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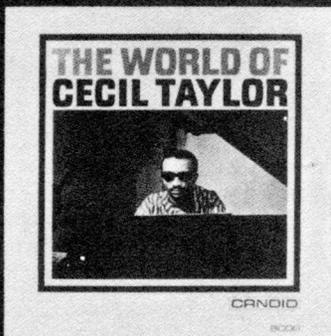


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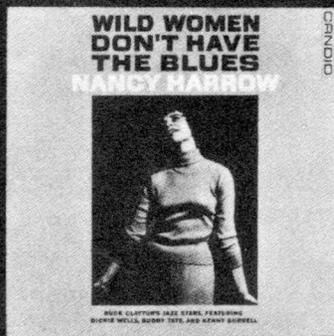


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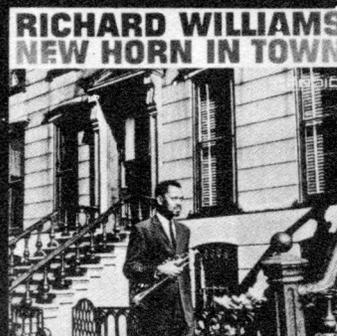
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THE JAZZ REVIEW

Volume 4 / Number 1 / January 1961

- 4 **One More Time: The Travels of Count Basie**
Nat Hentoff
- 10 **Charlie Parker: A Biography in Interviews**
Bob Reisner
- 12 **Dizzy on Charlie Parker**
Felix Manskleid
- 14 **Budd Johnson, Part II**
Frank Driggs

RECORD REVIEWS

- 19 Miles Davis by Jack Cooke
 - 21 Pete Fountain by Michael James
Tubby Hayes by Michael James
 - 22 The Jazz Modes by Henry Woodfin
Pete Johnson by Dan Morgenstern
Lee Konitz by Herb Pilhofer
 - 23 Harold Land by Harvey Pekar
Furry Lewis by Dick Weisman
 - 24 Shelly Manne by Harvey Pekar
Red Prysock-Sil Austin by Harvey Pekar
 - 25 Kid Ory-Red Allen by Martin Williams
Max Roach by Henry Woodfin
 - 26 Rex Stewart by H. A. Woodfin
Art Tatum by Harvey Pekar
Jack Teagarden by Martin Williams
 - 27 Ben Webster by H. A. Woodfin
 - 28 Teddy Wilson and Earl Hines by Martin Williams
Blind Lemon Jefferson and Ma Rainey by J. S. Shipman
 - 29 Newport All Stars by H. A. Woodfin
 - 30 Saxes, Inc. by Herb Pilhofer
The Rocking Fifties by LeRoi Jones
 - 31 Shorter Reviews by I. W. Stone and Max Harrison
- 33 **Jazz In Print** by Hsio Wen Shih

BOOK REVIEWS

- 35 **The Book of Negro Folklore and The Idiom of the People** by Mimi Clar
- 36 **Martin Williams' King Joe Oliver** by J. S. Shipman
- 37 **Jazz on British Radio & Television** by David Griffiths

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ONE MORE TIME

TRAVELS OF COUNT BASIE

The jazz hero is an indigenous American phenomenon. There are European and even Asian counterparts, but they invariably fade into the admiring background when an American quasi-legend comes through on a concert tour. In America as well, the more renowned jazzmen also assume a myth-like aureole in the imaginations of many of their followers. Although more listeners past thirty are remaining interested in jazz, the majority of the jazz audience is still young and impressionable, in search of more venturesome gods than they find at home or in politics.

Until recently, most of the writing about jazz has shown what a British critic has called a "sports page" penchant for romanticizing the music and its players. Even now, comparatively little exploration is being done on who the players actually are off the stand, why they have chosen the itinerant jazz life, and what kinds of interpersonal relationships are created in that crowded microcosm, the band bus.

Partly because they have learned what their public role is supposed to be and partly because they protectively prefer to keep some of their feelings to themselves, several of the most established jazz performers are enigmas, even to their friends. Duke Ellington, for example, wears so many masks that some of his intimates wonder if his own face has not all but disappeared. Louis Armstrong is not just the grinning clown he appears to be on television. Those who have heard his dressing room talk—which occasionally makes Long John Silver sound like Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm—were not surprised when "Satchmo" attacked President Eisenhower so bitterly about Little Rock. Yet Armstrong too can be suddenly unpredictable and secretive, even to musicians who have known him a long time. No member of the jazz pantheon, however, smiles so much and says so little as Count Basie.

Nat Hentoff



"Nobody knows Bill Basie really," says one musician who has been working with him for years. "He keeps in most of what he feels, and the Basie he presents to the public is the one we usually see too. Once in a while he'll explode or do something else that isn't in keeping with the customary picture of him, but he always quickly picks up his familiar role."

Although the 1960 Basie unit has become heavy and predictable with its increasing acceptance, musicians of all ages and styles congregate wherever it plays for the basic physical pleasure of being seized by the mass of driving emotion the band unleashes.

Nobody as bland as the public Basie could have been responsible for such irrepressibly vigorous music. Although they find Basie himself a puzzle, his sidemen have no difficulty recognizing what he contributes to their playing. "The band doesn't feel good until he's up there," explains former Basie trombonist and arranger, Johnny Mandel. "He makes everybody play differently. And not just with his own band. I was working with a bad band Buddy Rich had in 1945. One night, Basie sat in, and suddenly we all came alive."

Yet the irresistible strength Basie projects as a musician and organizer clashes with the caution that has also been pervasive in his life. Like the more sophisticated and more mocking Ellington, Basie will engage in no public controversies with critics, club owners or booking offices. He is exceedingly cautious in the arrangements he will allow his band to play. If the musicians have difficulty in reading a new score the first or second time through, he is apt to reject it. He is a much fleeter pianist than he lets on, but he prefers to sustain the image of himself as a functional band player, not a soloist.

The caution is not without strain. Like all Negro musicians, Basie is bitter about conditions on the road—filling station operators in New England as well as the midwest who lock the men's room as the bus approaches; unpredictable restaurants; towns like Las Vegas, where only headlining Negroes can stay in the hotels where they play. Basie and his men rarely demonstrate when they run into prejudice. They go somewhere else.

But one afternoon about three years ago, the band

rolled into Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, where they were due at a college dance that night. Some went into a restaurant, and others found a small tavern. In the tavern, the musicians were refused service.

Basie walked up to the manager, looked at him icily, and said, "You want us to go out in the street and drink it? You want us to get arrested for breaking the law?" The manager was shaken but stubborn, and the musicians decided to at least leave a memory behind. The biggest men in the band, "The Killers"—Eddie Jones, Billy Mitchell, Henry Coker—began to roam around the tavern like lions deciding just which part of their prey they'd savor first. Basie watched the scene, made no move to stop it, and in fact, quite evidently enjoyed the morality play.

In the past year, Basie has become more vocal about civil rights and this spring, for instance, publicly endorsed the sit-in movement of Southern Negro students as a "beautiful" development. Referring to the pressures on the students, he added: "They're trying to knock us down, but we get right up again." Basie is also an admirer of Martin Luther King: "Like the cats would put it, he's saying something."

There has also been a relaxation of caution in Basie's handling of the band's rebellion against playing the same arrangements night after night. He has yielded to the sidemen's pressure and has begun to program more originals by Thad Jones, Frank Foster, Frank Wess. Basie also occasionally allows men in the band to call a tune. Almost invariably, they'll call a new number. "But if we don't play it well," says a reedman, "it'll be a long time before the guy who calls it will be asked to again."

Basie's role in general as disciplinarian reflects the mixture of strength and reserve that characterize nearly everything he does. The "straw boss," the man who handles the rehearsals and is in charge of minor disciplinary problems, is reed section leader Marshall Royal. Royal is an indifferent soloist, but he is personally self-confident and efficient. Final decisions, however, are always made by Basie, and if Royal exceeds his authority, Basie immediately steps in.

It's the feeling of Jo Jones, Basie's drummer from 1936-48, that a major influence on Basie's conception of leadership was the late midwestern band leader, Bennie Moten. After an apprenticeship in Harlem where Basie was befriended by Fats Waller and influenced by the reigning ragtime pianists—Lucky Roberts, James P. Johnson, Willie "The Lion" Smith, and Abba Labba—Basie toured for a time with vaudeville shows. Stranded in the midwest in 1927, when he was 23, Basie played for silent movies in Kansas City, joined Walter Page's Blue Devils (the best of the territory bands there), and moved over to the Bennie Moten band before the Page unit was absorbed by Moten.

"Bennie" recalls Jo Jones, "was cool. He didn't browbeat his men. Whenever Bennie wanted something done, he'd call the band together, and he'd always speak softly enough so that you had to hear him. After it was all over, he'd produce a gallon of whiskey."

Basie is also cool, until provoked beyond patience. Most of the time, however, even his rages are somewhat staged. "The cursing usually seems controlled," notes a sideman. "Sometimes, if we've been goofing at a rehearsal, he'll ask any women present to leave the room, and then he'll blow up. But always, after the

steam is out, he'll make some kind of funny crack so we'll know he's not still mad."

Whenever possible, Basie tries to mask his anger in play. During the last set one early morning at Birdland when only a few people were in the room, Eddie "Lock-jaw" Davis, the featured tenor soloist at the time, was "catting" with a young lady at ringside, sending eye-brow signals for a later tryst. Basie became increasingly irritated and finally, with a smile, wadded up an arrangement and conked Davis hard on the head.

A man who represses as much emotion as Basie does needs to let some of it out to avoid ulcers or hypertension. One of Basie's indirect methods of expelling aggression is to try to catch his men off-guard. "If a guy comes in juiced," says an aggrieved trumpet player who has been the target of several Basie curves, "Basie is likely to call a number on which that guy is featured." "If he's been having trouble with somebody," adds another employee, "he'll catch him by calling a number with a tough solo before the guy has had a chance to warm up."

Of all of his contemporaries, Basie is most in awe of Duke Ellington. He has held Duke's suave elegance as a model for himself, a model he knows he doesn't have the temperament to emulate convincingly. But the two leaders are alike in their extreme reluctance to fire a musician. The discipline in Ellington's band has always been remarkably lax. Basie actually runs a tighter crew, but he too has to be driven to acute irritation before applying the guillotine.

In recent years, the three most notable firings were of drummer Gus Johnson, reed player Bill Graham, and trumpeter Reunald Jones, Senior. No one—in or out of the band—is clear as to exactly why Basie fired Johnson, the best drummer he's had since Jo Jones. The consensus is that Basie felt the band needed some "flash" and accordingly, he fired Johnson to replace him with Sonny Payne, who is inclined to keep sending up rockets when the music calls for subtle illumination. The men have long been disturbed at Payne's playing. Although he will not admit it publicly, Basie realizes that he made a mistake. But Basie is not likely to dismiss Payne unless Sonny becomes a disciplinary problem. Basie did look on approvingly during a period when guitarist Freddie Greene, annoyed by Payne's tendency to rush the beat, kept a long stick on stand with which he poked the drummer when the beat began to run away.

Saxophonist Billy Graham, an extrovert and a prankster, "played himself out of the band," as one of his fellow roisterers put it. "Billy was not only too playful, but he used to get a little too familiar with Chief himself. He'd even heckle Basie on the bandstand. As usually happens when a guy goes, Billy got the news during a layoff. When we came back, he just wasn't there."

The patrician Reunald Jones, Senior, was quite a different case. For several years, Jones, who has the bearing of a British officer in pre-Gandhi India, was the most conspicuous member of the band. Seated at the extreme left end of the trumpet section, Jones was always one level higher than his colleagues. He played with one hand, as if in derision of the simplicity of the music. When the rest of the section would rise in unison, Jones invariably remained seated. His expression—no matter how much joking was going on among the men—was constantly like Richard Nixon reading

Herblock. Jones' campaign of passive contempt was in protest at the fact that Basie never assigned him any solos.

Jones was fired finally because, as a section mate says with satisfaction, "he drank too much water." Jones was a clubhouse lawyer, and occasionally complained to the musicians' union about overtime disputes. He went one time too often.

The jazz trade press is notoriously poor at reporting, and so it has never been revealed in print that Jones has not been alone in summoning Basie to the union. Basie is quite close about money. He has to be pressured over a long period of time into a raise, and he deals with each man in the band individually in a divide-and-conquer technique that lessens the possibility of a mass mutiny about basic pay. Basie was not always so close a kin to Silas Marner, but he has been mulcted outrageously in his years as a leader.

John Hammond has written about Basie's first Decca contract in 1936 which called for 24 sides and an exclusive three year contract for a total payment of \$750 without a cent of royalty. Hammond later complained to the union, and Basie was raised to scale, but he's never received any royalties from his big early hits—**One O'Clock Jump, Swinging the Blues**, etc.

It took Basie many years to learn financial caution. He had a series of rapacious personal managers. Relatively unconcerned with bookkeeping details, Basie was a "professional baller" during the thirties and forties, hanging out with his men after hours and generally exploring the pleasures and challenges of hedonism. "When he woke up," says a friend, "he had no band, no wardrobe, no money. The managers had swimming pools." Basie disbanded and toured with a small group in 1950 and 1951, mainly to pay off his debts. So suspicious was he in the first years of the new big band that for a time he was the paymaster himself.

Basie has held on to his recent profits, investing part of them in his informal Harlem night club, Count Basie's at 132nd Street and Seventh Avenue. Some members of the band feel that while Basie is entitled to save for retirement, so are they. In the spring of 1959, the band was flown down and back to an all-night dance and breakfast given by Roulette Records for visiting students of communications at the Miami Disc Jockeys' Convention. The sidemen complained to the union that they were paid less than had been agreed. They won. "We always win," says the band's unofficial shop steward. "It happens once or twice a year, but there's no strain afterwards. It's as if it never happened."

There are sidemen who are embarrassed at the trips to the union, and blame not Basie but his booking office. "That Miami business," says Thad Jones, "wasn't Basie's fault. The office should have taken care of it before we left."

The band as a whole is more social and has less cliques than most big bands. Many of the men spend their spare time together, and until fairly recently, Basie traveled in the bus with his sidemen all the time, as he had in the thirties and forties. The present band is composed of tough professionals. They have team pride, but as one says, "it takes quite a lot to really excite us. We've been in the business a long time, mostly for a lot of glory and no money. We still want a certain amount of recognition, but we won't stand on our heads for it. We're at our best under strain—on

an opening night or any night when important people are in the crowd."

Basie has picked his men carefully. He is concerned with a man's temperament as well as his musical ability, and will not knowingly hire a congenital complainer nor anyone who is addicted to narcotics. The Basie band is the cleanest of all the big bands, a rather difficult feat when, as one leader said recently, "I'd have trouble getting a full band together of first-rate musicians without at least a few having their problems." Just as he has greater capacity as a pianist than he indicates, so Basie's organizing capacity is more impressive than is generally realized. "Think of what he was able to do in 1953," says Jo Jones. "He'd lost all of the band, and yet he was able to remember guys he'd heard that he'd liked, take some other suggestions, fuse them into a unit, and take over the whole band business."

Basie as an organizer is also in evidence at rehearsals. Sitting on the sidelines, he'll stop the band, make changes—usually cuts—and otherwise shape a score into the Basie vein. He does not read music easily and prefers to absorb a new score by ear, but once he has it down, it becomes inescapably his—and the band's.

Age is beginning to tell on Basie, not so much in any diminution in his pleasure in playing, but in his after-hours pursuits. "We used to go to sessions," remembers vocalist Jimmy Rushing of the first Basie band, "or to people's homes, and drink and sing. Basie was a pretty nice singer, a more or less baritone. We were all like brothers."

Basie still socializes after hours with his men on occasion, but his avocations are increasingly solitary. While there are some good golfers in the band—Freddie Green would be a match for most professionals—Basie's own golf clubs are seldom used. His major outdoor activity is attending and playing the races. He's also much involved with the fortunes of the New York Yankees. Aside from going to the track and ball games, Basie is seldom gregarious in his pleasures.

He came from a family that emphasized respectability and accomplishment. His father, Harvey Lee Basie, who died in April, 1960, at 88, had been a gardener, and his mother was a domestic. Basie grew up in the Negro section of Red Bank, New Jersey, and learned early how much dissembling was then necessary to "get on" with whites. Besides, he was a shy child, and the consciousness of being a Negro probably intensified the shyness. His wife, Catherine, has known him since his mid-twenties and remembers him as always having been reserved.

As Basie grew older, he found an outlet for some of his emotions in a certain amount of self-gratification—food, liquor, sex—although characteristically, he has seldom lost control in any of those areas. He also used to read to some extent in the days before television. On the way to a job or at home, he'll still go through the papers, scan the trade press with the musician's usual skepticism and absorb such magazines as *Jet*. He has a particular affection for the more violent comic books. "Basie was disappointed," one band member says, "when they started to clean up the comics, because they got rid of a lot of the shockers he liked so much." Television is Basie's favorite release, and he most prefers what he terms the "fast draws". "It's the most relaxing thing in the world," he observes. "When I'm

home, I usually get up about 10:30, go downstairs, put on the set, and fall asleep by it, because it is so relaxing." He's up again by noon to start with the re-runs of Western movies. "I especially like playing California because the shows start earlier there, and that gives me an extra hour."

Basie is most drawn to **Have Gun, Will Travel** and **Wagon Train**, both of which specialize in fast tough action.

Another solitary pleasure for Basie is model trains. The basement of his home contains an extensive train network that might even impress Lucius Beebe. Upstairs is a further avocation, a Hammond organ. His St. Albans, Long Island, house is ample but unostentatious. Basie, his wife, and their fifteen-year-old daughter, Diane have lived there for some fourteen years. Catherine Basie first met the pianist in Philadelphia during an Eastern tour of the Bennie Moten band, when Catherine was one of the dancing Whitman Sisters.

In contrast to her husband, Catherine Basie is a brisk, energetic clubwoman who hurls herself into an astonishingly full round of activities. She is on the boards of nearly a dozen organizations, works for the Urban League and the National Conference of Christians and Jews, and is actively involved in local politics. Although Basie has now publicly supported the sit-ins, he avoids political stands. When a newsman asked him recently whom he'd support for president, Basie referred the question to his wife.

Basie is beginning to talk rather vaguely about plans to drastically curtail his traveling and spend more time at home, but his wife and friends doubt if he'll ever leave the trail. "He's a gypsy," trombonist Benny Powell believes, "and besides, he has too many friends all around."

"They'll carry him to his grave from a road trip," adds trumpeter Joe Newman. "He's like Louis Armstrong that way. On the road, he can forget himself."

It is true that while Basie is apt to become rather fretful when he's been in New York too long he's the prototype of stoicism while traveling. "It's strange to watch him in a crisis," says Benny Powell. "He lets everybody else panic. We'll be doing a one-nighter, and everything will be going wrong. The bus breaks down; there's no time for dinner; we get to work late; the promoter is angry. Basie couldn't be calmer, and funnier."

"Basie," says another band member, "likes to have a cushion of privacy between him and everybody else. It's easier to do that on the road."

Once in a great while, Basie's public facade slips. "One night at the Newport Festival," recalls pianist Billy Taylor, "I saw Bill, off to one side, listening intently to a modern combo. He seemed to be listening wistfully. The group was quite adventurous, much more so than his current band. Somebody interrupted Bill, and suddenly he was Count Basie again—the smile, the detachment. I just don't think he's as happy musically as he mostly convinces himself he is. There was more he wanted to do; but some time back, he decided to play it safe."

The above article is a part of Nat Hentoff's forthcoming book, *The Jazz Life*, to be published next spring by the Dial Press.

BIRD

A Biography In Interviews by Bob Reisner



Art Blakey

Art Blakey was a pianist until some Pittsburgh underworld characters decided that Errol Garner was going to replace him as pianist in a local nightclub. Art switched to drums, and in the years since, has become one of the best and best known drummers in modern jazz. He was also with the Billy Eckstine band in 1943-4, has visited Africa to broaden his knowledge of drumming, and since his return to the U.S., has led several small groups, all called the Jazz Messengers. There was a guy in Fletcher Henderson's band who said, "Man, you ought to hear this guy Charlie Parker." "Man, he can't outplay Willie Smith?" "He can."

