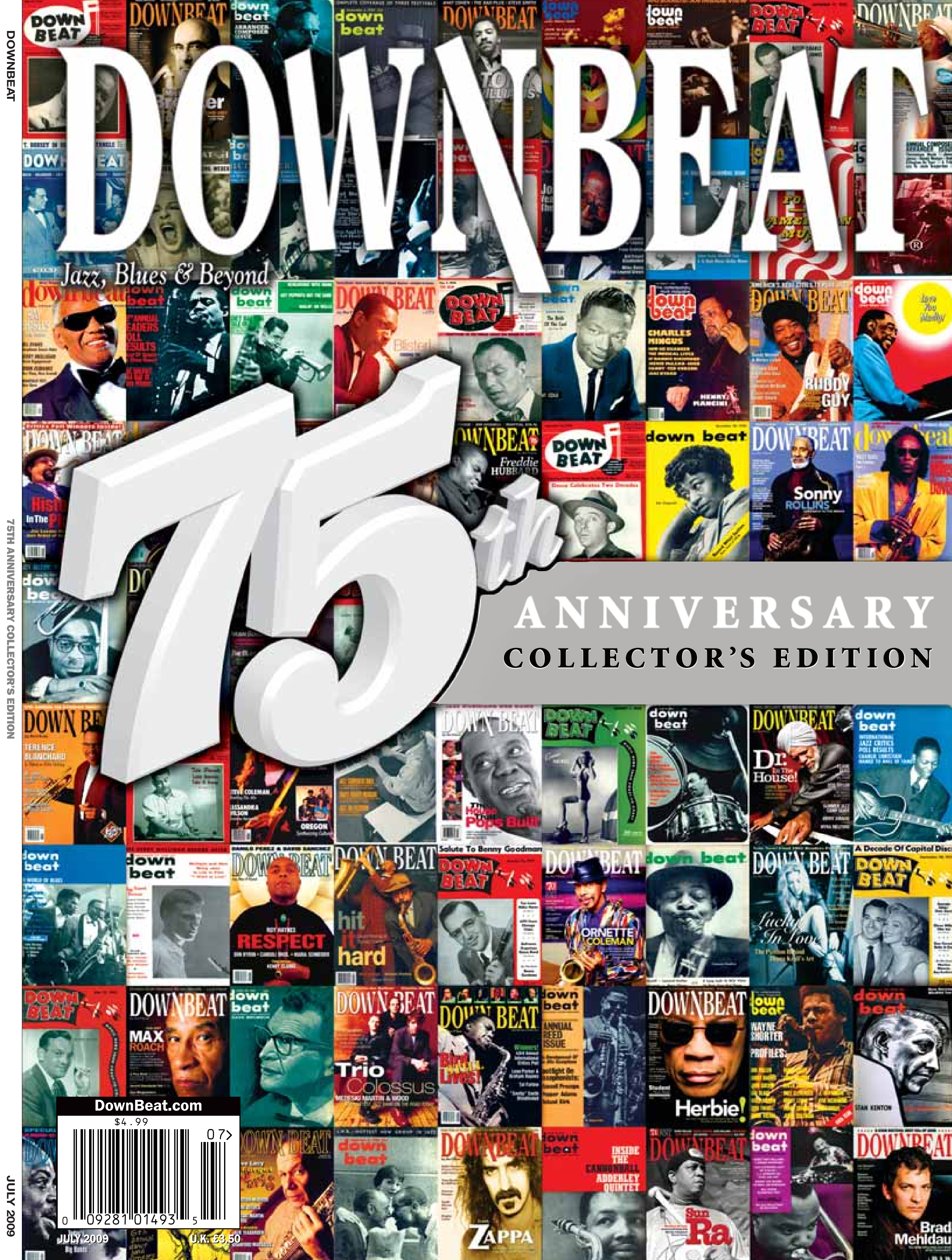
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Getting SERIOUS
Send Bonds To Europe!
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Charlie Christian Plays Last Chord!
DOWN BEAT
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Elvis COSTELLO & Allen TOUSSAINT
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Merry Month Of Billy May
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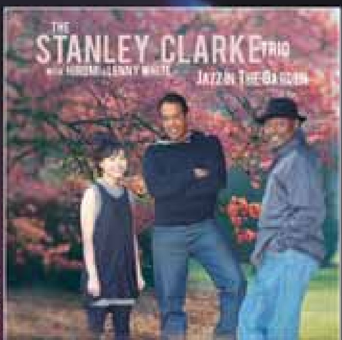
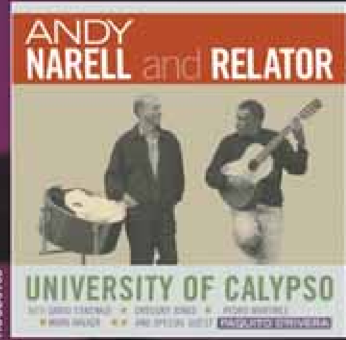


A musical "dream team" featuring Stanley Clarke, one of the most innovative bass players of the past three decades, Japanese pianist Hiromi, emerging rising star on the jazz scene, and versatile drummer Lenny White, best known for his Return to Forever work. Clarke's acoustic recording of Clarke and Hiromi originals along with the reinvented standards is jazz virtuosity at its highest level.



