith contributes articles on Pee Wee Russell, Teagarden, and Billie. These pieces are true evocations of personality: every rambling paragraph, moreover, exhibits the respect and affection of Smith for what he is dealing with. And isn't this first requisite of readable criticism?

The Jazz Makers was published last year by Rinehart and now reappears (with some different photographs) as a reprint from the Grove Press, which already offers Hodeir's valuable and annoying book. It is encouraging to find a line of paper backs hospitable to books on jazz, but sad to acknowledge that so few merit reprinting.

—Glenn Coulter

JAM SESSION, edited by Ralph J. Gleason, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958

Under the accurately loose-sounding title, *Jam Session* and subtitle "An Anthology of Jazz," jazz writer, reviewer, critic and (as I'm sure he'd insist on including) still-enthusiastic veteran jazz fan Ralph Gleason has compiled an extremely varied thirty-six piece collection concerned with aspects or people of jazz. All but one are non-fiction—the exception is Elliott Grennard's highly effective "Sparrow's Last Jump," which deals with a musician who flips, quite literally, at a recording session, a story that has been described as an almost-non-fictional account of a Charlie Parker session. Like almost any other anthology in the world, this volume is clearly designed to be read in fairly small chunks, or left on the bedside table. Much of it appears to have been originally written for light

reading—brief personality sketches, musicians' reminiscences—although there are several efforts at serious critical or analytical writing. On this level—which is a completely respectable, and in this case quite enjoyable level—this is generally a very successful collection.

If the foregoing seems a somewhat negative way of speaking well of a book, it is just because I feel there is some need to keep the reader from being deceived by the book's own presentation of itself. For we have here another instance of the great war between publishers and writers (or anthologists), the manifestation of which is in the jacket blurb claiming far more that the man who put the book together thought of doing, and the main potential victim of which is the purchaser of the book. Mr. Gleason, who is literate and non-pretentious, notes in his introduction that he could not make this a winnowing of the best jazz pieces he has read in the past twenty years, largely because so much that seemed good at the time has turned out on re-inspection to have grown dated or corny. So all he claims for the book is that it is "an interesting collection of articles about interesting people, interesting aspects of jazz and explanations of it." He notes with regret that there are no articles about Duke, Louis, or Bird, but points out that the book couldn't hope to be all-inclusive. When he takes such an approach, it would be unfair to fault him very much for not including the work of a single current serious jazz writer (excepting only himself, and none of Ralph's several pieces here are intended as 'serious' writing), and I would even be inclined to let him get away with limiting a selection entitled "The Coming of Modern Jazz" to only three selections (one of which is from *The Partisan Review*—and reads that way; and another by the splenetically argumentative and inadequately informed Henry Pleasants). But why, oh why, does the jacket blurb have to insist that within these pages is "... the finest writing on jazz that has appeared during the past two decades ... in pieces by and about the jazz world's greatest critics, performers and writers"? Why are we informed that this anthology seeks "to bring into perspective the whole body of ... a new and serious writing" about jazz? It's not really Gleason's fault, but too much *caveat emptor* is too much.

This gripe aside, the book has lots of good fun in it, as previously indicated. There are some examples of the rich, ripe Boston prose of George

Frazier; there is that Grennard story (which I had never read before and was grateful for); there is an old and interesting Bruce Lippincott piece that is sort of a theoretical dissection of the jam session; there are excerpts from the spoken recordings of Jelly Roll Morton and Bunk Johnson; two good items by the late Otis Ferguson (one of the under-appreciated early jazz writers); an intriguing fragment about prohibition Chicago by Art Hodes, who was there; Lillian Ross' classic (if you know how seriously not to take it) *New Yorker* yarn on the first clam-bake at Newport. There are also lesser items by less able or interesting people; and there is a mite too much of the editor himself (eight selections, some quite good, but about three that don't seem worth it: one on the up-coming of "Rhythm and Blues" that is rather dated; a 1946 piece on the career of Nat "King" Cole; and a 1956 detailing of how active things were in jazz on the West Coast).

All in all, a good though certainly not indispensable book, and at its fully comparable price (\$4.95,) a better buy than a lot of twelve-inch LPs that are issued nowadays. But if you take this book home, don't forget to throw away the wrapper before anyone can get at it.

—Orrin Keepnews

THE HANDBOOK OF JAZZ, by Barry Ulanov, Viking Press, 1957

Somewhere in the vast United States, it seems there is an institution called Barnard College, and in this college there dwells an assistant professor of the English language called Barry Ulanov. I state these facts as categorically as possible because people who read Ulanov's *Handbook* will think there has been some mistake.

The *Handbook* is a pedestrian hotchpotch of old-hat anecdote and smug presumption badly written. The professor says "flatted" when he means "flattened" and still believes after all those years at college that the flute is a reed instrument. He is also a past master of the construction of those woolly sentences which, like the lights of Broadway, look pretty so long as you don't attempt to read them.