I got mad at this guy.

A little while later we met Parker. I turned to my friend and said, "Is this the bum you mean?" He wasn't dapper like a musician. He was wearing a pair of slacks, a sweater and a beret. He looked too relaxed. After that we'd meet in train stations while we were going in different directions. He's so great he was easy to meet.

I left Fletcher Henderson's band in Boston and I formed my own group, that became the house band at The Tic Toc Club.

Billy Eckstine was forming his band and Dizzy said to him, "There's a guy in Boston; this guy can play." Billy said he knew me and that I was from his home town, but he had not heard me play. But he sent for me, and I came down to St. Louis, and there I met Bird, Billy, Sarah, Dizzy, the rest. We were playing in

a prejudiced club; Billie Holiday, Billy Eckstine, Bird, Dizzy. The man told us all to come in through the back door that night, and these damn fools, they got together and they came in the front door. The guy is wiggled. They all come in the front door havin' a ball. He said, "I don't want you to fraternize with the customers." When Charlie got to the intermission, they all sat at the tables and the guy was about to wig. He told someone, "You gotta get this band the hell outta here." The guys were carrying on something fierce despite the fact that gangsters were walking around with big guns up on their hips. They didn't scare Bird or anyone. Tadd Dameron was drinking a glass of water. Out of one of the beautiful glasses they had to serve the customers. Bird walked over to him saying, "Did you drink out of this, Tadd?" Tadd says "Yeah."

Bam! He smashes it.

"It's contaminated. Did you drink out of this one?"

"Yeah," Tadd says.

Bam.

"It's contaminated."

He broke about two dozen glasses.

A guy was glaring at Bird; he just looked back coolly.

"What do you want? Am I bothering you?" Bird asks

"Are you crazy?" the guy asks.

"Well, if you want to call me crazy."

Then once again he turns to Tadd.

"Did you drink out of this glass?"

Bam.

"Its contaminated."

They put us out and put Jeeter-Pillows in our place at the Plantation and sent us to the Riviera, which was a colored club. There the band got started, and we went from there to Chicago and that's when I realized how great the man was.

The Man stopped the show in Chicago. It was on a Saturday night in 1944. Sarah was singing **You Are My First Love**. That man came out and took sixteen bars and stopped the show. The house was packed. People applauded so loud we couldn't go on. We had to do it all over again.

He always was one for fun. The fellows were always up to pranks. They'd ride up and down the hotel halls on broomsticks or have mock fights with swords — him and Dizzy loved to do that. It's lonely in some towns, especially down South. Nobody understands you. So we get together and have fun ourselves — spill water on each other, anything that boys (for that's what we were) would do just to keep things interesting. He was a good guy. He gave a lot. In 1950-51 I was on relief. In 1951 after my wife died, Bird, who had come in from the Coast, lent me \$2000 just to help me out. He was distressed by some of the idiots in the music business. You build all your life, and then you see it destroyed by fakers.

A symbol to the Negro people? No. They don't even know him. They never heard of him and care less. A symbol to the musicians, yes.

There was no rivalry between the Baroness, Bird, and myself. Nica is just a wonderful woman. A woman first and a Baroness second. She wants to be witty. Poor thing, she ain't so witty. We are very good friends, but I stopped seeing her when stories got back to my daughters, and they sounded on me.

Bird died trying to kick his habit. He tried to kick it the wrong way, by drinking whiskey. The whiskey is the

thing that killed him. The heroin was preserving him — the heroin did not kill him. He tried to do what people asked him to do, that's why he's not here today. After a man shoots dope for fourteen years, how you gonna stop him? His system cries for it. If he uses it, the heroin will preserve him, it won't destroy him. I know he died trying to do what society asked him to do, which is impossible. Our society has to find out that the people who are using dope are not crazy or criminal, they are sick people. This man had been sick for fourteen years and nobody would help him because they didn't know. They didn't know he was sick. They don't understand heroin.

You do not play better with heroin but you do hear better. Bird said that he wanted to kick the habit so that he could tell people what he heard. It is something like a neurotic. While he is suffering, he cannot produce; but reflecting about his pain, he can create. Musicians who have been junkies and then rid themselves of the habit, have sometimes really then come into their own musically.



Oscar Pettiford

The late Oscar Pettiford was a pioneer in modern jazz and is unquestionably one of the great bassists in jazz history. He was born on an Indian reservation at

Okmulgee, Oklahoma, one of thirteen children of Harry 'Doc' Pettiford, who led one of the most successful territory bands in the Southwest, a band in which most of his talented children started playing. Pettiford worked with Charlie Barnet's band, and in 1943 he and Dizzy Gillespie led a bop group, the first on 52nd Street, with Don Byas, George Wallington and Max Roach. Pettiford has worked with Duke Ellington, and led his own groups, large and small.

I got started at six, when I used to dance with my father's band. When I was seventeen, I had a bit role with Olson and Johnson in Minneapolis. Before I settled on bass, I played piano, trombone, and trumpet (which hurt my jaws), and I studied tailoring in case the music business ever got tough.

When I first met Parker he was with the Jay McShann band, and they came out to Minneapolis where I was playing in my father's band; that was around 1940-41. I was around sixteen years old. Everyone, Jay and the band, respected and loved Charlie Parker; he wasn't called Yardbird or Bird then. Everyone dug his playing; he had a happy sound.

I saw him again in Earl Hines' band in 1943; they were in Chicago, and Diz was in the band too. I got word that time that I could be in a jam session with Bird and Diz, and I walked two miles carrying my bass without gloves in ten below zero weather to the Ritz Hotel. It was a fine session. I remember a fellow named Red Cross taped the session. He works for Billy Eckstine; maybe he still has it.

In 1943 I met Bird again. I was with the Charlie Barnet band, and we were playing at the Capitol Theatre. Bird was with the Earl Hines band playing at the Apollo Theatre. We were both registered at the Braddock Hotel on 126th Street and 8th Avenue. This was a hotel where a lot of musicians stayed in town. Bird and I did a lot of jamming at the hotel. He was writing a lot of things then.

Dizzy Gillespie and I went looking up and down 52nd Street for work in 1943. We turned down \$75 a week apiece offered by Kelly's Stables. I had worked at the Onyx club before, and I was good friends with the owner, Mike Westerman, so I asked him if I could be re-engaged. I was welcomed back gladly. I said "Make it a Diz group." And Diz said "Make it your group because you got the job." So we made it the Gillespie-Pettiford group. We wanted Bird to come in the group, but he didn't have a union card. He never seemed to have a card. He didn't stay in town long enough. There's a local 802 regulation that says a musician must wait in town six months for his card. For the first three months he may be able to work at a steady job with union approval as long as he is in town.

Bird was always broke, and he would have to work jobs out of town to make quick money. He continually borrowed. Dizzy always allotted part of his pay to him. Nobody ever expected it back — never got it. Nobody ever did. One musician said laughing, "To know Bird you got to pay your dues." I never knew Bird to lend money to anyone. Anyone. Once when I was flat, I asked for some of the money that Bird owed me. I never got it. He was so likeable that you didn't mind being generous with him.

At this time Billy Eckstine and Dizzy Gillespie were Bird's closest friends. Bird dug Eckstine's singing very much.

DIZ ON BIRD

Felix Manskleid

I met Charlie Parker for the first time in 1939, when I was with Cab Calloway. We were introduced by a Kansas City trumpet player, Buddy Anderson, one of the trumpet players of that time who was trying to do something new. I dug Buddy immediately.

He tried to play chords that were making preparations for going into another chord. He made up his own variations on another chord. He was with the Jay McShann band that time, you know, when they came to New York.

Was that so unusual then? Using these different chords?

Trumpet players at that time, they just didn't think like saxophone players, like Benny Carter and people like that. I mean, I didn't know any. There were trumpet players then who were doin' that maybe, but they weren't making recordings, and it wasn't so easy for people to emulate their styles.

Does that mean you weren't so surprised to hear that kind of things from saxophone players?

Well, yeah. Saxophone players generally knew more music than trumpet players. As a matter of fact, I didn't know any trumpet players at that time who played the piano. Many saxophone players could play the piano — in fact, there was Ben Webster, there was Don Byas, and Coleman Hawkins, and Benny Carter; all those guys played piano too, you know.

Would it have surprised you if a piano player played those chords?

No. Because in the first place, I think the piano has a little bit of an advantage for jazz, because you can just lay your hands on the keyboard of the piano, and play a whole series of chords, just like that, but on a trumpet you can't visualize it; it's very hard.

Were there other trumpet players who used these chords?

There was a guy up in Toronto. He's become famous since then, but not as a trumpet player — as a composer, and arranger and conductor. His name is Robert Farnon. He was doing — I'm not surprised at him, I knew there was going to be great things for him — but he was playing cornet at this time, when I was with Cab Calloway. Cozy Cole, Choo Berry, Danny Barker, most of those fellows, would go over to this guy's house in 1939, way before he went overseas; funny thing, I've been hearing about this Robert Farnon, but I never connected him with Bob Farnon, the cornet player I knew.

When you met Parker through Buddy Anderson, what were you doing at the time?

I was staying at the Booker T. Hotel in Kansas City when I met him one afternoon.

Was he playing the same way then, as he did when he came to New York?

Well, I think — I'm not saying this as absolutely sure — I think that his particular style, by the time he got to New York, had developed so rapidly that it didn't have much to do with what he was playing then. They told me he was mad with the older musicians who wouldn't let him play, so he was determined to upset everything, and he went in the woodshed, you know. When he got to New York was the next time I saw him. If I'd known you wanted to talk about Bird, I'd have brought Teddy Stewart, who knows all about what happened in the band there; he could tell you the real story about Charlie Parker at that time.

How long was that, between the time you met him in Kansas City, and the time when he came to New York?

It was 1939 or 40 in Kansas City. Then Oscar Pettiford and I in 1942, early 1942, we sent him a telegram in Kansas City to go into the Onyx Club with us. No, wait a minute; in 1942, Charlie was playing tenor with Earl Hines' band. He came here before that in Jay McShann's band. Then he used to play in Monroe's Uptown, an after hours place. They had a terrific little band there; they didn't have any music or anything, but that was where I really started playing with him. After that, I went with Earl Hines, '41 and '42. We needed a tenor player, so we bought Yard a tenor, and he came into Earl's band to play tenor, and he played tenor all through Earl Hines' band until we went with Billy Eckstine's band.

Between 1939 and 1942, did people know what he was trying to do?

Oh, he was getting a lot of publicity from musicians; like Ben Webster sayin' "I can't believe it." Ben Webster was a big Charlie Parker fan.

When you became friendly with Charlie Parker, what were the human and musical ties between you? What did you talk about?

Well, he was full of ebullience; he had an extreme amount of energy, which all of us know, because he could stand off being sick and things like that. He was sturdy, very sturdy. He reminded me of a leaf, on a stream that's floating, but he had a definite, definite, purpose; knew exactly where he was goin'. He was dynamic — a very dynamic personality.

Did he talk a lot about music?

No, he wasn't a big conversationalist about music. But you could tell that he had that definiteness from the music he played.

But he would talk. Oh, he was a great talker — about any subject you'd want to talk about. Like philosophy, or if you wanted to talk about art he'd talk with you. Or if you wanted to talk about History — European History, African History, or Middle Ages or Stone Age History. Oh, he knew about current events and things like that.

He was a profound thinker, you see. Sometimes he would get into a room, he'd be off in the woodshed, wouldn't see anybody; I guess that was meditation.

Do you believe that it is possible to determine in the musical history of jazz the exact role played by Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Clarke and Monk and others?

Each one of us knows the exact role that each one, the individual, has played. But all you can do is hope that history — but you see, you can't. You see, history is a history of newspapers and things like that, and you know you have to take newspapers with a grain of salt.



But I don't think it was that way with us; I think it was more a question of embellishing one another. Yes, embellishing one another. And the knowledge was coming that way. Because many times, I've sat with Charlie Parker, and I'd play something, and he'd say, "What was that?" And I'd say, "Well, I do this because I want to do this." And same thing; I'd say to him, "Well, why is that?" and he'd say; and I'd say, "Oh." And you get knowledge like that. And Monk the same way.

You see, I had no formal musical training. There were many musicians — many musicians — who knew harmonically more than I did. Like Charlie Shavers; I played with him in Philadelphia. I've known Charlie Shavers longer than I've known Charlie Parker. I played with Charlie Shavers in 1935, way before I even came to New York.

Did Charlie Parker have formal musical training?

I don't know; they tell me no. I don't think he had any either. But he had that background. You don't get things out of the air. Take Charlie Parker; you say "Charlie, play the blues." He'd play the blues just like a blind man. He could play the blues with that emotion, that blue feeling.

Some of us have that and some of us don't. You see, he uses notes that aren't there. That's all. They are not there. You try to find them, you can't find them. I'm going to look into that myself, because you get so much emotion in a cry. I mean if somebody sometime just cry. And then in a moan there's emotion; there's a clipped, clipped accent — there's emotion — fiery. You sit down long enough, you do everything, run the gamut of emotion.

But you must have that kind of background. If you're going to be in jazz, you got to know the history of it.

Did you have opportunity to play frequently with Charlie Parker?

Oh, yes. Oh yes, of course we made records together; and we played together in Earl Hines' band; we played with Eckstine; we played on 52nd Street together; we played in California together; and then after 1946, we just played spasmodically together. You know that's something, we haven't played together, Charlie Parker and I, I mean we haven't worked together since 1946. I'll tell you one time, during wartime, we had a record date. There was Charlie Parker, Don Byas, Trummy Young; let's see who was the rhythm section — Clyde Hart, I think Oscar Pettiford; I don't remember who the drummer was, and Rubber Legs Williams on vocals. We were doing some blues things with Rubber Legs. This was the big thing; Teddy Reig set that up. So we got there; we were playin'; so finally, everybody had been up all night or something like that. At that time, the kick was, you know those Benzadrine inhalers? You take one and break it up, you get some coffee or something and let it dissolve a little bit, and you drink it up. You can stay up two, three days. And Rubber Legs, he didn't smoke or drink — he was completely without vices. Charlie dropped that thing in his coffee, and Rubber Legs drank that coffee, and boy, after that, he was singing and cryin' and moanin'. Hah! And Rubber Legs didn't know what was wrong with himself.

Another time when we were in Pine Bluffs, Arkansas, with Earl Hines, and I remember, during intermission, you couldn't go out in the audience where people were dancing; you were with the band, supposed to stay on stage. I was just sittin' at the piano, fooling with the

piano. Some guy came up and slipped me a quarter, and asked me to play something, but I didn't pay him any mind; just went on foolin' with the piano. After the job, I met this same guy, and he had a bottle, and he hit me with this bottle. I had to have six stitches put into the back of my head. Charlie Parker saw me with all this blood coming out of me, and he walk up to this guy, and he yelled "You have taken advantage of my friend — you cur!"

How would you describe the evolution of Charlie Parker's playing?

I wouldn't attempt to. I'm not a scholar — not a lingual scholar. If I spent my time trying to figure out why, to wonder about why, I wouldn't have any time to play music.

How would you describe the evolution of jazz from the time when you started out, and Charlie Parker started out, until the time you had arrived and actually were known, and you had created something?

You don't have any set time or place where any one thing happened in music. It's such a big picture — you got to take it in terms of alto sax, in terms of tenor sax, in terms of trumpet . . . How can you say what started what or where or when?

You should get a bunch of guys who were with us at the time and ask them to remember what happened. It's very hard to remember. You might be putting yourself on. All the original guys know exactly who contributed what. One guy who has been sadly neglected in the history of modern music, I think, is Oscar Pettiford.

Charlie Parker and I, we started out of the same kind of music, but our styles are different.

One thing that is different now, most soloists now know how to play piano — most of the best ones. It's very important because it is the basic instrument of Western music, the piano gives you the key. When you know that, you can branch out to other instruments. It gives you a wonderful perspective.

But you can't say it was a new thing. We all were working on the same chords, the same notes that everybody worked on from before. It was just a different approach. It takes lots of little things that when they are added up, many, many, many, many of them, they add up to a great abundance.

When was the last time you saw Charlie Parker?

The last time I saw him was at Basin Street, just before he died, about two or three weeks before.

Would you say that his style or his energy or his creativity was deteriorated in the last years?

No. Oh, no. No. I don't see how creativity can deteriorate. Physically, if Charlie Parker, or Tatum, or anybody, walk out on the stage under the influence of anything, drunk or anything, they're not going to do their best. I don't care who it is; you need a sober mind and you need physical prowess. But deteriorate! You just sober up and there it is. With Charlie Parker, as great a genius as he was, you speak in terms of Charlie Parker, you can't speak in terms of somebody else. He's unpredictable—you can't speak of him as you would an ordinary musician.

He was very, very special, and you have to treat him in a very, very special way.

He wasn't declining, not to me, not when I heard him play. Last time I heard him play, he wasn't declining, not to me. Not to me, man.

BUDD JOHNSON

PART II

As time went on, I kept close to Earl's band and got to be very close with several of the guys, including Cecil Irwin, a tenor man and one of the great arrangers of that time. A very unfortunate thing happened; Cecil was killed in an automobile accident, and Earl called for me. I'll never forget that. I joined the band on May 10, 1935 at the Orpheum Theatre in St. Paul. I was thrilled and sad at the same time, because I'd thought Cecil was such a wonderful guy.

When I got in the band it didn't always seem to click to me, and they were out of tune. Earl wasn't too well liked around Chicago then because of his attitude. The guys used to say, "Who does he think he is?" and he wouldn't always be able to get the best new guys. After a while he left all the hiring and the firing to me, but I had come and gone once by that time. In 1937 I came to New York as the chief arranger for Gus Arnheim's band. Stan Kenton was playing piano with Gus then, and he had a nice band. They played at the Hotel New Yorker for the Ice Frolics. I didn't do any playing with the band, but made all his arrangements. He was recording a whole bunch of Alec Wilder tunes then and a bunch of pops.

When I came back in 1938, Ed Fox, who was the manager of the Grand Terrace, was pressuring Earl. Walter Fuller, Omer Simeon and some of the others quit. Fuller later took them and formed his own band. Fox had power of attorney and he came over to the Grand Terrace to impound the music. We memorized the whole book and had them locked up in a vault. When Fox and the police arrived to grab our books, they got the surprise of their lives, because there wasn't any music in sight. We really had to go out on

Frank Driggs



our own then, because after that, Earl split with Fox and we had to get together and do some thinking. I told Earl, "Look, Ed Fox was okeh, but he wasn't building Earl Hines all this time. Now you know these guys too, so why don't we write them for some engagements." Earl did that while I rehearsed the band. We couldn't get very much because Fox had always gotten a small guarantee and a large percentage, so we'd get around \$200. Pretty soon, Earl was able to get some money aside, and we got a bus and new uniforms and things like that and went out on some one-nighters. Things worked out pretty well after that, because he left me in charge of the band and set up officers, just like a business. That was the beginning of his greatest band, because we had Scoops Carry, Robert "Little Sax" Crowder, Willie Randall, Streamline Ewing, Ed Sims, and George Dixon on trumpet, alto and baritone. Dixon was the key man in the band, because he could play almost every instrument well.

A little before that, King Kolax had the greatest combo in Chicago, playing at 55th and Michigan. He and Goon Gardner on alto were great, and he had Kansas Fields on drums. He was a terrific trumpet player himself, sort of on the Charlie Shavers model. It was about 1939. A bunch of us were all standing at the bar drinking early one morning and in comes this raggedy bum. You know the type of guy they used to draw in the papers to represent the Brooklyn Dodgers? Well, that's the way this guy looked. He walked up to Goon and asked if he could play his horn. In those days any way the guys could get off the stand to kibitz with the girls was fine, so Goon said, sure, come on. This guy started playing alto and you never heard anything like it in your life. He was making everything and we stood there flabbergasted. It was Charlie Parker and he'd just hoboed into town and didn't have anything. When the set was over Goon ran over to him and said, "Man, where've you been, playing that way?" Bird told him he'd just got into town. Goon gave him the horn that night, because he had another one. I didn't know Bird in Kansas City, because he was just a little kid way back then.