University of Calypso has Andy Narell joining forces with calypso legend Relator to explore the role of jazz in vintage calypso. Together, they perform 15 classic compositions by Lord Kitchener, Lord Melody, Mighty Terror, Roaring Lion, Spider, and Relator, supported by a group of world-class Latin-jazz cats who can swing the calypso *and* blow *le jazz hot*. It's been over 50 years since a major calypsonian went into the studio with a bunch of jazz players.

The wildly popular and sexy alto saxophonist returns. A bandleader and solo recording artist since the age of 19, Dutch-born Candy Dulfer has recorded and/or performed with Prince, Van Morrison, Maceo Parker, Dave Stewart, Beyoncé, Pink Floyd, Chaka Khan, David Sanborn, Aretha Franklin, Blondie, Joey DeFrancesco and many others. This follow up reflects her growth as a true jazz/funk player.

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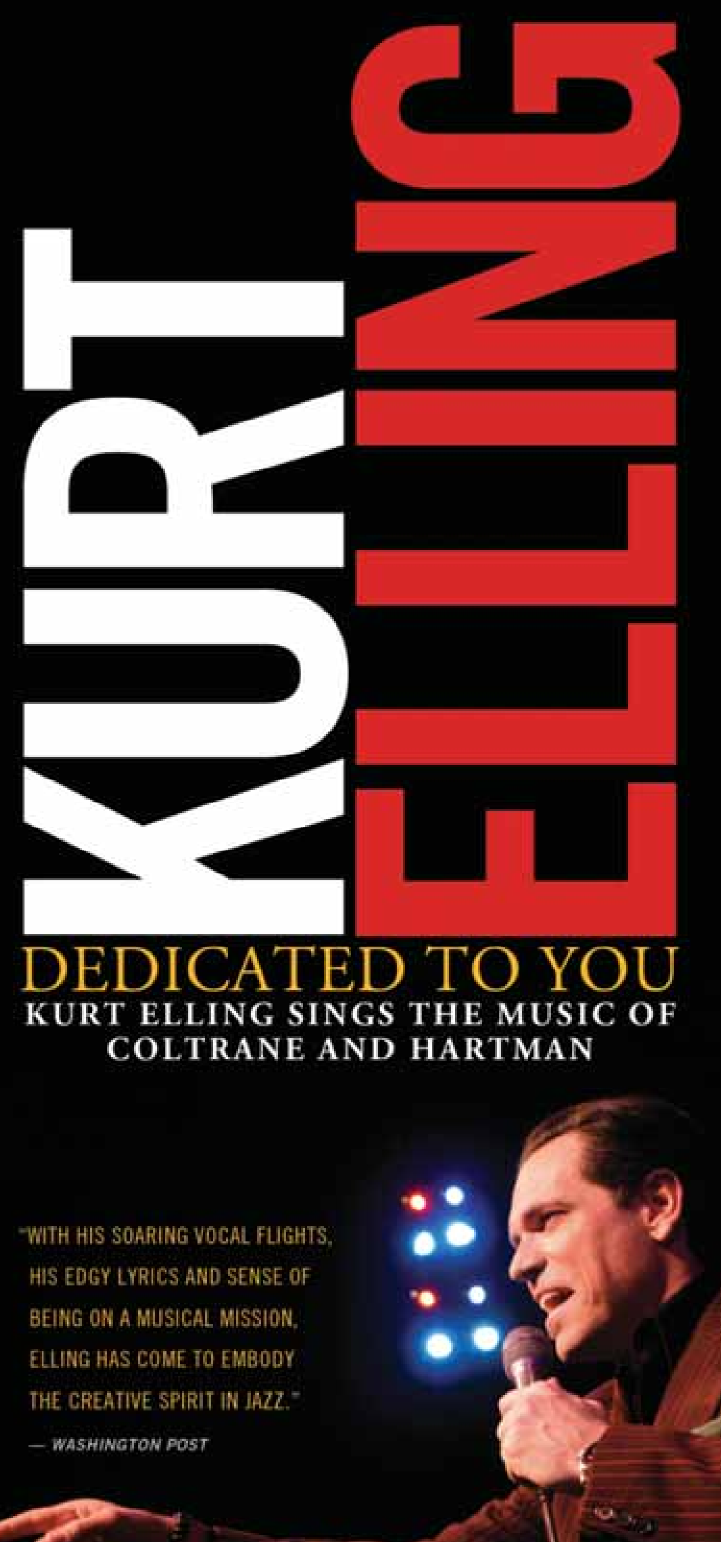