Early in the book, the professor tells us that Lester Young's style is "close-noted," whatever that is supposed to mean. And then we learn, later on, that Lester's style features the use of "sustained open notes"—a truly professional example of nonsense contradicting itself. After this kind of stuff, the reader is hardly

surprised when told that Billie Holiday "scoops pitch."

At the end of his book, Ulanov, typifying the average jazz writer's yearning to establish his intellectual bona fides, gives a table of comparative developments of the arts, which tells us that Cezanne died four years after Jelly Roll Morton made his Storyville debut. Whether the two events were connected in any way nobody bothers to say. The student of English Literature, always presuming, that is, that he doesn't study it at Barnard College, may wonder why *Kim* and *Green Mansions* have been admitted to Ulanov's pantheon and *Man and Superman* and *The Old Wives' Tale* have not. Or why Picasso should be listed twice and Renoir and Monet not at all. Or whether "Show Boat," which is listed, is more significant than "Daphnis and Chloe," which isn't. Or why, most poignant of all, "My Fair Lady" is included and *Pygmalion* isn't. Or whether any of this senseless display of pseudo-scholarship has the slightest relevance to a history of jazz music.

—Benny Green
(Reprinted from *Jazz News*, London, by permission of the author.)

DISCOGRAPHIE CRITIQUE DES MEILLEURS DISQUES DE JAZZ, by Hugues Panassié. Published by Robert Laffont, 30, rue de l'Université, Paris, France

Panassié's new selected discography (expanded from an earlier work) is useful enough to warrant ordering it through a French bookstore or sending directly to Laffont, the publisher. An American edition, I would expect, is unlikely in view of the limited sales potential of a discographical work.

The "best jazz records" included here are "best" by Panassié's criteria, and unlike most discographies, Panassié's does not always name the full personnel, particularly not for big bands. He does, however, cite the soloists in order of their appearance, an often vital service that most discographies in turn do not provide. (An exception is Benny H. Aasland's *The "Wax Works" of Duke Ellington*.)

In view of Panassié's religious belief that most modern jazz isn't jazz at all, do not expect to find any records by Parker, Gillespie, Davis, etc. As in his *Guide To Jazz*, however, there are entries for blues and gospel singers, many of whom do not appear in other discographies. There are large sections for Ellington, Coleman Hawkins, Henderson, Lunceford,

Basie, Big Bill, Hines, Waller, and Webb, among others. The often eerie imbalance caused by Panassié's pontifical taste leads not only to the omission of the moderns but to the inclusion of only four Billie Holiday titles contrasted with over 90 for Mezzrow who is, Panassié assures us, the only white man capable of playing the blues like a Negro. (Cardinal Mezzrow also merits more space in this hagiology than Mary Lou Williams who only has two titles because she succumbed to the incubi of the "progressives.")

Despite this increasingly pitiful incense-burning ("It won't fly, Orville, it won't fly"), the book is worth having for those areas it does cover. Panassié does know more than most current jazz writers about certain blues singers and about some of the big bands of the 30s. (He has been

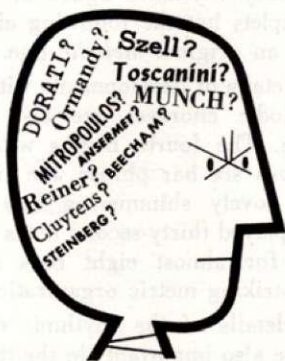
assisted in the latter specialty by Stanley Dance, a devoted expert in this area, and in his credits he also lists the best—if incomplete—of all discographies, the McCarthy-Carey *Jazz Directory*.)

The book is arranged alphabetically, and the discs under each name are listed chronologically. At the end of the book there is a further index of all the musicians who have received a separate entry. Panassié cites the label on which the record was first released and then often the companies that issued the record in Europe. Irritatingly, he does not give the number of each record.

Erroll Garner, by the way, has been given the keys to the kingdom. ("Probably the greatest jazz musician since the Second World War.") As for Bird, think of all the time Saint Joan waited.

—N. H.

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Reconsiderations 1

Jelly Roll Morton, *Kansas City Stomps* (Library of Congress Version). Riverside 9003.
Fats Waller, *Numb Fumblin'*. Label X LAU3035.

Probably this department should not begin with an account of the two records listed above, since, as far as I know, neither has ever been called a classic performance. However, each of these records can serve to illustrate something central to the talents of these men. In both cases, but in rather different ways, it is a sense of form.