In Earl's new band, Pee Wee Jackson was the top trumpet man for solos. Each guy had a different thing to do. Freddie Webster was in and out of the band for a couple of years, and he used to do all the sweet and pretty things when he was there. He couldn't play too fast and he didn't have the range that Pee Wee did, but he played modern — it was different, but it wasn't bop. He had such a big, beautiful sound and a wonderful interpretation so he never had to play in any specific style. He didn't really come into his own until after he left Earl.

Shorty McConnell was quite a man. We got him from Buffalo, which was Tommy Enoch's home town. I'd known him from Chicago before that and he was playing some beautiful stuff. I'd call a rehearsal and call the beat off and Shorty would still be looking at his part. He couldn't read so I wondered what I was going to do. I wasn't worried about teaching him how to read because I knew he had the ability and all he had to do was to get some short cut methods. He had a terrific ear because he had to rely on it so much. He was very religious, and very sincere, and we used to kid him all the time. He couldn't take it, and he eventually left

music.

I left Earl on December 22, 1942 and Bird took my place on tenor. Most of the guys were going in the service then, so Dizzy and Bird were in. Billy Eckstine was the cause of them coming in the band, because he used to talk about them all the time. I came home then because my son was born. After that, I joined Al Sears for a USO tour. We had three tenors with Lester and he used to get burned up because Al got so much applause when he played. Then I joined Dizzy on 52nd Street.

This is how I got that job: Ben Webster left Duke when they were going into the old Hurricane Club. Don Byas who had the job with Dizzy was supposed to take Ben's place and he told me to take the job with Dizzy. I rehearsed that night and took the job. It turned out that Don didn't get the job with Duke, Al Sears did. Dizzy and the other guys liked me so I stayed.

Whenever I'd come to New York with Earl we used to go around to all the spots. I ran into Monk and he had all these tunes of his that he was playing. A little, short trumpet player named Vic Coulsen was with him and all the guys were scuffling trying to play them at Monroe's. Only a few guys could play this music. I had a fair technique and a good command of my horn and I used to scuffle trying to play their stuff. No one else could then.

When I was on 52nd Street with Dizzy we were playing those unison-line things that became so famous on records later on. Oscar Pettiford and I told him to write them down, but we had to do it ourselves. They were the basis of the style then. I'd always kept up on all the reeds and rehearsing with them for that job made me work very hard. That was true of Earl's band too, because he let me pretty much alone in choosing the guys, because he wanted to stay with whatever was happening in music. In fact, the only time I ever saw him thrown was once when Art Tatum was playing. But he needn't have been because great as Art was, Earl had his own thing and it was just as good.

I was doing a lot of writing for Boyd Raeburn and Billy Eckstine around 1945 and I joined Billy after Dizzy left to form his own band. I went with them to the coast when they played the Plantation Club. I made one or two records with them on National and made arrangements on **Rhythm In a Riff** and **I'm In the Mood For Love** and one on **Airmail Special** which was for a transcription agency. That was really a wild bunch, and they were very disorganized. I had to work very hard on them to get them to stay in line. I only stayed with the band about six months and spent about the same amount of time with Cab Calloway playing alto. Sam Taylor was playing tenor. I went back to Earl for about a month in 1947 just before he broke up his big band. I was making a whole lot of records then, some commercial ones for Victor, and a lot of jazz dates. I made some sides for Victor with Hawk, Fats Navarro and J. J. Johnson and played some alto on them.

Snub Mosley and I went to Europe in 1952 for some USO tours and we went over very well. He is a great entertainer and performer in addition to being one of the all-time best trombonists. I remember when we were in England and he couldn't count their money to save his life. He'd shake his head and hold out his money, and boy, they'd rob him blind!

I was with Benny Goodman in 1956 and went to Europe with Quincy's band last year. We did very well in Europe. I was surprised at the reception we got and they all seemed to like my playing. I did a lot of soprano over there and we cut two albums which show the band better than the ones made before they left. Quentin Jackson and I made a blues album with Bill Coleman for Polydor which was nice. I'll probably go back because I got some nice offers and I could really play what I wanted to over there. They appreciate you more. Here I'm doing more writing than playing, which is all right, but I really like to play. I went into Birdland with Illinois Jacquet this year a couple of times and we really had a ball. He's a good friend of mine and we had tenor battles all night long. I'm going to do an album later on this year for a new label. It's going to be a modern date and I'm going to play every reed instrument and do all the writing. It's something I've wanted to do for a long time now.

24257) his solo utilizes space in much the same manner that Lester Young was later noted for and shows his ability to swing using the simplest of statements. I believe he arrived at his own style at about the same time as Lester and independently. On **Dusky Stevedore** (Victor 24320) his solo owes more to Coleman Hawkins than any other he was to play in years to come. Budd joined Earl Hines in the spring of 1935 right after the death of tenor saxophonist-arranger Cecil Irwin, the director of the band. The group was not at its best then, even with Trummy Young and Jimmy Mundy, vocalist Herb Jeffries, and regular soloists Walter Fuller and Omer Simeon. When Vocalion signed Hines early in 1937, Budd was contributing arrangements along with Mundy, and the band was beginning to swing more. On Budd's interesting and driving arrangement of **Pianology** (Vocalion 3501, Epic LN 3223) his solo follows Hines' and is marked by short riffs, swooping phrases and long lines — again paralleling Lester's work, but not imitating it. He is also heard to good advantage on the quartet version of **Honeysuckle Rose** (Vocalion 3586, Epic LN 3223) both in solo and interplay with Omer Simeon.

The Hines band had a number of internal difficulties at this time, so Budd left to join Gus Arnheim as chief arranger for the rest of the year. He returned to Hines in 1938. Hines had pretty much given him carte blanche to hire and fire as he pleased, and, by the end of the year, he'd brought in drummer Alvin Burroughs (whose associations went back to Walter Page's Blue Devils) and tenor man Robert "Little Sax" Crowder. In 1939 the band switched to a Bluebird contract, their most successful recording affiliation. Budd was contributing more and more arrangements to the book; by 1942 when the record ban set in, he'd written the arrangements for half the band's records.

Nearly every man in the Hines band could take a satisfactory solo, and by 1941 Budd had added Harry "Pee Wee" Jackson and Maurice "Shorty" McConnell on trumpets, John "Streamline" Ewing, trombone; Gerald Valentine, trombone and arranger; Scoops Carry (that is the correct spelling) on alto; and Franz Jackson, tenor and arranger. But even with the tremendous popularity of its singer Billy Eckstine, the Hines band was never a big popular success.

Budd's own fortunes seemed to parallel that of the band he was associated with for so long. Though he went on to play an important part in building a modern band for Hines in the one which eventually became the legendary 1943 band with Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker (Bird took Budd's chair on tenor in December, 1942) and Sarah Vaughan, and later wrote down, with Oscar Pettiford, the unison lines Oscar and Dizzy were playing on 52nd Street in 1944. He seemed to slip into obscurity while Dexter Gordon, Gene Ammons and other younger tenor players became popular.

Budd's style was formed by the middle thirties but his ability enabled him to make the change to modern jazz during the forties. He wrote arrangements for Boyd Raeburn and Eckstine during this period, as well as playing with and directing the Eckstine band. On two rare transcriptions the Eckstine band made at the Plantation Club in Hollywood in 1945, Budd and Gene Ammons take the choruses on **Blowin' the Blues Away** (Budd won) and on a fantastic arrangement of **Airmail**

SELECTED BUDD JOHNSON DISCOGRAPHY

Frank Driggs

Budd made his first records with George Lee's Kansas City band late in 1929, when he was only nineteen. **Paseo Street** (Brunswick 7132), written and arranged by Jesse Stone, has an eight bar solo by Budd which shows him to have been a tenor player of fluent technique and an unusually light tone for that time. His style already seemed personal and original, and he seemed to owe little to Coleman Hawkins, Prince Robinson, or other established tenor soloists of the time. Budd left Kansas City in 1932 to join his trombonist brother Keg in Chicago. In 1933 they both joined Louis Armstrong's orchestra and recorded several times with the band that spring. On **Some Sweet Day** (Victor

Special. He has an alto solo on **Jumpin' For Jane** with Coleman Hawkins (Victor LJM 1017), and he wrote and arranged with the late Clyde Hart **Bu-Dee-Daht** that Hawkins recorded for Apollo on the first modern jazz in 1944.

Perhaps it was because Budd was able to move easily in and out of every school of jazz that he was never identified with any one group in jazz or has been passed off as derivative — which is a mistake one could not make if his records are listened to carefully. Budd's tone today is the lean tone associated with Prez, but during his years with Earl Hines, and earlier with Armstrong and George E. Lee, it was fuller, although not nearly enough to place him as a follower of Hawk. In his solos, his devices parallel those of Lester rather than Hawk's; he tended to play long and flowing lines, utilizing rests and combinations of short and long phrases much in the manner Lester did. Lester and Budd came from a similar background — the fine territory bands and rapidly developing musicianship in the Southwest which was later to produce Charlie Christian, Jimmy Blanton and Charlie Parker; it had already produced Buster Smith, Lester and Budd. When Lester made his great impact on musicians and the public in 1937-38, Basie's band was recording more sides than Hines. Lester also made thirty-eight sides with Teddy Wilson and Billie Holiday, and other sides with Benny Goodman and with the Kansas City Six on Commodore. Budd's only recordings away from the Hines band were three titles with Lionel Hampton late in 1938. This comparison is not intended to demean Lester, nor to place Budd ahead of him — that can't be done — but I hope we will make some room for Budd Johnson's achievements during those important years.

GEORGE E. LEE ORCHESTRA:

Paseo Street, Brunswick Br 7132. Kansas City, Nov. 1929.
Sam Utterbuck, Harold Knox, trumpets; Jimmy Jones, trombone; Clarence Taylor, Herman Walder, Budd Johnson, reeds; Julia Lee, piano; Charles Rousseau, guitar, banjo; Clint Weaver, tuba; Pete Woods, drums; Jesse Stone, arranger.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG ORCHESTRA:

Some Sweet Day, Victor 24257. Chicago, April 1933.
Louis Armstrong, Elmer Whitlock, Zilner Randolph, trumpets; Keg Johnson, trombone; Scoville Brown, George Oldham, Budd Johnson, reeds; Teddy Wilson, piano; Mike McKendrick, banjo; Bill Oldham, bass; Yank Porter, drums.
Dusky Stevedore, Victor 24320.
Same personnel except Charlie Beal, piano; Bob Yasquarre, bass; Harry Dial, drums.

EARL HINES ORCHESTRA:

Pianology*, Epic LN 3223; New York, February 1937.
Wilton Fletcher, Charlie Allen, Walter Fuller, trumpets; Lewis Taylor, Trummy Young, Kenneth Stuart, trombones; Omer Simeon, Darnell Howard, Budd Johnson, reeds; Earl Hines, piano; Lawrence Dixon, guitar; Quinn Wilson, bass; Wallace Bishop, drums.
Grand Terrace Shuffle*, Bluebird 10351; New York, July 1939.
Father Steps In*, Bluebird 10377; same date.
Milton Fletcher, Ed Sims, Walter Fuller, trumpets; George Dixon, trumpet, alto; Ed Burke, Joe McLewis, John Ewing, trombones; Omer Simeon, Leroy Harris, Budd Johnson, Robert Crowder, reeds; Hines, piano; Claude Roberts, guitar; Quinn Wilson, bass; Alvin Burroughs, drums.

Tantalizing a Cuban*, Bluebird 10792; New York, June 1940.
Same personnel except Shirley Clay replaces Milton Fletcher.

Jelly, Jelly*, Bluebird 11065; Hollywood, December 1940.
Harry Jackson, Rostelle Reese, Leroy White, trumpets; Ed Fant, Joe McLewis, John Ewing, trombones; George Dixon, trumpet, alto, baritone; Leroy Harris, Scoops Carry, Willie Randall, Franz Jackson, Budd Johnson, reeds; Hines, piano; Hurley Ramey, guitar; Truck Parham, bass; Alvin Burroughs, drums.

Windy City Jive, Bluebird 11329; Hollywood, August 1941.

Yellow Fire, Bluebird 11308; same date.

Harry Jackson, Tommy Enoch, Freddy Webster, trumpets; George Hunt, trombone replaces John Ewing; Buddy Taylor, drums replaces Burroughs; all other personnel same.

Second Balcony Jump, Bluebird 11567; New York, March 1942.
Harry Jackson, Shorty McConnell, Jesse Miller, trumpets; George Hunt, Gerald Valentine, Joe McLewis, trombones; Skeeter Best replaces Ramey; all other personnel same.

EARL HINES QUARTET:

Honeysuckle Rose, Epic LN 3223; New York, February 1937.
Budd Johnson, tenor; Omer Simeon, clarinet; Hines, piano; Wallace Bishop drums.

LIONEL HAMPTON ORCHESTRA:

Rock Hill Special, Camden 517; Chicago, October 1938.
Walter Fuller, trumpet; Omer Simeon, George Oldham, Robert Crowder, Budd Johnson, reeds; Lionel Hampton, Spencer Adams, piano; Jesse Simpkins, bass; Alvin Burroughs, drums.

COLEMAN HAWKINS ORCHESTRA:

Bu-Dee-Daht*, Apollo 752; New York, February 1944.
Ed Vanderveer, Vic Coulson, Dizzy Gillespie, trumpets; Budd Johnson, Leonard Lowry, Coleman Hawkins, Ray Abrams, Don Byas, Leo Parker, reeds; Clyde Hart, piano; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Max Roach, drums.

BILLY ECKSTINE ORCHESTRA:

Rhythm in a Riff*, National 9014; New York, March 1945.
Gail Brockman, Marion Hazel, Shorty McConnell, Fats Navarro, trumpets; Howard Scott, Taswell Baird, Alfred Outcalt, Gerald Valentine, trombones; John Jackson, Sonny Stitt, Dexter Gordon, Budd Johnson, Leo Parker, reeds; John Malachi, piano; Connie Wainright, guitar; Tommy Potter, bass; Art Blakey, drums. Billy Eckstine, vocals and valve trombone.
Blowin' the Blues Away, transcription; Hollywood, summer 1945.

Airmail Special*, transcription; same date.
Gene Ammons replaces Dexter Gordon; all other personnel the same.

COLEMAN HAWKINS ORCHESTRA:

Jumpin' for Jane, Victor LJM 1017; New York, December 1947.
Fats Navarro, trumpet; J. J. Johnson, trombone; Budd Johnson, alto; Coleman Hawkins, tenor; Marion DiVeta, baritone; Hank Jones, piano; Chuck Wayne, guitar; Jack Lesburg, bass; Max Roach, drums.

BENNY GREEN ORCHESTRA:

La vie en rose, Jubilee; New York, August 1950.
Benny Green, trombone; Budd Johnson, tenor; Jimmy Jones, piano; John Collins, guitar; Tommy Potter, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

BUDD JOHNSON ORCHESTRA:

A la Mode*, Felsted FAJ 7007; New York, February 1958.
Charlie Shavers, trumpet; Budd Johnson, tenor; Ray Bryant, piano; Joe Benjamin, bass; Jo Jones, drums.
Leave Room in your Heart for Me*, Felsted FAJ 7007; same date.
Add Vic Dickenson, trombone; Al Sears, baritone; Burt Keyes, piano, organ, replaces Ray Bryant.

*Arrangements by Budd Johnson.

RECORD REVIEWS

MILES DAVIS: "Sketches of Spain."
Columbia CL 1480.

Miles Davis, trumpet and flugelhorn with orchestra conducted by Gil Evans.
Concierto de Aranjuez; Will o' the Wisp;
The Pan Piper; Saeta; Solea.

This is the third lp Davis has recorded in collaboration with Gil Evans, and anyone whose enthusiasm was aroused by the first two will find no quarrel with this release. Yet, although "Sketches of Spain" is undoubtedly the best in the series so far, it nonetheless suggests some pertinent questions about the range, depth and artistic validity of the Davis-Evans collaborations as a whole. Evans is unquestionably an extremely skilled orchestrator, and in this direction he has produced his best work on this occasion; the sounds he obtains from this orchestra are complex and subtle, and one can have little doubt that they are precisely the sounds he means to get. But underlying this meticulous writing is the fact that there is really no original material used in the album—that Evans is not composing. His work, though it abounds in craftsmanship and formal elegance, does not have the direction or emotional conviction of the compositions of a Monk or a Mingus.

"Miles Ahead," the first album Evans and Davis recorded together after the 1948 Capitol sessions, utilized a melange of popular songs, light concert material and a solitary Evans original. The second album was entirely based upon Gershwin's somewhat shaky "folk-opera," and the present recording draws upon the Guitar Concerto of Joaquin Rodrigo for the major section of this album, and for the rest, reworks three folk melodies and a piece by De Falla

which also has its roots in a folk tune. Not unnaturally, as a result, the album is almost entirely removed from jazz as such. To be sure, one hears a steady beat from time to time; some jazz musicians are used in the orchestra; and much of Davis's part is pure improvisation, yet all these elements can be found in other musics, and the use of any one or all of them does not necessarily make jazz.

The first track, and the longest piece in the album is **Concierto de Aranjuez**, which is actually Evans' extension and rewriting of the second movement from the work of the same name for guitar and orchestra by Rodrigo. This performance contains all the faults and virtues to be found in the work of Davis and Evans. The opening statement is typical of Evans, a subtle many-faceted crescendo; adorned by castanets it introduces Davis's theme statement over the orchestra. Evans uses an orchestra composed almost entirely of brass and woodwinds to establish a sonority somewhere between the jazz band and the symphony ensemble. This striking timbre represents Evans' only real achievement, an achievement no less real for being set in a no man's land between the European concert platform and the American jazz performance. Here Evans is not a composer then; he is purely a creator of sound. In this half-lit world, the playing of Miles Davis is perfectly in context, matching the sound of the orchestra with an equally personal, and equally esoteric, tone which, removed from jazz surroundings of his own small group, ceases to have any jazz significance and becomes merely a unique noise. One has only to imagine Louis Armstrong or Charlie Parker playing against one of Evans'

scores to realize how little Davis's tone owes to jazz tradition, and how well suited it is to the musical wilderness which Evans has chosen to inhabit. The complement of trumpet and orchestra is perfectly demonstrated in the first part of the **Concierto**, a slow and stately discursion in which the sound hangs like that well-known "cloud" which Evans has discussed in connection with the Claude Thornhill orchestra. Castanets introduce the second section which finds Davis in mute; pizzicato bass states the rhythm and furnishes some link with the world of jazz, while the castanets and other percussion, though extensively used in this section, are used largely for their tonal value rather than as rhythmic instruments.

The first theme is restated by full orchestra, and is a quite remarkable piece of scoring, full of tiny jeweled faces, and very similar in effect to the work of Frederick Delius; in fact, this final section has much of the atmosphere of **Walk to the Paradise Garden**, and is much nearer to such music than to jazz.

Will o' the Wisp is a single statement by Davis, with an added rhythmic figure by the orchestra, of **Cancion del Fuego Fatuo**, from De Falla's **El Amor Brujo**, followed by a roaming and dissonant coda built around the orchestral figure which plainly shows Evans' real lack of any compositional powers.