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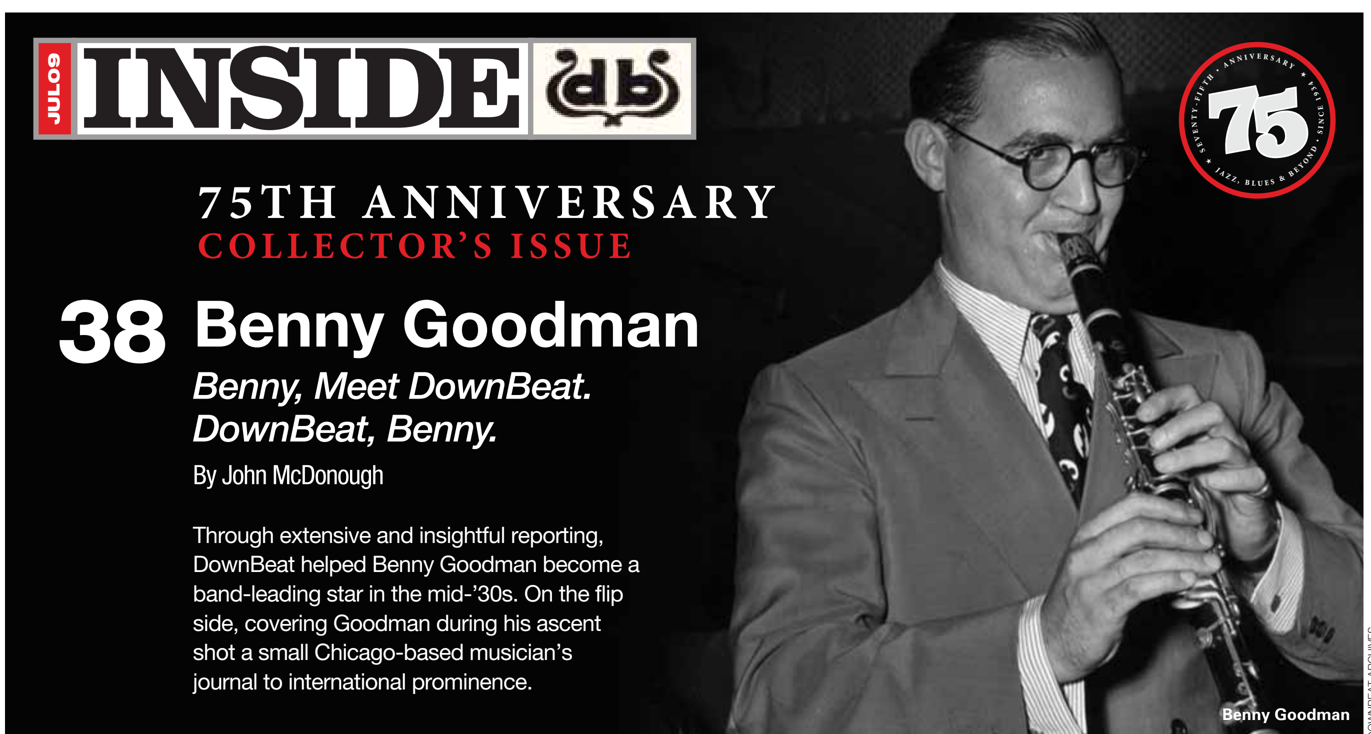

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Benny, Meet DownBeat. DownBeat, Benny.

By John McDonough

Through extensive and insightful reporting, DownBeat helped Benny Goodman become a band-leading star in the mid-'30s. On the flip side, covering Goodman during his ascent shot a small Chicago-based musician's journal to international prominence.

Benny Goodman

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A Place That Jazz Has Called Home for 75 Years

By Jason Koransky

Jazz—Not For Morons Only

This headline in the February 1939 issue of DownBeat introduced a story that defended the merits of jazz composition. A photocopy of the story has been tacked to the wall by my desk for years. It's always good for a laugh. But a greater significance exists to this piece.

DownBeat was less than five years old in 1939. Debates raged about the merits of jazz, whether swing music had a place in decent society. For example, a headline in the December 1937 issue of DownBeat screamed, "Ellington Refutes Cry That Swing Started Sex Crimes!" Jazz needed its media supporters, and DownBeat stepped in as a bold voice in the era's music debates, serving as a staunch defender of jazz.