For the Morton record, a brief account of the form of the solo will suffice for the point at hand. This is a unique performance of that piece—or any similar multithematic Morton composition—since it completes the implicit rondo and does it in unique improvisational form. As published, *Kansas City Stomps* consists of an introduction ("tune up" motif) and three themes, thus: A (E flat), A (an exact repeat), B (E flat), B (an exact repeat), C (A flat), C' (a melodic variation). Both A and B are sixteen bar themes (out of ragtime and marches) and C is an unusual 12 bar melody with stop-time at bars one and two, seven and eight—making two six bar units possible. The performance at hand goes this way: Introduction, A, A' (a variation), B, B' (a variation), A'' (another variation), C, C' (a variation), introduction (as a modulation), A''' (a third variation). Thus a rondo, with each return to each theme a variation on that theme. I have the strong feeling that if anyone even attempted such an "extended form" today, phrases like "daring experimenter" and "searching innovator" would be thick in the air.

Numb Fumblin' is a twelve-bar blues in form, but, like most of the blues that come from the northeast, it does not have that quality of deep sadness or joy that one hears in southern and southwestern blues, but one of pensive introspection, in this case modified by Waller's natural extroversion. To some extent, it may have been a pre-set piece, but if it were entirely improvised, Waller's innate compositional gifts might well account for its structure. There are six choruses and the basic structural

principle consists of alternating predominantly almost "low-down," rhythmic statements (choruses 3, 5) with sparkling, predominantly short-noted (almost virtuoso) lyric melodies (choruses 2, 4, 6). As the performance proceeds, the motifs in the rhythmic choruses become increasingly complex and, in parallel, the lines in the melodic choruses do the same. Furthermore, the four-bar introduction suggests the lyric choruses but is simple enough melodically to suggest the rhythmic ones at the same time, and the first chorus which has some interesting substitute harmonies, is, similarly, strongly but simply rhythmic, a blues *melody* of a pronounced rhythmic quality. The transition into chorus two is interesting because the first four bars of two are based on a rather ordinary *rhythmic* figure of implied triplets but the following eight develop an original *melodic* line.

The details of developments within the melodic choruses are also interesting. The fourth begins with a continuous six bar phrase, the sixth with a lovely shimmering line of cleanly played thirty-second notes unbroken for almost eight bars and with a striking metric organization.

The details of the rhythmic choruses are also important: in the third the treble carries rather simple figures against the left hand's time-keeping; in the fifth, the bass line carries a simple, almost boogie-

woogie-like riff and the treble makes a counter-rhythm above it.

The performance is made continuous not only by the fact that, as I say, there is a paralleling of the increasing complexity as Waller alternately takes up each of the motifs, the rhythmic and the melodic, but by his use of an over-all dynamic building. Thus, the last two choruses, although contrasting, are both still not only relatively complex but played at an equivalent dynamic level. Furthermore, Waller ends each chorus with the same two bar device—a very common practice, of course, in much blues piano.

There is a great deal of rather ordinary material in this performance. The second chorus begins with a hoary Waller cliché and, if isolated, the third would be almost an empty stall-for-time. And that motif which he uses to end each chorus is very ordinary. But as parts of a total structure, these things have an ingenious *raison d'être* and appropriateness. And if one did isolate choruses 4 and 6, he would have playing excitingly original in itself.

If Waller was just "playing the blues" on this record, such a structure would be extraordinary. But even if the main outlines were pre-set, an organization of no little subtlety is there.

—M. W.

(Contributions to this department are welcome. We would particularly like to see celebrated recordings, from Joplin through Parker, Morton through Monk, re-examined and re-evaluated from any point of view.)

The Blues

Fogysm

Why do people believe in some old sign?

Why do people believe in some old sign?

You hear a hoot owl holler, someone is surely dyin'.

Some will break a mirror and cry, "Bad luck for seven years,"

Some will break a mirror and cry, "Bad luck for seven years,"

And if a black cat crosses them, they'll break right down in tears.

To dream of muddy water—trouble is knocking at your door,

To dream of muddy water—trouble is knocking at your door,

Your man is sure to leave you and never return no more.

When your man comes home evil, tells you you are getting old,

When your man comes home evil, tells you you are getting old,

That's a *true* sign he's got someone else bakin' his jelly roll.

(By Jessie Crump. Sung by Ida Cox, Riverside RLP1007.

Transcribed by M. W.)

Jazz In Print

by Nat Hentoff

Evil Blues

If you see my baby, tell her to hurry home,
If you see my baby, tell her to hurry home,
I ain't had no lovin' since my baby's been gone.
She's little and low; she's built up from the ground,
She's little and low; she's built up from the ground,
But that's my baby; she makes my love come down.
Evil, evil as I can be,
Evil, baby, evil as I can be,
My baby's gone; she won't come home to me.
(Ascribed to Count Basie; sung by Jimmy Rushing with
the Basie band, Decca DL 8049. Transcribed by N. H.)