The second side of the lp consists of three folk melodies which Evans has reorchestrated to form a remarkable and satisfying suite, much of which has more connection with the jazz world than the first side. On **Pan Piper**, Davis opens muted and out of tempo against a background of flutes; the rhythm is introduced once again on bass, and woodwind

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and trumpet take up a repetitive figure, against which Davis develops an adequate solo. An astonishing piece follows, the *Saeta*. There, bassoon introduces a passage by snare drum and tambourine which is, in turn, enlarged by a trumpet call, cleverly varied to introduce different lines for each man in the section. Davis then takes over and delivers his solo against a background of subdued and sustained chords from the woodwind punctuated by the percussion. At the end of his solo the percussion returns and strikes up its march beat once more, and to the sounds of trumpets the percussion moves along its way. This is, I think, the most successful track on the album, and certainly contains the most spectacular moments. And if he had done nothing else, Evans here managed to capture something of the Spanish character. The final selection, *Solea*, comes nearer than anything else to being jazz. It uses a steady rhythm laid down by bass and percussion, and essays the most elaborate solo of the syncopated phrasing and implied double-time from the melody instruments which one might expect from a jazz performance. Davis here says the most elaborate solo of the lp, attempting some of the effects obtained by the Andalusian singers; however his comparatively straight tone, with its absence of vibrato and lack of vocalisation, which had stood him in such good stead throughout the album, leaves him rather helpless in his quest for such overt emotion. The work of men like Sonny Rollins, Jackie McLean, and to some extent Johnny Griffin and the forgotten Clarence Shaw, immediately suggests a comparison on the same emotional level with these singers. With Davis, I hear only *straining after mere imitation*. The impression which "*Sketches of Spain*" gives is on the whole satisfying. The music is at least one step removed from the jazz idiom, and for much of the time considerably further away from its parent style. That the "sketches" grew out of jazz seems incontrovertible; that it has moved away without yet becoming comparable to European art music seems equally obvious. Clearly the genre is incomplete, for in any style the work of the orchestrator is incomplete, without the essential compositional basis, and the composer has not yet arrived in the field in which Gil Evans works. The role of the soloist is considerably lessened. The soloist here is largely an interpreter and only occasionally a creator. The work of Evans, therefore, will perhaps become a minor curiosity, attractive and repaying study up to a point, yet in the end

failing at anything deeper than technical interest. Beyond the elegance and the dazzling haze of sound, nothing remains.

Jack Cooke

"PETE FOUNTAIN Salutes the Great Clarinetists." Coral CRL 57333.

Pete Fountain, clarinet; with orchestra directed by Charles Bud Dant. *Woodchoppers' Ball; Petite Fleur; Sometimes I'm Happy; Frenesi; When my Baby Smiles at Me; March of the Bob Cats; Begin the Beguine; Me and My Shadow; Green Eyes; Let's Dance; My Inspiration; Amapola.*

In other contexts Fountain has shown himself to be a more than capable improviser, but here he turns in a series of extremely dreary performances, rarely deviating from the melodies as written. The scores are conceived primarily as a backdrop, are played in a dull and mechanical way, and in their utter lack of enterprise confirm that the production of the record was solely a commercial undertaking.

Michael James

TUBBY HAYES: "Tubby's Groove" Tempo TAP 29.

Tubby Hayes, vibes, tenor sax; Terry Shannon, piano; Jeff Clyde, bass; Phil Seamen, drums. *Tin Tin Daeo; Embers; Like Someone in Love; The Surrey with the Fringe on Top; Sunny Monday; Blue Hayes.*

Tubby is a twenty-five-year-old Londoner previously heard on Dizzy Reece's "Blues in Trinity" lp. "Tubby's Groove" represents a striking advance in his thinking, and is a moving and vital statement by any criterion. An intelligent and sensitive performer, he is fast welding elements from Johnny Griffin and Sonny Rollins into a personal style. His magnificent technique enables him to interpret the most involved phrases with confidence. His tone, bold and caressing by turns, is invariably well-suited to his melodic substance. The emotional compass of his music is a good deal wider than is general with jazzmen of his generation, ranging from the romantic air of *Someone* through the brooding *Sunny Monday* (a delightful tune by Chicago musician John Hines, with the main eights in 3/4) to the swashbuckling exuberance of *Tin Tin Daeo* and *Surrey*; the latter incidentally, is not a mere pastiche of the Rollins version. *Blue Hayes* is an ultra-slow twelve-bar blues with stop-time passages on which the whole group plays with commendable involvement. Hayes' one weakness is an occasional repetitiveness in double-time, but especially in view of his youth there is every likelihood that he will overcome this failing.

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- 1007—BLUES by LONNIE JOHNSON
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On **Embers**, Hayes plays vibes; this track has an attractive melody and unusual construction, and it finds Hayes in dulcet mood. The rhythm team is very good, with Shannon particularly deserving praise. His introduction to **Someone** is beautifully apt as is the support he gives Hayes throughout.

Michael James

"THE JAZZ MODES." Atlantic 1306. Julius Watkins, french horn; Charlie Rouse, tenor; Gildo Mahones, piano; Martin Rivera, bass; Ron Jefferson, drums; Chino Pozo, bongos; Eileen Gilbert, vocal on all but **Knittin'**.

Blue Flame; **Knittin'**; **Glad That I Found You**; **Princess**.

Add **Sahib Shehab**, baritone saxophone; **Jimmy Wormworth** replaces Jefferson; Pozo out.

The Oblong; 1-2-3-4-0 in Syncopation; **Mood in Motion**; This 'N That.

No one can deny that all of the participants here work hard and tastefully, and there seems to have been a strong effort to mold a unified group which would play real compositions. However, the result is merely a rather sophisticated blowing session.

Neither of the two main soloists was then of sufficient caliber to sustain interest. This lp was made before Charlie Rouse joined Mork, and Rouse is today a better soloist than he was here. He plays well in angular lines that are rather strictly bound to the beat, and rather slight melodically. His work on **Knittin'** is an effort that deserves commendation, but as an improvisation it has thin melodic content. Watkins displays an overall mastery of his instrument and at least on **Knittin'** his work has unity and point.

The scores and arrangements are done with care, but the effort seems wasted on material as basically trite as most of these numbers are. **Princess** and **Mood in Motion** are exempt from such criticism but their development does not do justice to the possibilities.

Miss Gilbert's vocal contributions are wordless. Outside of one or two possible successes in the Ellington canon, I do not feel that this sort of thing has been done to any real point other than a sort of bland artiness.

It is not alone in the vocals that the Ellington style comes to mind. Throughout the set there are traces and touches of Ellington that never coalesce into a definite image.

H. A. Woodfin

PETE JOHNSON: "Pete's Blues".

Savoy MG 14018.

Pete Johnson, piano; **Pete's Lonesome Blues**.

Add J. C. Heard, drums; **Mr. Drums Meets Mr. Piano**. Add Jim Shirley, guitar; Al Hall, bass; **Mutiny in the Doghouse**. Add **Albert Nicholas**, clarinet; **Mr. Clarinet Knocks Twice**. Add **Ben Webster**, tenor; **Ben Rides Out**. Add **Oran Hot Lips Page**, trumpet; **Page Mr. Trumpet**; Add J. C. Higginbottom, trombone; J. C. from K. C.; Pete's housewarming.

Page, trumpet; **Clyde Bernhardt**, trombone; **Budd Johnson**, tenor; **Don Stovall**, alto; **Johnson**, piano; **Shirley**, guitar; **Abe Bolar**, bass; **Jack 'the Bear' Parker**, drums. **Atomic Boogie**; **Back Room Blues**; **1280 Stomp**. Add **Etta Jones**, vocals; **I May Be Wonderful**; **Man Wanted**.

This lp was culled from the defunct National label. It is not very important or even especially good, but it does represent a kind of rugged unpretentious jazz which always has been and always will be around in one guise or another. Its mainstay is the blues and only two tracks here are not blues.

The best things are Lips Page's trumpet (not enough, but we must be grateful, I suppose, for what little we get of him on lp); Pete's piano, not at its very best, but good; Nicholas' clarinet, another rarity on microgroove; Shirley's bluesy guitar and Parker's drumming. Ben is not comfortable and growls too much. Higginbotham is content to play clichés with verve. Budd has too little solo space, but what he has again proves him to be a neglected man with his own style. Stovall's alto is in a Hodges-Tab Smith groove with plenty of swing and nice sound. On **Back Room Blues** he plays an interesting chorus with intimations of things to come. The rhythm is good throughout, but J. C. gets a little heavy here and there. There are two sessions here, one an a&r man's concoction, with the add-an-instrument gimmick and the cute titles, the other a business date with an eye on the r-and-b market of the day. Etta Jones sings in a Dinah Washington (early, or **Evil Girl** Dinah) manner; nothing profound but with a nice beat and disarming manner.

Man Wanted, is previously unreleased. The second date was better organized, but solo spots, except for Pete, are short.

On his duet with J. C. Heard, Pete proves the injustice of dubbing him a boogie woogie pianist; his roots are in Hines and James P. as well as in Kansas City Blues. Shirley's guitar blends interestingly with the piano and bass; his "humming" effect is personal and distinctive. Al Hall is one of the most musical and reliable of bassists. Nicholas' singing tone has a nice edge, and his fluidity reminds me at times of Bigard, although he is a less mannered player. **Housewarming**

is a good track, with Lips showing some of the "false fingering" that was his own and some of the strength that was his, too. Pete's exuberant the ground.

solo is cut off by the red light—there isn't even time for the final ensemble chord. **Paging Mr. Trumpet** shows Lips working hard to get things off the ground.

On the band tracks Lips is a tower of strength, leading the ensembles, setting the riffs and playing a few fierce growl choruses here and there. Lips' growl-and-plunger style bears little resemblance to the Miley-Williams kind, being more earthy and violent. (The tender side of Lips is not in evidence on this album, nor is his wonderful singing). Pete's boogie woogie on **Atomic** is the streamlined kind; the riffs keep things moving. The lugubrious introduction on **Man Wanted** is tongue-in-cheek and it gets to jump, with a good chorus by Lips.

This one gives an interesting glimpse of one kind of jazz of 1946, and some small indication of the prowess of a great jazz trumpeter. Savoy would do well to reissue the good Lips sides with Big Sid and Byas and Clyde Hart and the later ones with Bostic and Tiny Grimes.

Dan Morgenstern

LEE KONITZ: "You and Lee". Verve MGV-8362.

Lee Konitz, alto; Jim Hall, guitar or Bill Evans, piano; Sonny Dallas, bass; Roy Haynes, drums; brass section personnel not listed; all arrangements by Jimmy Giuffre.

Everything I've Got Belongs to You; **You Don't Know What Love Is**; **You're Driving Me Crazy**; **I Didn't Know About You**; **You're Clear Out of This World**; **The More I See You**; **You Are Too Beautiful**; **I'm Getting Sentimental Over You**.

There seem to be two possibilities: this might be an attempt to integrate Jimmy Giuffre's pen and Lee Konitz's sax in a joint effort; on the other hand, Verve may have been thinking primarily of a way of presenting Konitz in a different setting. Either way it just doesn't come off convincingly. The combination of Giuffre's writing and Konitz's playing results in real musical conflict. Their inherently different musical conceptions gives this album a kind of split personality, something like two different artists, each with his own brush and ideas, painting on the same canvas at the same time. I have long been a fan of both these musicians, but I don't think this joint effort measures up to anything they have done individually. I hesitate to use comparison as a means of criticism, but one can't help noticing in this case how much

more homogeneous and integrated the Miles Davis-Gil Evans collaborations are—just to name one instance. Granted the Davis-Evans lp's are more ambitious projects in many respects (for instance, instrumentation and form), still, their relative success stems mainly from the fact that the two men are able to apprehend each other musically. Giuffre supplies a kind of setting that is rhythmically and melodically so far removed from Konitz's concept that it seems to straitjacket his playing. An improviser in the truest sense of the word, Lee is without a doubt at his best in a simple, uninvolved environment; that is, working with just a rhythm section where his ability to weave and develop a line, with all the subtle complexities of his style, has the freedom it needs.

So many of the background figures Giuffre uses in his scoring (at times almost Basie-like) sound a trifle "square", edgy, and generally unrelated to Lee's playing. His backgrounds—even though at times well-tinted with dissonance—are actually somewhat conventional, and often in a "folkfunk" idiom out of place here.

Giuffre's insistence on using muted brass throughout makes for a sameness of color that wears thin, and there are no solos for the brass. However, one bright moment is a short, unaccompanied piano solo by Bill Evans on **You Don't Know What Love Is**. Guitarist Jim Hall and pianist Evans—both sensitive and experienced accompanists—alternately work with the excellent rhythm section of Haynes and Dallas. Generally speaking, **Everything I've Got, Clear Out of This World**, and portions of **I'm Getting Sentimental Over You** are the best tracks, and then there is **You Are Too Beautiful**...

Herb Pilhofer

HAROLD LAND: "West Coast Blues!" Jazzland JLP20.

Joe Gordon, trumpet; Harold Land, tenor; Wes Montgomery, guitar; Barry Harris, piano; Sam Jones, bass; Louis Hayes, drums. **Ursula**; **Don't Explain**; **Klactoveedsedsteen**; **West Coast Blues**; **Terrain**; **Compulsion**. Harold Land, who leads this pickup group, was raised in L.A., but had to go East to find recognition—something that is true of many good Negro musicians born or raised in California. Land plays with great vigor and sensitivity. His style is strongly influenced by Parker and Rollins although he occasionally stretches on a chord like Coltrane. No tempo, fast or slow, bothers him. He has the equipment: fast technique, great drive and fairly good melodic ideas. In recent years his tone has softened and that helps his ballad

work; his solo on Billie Holiday's **Don't Explain** is full of passion. Land writes well too. **Ursula** is a lovely theme and should become a part of the jazz musician's repertoire. All his compositions have stimulating chord progressions.

Joe Gordon generally isn't up to Land's standard here. His lyrical solo in **Ursula** stands out, and he is calm and orderly on **Terrain**; elsewhere, however, his melodic lines lack continuity.

Wes Montgomery also plays his best solo in **Ursula**, which, you can gather, is a wonderful track. Montgomery is a solid and thoughtful musician, but on the basis of his work here, I wouldn't say that Charlie Christian has been threatened. Perhaps he doesn't get enough space. Here he does not use the Django-like octave technique which has won him praise. Barry Harris is, for me, the star of this set. His touch has grown fuller and more attractive; he is playing with more strength than ever; his melodic sense remains wonderful and all his solos are excellent. He also picks out some lovely accompanying chords on **Terrain**. Few pianists can come close to him as a section man. His bursting-with-ideas spot on **Klacto** is reminiscent of Bud Powell, although Harris is not as forceful and percussive as Powell.

Louis Hayes' playing here is more tasty and economical than his work with Cannonball. And Sam Jones is Mr. Strongman as usual; his time is perfect, his tone big and round. This lp is one of the best things to come out of California in years.

Harvey Pekar

"FURRY LEWIS". Folkways FA 3823 A.

One could review this record either as a musical production or as a piece of folklore—the work of a man who grew up with the blues, but who, according to the notes, has not sung or played much in the last twenty years. Musically Lewis' abilities vary. He has a fascinating style, or variety of styles, on guitar, but his voice has a dry and monotonous quality, as though he were talking rather than singing. His guitar technique in this album is rusty; mistakes and fuzzy lines crop up repeatedly. On two tracks the guitar is out of tune; there can be no excuse for releasing **East St. Louis Blues** commercially.

The poetry of Furry Lewis' songs is unusual by current blues standards, and is perhaps the most attractive feature of the album. The version of **Casey Jones** that Lewis sings has marvelous lyrics and a beautiful guitar accompaniment. The right hand picking technique which Lewis uses seems the predecessor



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of the current white country guitar styles of Merle Travis and Chet Atkins. The thumb keeps a steady bass beat while the first and second fingers pick out the melody or improvise around it on the treble strings. The effect is as though two guitars are playing simultaneously.

On four selections Lewis uses a bottleneck worn on his little finger to chord the guitar. After each sung phrase the guitar repeats the melody, and since the singing is often close to talking anyway, the effect is like a two way conversation. Furry's guitar playing is imaginative; a nice bass line appears on **I'm Goin To Brownsville** and a Leadbelly-like bass figure on **East St. Louis Blues**. Spoken reminiscences on two tracks tell of Furry's experiences playing guitar for a patent medicine salesman, working four hours a night for the impressive sum of two dollars. He tells of his first recording date in Chicago, and the usual gallon of whiskey. Although for the most part the interview is intelligent and effective, at one point Charters asks, apparently in all seriousness, what kind of bottle Lewis used for his bottleneck playing, and Furry replies that he used Royal Crown Cola bottles. Shades of market research!

I think that there were several unfortunate mistakes in producing this record. For one thing the entire recording was made in just two visits, and almost entirely on the second visit. During the six month interval Lewis should have been given access to a guitar so that he could practice. I also believe that the cream of a singer's repertoire, especially a sixty-year-old man who hasn't really played or sung in twenty years, cannot be glimpsed in a single afternoon. More time should have been spent with the artist, then perhaps a single record from the repertoire of a lifetime would make more sense.

What we have in this recording is one beautiful track (**Casey Jones**), a number of adequate ones, and several that should not have been included for obvious musical reasons (out-of-tune guitar, strained voice). Was it really necessary to include the rather commonplace version of **John Henry**, probably the twentieth or thirtieth such recording in the last ten years? Undoubtedly Charters was working with limited resources of money and time, but perhaps the job is better postponed than completed this way. We are left with a portrait of Furry Lewis that implies rather than states his abilities. A potentially fine musical experience is reduced to a dusty piece of folklore. Charter's notes are more atmospheric than informative, in telling us Lewis'

life story.

Dick Weisman

"SHELLY MANNE Quintet at the Blackhawk, Volume I." Contemporary. Joe Gordon, trumpet; Richie Kamuca, tenor; Victor Feldman, piano; Monty Budwig, bass; Shelly Manne, drums.

Summertime; Our Delight; Poinciana; Blue Daniel.

The missionaries—Harold Land, Dexter Gordon, and Carl Perkins—have had a belated influence on the West Coast Soft School. Shelly Manne's group, for instance, is almost where Clifford Brown-Max Roach were several years ago.

Summertime is fine—the best and most consistent track on the album. Joe Gordon states the melody and takes the lead-off solo. His playing is simple and moving; he must have been thinking of Miles' conception of the tune. Kamuca makes it too. He has been listening to the East Coast tenors, and his phrasing is tighter now and more on top of the beat. But his tone is still big and thick and soft. He can play melodically well-organized solos if the tempo doesn't rush him.

Feldman's solo style draws on several seemingly contradictory sources but, unlike Andre Previn or Pete Jolly, he manages to convey real emotion. On **Summertime** he plays a two-chord accompaniment reminiscent of Bill Evan's ethereal approach. Then he switches to a Red Garland approach, going into the upper reaches of the keyboard. But Feldman's personality manages to assert itself through the eclecticism. Perhaps it is because he really understands the men he's chosen as models and isn't afraid to take chances. On the fast tunes—**Poinciana** and **Our Delight**—he plays fairly commonplace ideas but swings with great vigor, and his left hand is very propulsive.

Joe Gordon begins **Our Delight** very nicely with restrained, well-shaped lines, but he explodes too soon, and repeats himself during the rest of the solo. Here Feldman, raining chords thick, hard, and fast, doesn't help. His touch is almost brutal, and I don't think he is a very sympathetic accompanist. Kamuca gets too much space here and on **Poinciana**. He swings, but doesn't sustain beyond two choruses. **Blue Daniel** is a pretty waltz by Frank Rosolino. Gordon plays with small but attractive tone and intense attack.

Manne plays extremely well throughout. What a wonderful technician! Always inventive and always listening to the soloist.

Harvey Pekar

RED PRYSOCK-SIL AUSTIN: "Battle Royal". Mercury 20434.

Rhythm and blues or rock 'n roll has been a whipping boy for almost as long as it has enjoyed popular success. Irate parents cite it as a cause for juvenile delinquency, some music critics deny that it is even music. People connected with jazz generally divide into two camps. The first says that rock 'n' roll is valuable because it has a "beat" and may be a stepping stone to jazz for listeners. The second will have absolutely nothing to do with it. Poor ol' Dick Clark used to be accused of being a Pied Piper leading adolescents into a sordid world of chewing gum and backbeats.