Seated (from left): Dizzy Gillespie, Cannonball Adderley, J.J. Johnson and Candido; standing (from left): Art Davis, Jo Jones, Victor Feldman, Roy Eldridge, Nat Adderley, Louis Hayes, Leo Wright, Sam Jones and Coleman Hawkins

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

The fact that DownBeat is celebrating its 75th anniversary with this issue shows who won the debates. Jazz found a home in these pages, and over the past eight decades DownBeat has helped nurture, promote, criticize, change and honor the music. The magazine's design, shape, paper stock, owners, publishers, editors, writers, photographers, advertisers and musicians covered may have changed over the years, but at its core, the magazine has retained one simple purpose: to serve as the "Bible of jazz."

The photo on this page offers a glimpse into the world that DownBeat has worked so hard to cover. It appears to be a mundane event—musicians mulling in a lounge at New York's Idlewild Airport (now Kennedy), preparing to depart to Europe. But it's who these musicians are that made it important for DownBeat to publish the photo: From Dizzy Gillespie and Cannonball Adderley to Coleman Hawkins and Jo Jones, the group, on its way to a Jazz at the Philharmonic tour, offered a summit of some of the legends of the music. The collection of these artists cuts to the essence of DownBeat: We immerse our readers in hardcore jazz

Trying to encapsulate into one issue all of the rich music journalism history that has been produced in 75 years loomed as an impossible task. But we tried. The issue starts with five pages of classic letters that have appeared in "Chords & Discords," and ends with a Leonard Feather "Blindfold Test"—DownBeat's trademark column—with Dizzy Gillespie and Louie Bellson from 1967. In between, we delve into the archives and reprint many of the classic stories and photos from the past 75 years. We have also put together several features that highlight how the magazine has covered specific artists—Benny Goodman, Sonny Rollins, Dave Brubeck and Marian McPartland.

For the Rollins, Brubeck and McPartland stories, we sent each artist a package of their DownBeat archives. We gave each musician time to read the stories, to reflect on how DownBeat has covered them (and McPartland and Brubeck saw the stories that they penned for the magazine) over the past 60 years. We then reminisced with each about these stories. Ted Panken's Rollins piece starts on Page 48, Paul de Barros' McPartland story is on Page 64 and my Brubeck feature is on Page 56.

The Goodman feature, written by John McDonough, serves two purposes. First, it celebrates the centennial of the clarinetist's birth. In addition, the story delves into the symbiotic relationship that DownBeat and Goodman had. Goodman was a fledgling clarinetist and bandleader when Albert Lipschultz and Glenn Burrs launched DownBeat in July 1934. DownBeat was looking for readers. Through its extensive coverage of the clarinetist, DownBeat built its reputation and readership; Goodman's rise to fame was aided by DownBeat trumpeting his merits.

As McDonough writes in the story, which begins on Page 38, "DownBeat's destiny might have been very different had its early trajectory not converged with an unknown clarinet player—Benny Goodman."

Coincidentally, writing about Goodman more than 40 years ago offered McDonough an entree into DownBeat. Dan Morgenstern was the editor. McDonough met Morgenstern in 1967 when culling the DownBeat archives for a story he was writing on John Hammond for the Chicago Tribune's magazine. McDonough interviewed Goodman for the story, and after it came out, he received an invitation from Goodman to attend a party in New York celebrating the 30th anniversary of the clarinetist's classic 1938 Carnegie Hall concert. Morgenstern asked McDonough to write about the party for DownBeat, and ever since McDonough has served as a valuable contributor to the magazine.

Writing for the magazine has opened doors for McDonough to become part of the music. "Going to that Goodman party was like going to a private party with the reunited Beatles," said McDonough, a DownBeat senior correspondent. "This was the first time I was struck with how journalism gave you great access to people and events, which you otherwise wouldn't necessarily have access to. It spoils you after a while."

Morgenstern, who started his work with DownBeat in 1964 as the magazine's New York editor and left in 1974, thinks that musicians have opened up to DownBeat reporters and photographers because the magazine has always worked hard to present a competent and accurate reflection of the jazz scene of the day. He recalls that during his tenure, a lot of pressure existed for DownBeat to cover rock 'n' roll, and that the Civil Rights Movement had an enormous impact on the jazz scene.

"People took strong positions," Morgenstern said. "DownBeat was open to the debate about issues of race, and whether there was economic equality in the music world."

When asked about some of the exciting moments and issues during his long tenure at DownBeat, Morgenstern recalled the outpouring of emotion when John Coltrane died, all of the telegrams and phone calls that flooded into the office. "It was touching," he said. "Much more fun was celebrating Louis Armstrong's 70th birthday. We put together a special issue as a birthday present. We tried to get comments from as many people as possible. It was something I felt good about. We had people like Sun Ra in the issue, who you wouldn't have expected to relate to Pops."