I Just Want to Make Love to You

I don't want you to be no slave,
I don't want you to work all day,
I don't want you to be true,
I just want to make love to you.
I don't want you to wash my clothes,
I don't want you to keep our home,
I don't want your money too,
I just want to make love to you.
I can tell by the way you switch and walk,
I can see by the way you baby talk,
I can know by the way you treat your man,
That I could love you baby until the crying shame,
I don't want you to cook my bread,
I don't want you to make my bed,
I don't want you because I'm sad and blue,
I just want to make love to you.
(Writer listed as Dixon. Sung by
Muddy Waters on Chess LP-1427. Transcribed by N. H.)

Young Woman's Blues

Woke up this morning when chickens were crying for day,
Turned on the right side of my pillow, my man had gone away.
By his pillow, he left a note
Reading, "I'm sorry, Jane, you got my goat—
No need to marry, no need to settle down."
I'm a young woman, and I ain't done running 'round.
I'm a young woman, and I ain't done running 'round.
Some people call me a hobo,
Some call me a bum,
Nobody knows my name—
Nobody knows what I've done—
I'm as good as any woman in this town.
I ain't no high-yellow
I'm a deep color brown.
I ain't gonna marry,
Ain't gonna settle down,
I'm gonna drink good moonshine
And run these browns down.
See that long lonesome road?
Don't you know it's got to end?
And I'm a young woman!
And I can get plenty men!
(By Bessie Smith. Columbia CL857. Transcribed by M. W.)
(Contributions to this department are invited.)

Howard Taubman in the July 30 *New York Times*, reviewing an evening of jazz presented by the Newport Festival at the Brussels Fair as an "official" American entry, commented on the International Jazz Band: "The plain truth is that this international band is not much more than a stunt. Under Marshall Brown's leadership it played pretentiously and tediously. It had no cohesion and no point of view."

Of the concert as a whole, Taubman concluded: "The jazz festival spreads itself out in Newport over a long week-end. For Brussels it should have chosen its performers more discriminatingly and concentrated its program to better purpose."

If the Newport Festival cannot present intelligent programs over a long week-end, only someone who had never been to Newport (Jean Dalrymple?) could have been innocent enough to have placed the Brussels project in Newport's butter fingers to start with.

Ralph Gleason concluded an angry column in the August 5 *San Francisco Chronicle*: "The Newport Jazz Festival and the State Department owe an explanation to the American people for this one."

What can they say after they say they're helping to advance jazz as an Art Form? And all that jazz.

In the August 9 *Melody Maker* (London), Yannick Bruynoghe reports from Belgium the reaction of Newport promoter George Wein to the Taubman appraisal: "The *New York Times* put it down, mind you, but their guy wasn't a jazz critic."

Next question?

John McLellan in the *Boston Traveler* reports the move instituted by Gerry Mulligan to insist that musicians be given a voice in the programming of the Newport Festival. In his column in the *Boston Herald*, George Wein said he'd be delighted to have help. Couldn't be happier.

So when's the first meeting?

Critical Insights, 1: John Tynan, in a review of Ernie Henry's *Seven*

Standards and a Blues (Riverside) in the June 26 *Down Beat*: "... his wholly uncultured tone."

Poor John Dodds. And Charles Parker. And Billie Holiday. Marcel Mule though should have a fine future in the Tynanworld of jazz.

Jazz at Home, I: From a *New York Times* review of the film version of *Ten North Frederick*. Reviewer: Bosley Crowther. Date: May 25. "In the course of its uninhibited telling, it clearly and credibly reveals the moral collapse of this family in the early Nineteen Thirties or thereabouts. The daughter gets involved with a jazz musician, the son gets bounced from school to school, the father gets hurt in a political venture that has a taint of corruption in it, and various other ugly things occur."

But nothing uglier—presumably—than that jazz musician.

Jazz Report is published monthly by Robert G. Koester, 5663 Delmar Boulevard, St. Louis 12, Missouri. \$1 a year. Part of the magazine consists of record auction lists. Also included is news in St. Louis and elsewhere (July had *Traditional Jazz in England* by Bruce King); book and record reviews; biographies (July had a page-long obituary on Sterling Bole); and often transcriptions of blues lyrics. A good investment.

Ray Bentley, reviewing John Clellon Holmes' *The Horn* in the August 10 *New York Times Book Review*: "The 'Horn' himself seems three parts Coleman Hawkins and one part Lester Young." Bentley couldn't have possibly picked a man of that generation more unlike—in all respects—the protagonist of the novel than Coleman Hawkins. In fact, Mr. Bentley was so concerned in his review with indicating how "inside" he is that he says nothing helpful, pro or con, concerning the book itself.