Granted that rock 'n' roll may stimulate a comparative handful of people to investigate jazz, but the vast majority will not get past it because music is not as important to them as it is to some of the jazz critics (who will not rest until Miles and Monk make the hit parade) and because contemporary jazz is harder to understand than the music of a swing band. To most people modern jazz is incoherent. They cannot understand the relationship between the original theme and the variations. I think jazz is the most exciting thing happening in music today, but what does a steelworker coming home from an eight hour shift care about Rollins—or Shakespeare or Stravinsky?

Rock 'n' roll is music for dancing. It gives kids a big fast beat, it has virility, and sometimes humor. It serves a healthy purpose. Red Prysock and Sil Austin are two outstanding exponents of the rock and roll tenor. I'm not familiar with their biographies but both sound as if they had a thorough jazz grounding. It sounds paradoxical but I think Lester Young may have had quite a bit of influence on this style. It was he who discovered that tension could be built up by holding a note through several chord changes—one of the rockers' favorite devices. They start each number playing more or less straight jazz, then revert to squealing and honking. The rhythm section (which includes Kenny Burrell and Milt Hinton) gradually increases in volume until the tenors are almost drowned out. (Can't you see yourself on that dance floor with your hair disheveled, swinging your chick in a very hip fashion while the crowd is stamping their feet and hollering, "Shake that thing?") Prysock particularly impressed me in his opening chorus on **Take the A Train**. He has nice ideas and a sound similar to Wardell Gray. Both men play very infectiously. Maybe they're not serious when they start to squeal and honk but they're having fun.

Dave Francis uses a two, four rimshot a lot like the one Ellington likes his drummers to use. It's used more as an accent than a backbeat. Frankly, I'd just as soon this music was popular as some of the more insipid West Coast jazz.

Harvey Pekar

KID ORY-RED ALLEN: "We've Got Rhythm". Verve MG V-1020.

Kid Ory, trombone; Red Allen, trumpet; Bob McCracken, clarinet; Cedric Heywood, piano; Frank Haggerty, guitar; Monty Corb, bass; Alton Redd, drums; vocals on tracks 2 and 7.

Christopher Columbus; Some of These Days; I Got Rhythm; Come Back Sweet Papa; San; Tuxedo Junction; Lazy River.

In California during the mid-forties Kid Ory had a jazz band mostly composed of what were then called "New Orleans veterans". They made beautiful and moving music, and I don't suppose I have ever heard a more unified ensemble—a group of men with such sureness and grace in doing what they wanted to do—or a group with a more specific ability to project feeling artistically. And, although I have heard other kinds of feeling and wider range of feeling in other instrumental jazz, I don't suppose I have heard any deeper feeling. It was feeling not only exposed, but truly and artistically transformed and ordered into musical expression. I expect that such disciplined group playing in that style is almost a lost art now, and a very great loss it is. It has been preserved on records, but not on many of Ory's records, for in the studio the band seldom played its singing, easy style but usually a rather nervous dixieland. (There is a *Girls All Crazy* on Decca that I think did capture the kind of ensemble feeling they could project in person.)

Since then, Ory has led several kinds of groups, of course.

The differences between Red Allen's style and Kid Ory's are much greater than the difference between Red Allen's and Lester Young's. Red Allen is a soloist, not an ensemble improviser; his lines are too active to be leads for this kind of polyphony, and I doubt that Red Allen should ever play in New Orleans ensembles (at least not very seriously). He can also find challenge in tunes with more complicated structures than these. I think that a program of Red Allen improvising on medium and slow pop tunes with a good rhythm section could be one of the great delights in all of jazz.

Red Allen could also give lessons to almost anyone in the use of dynamics and of the range of the trumpet. And in phrasing and rhythmic ease.

3 9 3

I don't suppose that any hornman who came along between Armstrong and Lester Young showed as much rhythmic flexibility and variety as Red Allen did and does. When he puts all this in order, he is a beautiful improviser, and his solo here on *Tuxedo Junction* shows it. Even when he darts and dances in one rhythmic, dynamic, harmonic or melodic direction after another, there is a joy of surprise that makes one believe (for a while anyway) that symmetry and order are not the only deeper pleasures. This running in several directions (*Lazy River* here is an example) has been called evidence of a "lack of taste". I might argue only with that choice of words, but I would rather save any such description for his up-tempo grandstanders (there are none here) which seem to me just genial and exuberant hollering. Even then—in fact all the time—he is always and only himself, with no apologies. A rare quality.

Most of Ory's solos are restatements of the melodies (*Sweet Papa*, *San*, *Some of These Day*) with slight changes which I don't think are effective one way or the other (as Armstrong or Bessie Smith's slight changes definitely are). On *I Got Rhythm* he tries for an invention but has no ideas. Still, there are *Tuxedo Junction* and *Christopher Columbus*. On *Tuxedo*, he takes a phrase which is really a perceptive simplification of the line and makes a solo of it. On *Columbus*, he takes a single simple invention on the chords and spins it out into a one-chorus melody. Both are examples of how to do something very lovely and very valid with the simplest of materials. I also think that in them we hear a man facing what abilities he does have and what he can do, admitting what he can't, and proceeding to make music. Kid Ory is 74 and still singing such lovely melodies as those two!

They've got rhythm indeed. Cedric Heywood plays a kind of Southwestern piano that also fits in very well with this string-of-solos conception—better than an earlier piano style might have, in fact. And, to contradict myself, the opening ensemble on *Some of These Days* is lovely.

Alton Redd has a couple of vocals that seem to me raucously mannered and forced. Why Redd? Red Allen was there.

Martin Williams

MAX ROACH: "Quiet As It's Kept". Mercury MG 20491.

Tommy Turrentine, trumpet; Stanley Turrentine, tenor; Julian Priester, trombone; Robert Boswell, bass; Max Roach, drums.



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Quiet as It's Kept; To Lady; Lotus Blossom; As Long as You're Living; The More I See You; Juliano.

Why has a musician as well endowed and as intelligent as Max Roach never been able to form a group which would provide an adequate outlet for his talents? A question as irksome as it is perplexing. None of the various Roach groups has shown a guiding conception which would make it anything more than a loose, often uneven, collection of soloists in which the leader's skill was largely wasted. And while one cannot deny historical importance to the Roach-Brown unit, the unsatisfactory quality of most of its recordings is now, I think, fairly evident. Even with more mature soloists like Rollins and Dorham, there was still little of real, group achievement. The succeeding groups have been even more diffuse and unstable.

Unfortunately, this present quintet was not the hoped for exception, and the individual performers are not yet skilled enough to maintain a consistently satisfactory level. Stanley Turrentine is the strongest soloist on this recording, but his work displays a vacillation among Parker, Hawkins, and Rollins—an instability natural to a growing talent, of course. Tommy Turrentine is still at an almost formless stage in style, and, while he seems to be a Miles Davis follower, he does not articulate his ideas with clarity. Julian Priester is disappointing throughout as he emulates the speed—and blandness—of the current J. J. Johnson without attention to what it is he is being so fast and so bland about.

Roach is a further and surprising disappointment. The usual subtlety of his work is conspicuously absent, and there is a quality of obvious pushing rather reminiscent of Buddy Rich.

However, in Robert Boswell this group has a strong asset. He works with a percussive and sharply defined attack which provides an usually full and deep background for the horns. Especially on *To Lady* and *Lotus Blossom* this ability is impressive.

While the failure of this recording is only too apparent, there is definite potential here besides Boswell's. Stanley Turrentine indicates on *The More I See* and *Quiet as It's Kept* that he is finding his way; Julian Priester can do much more than he does here, and Tommy Turrentine has a still inchoate but growing feeling for melody.

But none of this could replace the lack of conception and overall group purpose which still appears to plague Roach himself.

H. A. Woodfin

"The Happy Jazz of REX STEWART".
Prestige/Swingville 2006.

Rex Stewart, cornet, kazoo, vocals; John Dengler, bass saxophone, washboard, kazoo; Wilbert Kirk, harmonica, tambourine; Jerome Darr, amplified guitar; Chauncey Westbrook, guitar; Charles Lampkin, drums. *Red Ribbons*; *If I Could Me With You*; *Rasputin*; *Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone*; *Four or Five Times*; *You Can Depend On Me*; *San*; *I Would Do Most Anything for You*; *Tell Me*; *Nagaski*.

Duke Ellington was able to frame and set off Stewart in a way that drew the best from him, often with settings which required little more than a simple directness of him. But, like Cootie Williams, Barney Bigard, and Lawrence Brown, whom Ellington also, in a sense, created, the limitations of Stewart's style have become apparent since he left Ellington. His forceful attack (which owes a great deal to the Armstrong of the Hot Five period) has often had to compensate for conceptual failings or a simple lack of ideas.

This recording seems an attempt to recreate the skiffish sounds of The Mound City Blues Blowers and similar groups; the result is rather perversely archaic. Stewart shows up as a strong and crude soloist; his contributions are forceful but do not, I think, repay close examination. However, John Dengler is exceptionally interesting on the bass saxophone. He is amazingly agile on this clumsy instrument, and if his ideas are somewhat sketchy, they are expressed with great rhythmic ease and grace, particularly on *Tell Me* and *You Can Depend On Me*.

I regret that his work seems the only positive feature on the record. The guitar passages from Darr and Westbrook seem to me dull, while Lampkin's drumming is very back-beat conscious. Wilbert Kirk's harmonica on *If I Could Be With You* does not belong on a jazz date, but it would be fine on the soundtrack of a Jean Gabin film. Then there are kazoo solos.

H. A. Woodfin

ART TATUM: "Still More of the Greatest Piano of Them All".
Verve 8360.

Art Tatum, solo piano.

I Won't Dance; *I Can't Give You Anything But Love*; *Lullaby in Rhythm*; *Out of Nowhere*; *So Beats My Heart for You*; *Moonglow*; *I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues*; *It's Only A Paper Moon*; *Sunny Side of the Street*; *Do Nothing till You Hear from Me*.

Art Tatum illustrates the ambiguity of a word like "maturity" when it is applied to anything but the natural sciences. Tatum has a luminous touch and the greatest technique and harmonic imagination of any jazz pianist, and his style has

been original since he first started recording thirty years ago. Modern jazz has taught Harry Edison and Coleman Hawkins but could teach Tatum nothing—he had everything in 1940. Yet most of his records are interesting only technically.

I think that Tatum's conception of jazz has more to do with Paul Whiteman than with Miles Davis. He shifts voicing and tempo too often. Granted he has a great left hand, but the way he uses it detracts from his right. Teddy Wilson and Nat Cole may use stride figures, but they do so more discreetly. Hines, James P. Johnson, and Fats Waller played more right hand chords—their style was balanced.

The interest of most pianists who plays long single-note lines is horizontal. Tatum rarely plays a real melodic line when he employs a single-note style but plays scales and arpeggios. He never lays out; he fills every rest, and he doesn't care about pace. The sad part is that Tatum had melodic ability.

I'd like to cite Tatum's solo on *I'm in the Mood for Love* on Verve MG V8059 for comparison. The theme is stated simply. The second-chorus is pretty close to the melody. Tatum takes off on the third chorus, piling tension on tension, double timing to a final climax, then casually releasing the tension to a statement of the melody. In the process he stretches out on several chords like the most modern musician. He shifts accents brilliantly, now sitting right on the beat, now anticipating it. He does it so off-handedly that it leaves you breathless.

There is nothing on this set that approaches that mastery.

Harvey Pekar

JACK TEAGARDEN. "Jazz Maverick".
Roulette R25119.

Jack Teagarden, trombone and vocals; Don Goldie, trumpet and vocal on track 2; Henry Cuesta, clarinet; Don Ewell, piano; Stan Puls, bass; Ronnie Greb, drums. *Ever Lovin' Baby*; *Aunt Hager's Country Home*; *High Society*; *Blue Dawn*; *Riverboat Shuffle*; *Roundtable Romp*; *Ain't Cha Glad?* *A Hundred Years from Today*; *Tin Roof Blues*. Like Armstrong, like Hines, like Hawkins, Jack Teagarden survives from the mid-twenties into the sixties as a major jazzman, retaining a vitality and integrity in his own style. But like so many jazzmen of all styles and all ages, he is not really a leader with a comprehensive group conception, but a soloist; even more than most he has suffered from that fact, whether he was leading a "swing band" or a neo-dixieland group like this one.

Jack Teagarden is a leader almost

solely because he is a major jazz improviser. I think he should be limited only by whatever material he likes to play and sing—and sings and plays well—a proposition which can make it tough for him as a leader, and tough on the other members of his groups, even when they are, like several of these men, good musicians and flexible craftsmen to begin with. And his recent recordings have paradoxically not reflected the great trombonist and singer the way one would like to hear him. I don't know why this is so, exactly, but repertoire and a kind of strange imbalance in assigning solo space in instrumental vehicles and a lack of appropriateness in his vocals seem to figure in it.

There are four vocals here, and all of them sound rather uncomfortable to me. **Ever Lovin' Baby** (her real name is **Topsy**), the name-dropping jazz novelty **Aunt Hager's, Ain't Cha Glad**, and especially **A Hundred Years from Today** all seem taken a little too slow for the pieces involved.

Don Goldie is an astonishing trumpet player. A friend says he plays "like Phil Napoleon imitating Clifford Brown", and it's a phrase I am willing to appropriate. All that technique and undisciplined exuberance are just the qualities that will lead many to call him "not really a jazz player"; on the other hand, I wish I knew of ten symphony men that sure of their time. He has a break on **Riverboat Shuffle** that could only have been played by one who understands jazz. (That piece is almost foolproof if you take it at the pace Muggsy Spanier assigned to it. They do.)

If we are going to talk about the possibilities of an **interpretive** jazz, then that remarkable pianist Don Ewell will be one of the first men to consider. He is now going back to some of his earlier models (Hines and Stacey) to fit into this group. His introduction and solo on **Tin Roof** are fine examples of a player's discreet use of his own feelings to fit them to a given piece and given group.

And it is a discreet use of feeling that is probably the essence of Teagarden himself. On his solo in **Ain't Cha Glad** he shows again what really florid sentiments and florid lines he can handle as jazz, without schmaltz, sentimentality, or mere decorativeness. There is also a wonderful series of events on **High Society**: Goldie has an engaging solo based on the clarinet choruses in which he seems to say "Gosharootie, looks like I can do **anything!**" Then Teagarden re-enters with a fragment of the trio melody;

in a few bars, he is building a melodic improvisation of original, cohesive line and calmly articulated feeling that sounds like wisdom itself.

Martin Williams

BEN WEBSTER: "Ben Webster Meets Oscar Peterson." Verve MG V-8349. Ben Webster, tenor; Oscar Peterson, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Ed Thigpen, drums. **The Touch of Your Lips; When Your Lover Has Gone; Bye Bye Blackbird; How Deep is the Ocean; In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning; Sunday; This Can't Be Love.** To many artists there comes, with age, a ripening of style which enables them to achieve statements of admirable succinctness and precision. All they have to say seems to find its complete expression. One thinks of the late Yeats, the Bartok of the **Fourth Quartet**, the Schoenberg of the **String Trio**; they found in age the power to order their conceptions in marvellously illuminating ways. But this ripeness is not found only in the work of the major creators, and in the art of jazz Ben Webster has certainly become one of these masters for whom, in Edwin Muir's phrase, "all effort is to ease refined". Certain elements of his style represent a personal adaptation of Hawkins' methods. His rhythmic devices are the result of a deft molding of Hawkins' essentially rigid time patterns. His playing is not the constant flow of arpeggios we have come to expect from Hawkins, but we can note the influence in certain fast or medium tempo numbers where Webster does open up the chords in somewhat the same way. But in the important things he has gone his own way, and his total conception is the property of no one else.

He possesses a sharp melodic sense, enhanced by his vibrato—a delicate and expressive instrument in itself which punctuates and diminishes or intensifies the force of the line. Each phrase of a solo is rhythmically lifted and joined to the preceding and succeeding parts by a subtle and discreet propulsion which moves away from and then back to the beat with an amazing suppleness and deceptive ease. The phrases are wonderfully flexible, and lengths are determined by the shape of the developing line. They are often broken by rests, which he uses to lend greater impetus to his next phrase. At their best, his efforts have an organic quality and a completeness that frustrates description. And his deep devotion to his art is immediately apparent in every bar.

For Webster this is a fine recording. **The Touch of Your Lips** has a

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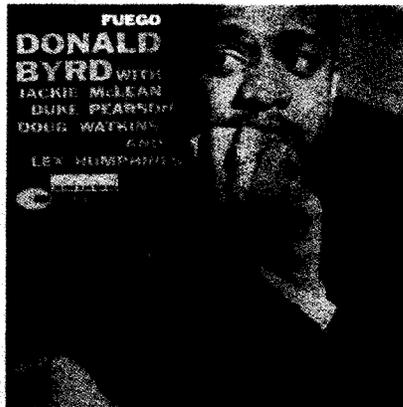
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splendidly paced and developed improvisation, and **When Your Lover Has Gone** has a wonderfully airy second chorus which did not pall for me on persistent replaying. He is no less impressive on the other numbers, all of which contain beautifully consistent solos. However, Verve has again chosen Oscar Peterson to back him. His accompaniments are obvious, and they miss the point of Webster's playing. (Why not Jimmy Rowles or Al Haig on Webster's dates?) In solo, Peterson plays nothing we have not heard from him before, often. Ray Brown, however, is a delight. When Peterson lays out on parts of **Bye Bye Blackbird** and leaves Brown alone behind Webster, a fine, edifying coalescence of skills takes place. Brown's solo work on **The Touch of Your Lips** and **This Can't Be Love** is equally exemplary. I cannot see that Ed Thigpen does any more than keep time.

H. A. Woodfin

TEDDY WILSON: "And Then They Wrote..." Columbia CL1442.

Teddy Wilson, piano; Major Holley, bass; Bert Dahl, drums. **King Porter Stomp**; If I Could Be With You for One Hour Tonight; **Honeysuckle Rose**; Sophisticated Lady; **Rosetta**; One O'Clock Jump; **Sunny Morning**; 'Round Midnight; **Artistry in Rhythm**; Lullaby of Birdland; **Misty**; The Duke. **EARL HINES: "Earl's Pearls"**. MGM E3832. Earl Hines, piano; William English, drums; Carl Pruitt, bass; Calvin Newborn, guitar. **Boogie Woogie on St. Louis Blues**; Tea for Two; **Stealin' Apples**; Willow Weep for Me; **I Can't Believe That You're in Love with Me**; **Rosetta**; Like When the Saints; **Satin Doll**; **Manhattan**; You Can Depend on Me; **Love Me or Leave Me**; The Song is Ended. The Teddy Wilson set is based on a gimmick (the performances aren't really tributes, and I doubt if the pieces are Wilson's private choices), but that doesn't really matter. He plays Henderson's version of **King Porter Stomp** rather than Morton's, Harry James' version of **One O'Clock**, a grossly simplified **'Round Midnight**, the banal **Misty** and the jazz version of Hollywood bombast in Stan Kenton's **Artistry in Rhythm**, but that's not really important either. He plays Brubeck's **The Duke** in a way that has nothing to do with Duke, and so fast that he makes that good piece sound downright flippant. And certainly he has recorded better versions of **Honeysuckle** and **Rosetta** before, but that sort of thing is bound to happen to anyone. But one reason that the earlier versions were better is important.