Understanding the connections between all forms of jazz have helped DownBeat evolve. A writer who understands this is Nat Hentoff. From 1953–'57, he interviewed hundreds of musicians for DownBeat. His stories have stood the test of time as some of the most insightful glimpses into musicians' minds that have ever run in the magazine. His work allowed the artists' voices to come through. This is why Hentoff's byline appears more than any other writer's in this issue, including his pieces on Miles Davis (Page 104), Charlie Parker (Page 102), Clifford Brown (Page 20), Tito Puente (Page 24) and Jimmy McPartland (Page 82).

"You have to know these artists as people to know where their music comes from," Hentoff said. "If you come to an interview with a list of questions, you forget them. You have to listen to the person, and then the

questions come. You have a conversation.”

Musicians trusted Hentoff (and still do today), and approached an interview with him with an inherent comfort level. Being that he worked as a DownBeat editor also gave his interviews a heightened importance.

“Gunther Schuller told me that during the period that Thelonious Monk was not known by most musicians, the long interview I did with him in DownBeat helped speed his way toward acceptance,” Hentoff said.

Michael Bourne’s ability to talk music with artists has led to a 40-year relationship with the magazine. Now a senior contributor to DownBeat, Bourne, early in his tenure with the magazine, interviewed Frank Zappa at an Indianapolis Holiday Inn on July 4, 1970. The story appears on Page 124 of this issue.

“DownBeat has always had open ears about this music, understanding that it’s all connected,” Bourne said. “I am always amazed at how this music remains timeless.”

The music may be timeless, but keeping DownBeat around as a viable business for 75 years also stands as quite an accomplishment. The Maher family’s ownership of the magazine for more than six decades has demonstrated a genuine commitment to jazz. Their willingness to keep this platform for the music around in good times and bad has bolstered the careers of countless musicians.

Charles Suber served as DownBeat publisher for two stints—first from 1952–’62, and then from 1968–’82. Perhaps more than anyone, he understands the challenges that have been involved in publishing DownBeat continuously for 75 years. “The music is its own language,” Suber said. “I realized that in order to talk the language of the musicians, we had to use actual music in DownBeat, to break that divide.”

From transcriptions and master classes to complete scores, DownBeat under Suber became an insider’s guide into the music. It also became a leading voice for jazz education, with Suber pointing to the formation of the Student Music Awards in 1978 as one of his most proud accomplishments at the magazine.

On its 75th birthday, DownBeat can stand tall knowing that it has become an integral part of so many peoples’ lives.

“It says a lot about the music itself that DownBeat is 75 years old,” Morgenstern said. “This music is something of lasting value. It isn’t a fad, something that comes and goes. DownBeat is part of the enduring world of music and art.”

Jazz won’t go anywhere. Playing this music is not an option for the musicians who get bit by the improvising bug. Jazz becomes a necessity, as important as food or water for the musician. It’s organic music that will continue to grow as long as humans still play instruments.

A story from the July 1936 issue illustrates the urge that musicians have to create. Carl Cons profiled Duke Ellington in the piece “A Black Genius In A White Man’s World: Much Nonsense Has Been Written About The Duke.” The headline demonstrates the vastly different racial situation that existed then as compared to today. But what stands out from this story is a quote from Ellington: “I have never caught a vine swinging in a forest, but I think that would be a real moment in musical literature when the gentle swaying to and fro of that vine, and the rhythmic swish of the leaves as they were caressed by it, could be captured in orchestral sound.”

I don’t know if Ellington ever captured in a composition this image he had in his mind. But it is this search for sound—translating poetry into notes—that will keep jazz evolving. DownBeat will be there along the way, covering the past, present and future of the music.

This issue is dedicated to all of the musicians with visions like Ellington, who have made producing this magazine for the past 75 years such an amazing job. Also, this celebration would not have happened had it not been for the dedicated work of all the pubishers, editors, designers, advertising executives, writers, photographers, circulation directors and others who have worked so hard to put DownBeat in print. And, most importantly, this issue is a gift to you, the reader, who has spent precious time each month reading these pages. Keep swinging! **DB**

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Otis Taylor’s new recording, ***Pentatonic Wars and Love Songs***, throws a light on the complexities of love in all of its forms. His love songs take a hard, realistic look at the relative benefits and costs of what is perhaps the most confusing and unnerving of forces within the human heart. In addition to Taylor’s trademark haunting vocals and simple but stirring guitar riffs – a combination often referred to as trance blues – the album also features guest appearances by Irish blues-rock guitarist Gary Moore (previously heard on Taylor’s *Definition of a Circle* in 2007) and jazz/hip-hop pianist Jason Moran.