Studs Terkel awarded *The Horn* a rousing positive review in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. An opposite view is that of Orrin Keepnews, elsewhere in this issue. In a lead review in the book section of the July 27 *San Francisco Chronicle*, Ralph Gleason concludes that with all its faults, "it is the most successful novel of jazz that has ever been published." I'm inclined to agree. It's an often grotesquely distorted beginning, but at least it is a beginning, toward jazz fiction that has some knowledge of the life other than what can be absorbed with the beer at Newport.

The August 2 *Saturday Review* gave Kenneth Rexroth a full page for his review of the novel. It's a pontifically uninformed essay; and Mr. Rexroth's authority as a jazz "critic" is disposed of neatly by himself in this revelation: "All the storm and stress of the bop revolution was about nothing more than the introduction of a few chords which were commonplace to Beethoven, the use of the saxophone as woodwind, which is what it is, rather than as a novelty instrument, and a slightly more flexible treatment of the standard jazz beat—8/8 or 12/8 instead of always 4/4."

All clear? Ever heard Hawkins, Young, Berry, Evans, Webster, Carney, Hodges, etc. play those "novelty" saxophones in the thirties?

I will not comment on the other assinnities in that flying saucer paragraph, except to wonder whether it is indeed true that the *Times* and *The Saturday Review* do select some of reviewers by lot from the nation's telephone books.

So far as my exceedingly limited Italian can determine, a valuable jazz magazine is the monthly, *Musica Jazz*. Giancarlo Testoni and Arrigo Polillo are in charge and the address is Galleria del Corso 4, Milano, Italy. There's a long letter from Norman Granz in the July issue—in case anyone's doing a thesis on Norman.

Tom Scanlan, who is kind of the Stanley Dance of American jazz writing offers some definitions of current terms in the June 28 *Army Times* for which he writes a blunt weekly column: "*The Future*—Jazz critics are constantly talking about the future, meaning, of course, jazz music of the future. The extent to which the term is used would seem to suggest that many critics don't really like the jazz they write so much about after all. At least, the persistent use of the word indicates that they are more concerned with how jazz will 'develop' and what it will 'evolve' into than they are with what it is NOW."

The Discophile, The Magazine for Record Information announced in its June issue that the next one, No. 61, will be their last under present management with some chance that new editors and publishers will take over. I hope so, for this is an invaluable discographical journal. Address for whatever back issues are available and a list of other specialized maga-

zines for which they are agents is 25 Broadfield, Harlow, Essex, England.

The Jazz Review is interested in exchange subscriptions with any jazz magazines anywhere in the world. Like the *Australian Jazz Quarterly*, *Jazz Music*, *Matrix*, to start the list. We will also list particulars (price, etc.) of any jazz magazine but will also, of course, review them. Write us at box 128, Village Station, New York 14, N. Y.

Excellently written—and, from my French sources, I would say excellently comprehended—article on *Parisian Jazz* in the July 12 *New Statesman and Nation* by the reliable Francis Newton. A contrastingly shallow piece on the same subject is Milton Bass's *The Squares of Paris* in the August *High Fidelity*. In his whole smugly provincial article ("They [the French] can't play it [jazz] worth a damn"), there is no insight into Wilen, Solal, and other French jazzmen who can play jazz worth a couple of damns. But Bass writes better than most other jazz feature writers for *High Fidelity* ("Mezzrow, who would like to be a legend" . . . "They strive to make Beale Street talk, Beale Street walk, but even a blind man can see that 'bonjour tristesse' is not the same as 'hello sadness.'") and the article is not without interest, especially in the quotes from Quincy Jones and Kenny Clarke. Same issue has an appreciation of Willis Conover by Edward Randal.

An American journal worth investigating is *Record Research*, "The Magazine of Record Statistics and Information." Address is 131 Hart Street, Brooklyn, New York. It's \$3.00 an issue; \$1.50 a year. In addition to auction lists, there are features like *Panorama of Jazz Events* (what happened in 1922 is covered in the July-August issue) along with reproductions of records and theatre ads of the year; discographies (John Steiner has a history-and-discography of The California Ramblers in the same issue); a valuable section reviewing blues singles on Veejay, Chess, etc.; and other rare research material.

The International Jazz Club of Toronto is publishing *Coda* (Traditional Jazz Scene). July, the third volume, included a report on George Lewis in Cincinnati, record reviews, etc. Address is John Norris, 229

Woodmouny Avenue, Toronto 6, Ontario. \$1.20 a year, \$.10 an issue.

Best jazz magazine in Britain is Albert McCarthy's *Jazz monthly* (St. Austell, Cornwall, England). July issue has the second and final part of Neil Leonard's intriguing *The Opposition to Jazz in the United States, 1918-29*; an article by James P. Townley on *The Missourians*; pieces on Milt Jackson, etc. August included Paul Oliver on Brownie McGhee; Leonard Feather on *Battle of Jazz: Eggheads Vs. Yahoos*; *Sait-On Jamais and Other Films* by Max Harrison, etc. There are always record and book reviews and usually first-rate pictures. Most astute article ever written on the Modern Jazz Quartet was by Max Harrison in the April 1958 *Jazz monthly*.