On the second chorus of **Lullaby of Birdland**, for sixteen bars we hear

that magic melodic invention, that original and surprising way of phrasing, that are Teddy Wilson. But what does matter is that that variation, and so much of the rest of this lp, seems, not really perfunctory, but lacking the joy and life of improvisation and discovery that Teddy Wilson's playing once had so uniquely. (Do you know his solo on **Body and Soul** with the Goodman trio, and his solo version?) It seems to me especially ironic that this could be said of Wilson, because one would think that there would be no temptation for him to tone down his music to reach a new audience. For some time now he has been no longer hip with the youngsters. And I think it was apparent long ago, because of his unique gentle ways of expressing himself, that he can function before a rather chic club and record-buying audience just as he is, playing his best. A few years ago, on the "Jazz Giants of '56" lp and on **Blues For The Oldest Profession**, it seemed the danger of Wilson's becoming a glib or mechanical performer was past. Here, it seems to me, only **If I Could Be With You**, **Sophisticated Lady**, and Wilson's own **Sunny Morning** are played with the feeling and taste of Teddy Wilson, and, the first especially, with real variational ideas. Among them we can hear those lessons of phrasing, voicing, variety of mood and tempo, continuity, and individuality that he can teach so well—without having to go back to the Wilson of ten, twenty or thirty years ago to hear them. Then Hines in 1959. He was Wilson's master, of course, an advanced guard jazzman in the twenties and a major soloist in the thirties and forties. He played the Embers last year with a group like the one on this lp. How does Hines play for such an audience? On this record there is certainly nothing of the daring, leaping Hines of **I Ain't Got Nobody** of 1929 (now on Epic 3295) nor is there anything like the powerful improvisational tour de force of his solos on **Brussels' Hustle** of 1958 (on Felsted 7002). There are a couple of vocals, apparently intended to be Nat Cole-ish. There is **The Saints**. There are several choruses of trilling on **St. Louis Blues**—and just in case that isn't killing all the people, he gets some other things going (some musical, some humorous) to keep the other people happy. There is a rather cohesive group, and lots of space goes to guitar and bass solos which you may feel that you've heard before. But most important, Earl Hines plays with the life and conviction of Hines most of the time, and sometimes,

musical ideas and excitement. **Rosetta** is almost the leaping bravura Hines; **Tea for Two** has some real ideas behind the conventional and flashy facade; so does **Stealin' Apples** despite the rather rushed air. **Willow** is a well-proportioned set of musical and emotional variations. Some things happen on **The Song is Ended** too. Earl Hines is still a major jazzman.

Martin Williams.

"BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON Volume 2"

Riverside RLP 12-136
The Black Snake Moan; Stocking Feet Blues; **Chock House Blues**; Broke and Hungry; **Chinch Bug Blues**; Deceitful Brownskin Blues; **Lonesome House Blues**; Balky Mule Blues; **Blind Lemon's Penitentiary Blues**; That Black Moan #2; **Long Distance Moan**; Bakershop Blues.

"MA RAINEY, Volume 2."

Riverside RLP 12-137.
Broken Hearted Blues.
 Accompanied by Lovie Austin's Blues Serenaders; Tommy Ladnier, cornet; Jimmy O'Bryant, clarinet; Lovie Austin, piano. **Ma Rainey's Mystery Record**; Lawd Send Me A Man; Southern Blues; (add ?? Harris, tenor.) **Honey Where You Been So Long**, Lucky Rock Blues, **Those Dogs of Mine.**
 With the Georgia Band; ?? Fuller, trumpet; Al Wynn, trombone; unknown saxophonist; Thomas Dorsey, piano; Cedric Odom, drums. **Broken Hearted Blues**; Jealousy Blues; **Seeking Blues.**

Accompanied by Jimmy Blythe, piano. **Mountain Jack Blues**; Don't Fish in My Sea; Accompanied by Cow-Cow Davenport, piano; B. T. Wingfield, cornet; unknown clarinetist. **So Soon This Morning.**
 Unlike country blues singers who sing a melodic line with forward momentum over a steady guitar beat, Blind Lemon Jefferson achieves a recitative style in many of the numbers on his lp. On **Black Snake Moan**, a good example, he declares each of the three lines which make up a verse, after striking a forceful preparatory chord, either over a soft guitar tremolo or unaccompanied. The pauses between the vocal lines are often filled in with descending guitar runs (which turn up on other numbers), with chords that emphasize the natural harmonic pattern of the blues.

This declamatory style is not the only way Lemon delivered a song. **Stocking Feet Blues**—the master from the recording date is adjacent to **Black Snake Moan**, is sung over a steady beat—but the recitative style is his most effective way. Besides being suited to his voice, it is by nature dramatic and it is just this, I think, that is responsible for the intensity of the best of Lemon's records and puts him above most

country blues singers of his time. It is possible to trace a gradual change in Lemon's use of the recitative through the numbers on the lp, which are arranged more or less chronologically. Perhaps **Black Snake Moan**, recorded in 1926 can be said to be a pure example; the 1929 **Black Snake Moan #2** finds him using the same pattern of guitar fill-ins, but delivering the vocal lines in a less dramatic and so less striking manner, blurring their once strong outlines with his guitar accompaniment. The last three songs, all recorded in 1929, have a rather lazy quality which is a let-down after the compelling earlier ones. Lemon's verses are, as a rule, less remarkable than the way he delivers them. The choruses are rather loosely strung together, few of them memorable for their imagery, and it is only rarely that a single idea is developed through succeeding choruses (**Long Distance Moan**). The most interesting metaphor, which occurs in other blues with other singers too, is the black snake; I'm not quite sure what it means, but I have an idea. As far I can tell the bakershop in **Bakershop Blues** seems to be a whorehouse. While four of the selections on the Blind Lemon Jefferson lp (**The Black Snake Moan, Stocking Feet Blues, Chinch Bug Blues, Deceitful Brownskin Blues**) were previously unreissued—*mirabile dictu!* (the rest come from out of print Riverside LPs 1014 and 1053)—the Ma Rainey lp is made up entirely of material from the 10" lp series (1016, 1032, 1044). The country blues as exemplified by Blind Lemon was, even as late as 1929, a remarkably pure, but limited, music. In contrast, Ma Rainey's music is much less homogeneous, not only in material which included, as early as 1923, thirty-two bar songs (of the type on which Mezzrow based his **Comin' On With The Come On**), the sixteen bar vaudeville tunes that were so popular among jazzmen then, as well as classic blues; but also in the complex instrumental accompaniment found on many of her records. This accompaniment is of course instrumental jazz which resulted, in my opinion, not as a development out of the country blues (since they could develop only into Rhythm and Blues), but from an application of an already existing playing style to blues material. At its best, as in Tommy Ladnier's 'solos' on **Lucky Rock Blues, Southern Blues**, and particularly **Ma Rainey's Mystery Record**, jazz of this kind has more sheer musical interest and a vastly greater potential than any country blues. At its worst, as in the saxophone on **Broken-**

Hearted Blues, it is bad in a way a country blues singer simply couldn't be bad. And in between it could fall back on riffs (in 1923!) as—again—on **Lucky Rock Blues**, or to be merely competent when played in good style with the right intonation, as the trumpet solo on **Seeking Blues**. The point is that for all its impure influence it was jazz that had it in itself to be great art, and not the country blues, which could achieve only sincerity. Ma Rainey's preeminence among the blues singers of the twenties—the quality that makes her better than, say, Ida Cox—seems to be primarily the vibrant timbre of her voice; phrasing and the shadings she could give that voice seem to be of only secondary importance. And it may be, although it is hard to tell on acoustical recordings, that she varied the voice production to effect a kind of registration, although she never used anything as obvious as the falsetto of certain blues singers. On **Mountain Jack Blues** the melodic line is virtually on the same note, and since she does not vary her treatment of it from chorus to chorus, the overall effect is dull. But given the lovely melody of **Don't Fish in My Sea**, she gives us great singing, in spite of Jimmy Blythe's accompaniment, which is too much in the vein of the Harlem stride pianists. Although it is possible for contemporary players to reproduce the great instrumental performances of the past, as the revivalists have shown, the great vocal performances are preserved only on records. Riverside has done a service by making available again the Ma Rainey sides which have been out of print as reissues for a few years—not to speak of the original issues. But there are still plenty more where these came from.

J. S. Shipman

"NEWPORT JAZZ FESTIVAL ALL STARS." Atlantic 1331. Buck Clayton, trumpet; Vic Dickenson, trombone; Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; Bud Freeman, tenor; George Wein, piano; Champ Jones, bass; Jake Hanna, drums. **Royal Garden Blues; Sunday; Dinah; Deed I Do; Pee Wee Russell's Unique Sound; You Took Advantage of Me; Rose Room.** This recording is often exasperating. Jake Hanna blatantly rushes tempos and George Wein displays his lack of talent. Every number is treated in the "dixieland" style now identified with the Condon groups. Buck Clayton seems particularly discountenanced by it and his solos show an unease and lack of ideas as he takes on the role of Max Kaminsky. Vic Dickenson comes off

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little better; his contributions to the ensemble are pedestrian, and only on *Rose Room* does he construct a solo really worthy of his skill. On the other hand, Bud Freeman seems quite at home and plays the same things he has played on many records.

However, Pee Wee Russell's playing is ample compensation. Seldom during his career has Russell worked with groups which have given him the kind of setting he really needs. What Russell has made of his style has long since transcended the extremely limited goals of what used to be called "Chicago jazz". He has never formed a unit which would accord with his own style and aims. Perhaps he couldn't or perhaps he is essentially a maverick who has accustomed himself to working in one of the backwaters of jazz. It is therefore all the more remarkable that his achievements have been such strong and valid ones. His solos are frequently melodic delights, and his lines usually structured with care. They twist and turn rhythmically and they are formed of undulating segments, and that is exactly the point. The rhythm, harmony, and melody are densely and pointedly interrelated. And his vibrato and contrasting timbres are integral parts of his melodic creations. On *Pee Wee Russell's Unique Sound*, a conventional blues, he develops a magnificent solo which misses perfection only infinitesimally, if at all. The melody is carefully woven. Even his move from low to upper register in the fifth chorus is a structural necessity and not an obvious device. He also does well on the other tracks; *Rose Room* and *Deed I Do*, in particular, have work of high quality.

It is too bad that no one made an opposite effort to fit the talents of Clayton and Dickenson to Russell's; it could be done—and has been done—with ease.

H. A. Woodfin

"Saxes, Inc." Warner Brothers W 1336. Coleman Hawkins, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, Georgie Auld, Seldon Powell, Morty Lewis, tenor; Herb Geller, Phil Woods, Gene Quill, alto; Hal McKusick, soprano; Sol Schlinger, Gene Allen, Al Epstein, baritone; Shelly Gold, bass; Dick Katz, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Osie Johnson, drums. Arrangements and conducting, Bob Prince.

Fugue for Tinorns; Broadway; The Gypsy; Night in Tunisia; Four Brothers; Sometimes I'm Happy; Tickle-Toe; Sweet and Lovely; Jumpin' with Symphony Sid; Early Autumn; Axmobile.

Nowadays, it seems that in order to compete the over-saturated record market, a new disc has to have some sort of gimmick. (Apparently some

recording companies spend more time than others racking their brains to find something new—free beer mugs, scenic Bardot jackets, odd instrumentations, and so forth.) Warner Brothers' angle on "Saxes, Inc." is a combination of 13—count them—13 saxes, plus rhythm section. The liner notes justify this massing as a tribute to the saxophone itself and to its players. Most of the tunes were either written by, or associated with, famous saxophonists, and arranger-conductor Prince has assembled a first-rate bunch of reedmen. Prince has also done an excellent and skillful job with this instrumentation, despite its obvious limitations. He did just about the only thing one can do with this setup. Using sometimes 10 (Sometimes I'm Happy, Four Brothers and Early Autumn), sometimes 13 saxophones, divided into two or three sections, he gets what is in reality an all-saxophone big band sound: three tenors and baritone for the saxes; soprano and three altos as quasi-trumpets; and, two tenors, baritone and bass sax as trombones. On some tracks this subdivision is less obvious than on others, and on *Gypsy* and *Sweet and Lovely* the band merely provides a simple, sustained background for soloists Coleman Hawkins and Georgie Auld, respectively. Prince has the knack of adapting his writing to the particular tune and to the soloist. His arrangements are unpretentious and clear, but certainly enhanced by touches of individuality. The tongue-in-cheek introduction to *Early Autumn*—a miniature "tone poem"—the polytonal harmonization of parts of *Symphony Sid*, and his own *Axmobile*, are good examples of this personal touch.

My only criticism would be that the Four Brothers sound is by now perhaps slightly overdone or almost trite. Would it be heresy to record *Autumn* or *Four Brothers* with a different treatment or voicing? Also, for variety's sake, Prince might have experimented with a somewhat thinner texture at times. The solo work is uniformly good, with all the soloists living up to their reputations. One of the most exciting tracks is *Night in Tunisia*, featuring Phil Woods and Gene Quill.

For a one-shot affair, fun.

Herb Pilhofer

"THE ROCKING FIFTIES".

Atlantic 8037.

Ruth Brown (1950) *Teardrops From My Eyes*; Joe Turner (1951) *Chains of Love*; The Clovers (1952) *One Mint Julip*; Clyde McPhatter (1953) *Money Honey*; Joe Turner (1954) *Shake, Rattle & Roll*; La Vern Baker (1955) *Tweedlee Dee*; Ray Charles (1955) *I've Got A Woman*; Ivory Joe Hunter (1956) *Since I Met You Baby*; The Bobbettes (1957) *Mr Lee*;

Chuck Willis (1958) *What Am I Living For*; Ray Charles (1959) *What'd I Say*; The Drifters (1959) *There Goes My Baby*. As Americans (or Armoricans) we ought to know that absurdity is our middle name—from the very beginning, with the noble ideals and idealists that made our "absurd revolution". But as absurd as that was (and as beautiful), we fall off after the civil war (the triumph of finance) till we find ourselves restored to absurdity via a full circle. But it certainly is not ideals or idealists that bring this on again but the cessation of them. We are now a nation of anti-christs.

O.K., this has got to do with the record "*The Rocking Fifties*" in this way. (And this is a limited analogy because the fifties themselves were already a lost cause. The forties were our last virgin days. There is too much neon in the fifties, too many soaps.) Ruth Brown's *Tear Drops From My Eyes*, The Clovers' *One Mint Julip*, Clyde McPhatter's *Money Honey* still do relate to something genuine, to other less organized days (or musically, because they still intimate the existence of a superior music, blues, shouts, hollers, etc.), whereas only Ray Charles (for obvious reasons) on the second side of the lp, which is largely "rock and roll", relates to any pure feeling. The last half of the fifties. Charles still has something to do with, say, some emotional idea outside of, "performance"; outside of, say, commerce. I mean The Bobbettes, Chuck Willis, The Drifters (and with them lump in the Ricky Nelsons, Fabians, Jerry Lee Lewises, etc.) are almost completely commercial; at their purest they go back to a semi-commercial tradition, rhythm and blues. It really was possible in the forties (with r & b) to maintain a semi-commercial tradition that was still emotionally sound. (It was the Negro in the big city, still edging toward St. Albans. They've made it now!) At least r & b went back to feeling rather than an idea about feeling. (Feeling for money.) But what's called rock and roll and the abortion, Rockabilly, is 99 and 44/100% money making. It's only real roots are, as I said, the semi-commercial r & b of the forties. R & r suffers from a loss of freedom, the freedom to please a minority. Only Negroes bought rhythm and blues; everybody's gotta buy rock and roll. But the record is really a continuum. It is also an example of the macrocosm of American life. It would be even better to have a big three lp album going back further with the blues (more contrast is what's needed) to really scare us.

LeRoi Jones

SHORTER REVIEWS

Blue Mitchell still seems to be roaming the Clifford Brown estates in his search for identity; however, there are several occasions on this record where he does seem to have found it. Walter Bishop seems to be having doubts—possibly about consolidating today's funk with his own well wrought, urbane out of Bud Powell manner. He does make two strong, cogent, funkless statements on **204** and **Upptankt**, nonetheless. A well-conceived blowing session with a far higher average level of consistency than all but the very best ones.

So some Capitol a&r people found **CHARLIE BARNET** playing with three rhythm in a Palm Beach lounge and were so smitten that they recorded it live practically instantaneously. At least so reads the press release on the reverse side of Capitol T-1403, "**Jazz Oasis—The Charlie Barnet Quartet recorded live at Palm Springs**". Mr. Barnet plays his three saxes serially; blurps, bleeps, casts covert glances at Hodges (with some accuracy) and Hawkins (most myopically), adds the "saddest" orchestral touches as well as some overtures toward rock 'n' roll and brings a non-descript piano soloist who is a welcome relief. It would be ridiculous to argue with Capitol's a&r department on economic grounds (like if someone told you about Jonah Jones and shuffle rhythm) but otherwise there ain't nothing at all happening.

WILBUR de PARIS—his own liner note writer and (presumably) conscience on Atlantic-1338, "**The Wild Jazz Age**"—claims that this is a top-drawer album (as are all of his Atlantic albums) and further says that he hopes he will never have to use the middle or lower drawers. I suspect that this would be solely, a function of the depth of the top drawer. While the de Paris product is well-made, this album has, aside from Doc Cheatham's consistently superb playing, very little authenticity, or emotional honesty, or for that matter any sort of genuine musical value. Cheatham functions almost unbelievably well among the husks. Brother Sidney makes an occasional emotional statement amidst his own corn. Also there are Garvin Bushell (the Jerome Richardson of his day) playing aggressively, some poor Louis Armstrong type vocalizing by Louis Bacon, the leader's trombone alternating between the maudlin/sentimental and his own brand of circus jive, and a rhythm section clanging and chugging along. Wilbur's two originals **Minorca** and **Blues Ingee** seem to have more to do with the music of the twenties than anything else in the album—and more than he might care to realize.

The Camden Division of RCA Victor has issued a short anthology (only ten tracks, just like *Harmony*) of the works of **BENNY GOODMAN** called "**Swing Swing Swing**" (CAL-624). If this were an earlier era we would say something like, "So swing already!" and have done with it. Aside from the last choruses of **Make Believe**, where the makeshift rhythm section includes the Messrs. Jess Stacy, Freddy Green, Walter Page and Lionel Hampton, this statement would have been quite pertinent. Some attractive, graceful solos by Harry James and Benny, certainly; a certain accurate aggressive rhythmic momentum, yes. But swing? Not really, from this vantage point. However, **Who?** and **Handful of Keys** are among the most successful trio and quartet records Benny made, and they feature excellent playing by Goodman, Teddy Wilson, and Hampton.

In the interests of dramatic unity and/or brevity, "**The RED NICHOLS Story**", a Sam Goldwyn production, made no mention of Red's 1939 big-little swing band—nor for that matter do the Red Nichols buffs. However, up at RCA they have issued an lp called "**Parade of the Pennies**" (Victor LPM 145g) which contains 14 (of 16) old sides by this unremembered and totally unremarkable group. It is not difficult to imagine how this particular package came into being: (1) potential tie-in sales with the motion picture and (2) the fi being higher in 1939 than theretofore, so we use the 1939 masters. There is a sort of dated charm in this mish-mash of obvious borrowings from such diverse sources as Bob Crosby, Duke Ellington, Jimmy Lunceford and Freddie Slack—among others.

"**Charlie Digs Dixie—CHARLIE SHAVERS**". At least, that is what it says on the front cover of MGM E3809. On the back Leonard Hoffman, **Hollywood Reporter**, attempts to illuminate this, at best, questionable declaration and reveals in the process a deep seated know-nothing attitude toward New Orleans music. Actually, except for three or four of the twelve tunes, the material is as representative of a swing era repertory as it is of the standard Dixieland repertory. And aside from occasional moments of overdramatic, Louis Armstrong-style playing, Charlie reacts accordingly, rampaging in his usual brilliant, technique-filled, eccentrically-inventive manner. Someone at the date had the Ray Bryant trio, Shavers' accompaniment, play shuffle rhythm on three of the tracks. On the others, the support is less obviously appropriate.