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1953

1963

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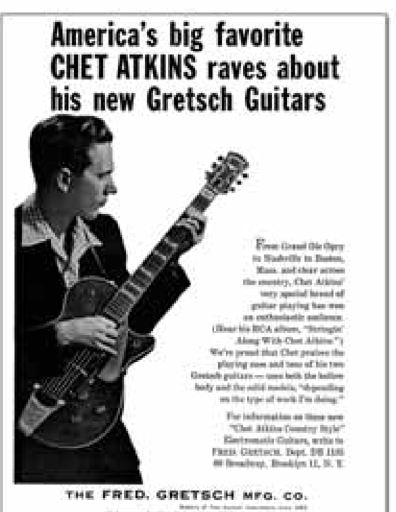

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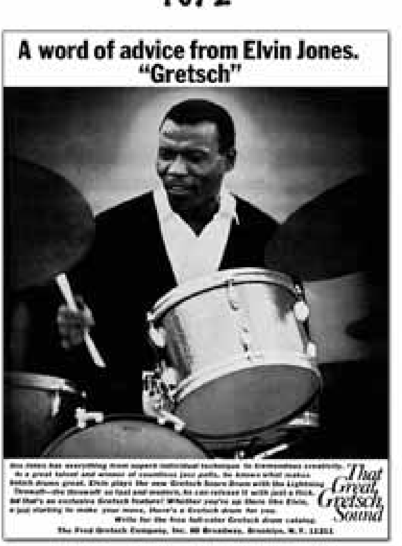

1972

"In July of 1954, my uncle, *Fred Gretsch Jr.*, congratulated *Downbeat* on its twentieth anniversary. Now it's my pleasure to offer Gretsch's congratulations on yet another milestone.

Downbeat has now been chronicling the history of music for seventy-five years. I'm proud to say that over those years, Gretsch instruments have been helping the world's greatest artists to make much of that history—as illustrated by the historic *Downbeat* ads shown here. We celebrated an anniversary of our own—our 125th—just last year, so we can appreciate how excited everyone at *Downbeat* must be.

We salute *Downbeat* for its ongoing efforts to promote the best in contemporary music while at the same time celebrating the rich heritage that our art form enjoys. The past, present, and future of 'jazz, blues, and beyond' is well and truly represented in the pages of this unique magazine." - Fred W. Gretsch

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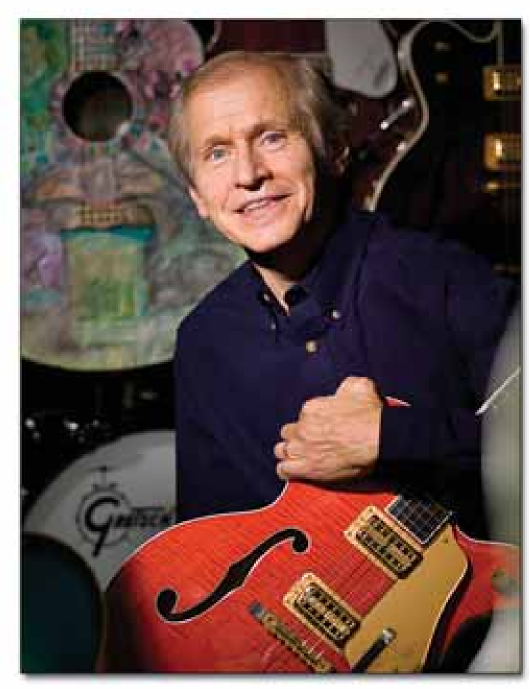
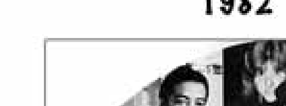


Fred W. Gretsch - President
The Gretsch Company

1978



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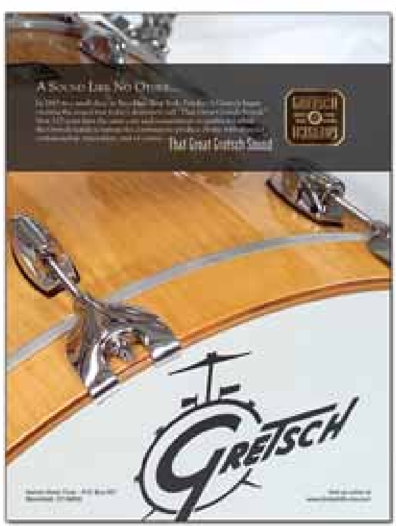

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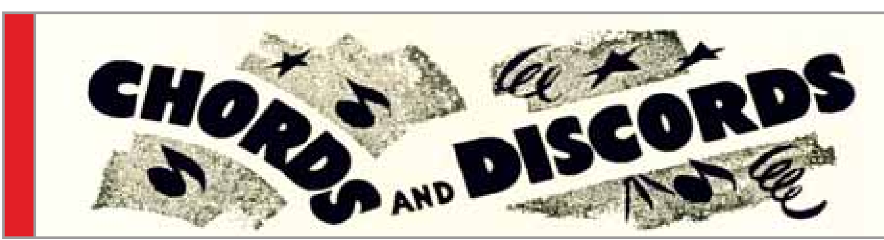


Lousy Method of Cheating John Public

When I was in high school I was reminded that dime novels were the lowest and cheapest type of reading material. Obvioulsy, those poor teachers had never heard of DownBeat. In my estimation, DownBeat rates top honors for being the lousiest method of cheating John Public out of an honest 15 cents.