Considerably less well-edited but occasionally of interest is *Jazz Journal* (The Cottage, 27 Willow Vale, London W 12). July had *Reminiscing with Bill Coleman* by Douglas Hague; Nevil Skrimshire's *On Tour with the J.A.T.P.*; Stanley Dance's regular feature, the always readable and often arguable *Lightly and Politely*; and damned if there isn't an article by George W. Kay on *Dudley Fossdick, Pioneer Jazz Mellophonist*. *Jazz Journal* has a relatively new, quite perceptive American correspondent in Dan Morgenstern who's in every month. I say this despite his calling Art Ford "inoffensive."

Don Gold's column on the Newport Festival in the August 21, 1958, *Down Beat* is an intelligent, constructive analysis of that blimp's faults, but I doubt if anybody in The Establishment will take it seriously other than to complain that a "conspiracy" is being carried on against Newport. A conspiracy of taste? The same issue has the annual critic's poll. I agree with Leonard Feather and Ralph Gleason that the poll's value in so far as it concerns the musicians is questionable, and may even be harmful in cases. I do think though that the careful reader will find the poll valuable for what it tells him of the critics. A choice, for example, of Ted Heath as best big band. Or Abe Lincoln on New Star Trombone because "anyone who has as beautiful a name as Abe Lincoln deserves at least one vote once." ("What is *that*?" asked a musician in the tent at Great South Bay).

Anyway, this magazine will run no polls. Of any kind.

British novelist Kingsley Amis is unaccountably a jazz reviewer for *The Observer*. In an account of *The Jazz Makers* July 20, 1958, Amis observed: "The subjects of this collection include not only Louis Armstrong, Bessie Smith and Charlie Parker, all of them central figures in their different fields, but the trumpeter Roy Eldridge, a mere squeal-merchant for most of his career and the New Orleans drummer Baby Dodds, whose spiritual home is vaudeville (accompaniments to tap-dancers and tight-wire acts a specialty.)"

Unlucky Jim, stripped ignorant out of his field.

Labels, Always Labels: The June issue of *Jazz monthly*, Pierre Bompar, 36, rue George, Marseille) has a feature titled *South Coast Jazzmen*. No, they don't mean Gulf Coast. They cover a tenor from Toulon and a bassist from Marseilles. Those geographical compartments travel as jazz does.

Best of the French magazines remains *Jazz-Hot*; Charles Delaunay, director; André Clergeat, editor-in-chief. Address: 14 rue Chaptal, Paris 9. In America, it's \$4.50 a year from Felix Manskleid, 40-35 Ithaca Street, Elmhurst, Long Island, New York. The July-August issue includes a long set of reminiscences by Claude Hopkins collected by Rudy Powell; and *Funky or not Funky* by Max Henri Cabridens. Cabridens asked several musicians to define the term. Among the answers: Sidney Bechet ("I don't know anything about it"); Martial Solal ("First time I ever hear that word"); Don Byas ("Primitive; a little vulgar"); Kansas Fields ("Those who play the blues with a lot of heart"); Kenny Clarke, after rubbing his chin a long time ("It's impossible to define; all the good jazz musicians succeed from time to time in playing funky"); Barney Wilen ("It means dirty. Since Jelly Roll, all good musicians have played 'funky'"); drummer Maxim Saury: "It's the dirty of modern musicians." The interviewer compared all his definitions at the end (including those of the critics) and concluded:

"Et après tout, est-ce que cela a tellement d'importance?" Each issue also has Boris Vian's irreverent *Revue de la Presse*, the spiritual progenitor of this roundup. For drummers and others: the April *Jazz-Hot* has an article on the techniques of

Elvin Jones and Philly Joe Jones by Bobby Jaspar.

Worth examining is another French monthly, *Jazz Magazine*; Daniel Filippacchi and Frank Tenot, editors; 3, Rue de l'Echelle, Paris 1. In August-September, there is a reprint of one of the musicians' panels at Lenox two summers ago, a piece on Django Reinhardt, and an interview-article on John Coltrane.

There is also Hugues Panassié's monthly *Bulletin du Hot Club de France*, 65, Faubourg du Moustier, Montauban (Tarn-et-Garonne), France. It's like reading *Time*; if you are aware of the magazine's intense biases against modern jazz and other "heresies" and can thereby screen its material in that context, there are articles of some interest each month. And good pictures.

Except for George Pitts in the *Pittsburgh Courier*, there is little of jazz interest in the Negro press. Once in a while, the Magazine Section of the weekly *Afro-American* in Baltimore has a feature of interest in fields like gospel singing (for example, the July 12, 1958, issue).