I. W. Stone

In the notes for Contemporary C-3551, Nat Hentoff tells us that "if a musician is 'taking care of business' he is playing very well." On the back of "**Takin' Care of Business**" (Jazzland 19), Orrin Keepnews explains that the expression should be reserved "for those no-nonsense occasions on which everything comes out just right and the job at hand is done unusually and excitingly well." As a description of the music that **CHARLIE ROUSE'S** pickup quintet plays on Jazzland 19 Mr. Hentoff's words are a shade the more accurate. Charlie Rouse mines with considerable taste, maturity, conviction and efficiency a field which I should have imagined was in the province of Sonny Rollins.

The best element in "Dance with Kid Ory or Just Listen" (Verve MG V-1022) is the intelligent and satisfying ensemble clarinet of Darnell Howard. He must be one of the few men left who is able to meet the especial demands of this style, and who knows just what to do in every musical situation. New Orleans-based three-part improvisation produces. Howard also takes several fair solos. The best solos, however, come, rather surprisingly, from Marty Marsala, who plays with considerable spirit on all six tracks. Ory is by now entirely predictable in all he does, but is nonetheless a quite extraordinary performer for his age. The sober virtues of his ensemble playing are evident as usual, and Marsala responds with a firm lead part . . .

Not all the melodies on **LOUIS ARMSTRONG'S "Satchmo plays King Oliver"** (Audio Fidelity AFLP 1930) were associated with Oliver, and only two were composed by him. Nearly all of them, however, are good, some extremely good. It is natural that Armstrong should respond more positively to challenging and comparatively unfamiliar material like this than to his perpetual one-night stand warhorses, and this is his best lp for some time, perhaps the best overall since the Handy collection.

The rhythm section is adequate—Danny Barcelona doesn't provide as much lift as this kind of trumpet playing needs—and the other horns, Hucko and Trummy Young, if dependable, appear subdued in the ensembles and are undistinguished in their solos—e.g., **Panama** or **I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None of This Jelly Roll**. Yet one suspects that Young's support counts for more with Armstrong than is apparent to the listener. Armstrong himself plays wonderfully almost throughout, sometimes majestically, and in certain of the final ensembles sounds half his age. Indeed, control, range, power and fullness of tone all seem better than on many records made in the past few years. Most moving is the grave, beautiful **St. James Infirmary** theme-statement, and there are fine, but usually too short solos on most of the twelve tracks, particularly on **Dr. Jazz**, **I Ain't Gonna Give and Jelly Roll Blues**. The regrettable shortness of the trumpet solos can, in part, be blamed on too many titles being crowded on to the disc. If items like **Frankie and Johnnie** (with jangling piano accompaniment) and **Old Kentucky Home** had been omitted we could have had more choruses of Armstrong on **Chimes**

Blues and Drop That Sack.

It is unfair to link two artists of such different statures as **SONNY ROLLINS** and **TEDDY EDWARDS** on one record because comparisons become involuntary and are much to the lesser man's disadvantage. Yet that is what has been done on "**Sonny Rollins at Music Inn, Teddy Edwards at Falcon's Lair**" (Metrojazz E 1011). The two Edwards tracks are swinging and well integrated, but, although the rhythm section plays well, they fail to hold one's interest. Edwards was, I think, somewhat more original when he first appeared in the forties, but during the intervening years seems to have picked up many clichés and there is now a lack of any real substance to his music. The four Rollins items are very uneven and his accompanists, the M. J. Q. rhythm trio, are unsuitable for him. **You Are Too Beautiful** is a most unfortunate affair in which there is little rapport between soloist and under-recorded accompaniment, virtually no swing, and a tenor line that is understandably disjointed. Rollins sounds doleful on this. **I'll Follow My Secret Heart** is a little better, and **Doxy** considerably so. The rhythm section is much more positive here, and Rollins has some very impressive moments. Best by far is a swift **Limehouse Blues** which is an especially clear example of Rollins' lucid musical thinking and his method of breaking a theme down into small sections and building a solo of long and very mobile lines from them. This improvisation, which employs a notable variety of rhythmic and melodic constructions, is poised yet forceful, and is played with a remarkably large, consistent and warmly vocalized tone.

Especially on the records he made in Paris during 1937, **DICKIE WELLS** often sounded like the best trombonist about, and **REX STEWART'S** extensive contributions to the Ellington band over a period of years are also well known. In view of these achievements "**Chatter Jazz**" (RCA Victor LPM-2024) is a depressing record. Besides secure and extensive conventional techniques both Stewart and Wells have a surprising variety of smears, glissandi and eccentric effects. Used with taste and discretion these devices can have a positive value as a kind of embellishment to a melodic line. Here they are used continuously and exclusively—albeit with notable control—in performances of almost unbelievably self-conscious cuteness. The rhythm section swings in a shallow though consistent fashion, but the horns do not improvise and there is

no jazz. It is regrettable Stewart and Wells should want to, or be encouraged to, misuse their unique talents. As a display of eccentric brass technique this disc is remarkable but as music it is boring and silly.

"**Thelonious in Action**" (Riverside RLP 12-262) is a record of what **MONK** and his group sounded like one night at the Five Spot in New York. Monk's compositions—most of them at least—are difficult to perform and the number of musicians who can improvise on them convincingly is small—even all these years after the original **Misterioso** and **Evidence** recordings, Milt Jackson is still the best after Monk himself. In this connection the present lp is disappointing because of Johnny Griffin's part in it. He had earlier given promise of becoming a good performer of Monk's music and on, for example, Atlantic 1278, (Blakey's Jazz Messengers with Monk), he had responded rather well. In this set, alas, his solos, far from being explorations of the compositions in terms of melody, rhythm, harmony and mood, are lines merely imposed on them, often with surprising arbitrariness. He played an intelligent improvisation on the Atlantic recording of **Rhythm-a-ning**, but here cheap excitement and sheer duration are the most prominent features. Griffin's insensitivity is most aptly demonstrated by the absurd folk song quotations in, of all things, **Evidence**.

Such stringent comments should not, however, be taken as a dismissal of Griffin, for he plays more convincingly on several other discs. It may be that his work here is a harking back to the tawdry sensationalism of the Hampton band in which he once served. Perhaps he only reacted so unfavorably in this case in face of the great difficulty of Monk's pieces. Monk's reaction to the situation is intelligent and practical. While everything he does is as characteristically expressive, his playing is more conservative in several respects. He is not quite so adventurous harmonically, and we hear less of his extraordinary virtuoso use of space (rests), accent and meter. This helps to make the group a little more cohesive, and he is still able to produce several fine solos, particularly on **Blue Monk** and **Evidence**. In the latter the progressive and beautifully graduated simplification of his solo leading to a restatement of the theme is masterly. **Coming on the Hudson** and **Light Blue** are both new compositions of which one hopes to hear more.

Max Harrison

JAZZ IN PRINT



HSIO WEN SHIH

This month we're going to look at jazz in the "urban male" magazines. These uneasy mixtures of flesh and fantasy are primarily substitutes for normal sex life, and therefore descend from girlie magazines like The Police Gazette. But the audience is no longer the gang in the barbershop or the backroom. The barbershop boys were Sports, and their interests, outside of women, ran to symbols of masculinity—prize fighters, ballplayers, sensational criminals and heroic cops. Today the odor of cigars and Bay Rum has been replaced by Dunhills special mixture and English Leather. The backroom boy has joined a fraternity and become a good living snob. He yearns for the sports car, fancy mixed drinks, party foods, hip vacation resorts, Italian tailoring — all the castemarks of good consumership. How does jazz fit into this? Most of these magazines seem to consider jazz a legitimate interest for the urban male as rock & roll and classical music are not. Why? Is jazz an accessory for sophisticated seduction like the sports car, the Italian tailoring and the mixed drinks? That seems unlikely considering how few women are interested in jazz. Is jazz a pure non-functional

401

symbol of male sophistication? That seems reasonable on one level. Jazz is not associated with either teenagers or old ladies; it is a part of nightlife, and in fact is one of the few kinds of nightclub entertainment that avoids both the sniggering gaucherie of the smoker and the pale elegance of the gay supperclub. (Another kind of nightclub entertainment that fits these specifications is the humor of Lenny Bruce, Mort Sahl and their school; they are notable popular with these magazines too.)

Or should we go further to say, with the "hip" novelists, that jazz is essentially orgiastic and therefore innately sexual, or that jazz and its milieu are the modern city equivalent of Huck Finn's Territory, "the wild frontier of American nightlife," as Clellan Holmes called it? I could go on for hours, but perhaps this is not the place.

In any case, most of the slick urban male magazines and some of the pulps, whether or not they review books, (the slicks all do) do give considerable space to jazz. The magazines with a regular department about jazz or about records in general usually place them up front, sandwiched between descriptions of Italian shoes and descriptions of authentic little bistros in St. Paul. Esquire, the pioneer in this kind of magazine, has now abandoned the pictures of girls and become a rather fuzzy Good Design New Yorker, but their coverage still includes jazz. Their column is written by our Nat Hentoff. In November, Nat took his indignation for a few more laps around Freebody Park before getting around to a review of Been Here and Gone, Fred Ramsey's recent book documenting his musical collecting trips in the South, and to short notices of some recent blues records. The book review is sprinkled with quotes from the book, mostly old-timers talking about old times, but one of the bits of Negro folk poetry is straight out of Psalms 98:8. Apparently The Bible is the only book Nat does not have time to read.

Playboy, the current success of the field, doesn't have a regular jazz column, but talks about jazz in their Playboy After Hours department. In the November issue Playboy,

in reviewing the George Russell sextet in live performance at the Five Spot, gave the relevant background information about the band but did not commit themselves about the music one way or the other. Playboy also reviewed jazz records by Charlie Byrd and Brubeck-Bernstein along with several pop vocal and party records. So few records are reviewed in Playboy each month that the effect of each review is a plug, since the review itself suggests that the record must be of more than routine interest. The same point would apply to Hentoff's column, of course, except that the records mentioned in a signed column are more obviously personal choices, and forwarn the reader to look out for personal quirks.

Since so few records are reviewed each month, one might expect a careful choice of the records to be reviewed. In this respect I have no argument with Playboy this month. Charlie Byrd is by way of becoming a phenomenon in jazz, and any collaboration between two such different and, let's say, characteristic figures as Brubeck and Bernstein can be called an occasion that deserves notice. Other magazines like Scamp and Rogue (isn't there something a little too cute about all these titles? How about a new one called simply Cojones, or as the musicians would have it, Work?) review a few jazz records in about the same way, and they chose them much less responsibly. Rogue for example, reviewed Ella's "Mack the Knife" and Billy Taylor's "One for Fun"; neither are "Important" or even particularly good. Scamp chose some good and some bad: a Firehouse Five record, the new Helen Humes, Jimmy Heath's "The Thumper," and Bill Evans' "New Jazz Conceptions". All of these records are, in effect, recommended. One would not expect any record to be reviewed without being recommended in these guides to good living. But why not pick better records?

It's all very well for Rogue to say, "Here are some fine sounds for a Saturday afternoon or the early evening first-martini time", but I do object to the quality of the reviews in Playboy. Playboy not only lists Leonard Feather as jazz editor but also has former Down Beat editor Don Gold on its staff. I find it

difficult to believe that either would write of Howard Brubeck's "Dialogues for Jazz Combo and Orchestra" that "All of it is enticing." This may be written for a wider audience, but does that mean that one need not be discriminating? And how about factual inaccuracies like calling the Charlie Byrd his first trio recording? Perhaps the best solution to a short jazz column is the one adopted by Nugget, another of the slicks. In the December issue, their Music column was an unsigned essay about "progress" in jazz during the last year and how "progress" has affected some musicians and jazz fans. "One of the best things that ever happened to John Coltrane was the discovery of Ornette Coleman by the jazz avant garde. . . Coltrane. . . has been able to continue his search for his own musical personality without the onus of having everything he does, mis-steps and all, hailed as evidence of genius." And about jazz audiences, ". . . an audience that is only interested in the newest, the latest, is a fickle audience and essentially a dangerous and misleading audience," for "While all this attention is being directed toward those who are advancing jazz on its outer fringes, those who are moving jazz ahead from within are being largely ignored." These are sound points, and the records that are mentioned in the column are only used as illustrations of the points. I was so pleasantly surprised with this column that I made attempts to find out who had written it. Nugget says that the author is Burt Korall, but Burt says he didn't write it. Bravo, who ever you are.

An attempt at something similar by prosodist Jack Kerouac, appeared in the December issue of Escapade, which Ira Gitler sent to me. The head reads, "There's a great jazz era ahead. Here are the signs." Then comes Kerouac on the new jazz, ". . . sign of a great jazz resurgence is the presence of hundreds of great soloists to implement the new phrase and harmony. Here are only a few names, the parade of great wailers who will make the New Wave Jazz pop." The few names include pianists Winton Kelly and Junior Manz, drummers Ocie Johnson and Al Hairwood, altoist Al Macusik, tenor players Charlie Rause and

Frank West, trumpeter Dizzy Reese (Pee Wee's crazy brother?) and trombonist Jimmy Nepper. I always suspected that Kerouac played the language by ear, but spelling? Proper Names? And not just spelling. Quincy Jones becomes a bass player, Art Farmer is a "West Coast or Soft Groove trumpet" and Red Garland is "a strange thinker, actually." My favorite sentence runs, "Behind these giants a whole bunch of newcomers are playing with that heartbreaking grope that jazzlovers love." Heartbreaking grope seems the perfect phrase.

There wasn't much in the way of feature articles about jazzmen in any of the magazines this month. The entire issue of Rogue was devoted to the hip comedians though. The most interesting feature of the month was a long panel discussion, I'm told it was done in bits and pieces, about Narcotics and the Jazz Musician in Playboy. The panelists included musicians Cannonball and Nat Adderley, Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Jimmy Giuffre, Stan Kenton, Shelly Manne, and Billy Taylor; Dr. Charles Winnick, a psychologist who directs The Musicians' Clinic in New York and serves on the Advisory Council on Narcotics, attorney Maxwell T. Cohen, and Nat Hentoff. (And Crater says he doesn't get around?)

The panelists seemed to agree that though narcotics are not necessarily an occupational hazard for the jazz musician, his milieu makes narcotics easy to get, and the pressure of his life may make him more susceptible to addiction than people in many other professions; that though considerable numbers of musicians are addicts, fewer of the youngest generation of jazzmen are addicts compared to the bop generation; that some musicians play very well when they are stoned while others do not, though the use of narcotics does not enable anyone to play better; that the public image of the jazzman identifies him with narcotics more than the facts would warrant, and that this image is reinforced by inaccurate reporting that identifies every musician arrested for any crime a jazz musician. There was an informative discussion of the legal controls on addicts and how these controls affect the

lives of all jazz musicians, addicts or no. Examples include the police card system in New York and harassment of jazz musicians by police officers in Philadelphia and Los Angeles. There is also the first mention I've ever seen in print of the frightening informer system the New York City Police Department uses as an aid in narcotics control, which apparently not only protects addicts and pushers, who are willing to inform on other addicts, from arrest, but even supplies them with narcotics to keep them on the street.

Unfortunately, there was very little agreement among the panelists about programs for improvements in the situation. The musicians tended to make light of a strictly medical cure. "A guy tells me," said Dizzy Gillespie, "that when they're in Lexington, all they're thinking about is - when I get out of Lexington, boy, I'm gonna get so HIGH!"

Nat Hentoff favored more work on medical control of addiction, including more basic research and the adoption of the English system of supplying addicts with decreasing amounts of narcotics legally administered by physicians. Dr. Winnick emphasized the importance of a wider social and psychological rehabilitation program. Mr Cohen emphasized legal control to discourage importation and distribution of narcotics. But in spite of the lack of agreement about program, I must say that the publication of the panel is a valuable service in informing a wider public about the nature of the problem.

While I was flipping through Playboy, I saw four letters about an article in the August issue on Miles Davis, all praising the article and its author, one Stanley Goldstein. I was so impressed with the praise in the letters that I went to a back-issue store and bought a copy. The article was long, very informative, perhaps the best single thing I've ever read about Miles, but I came away with a strong feeling that Stanley Goldstein was not really the best of the new jazz writers, only one of the best of the old ones - in fact, a man who has often complained about the use of pseudonyms in these pages.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE BOOK OF NEGRO FOLKLORE by Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps. Dodd, Mead, and Co., New York.
THE IDIOM OF THE PEOPLE by James Reeves. Macmillan Co., New York.

Folklore may be loosely defined as the study of oral tradition, of material moving in time and space, handed down from generation to generation, wherever there exists a homogeneous group. Folklore may also be interpreted broadly enough to include studies of barroom humor and flying saucer rumors, or narrowly enough to exclude anything not directly from the mouths of uneducated, backwood men who make "panther sweat" in hidden stills. There is the folklore of jazz itself: jive talk; the improvisation through which runs a continuity of tradition—much as old ballads and sayings change when passed on by word of mouth yet cling to their original sources; the ethnic material coursing through the idiom. Also there is the folklore in the backgrounds and roots of jazz. African music and culture, Afro-American music and environment, music concurrent with Afro-American beginnings—English-Scottish ballads, Creole, French, Latin material. The study of jazz thereby becomes a study of its makers, their backgrounds, culture, traditions, and folkways. The superstitions, proverbs, tales, work, and play of a people often provide illuminating psychological insights not readily revealed elsewhere. Langston Hughes's and Arna Bontemps's *The Book of Negro Folklore* has an obvious connection with jazz. The Negro roots in jazz are the most virile and prominent; the connection of Negro folklore with jazz is the most direct. James Reeves's *The Idiom of the People* has a less immediate and obvious relationship to jazz. It deals with collections of English and Scottish ballads, which on the surface differ from things hip. However, such ballads, transplanted, are in the background of blues and Negro folk songs. A verse in the ballad *A Brisk Young Lover* goes

When I wore my apron low
My love followed me through
frost and snow
When I wore it up to my chin
My love passed by and never
looked in.

Similar verses are found in many Negro songs. One is the piece which the Lomaxes called *Dink's Song*:

When I wore my aprons low,
Couldn't keep you from my do'.
Fare thee well, O Honey, fare
thee well.
Now I wears my aprons high,

Scarcely ever see you passin'
by.

Fare thee well, O Honey, fare
thee well.

Now my apron's up to my chin,
You pass my door and you
won't come in.

Fare thee well, O Honey, fare
thee well.

The ballad *The Sailor Cut Down in His Prime*, known variously as *The Unfortunate Rake* (as early as 1790 in Ireland), *Cowboy's Lament* (or *The Streets of Laredo*), forms the basis for the lyrics of *St. James Infirmary*.

The jazz heritage includes European folk influence, too.

A book like Reeves's can also provide guides for scholars of jazz: a method of approach, study, analysis and presentation of material.

Hughes' and Bontemps' material covers a wide range. There are ballads, spirituals and gospel songs, blues, work songs, street cries, play songs and games, roustabout tales and songs; a section on jazz with standard quotes from Jelly, Bunk, Armstrong, King Oliver, and Billie Holiday, and a section on Harlem jive with vocabulary lists and "bopster" stories. There are animal tales with traditional trickster "Brer Rabbit"—narratives written in dialect which for me comes across better aurally than visually; slavery tales, sermon texts, superstitions, proverbs; God-versus-the-Devil tales. Other tales of preachers (they're human, too), ghosts, witches, black magic and hoodoo frequently illustrate the Negro's ability to laugh at himself, his shortcomings and his troubles. The collection concludes with "Songs in the Folk Manner". Represented are Slim Gaillard, Louis Jordan, James A. Bland, "standards" such as *There'll Be Some Changes Made* whose "folk" status is open to question, and a moving, poignant *I Ain't Gonna Be No Topsy*. "Prose in the Folk Manner" has the social observation of Hughes's *Simple* stories, personal opinions and experiences, ads for house rent parties. And "Poetry in the Folk Manner": Paul Laurence Dunbar, Sterling Brown, and Hughes.