Mike Wilcox
Green Bay, Wis.
Jan. 1, 1940

Welk Objects to 'Ignominious' Rating of 'No Competition'

In your listing of the "Most Popular Records in the Coin Machines," you listed Jimmy Dorsey's recording of "Maria Elena" as first choice among waxings of this number. However, under the heading of "second choice" you have printed "no competition." Even if we don't qualify for the runner-up spot, do Wayne King and Abe Lyman's recordings deserve to share with us the ignominious rating of "no competition"?

Lawrence Welk
Memphis, Tenn.
June 15, 1941

Beat Proves First Class

A strange thing happened in Saipan when I landed there with the navy. Only first-class mail was allowed to reach the first invaders but somehow we managed to get a DownBeat. I'll bet at least 60 of my buddies read it. The last time I saw it only four pages remained. Why don't you engrave each issue on a stone tablet?

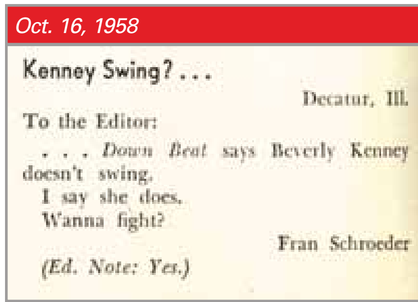
Richard Ettinger
South Pacific
Nov. 15, 1944

Case Against Dizzy

I heard Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker and their band at Billy Berg's and, though I call myself a swing enthusiast, I felt uncomfortable and disgusted after listening to that wild music. As strong as my faith in hot music is, I would just as strongly say that this rebop type of music will not last.

Doug Day
Los Angeles
March 25, 1946

Oct. 16, 1958



Kenney Swing? . . .

Decatur, Ill.

To the Editor:

. . . *Down Beat* says Beverly Kenney doesn't swing.
I say she does.
Wanna fight?

Fran Schroeder

(Ed. Note: Yes.)

Jazzman Learns Hard Way About 'Friends'

Before I began singing professionally, I buddied with all kinds of musicians. I thought "jazz" music was the only type of music that was completely sincere and unbastardized. I had to become a professional to find out that the lowest, most degenerate kind of people assume the business control of this phase of the music. Our only friends are the pseudo-hipsters who attach their meaningless existences to jazzmen. Why isn't a true picture of this situation presented by the so-called critics of jazz?

Doc Pomus
Brooklyn, N.Y.
Jan. 28, 1949

Cole Advocates for Equality

I am concerned over reports that purport to represent my views on Jim Crow and discrimination. I have been and will continue to be dedicated to the elimination of all forms of discrimination, segregation and bigotry. There is only one right position in this matter: Full equality for all people, reglardless of race, creed or religion.

Nat King Cole
Detroit
May 30, 1956

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Gerry Mulligan Remarks on Review of His New LP

I have before me the Jan. 14 issue of DownBeat opened to Page 15, where I find my Pacific Jazz album reviewed and rated. I am naturally pleased and gratified to find a 4-star rating for our efforts. However, I would have a few words with the reviewer who said, "We can't hear anything in the music that wouldn't have been even better with a piano."

I just don't consider the piano as an indispensable part of the rhythm section. It is more habit than logic that it is accepted standard practice to use the piano thusly. The piano's use with a rhythm section, where its function is to "feed" the chords of the progression to the soloist, has placed the piano in an uncreative and somewhat mechanical role. By eliminating this role from the piano in my group, I open whole new fields of exploration and possibilities when I do choose to use one.

In spite of the nasty thing said about the piano, it is a very nice review and we are all buying lots of copies to send to our friends.