An English monthly, *Jazz News*, edited by Brian Harvey, Alderman House, 37 Soho Square, London, W. 1., has a vinegary book reviewer, Benedict Osuch (better known by another name elsewhere, including in this magazine). In the July issue he includes his sixth installment of a review of the largely ridiculous Pelican book, *Jazz*, by Rex Harris: "there appears what is generally known among Pelicans as 'Harris's Law of Diminishing Returns,' which says, 'Jazz quality varies inversely as the square of the number of musicians taking part,' which means that the perfect jazz band consists of one man, sitting in a New Orleans bordello playing a blues in C."

Picture caption in *Jazz News*: "Below is National Jazz Federation Secretary Harold Pendleton caught at a New York conference with the internationally famous Joe Glazer (sic) —manager of Louis Armstrong and near owner of American Jazz."

Cartel Joe, they call him at Yankee Stadium.

And in the letters-to-the-editor section of the August *Esquire*, the gallant George Frazier, responding to a quoted attack on Glaser by Ruby Braff in the course of an article on Braff a few months before, proclaims (not entirely in Latin): "The boy,

in his field, is no match for Joe Glaser in *his*. As a jazz critic [the term is Mr. Frazier's] who holds the Order of the Mouldy Fig with seven bronze stars, *quorum magna pars fui*, and Braff me no Ruby Braffs, Joe Glaser has contributed more than Braff has, and I kid you not."

To Joe Glaser?

George missed the point he could have made. Ruby signed with Glaser shortly after the original Braff quote.

If you want to know where to obtain the bio-discography, *King Joe Oliver*; Samuel Charters' *Jazz: New Orleans, 1885-1957*; Volumes 2 to 6 of the invaluable discography, *Jazz Directory*, by Albert McCarthy and Dave Carey; and other books and pamphlets, I'd suggest you send for Allen's Poop Sheet, Walter C. Allen, 168 Cedar Hill Avenue, Belleville 9, New Jersey.

Time finally gave space to a jazz figure before she'd made it anywhere. They're usually several years behind the trade magazines. The August 4 issue has a properly appreciative story on Ernestine Anderson. Same issue says of *The John Lewis Piano* (Atlantic): "The spare treatments have a fragile charm all their own, but when heard in bulk they speak in an emotional monotone, ultimately as wearying as a series of landscapes executed in whites and greys."

Like the Chinese do?

The man who first used the term "mainstream," now appropriated—in different ways—by nearly all critics was Stanley Dance in England. In the June *Jazz News*, he explains what he means by it: "In my conception the term is expansively generic. In the liquid sense, the mainstream starts at the source and is continually added to enroute until it loses its identity in the sea. That may not be very helpful, but at least we can take it that the mainstream is no backwater, no insignificant tributary, no minor stream that vanishes in the sand of some dismal delta. In the jazz sense, I think of it as including the soloistic idiom developed in the jam session and by Louis Armstrong after his association with King Oliver, as well as the conception of the swinging big band as developed notably by Smack, Duke, Lunceford and Basie."

CONTRIBUTORS:

Glenn Coulter has written on jazz for i.e., *The Cambridge Review* and his study of Billie Holiday will be part of a forthcoming anthology on jazz for the Oxford University press edited by Martin Williams.

Bassist Bill Crow has worked with Gerry Mulligan, Stan Getz, Claude Thornhill, and others.

Frank Driggs has been doing research on jazz in the southwest and will contribute a chapter on that area to a forthcoming history of jazz co-edited by Albert McCarthy and Nat Hentoff to be published by Rinehart and by Cassell.

Jazz baritone saxophonist Benny Green has worked with several of the leading British jazz units. He contributes regularly to *The Record Mirror*, has appeared in several anthologies, and knows more about G. B. Shaw than any living jazzman.

Larry Gushee, currently studying music at Yale, is a saxophonist and long-time student of jazz.

Jazz pianist Dick Katz has played with Oscar Pettiford, Sonny Rollins, J. J. Johnson and Kai Winding, and many others. Trombonist Bob Brookmeyer, currently a member of the Jimmy Giuffre 3, has also played with, among others, Gerry Mulligan and Woody Herman. He is on the faculty of The School of Jazz.

Orrin Keepnews, a&r director and annotator for Riverside Records, was formerly managing editor of *The Record Changer* and is co-editor of *A Pictorial History of Jazz* (Crown).

William Russo, who gained prominence as a composer-arranger-trombonist with Stan Kenton in the early '50s, has been commissioned to write a long work for the New York Philharmonic. He is a faculty member of The School of Jazz.

Jazz composer George Russell is represented on several recordings, among them the Brandeis *Modern Jazz Concert* on Columbia and his own *Jazz Workshop* on Victor. He is a faculty member of The School of Jazz.