Bontemps and Hughes have written a few essays for *The Book of Negro Folklore*, but most of the material has been collected from standard sources which have been around for some time, and it will be more rewarding for the really interested reader to turn to the sources themselves for a more complete picture of each subject. The annotation is scanty. Sources are listed at the beginning in small print, making references difficult to look up. Approximate dates and places of origin, scope and currency of circulation, or explanation of certain local terminology ("*O! Hannah*" in the work song refers only to "the sun", for example) are not given. The inclusion of certain items as folklore is open to question unless one takes

the broadest "everything is folklore" approach.

Scholarly persnickitiness aside, the book is very warmly entertaining, subtly revealing in some spots, outright funny in others. It serves as a good introduction to Negro lore that will encourage further exploration, especially because, so far as I know, this is the first and only attempt at such an anthology. But to get a complete picture of Negro folklore one must go to sources which deal with only one or two aspects: Guy B. Johnson for discussions of John Henry; N. N. Puckett for superstitions; "lies", beliefs, ways of life, hoodoo; Zora N. Hurston for tales incorporating Botkin's *Lay My Burden Down* for slave narratives; Richard M. Dorson for current tales from Michigan; and music references in writers such as Newman I. White, Howard W. Odum, John W. Work and the Lomaxes.

Reeves's material follows a more narrow course. From the manuscripts of Cecil Sharp, fourteen volumes of transcribed English songs and ballads, the author selected 115 songs, about forty of them printed for the first time, and other texts for the first time as taken down, without cuts or censorship. Sharp, an English folk song collector, who also collected songs in America—and instigated a revival of morris dancing—helped get folk songs into the schools in England. Sharp had stressed the music of the songs. His attitude toward the lyrics was patronizing and when he published them he censored them accordingly.

In his preface, Reeves considers how folk song became transformed into art song, then restored to its original state; considers different versions of a single song to show its variety and multiplicity; and discusses various versions of *Foggy Dew* to discover its original meaning. The body of the book presents the song texts, mostly love, marriage, and courting songs, but some humorous (*Our Goodman*), criminal (*Jack Hall*), riddling (*Pery Mery Winkle Domine*), and supernatural (*Wife of Usher's Well*) ballads included.

Reeves's work is fully annotated. Obscure words are defined and dated, stanzas and lines are explained and traced historically, many cross references for the songs are cited. (And Mr. Reeves assures us of his editorial scrupulousness throughout.) The book contains material new to scholars as well as to the general reader.

Hughes and Bontemps will capture the reader who may have no previous interest in jazz or Negro folklore. *Idiom of the People* is not a beginning ballad book; it presupposes a familiarity with broader collections and previous studies, and the jazz lover must hunt for relevant items. For the jazz lover its value is more in grasping the study of music of, by, and from the people.

Mimi Clar

KING JOE OLIVER (Kings of Jazz 8) by Martin Williams. Cassell, London.

The "Kings of Jazz" series is an attempt by the English publisher Cassell to make available to the lay public brief but authoritative books on some outstanding jazz figures. Martin Williams' **King Oliver** is the eighth in this series of inexpensive books, which has included earlier volumes on Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie, Bessie Smith (by Paul Oliver), Bix Beiderbecke, Louis Armstrong (by Albert J. McCarthy), Charlie Parker (by Max Harrison), and Fats Waller. Martin sent a copy of his book to me as a personal gesture and not, I'm sure, with the idea I would review it. But a review seems a good way to call attention to a series which, judging from **King Oliver**, is fulfilling a worthwhile objective rather well. Martin begins, quite properly, by acknowledging his debt to Walter C. Allen and Brian Rust's **King Joe Oliver** and to Frederic Ramsey Jr.'s article in **Jazzmen**, and then proceeds (as is his custom recently) to knock the old critics for making a crude and sentimental myth out of Oliver's life. He complains that such myths do not take into account the facts of the world in which the artists functioned, but Martin himself seems insensitive to the realities of the (jazz) world in which the early critics worked. After tracing Oliver's life from his birth in 1885 to 1918, when Joe left New Orleans for the Royal Garden Cafe in Chicago, Martin interpolates a chapter on New Orleans music. He comes up with the theory, based on remarks of Garvin Bushell in the January 1959 number of this magazine (there are any number of references to **The Jazz Review** in the book), that the innovation New Orleans music offered was not in style, in variations, or in improvisation, but in the soul in the music which comes from the blues (does this make it 'funk?'). Martin's choice of A. J. Piron's Columbia records, as against his Victors, to illustrate early jazz with the soul of the blues is not altogether convincing since **Ghost of the Blues** is a Columbia. He seems to contradict himself at the end of the chapter by finding a remarkable common characteristic of style in variation among at least some early New Orleans musicians—Bunk, Freddy Keppard, Noone, Jelly. The remaining chapters in the first part of the book continue Oliver's life from 1918 to his death in Savannah in 1938 with accounts of the bands he had, their impact on other musicians, the important recording contracts, his early successes, later failures and eventual decline. Martin succeeds nicely in making his version of Oliver's story something more than a dreary list of band personnels and job dates while at the same time avoiding the trap of

easy sentimentality many writers who glanced at Paul Barnes' notebooks (1934-35) might fall into.

The second, and longer, part of the book is concerned with Oliver's records, for as Martin rightly says "the Oliver that exists for most of us exists through recordings. We are interested in his music . . . because some of it survives today as valid and meaningful music art." The point of view from which he appraises the records is the one from which most of the contributors to this magazine operate, namely, "art is a matter of how one handles one's conventions no matter what those conventions are." Criticism then becomes a matter, first of defining the conventions (the style) of an art form, and then of determining how successful the work is within those conventions. Such a critical stance seems to me a very comfortable one, for it enables the critic to go along with everything, rather than to fight frustrating battles against unhealthy trends, for there are no unhealthy trends. It is just this stance which enables Martin to discuss the Victor records with as much sympathy as those by the Creole Jazz Band: the trouble with most of the Victors is simply failure, for a number of reasons, to exploit the conventions properly.

Martin leaves it to Larry Gushee (**The Jazz Review** November 1958) to effuse over the Creole Jazz Band, and confines himself to a close analysis of the three versions of **Mabel's Dream**. Here he is following **King Joe Oliver**; personally I think there are better records artistically, and possibly more important stylistically, by the Creole Jazz Band, but even if there are not, I am not sure Martin has caught all of the essential details of the two Paramount **Mabel's Dreams**. His close analysis of Sippie Wallace's **Morning Dove Blues** (a record Walt Allen turned many of us on) with fine Oliver accompaniment is, on the other hand, in every way admirable, perhaps the best stretch of criticism in the book.

When he comes to the Dixie Syncopators period, Martin relates the music to the changes in the rhythms of jazz (under Armstrong's influence) at the time (1926-28) and to the problems of big band jazz, about which he has quite a bit to say. He finds **Too Bad**, **Snag It**, and **Wa Wa Wa** to be among the band's successes and **Dead Man's Blues**, **Willie the Weeper** and **West End Blues** bad. He denies (again quite rightly, in my opinion) that the New Orleans Rhythm Kings' **Tin Roof Blues** comes from Oliver's **Jazzin' Babies Blues**, but fails to note that Oliver's **Tin Roof** is note-for-note (hyperbolically speaking) from the NORK's. While he is patient with the earlier Dixie Syncopators' records, by the time he gets to Sticks Elliot's clarinet chorus on **West End Blues** (1928) Martin throws

his hands up in disgust. His final verdict on the Dixie Syncopators' seems to be that it was damned inconsistent of them to swing on fast numbers (**Too Bad**, **Wa Wa Wa**) where one would expect trouble and yet fail to swing or a slow number like **Snag It #2** at a tempo which would give an untutored folk musician no trouble at all.

By the time he got to the Victor records, the strain of listening to so many records in such a short period of time (my own guess as to how the book was written: it doesn't seem to me that Martin has 'lived' with any but the Creole Band records) was beginning to tell: the chapter begins to read like a list of titles, and in fact Martin is reduced to saying 'for some of the others, one can only hear and report.' On the whole he finds more polish in the Victor groups and more important a change in conception (another one!) **Too Late**, **What Do You Want Me To Do** and **Sweet Like This** are singled out as being particularly good for the period. The problem of Oliver's fantastic inconsistency during the period—from a date with no solo to one with a fine solo and then to one with a poor solo—has him baffled completely.

Martin considers that Oliver plays the first (open) solo—theme statement—on **Sweet Like This** and Dave Nelson the muted variation (but the first solo is 12 bars, the second 16), contrary to Allen and Rust. But then it is hard to see how the cornet on **Jet Black Blues**, to which he devotes the final close analysis, a good one, could be Oliver. I think it's Tommy Dorsey, but even if it's not Oliver, 'the playing represents much of what he stood for.' And that is 'without Joseph Oliver . . . jazz could not have happened as we know it.'

King Oliver shows some evidence of being hastily written, or at least hastily proof-read, but then it might be only the perils of writing in America for publication in England. Honore (Dutrey) comes out Horne fairly consistently in the text (but not in the captions to the photographs), (Zue) Robertson comes out Robinson, Lawrence Dube becomes Duke, and Bobby Holmes becomes Charlie Holmes (p. 80). On p. 86 Oliver solos on the Dixie Syncopators' **Speakeasy Blues**, but according to p. 68 Oliver does not solo!

The important thing about **King Oliver** is that Martin communicates the respect and affection he has for the best that Oliver represented. I know he sent me back to the records with renewed interest and that, they keep telling us, is the highest calling of a critic. From the microgroove discography at the end of the book it appears that most of King Oliver's EPs and LPs have been deleted from the English catalogues. Maybe Martin's book will help bring them back, along with some of the deserving sides which haven't been re-issued at all.

J. S. Shipman

JAZZ ON BRITISH RADIO & TELEVISION

Some time ago I heard a BBC radio interview with Benny Goodman, who was on a visit to London. The interviewer quickly got to his main question: which gives Goodman greater satisfaction—playing classics or jazz? Goodman replied that he enjoyed both equally. Each was a different kind of challenge.

Some uninspired chatter followed before the interviewer got to his second attempt: "Which do you find more rewarding?" (I should explain that when a BBC interviewer asks about rewards he is almost invariably concerned with *spiritual* values.)

Goodman rephrased his previous answer. At which the interviewer abandoned his attempt to wring from Goodman the confession that he played jazz for money and classical music for beauty.

I may be slightly unfair to the interviewer concerned, but I doubt it. There has been for many years (probably since the BBC's monopoly charter was granted) systematic denigration of jazz on the BBC. As a teenager, around 1948, I bought a book of **Best Broadcast Stories**. One was about a jazz musician who was weary of the "phony racket" he was in. The punch ending consisted of the musician stepping up on the stand in front of the public he had been defrauding and blowing his brains out (literally, I mean). About three years ago BBC television presented a play (strongly praised by the *London Times*) in which a young concert pianist, frustrated at his inability to make headway in "good" music, reached the depths of degradation: he turned to jazz and became very rich and unhappy. This play, incidentally, was not making the common mistake of equating jazz with Tin Pan Alley; the pianist was seen and heard playing

jazz to twitching youngsters at the Royal Festival Hall.

The above examples have stuck in my mind but there are plenty more like them. The BBC operates under charter from the government. The first was granted in 1926, a new one was granted in 1937 and has been renewed a couple of times since. The present charter expires in 1962. The charter requires the British Broadcasting Corporation to "inform, educate and entertain." The man most responsible for carrying out this aim was John Reith (Knighted 1927, made Baron Reith of Stonehaven 1940) who was appointed the BBC's general manager in 1922 and was its first director-general from 1927 to 1938. A dour Scot, Reith was a man of high principle who insisted on a high intellectual and moral content in BBC's programmes. He gave people not what they wanted but what he thought they ought to have. They could like it, or switch off, for the BBC was, and is, a monopoly.

Under the Reith regime, intellectual programs, so long as they were so uncontroversial as to be inoffensive to "right-thinking" people, flourished, and the air was filled with classical music. Devotees of the classics (who, incidentally, are no more numerous in Britain than they are in other European countries, despite Reith's educational efforts) were naturally delighted. Dance music fans were reasonably satisfied (Benny Carter worked in London in the mid-thirties as an arranger for the BBC Dance Orchestra). But very, very little jazz was heard.

With modifications (for the BBC is now much more anxious to please) such programming has remained the rule. BBC spokesmen apply an odd double-standard to music. It works this way: Classical music is presented in large

doses because it is good for people. It does not matter how few people listen. Jazz would be heard more often but, alas, it is not popular. It matters very much if only a few people listen.

Inside the BBC there have been jazz enthusiasts who have done their dedicated bests to get more airtime for their kind of music. Brian Rust, who works in the BBC's vast record library (co-author of a book on King Oliver and of a paperback **Recorded Jazz: A Critical Guide**, a biased and unrecommended work), pops up with a record show from time to time. July 7th was the 10th anniversary of Bunk Johnson's death, and Rust contributed a short tribute, complete with a snatch of **Tishomingo Blues**, to that morning's news program, "**Today**". Occasionally, jazz gets an unexpected plug; a couple of years ago the members of the TV "**Brains Trust**" (a very intellectual and thoroughly worthy Sunday afternoon program), instead of damning jazz, and rock and roll, as a submitted question clearly invited them to do, praised the music's vitality and hailed it as one really worthwhile popular art form. However, I should say that the chairman on this occasion was a Canadian comedian-actor, Bernard Braden (who spoke of being moved by Sarah Vaughan, I think at Birdland, and the man who did most of the talking was an American, Dwight MacDonald, a **New Yorker** writer who was spending a year on the superb British monthly **Encounter**—so the "**Brains Trust**" was somewhat trans-Atlantic on this occasion.

So little time is allotted to jazz record programs that there is practically no opportunity for disc jockeys to present consistent and well-developed points of view. Anyway, there is no great rush of talent anxious to earn money from

the BBC. In 1955 I did one broadcast—a half-hour on Count Basie—for the Saturday evening "World Of Jazz" series. For the narration, the script and the acquisition of some of the records (borrowed from Mike Nevard, then on the *Melody Maker* staff, who had been given discs not then available in Britain by Norman Granz), I was paid 10 guineas—roughly, 31 dollars.

These days the Saturday jazz program rotates three or four jockeys who mostly confine themselves to briefly introducing new record releases. In my opinion, there is only one outstanding disc jockey—pianist and bandleader Steve Race, who has also conducted some fascinating interviews with visiting American jazzmen.

Those programs are heard over the Light Program, the most trivial of the three domestic services provided by the BBC. The others are the Home Service, a more serious channel on which the sound of jazz hardly ever intrudes, and the ultra-intellectual Third Program which has a minute listening figure and which has very occasionally flirted with serious jazz programs. Alan Lomax did an admirable series on Jelly Roll Morton, for example. But on the whole, I feel, jazz is best left alone by the Third Program because the program planners naturally have no means of knowing whether or not a contributor is being sensible. I recall with a shudder a program on Louis Armstrong that put forward some fatuous theory that Armstrong's talent had been steadily corrupted by avaricious commercial interests. The speaker, obviously a Marxist, had been given the broadcast because he had a "classy" job—history lecturer at a University. Incidentally, this man has emerged, some five years later under another name, as one of the most stimulating and perceptive jazz writers anywhere. Perhaps events in Hungary, among other things, helped to loosen his Marxist straightjacket.

For an hour and a half before the Third Program goes on the air, the same wavelength is used as Network Three, which is devoted to special interests: hobbies, religion, language studies. Network Three offers a weekly jazz record review program at 6 pm. I have rarely heard it but I think it is well conducted.

There are few record programs of any kind on BBC radio because of an agreement with the Musicians' Union which restricts the hours devoted to canned music—although this agreement apparently does not apply to tapes—and occasional use is made of tapes supplied by the Voice of America. No such agreement exists with Radio Luxembourg, a commercial radio station which tapes most of its programs in London, sends them to Luxembourg, where they are transmitted to Britain—a situation which exists because of the BBC's radio monopoly with no ad-

vertising—especially ludicrous since 1955 when commercial television began in Britain.

Luxembourg is much used by record companies to push sales of pop discs. Recorded jazz usually gets a weekly half-hour, glibly presented.

Other European radio stations can be quite easily picked up in Britain. French radio has a few, but good jazz disc shows (the Panassié axe-grinders can be interesting). German radio has some lengthy ones. I can't understand much German so I can't vouch for the value of the disc-jockeys' comments but they often seem very ponderous and verbose.

The American Forces Network, broadcasting from Germany, only occasionally features jazz, and never does it seriously.

But the Voice of America presents *The Jazz Hour* nightly. Despite rather poor reception (it's relayed from Tangier), this program has a big following, I understand, and at least one London jazz record show—Dobell's—experiences a run on an album after it has been featured in *The Jazz Hour*.

Willis Conover is the regular Voice of America jazz disc jockey. He must have by far the world's largest jazz audience. A couple of years ago, a friend of mine attended a jazz concert given in Russia—Moscow, I think—by British jazzmen. He said there was a huge roar of approval from the crowd when the band started on *Take The 'A' Train*. Conover uses Duke's recording as the signature of *The Jazz Hour*.

Conover is a deep-voiced, slow-speaking announcer who concentrates on giving factual information about the records he plays. Some of his programs show much loving care in preparation. He also conducts occasional interviews with musicians and critics and sometimes he has turned the microphone over to guest musicians (such as Count Basie) who have run *The Jazz Hour* for him.

So, the British jazz fan with a very efficient radio set can, by judicious station-hopping, hear a reasonable amount of jazz.

Television, by nature of the medium, is unable to offer any American jazz. Records, obviously, have no visual appeal—though once in a long while dancers "interpret" a jazz record with the usual ugly gestures. The AFM-MU agreement forbids American bands to appear live on British TV. This has been circumvented several times by the use of the Eurovision link, a system whereby European TV stations link up with British TV companies for special events. Louis Armstrong was seen live from Italy last May, and there have been, if I remember rightly, telecasts from Belgium by Lionel Hampton and Benny Goodman.

When commercial television began in 1955, breaking the BBC's monopoly, a number of directors and producers who

liked jazz managed to feature British jazz groups on several shows, in particular *Downbeat*, a two-band session which usually featured a top jazz dance orchestra, such as Ted Heath's, with a top jazz group, such as Humphrey Lyttelton's. But in its early days commercial television lost a great deal of money and had to go all out to get a large audience as soon as possible. Such shows as *Downbeat* were jettisoned, and the director went into the sales department of his TV company. These days, commercial TV is making gigantic profits. The companies spend some money and time putting on cultural shows to try to demonstrate to commercial television's critics that the companies are worthy contract-holders. But of course, serious jazz is not counted as culture. The former *Downbeat* TV director has returned to directing—on a quiz show.

BBC's radio programs that present live jazz by British musicians usually, but not always, have good sound balance. I was once told how Ted Heath had carefully rehearsed his band through a steadily building increase in volume over something like 16 bars; on the broadcast, a girl sound controller kept her hand on the volume control and as the band's volume went up, she conscientiously turned the knob down, ensuring a nice, even sound. In the studio, Heath was very pleased with the orchestra's performance through this tricky passage. However, the radio sound men, generally speaking, know their job. On television, both BBC and commercial, the sound is frequently appalling because proper placing of mikes and musicians is sacrificed for the sake of "visual appeal", which is usually merely gimmicks. There are exceptions. BBC producer Christian Simpson occasionally puts on short jazz programs with plenty of arty camerawork, lighting and props, but he usually manages to let the group sound all right. And the commercial Granada Television's *Chelsea At Nine*—into which booker Joe Glaser seems to have got his hand; his singers often appear on it—usually can be relied upon to present musicians with fair fidelity. Granada TV also deserves credit for a good and fairly popular series starring the Lyttelton band. And I believe the TWW, which operates from Cardiff, Wales, has featured the Dankworth orchestra in a series.

There is so little jazz on TV in Britain that it is not easy to generalize about the quality of the performances. I won't try. But I would say that British jazz fans would dearly love to see such programs, now departed, as the *Timex Jazz Shows*, *Stars of Jazz*, and *Art Ford's Jazz Party*. They may have upset the American commentators, but the feeling in Britain is, they must be a great deal better than practically nothing.