Gunther Schuller is a composer, plays first French horn at the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, was on several of the Miles Davis Capitols, and is co-conductor of *The Scope of Jazz*, WBAI-FM, New York

Hsio Wen Shih, an architect and expert in acoustics, is a student of the music of many cultures.

Guy Waterman, who has worked as a professional pianist in the Washington, D. C. area, has been a long-time student of both ragtime and jazz piano.

In Future Issues:

Ella Fitzgerald by Bill Russo
Fletcher Henderson by Gunther Schuller
An Afternoon with Miles Davis
Anita O'Day, June Christy and Chris Connor by Glenn Coulter
The Jazz Compositions of André Hodeir by Bill Russo
Count Basie by André Hodeir
Louis Armstrong's Musical Autobiography by Martin Williams
Cecil Taylor by Gunther Schuller
Some Hard Bop Reedmen by Bob Wilber
James P. Johnson by Dick Wellstood
Lucky Roberts by Nat Hentoff
Willie "the Lion" Smith by Guy Waterman
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Benny Carter by Julian Adderley
Charlie Parker by Dick Katz
An Impression of Jazz in New York by José de Mello
The School of Jazz by Bob Brookmeyer and Jimmy Giuffre
The Miles Davis Quintet Recordings by Bob Brookmeyer
Ellington's *Black, Brown and Beige* by Gunther Schuller
and Art Farmer
Leonard Feather's *The Book of Jazz* by Benny Green and
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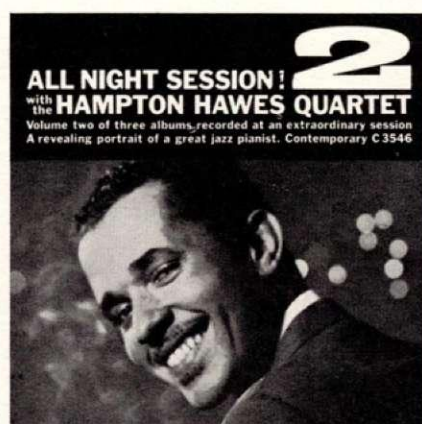
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"Pianist Hawes, Guitarist Jim Hall, Bass Player Red Mitchell and Drummer Bruz Freeman turned up at the studio one night and piled into *Jordu* and *Groovin' High*, and from there on 'we just played because we love to play.' The result is one of the few genuine jam sessions on LPs... The set kindles a kind of inner momentum rare to the recording studio." **TIME**

"The three records, considered as a whole, constitute one of the most remarkable jazz achievements since the invention of the LP."

C. H. Garrigues, **SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER**

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Ralph J. Gleason, **SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE**

"The most impressive pianistic achievement I've heard in months. Hawes plays with masterful assurance, in complete control of the piano, able on these albums to do exactly what he wanted with it... I highly recommend all three records."

Paul Sampson, **WASHINGTON POST AND TIMES HERALD**

"The result is a jazz landmark. The playing is remarkably inventive, the pace unflagging, the spirit dynamic and the ideas spontaneous."

Warren De Motte, **BRIDGEPORT SUNDAY HERALD**

"Here, at last, is the definitive Hamp Hawes... He has never sounded so good on record and now emerges as one of the foremost jazz piano talents of our generation. And as a modern blues pianist he remains superb... Hall's playing throughout is sheer, funky joy. As for Mitchell, he always is a paragon of jazz bass playing. Freeman's drums swing unrestrainedly all the way."

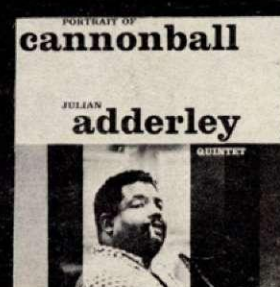
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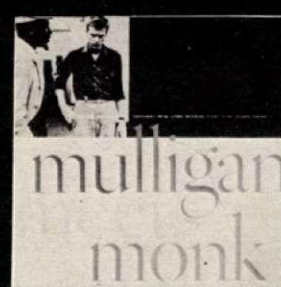
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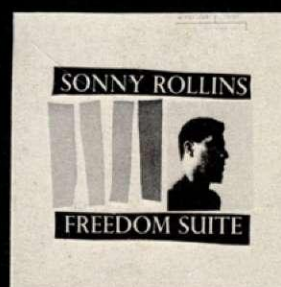
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Big Six: BLUE MITCHELL—sensational new trumpet discovery. (12-273)



The Modern Touch: BENNY GOLSON with Jay Jay, Roach, Dorham, etc. (12-256)



WYNTON KELLY: sparkling piano by a distinctive swinging stylist. (12-254)



HOORAY for BIX!: young traditionalists' tribute to Beiderbecke. (12-268)



Look Out for EVANS BRADSHAW: debut of a great new pianist. (12-263)