Gerry Mulligan
Hollywood, Calif.
Feb. 11, 1953

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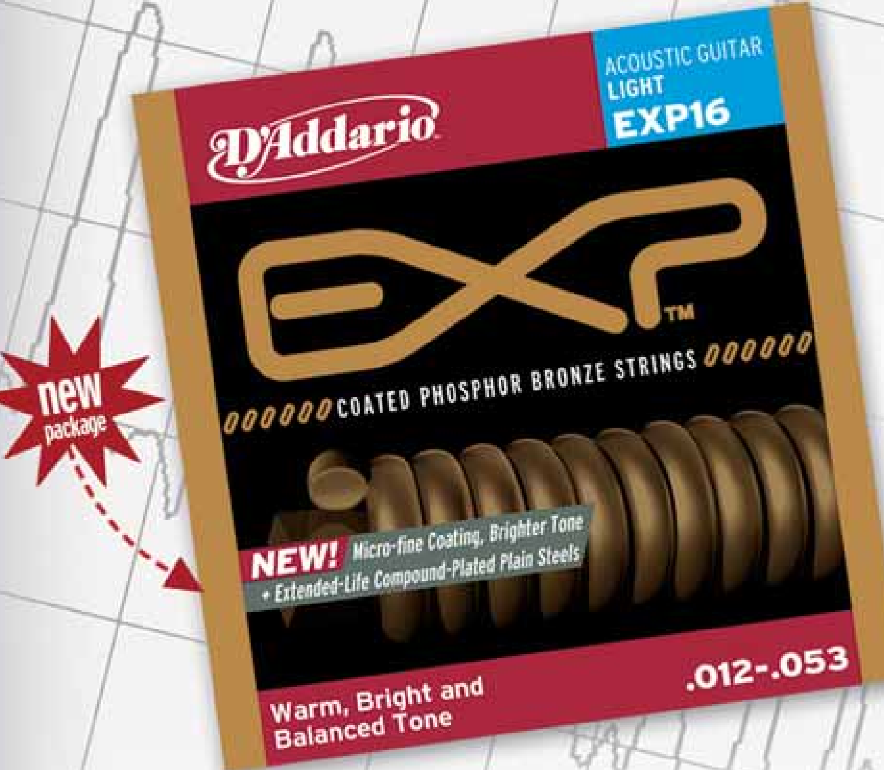

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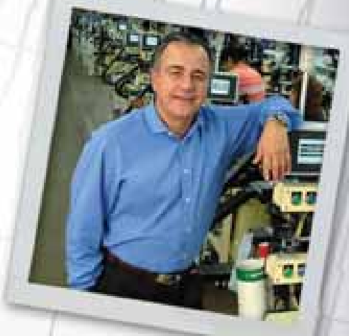

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Disappointed ...

Just finished reading your article entitled "Garrulous Sal" in the Oct. 3 issue, and am a little disappointed that when naming his favorite guitarist, Sal Salvador left out Barney Kessel, who in my opinion holds the title of the greatest guitarist. Maybe you could ask Salvador, who I think is also a fine guitarist, just why Kessel does not rate. Sure wish you would ease my pain and have a story about Barney.

Phil Spector
Los Angeles
Nov. 14, 1956

Nov. 12, 1959

So We're Sick

OUT OF MY HEAD IS CONSISTENTLY BRILLIANT SATIRICAL COLUMN. I LOVE IT. YOUR FAN, CHICAGO. LENNY BRUCE

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Miles Miffs Mann

It is obvious that Miles Davis was referring to me and my group when he spoke about a white combo sent to Africa in recent years. As far as Miles' saying about our African trip that, "That was the dumbest move I ever heard of in my life," that is one man's opinion. Find out from the thousands of people in Africa who heard and enjoyed American jazz as well how dumb a move it was. The most important part of our tour was showing that it's possible for peoples of different backgrounds to work together. Isn't it about time the message got across here, too?

Herbie Mann
New York
Oct. 12, 1961

Dec. 23, 1960

Limited Response

I hear *Down Beat* has been saying some rather bad things about us. Thank you.
Hollywood, Calif. Les McCann, Ltd.

Lovely Words From Ornette

I have read articles by the staff of DownBeat and some freelance writers about music. This is very good for musicians and listeners. Everyone shares in the nature of music. The biggest problem about music is the material it is made out of, and this seems to be brought about by the concept of classes rather than the music itself. That is why jazz has such a beautiful meaning; it is classless, just as the art of human living is a classless way of living that gives. Music has this quality.

Ornette Coleman
New York
Jan. 18, 1962

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

June 23, 1960

This comes in the form of a thank you for the space devoted to me in the May 12 *Down Beat*. I used to wonder if I would ever come out in a *Down Beat* poll. As you know, I have a great desire to be accepted on a musical level besides being considered a fine entertainer. But that you thought I deserved an entire cover . . . what can I say?

I feel that the story presented a true picture, and . . . again thank you.
New York, N.Y. Bobby Darin

Reply From Abroad

I have seen in your magazine photos showing me as an adamant and arbitrary person. Bob Van Dam is a damn liar. On my first trip to Berlin for the film, yes I was in disagreement with the music, as it was done without my consultation. Van Dam should stick to photography and leave journalism up to those who are more able to write the facts, and that isn't too often.

Oscar Pettiford
March 31, 1960

WHERE THE LEGENDS HAVE PLAYED AND THE TRADITION CONTINUES

Ernie Adams
John Allred
Karrin Allyson Quartet
Joe Ascione
Pete Barbutti
Shelly Berg
Anne Hampton Callaway
Gilbert Castellanos
Bill Charlap Trio
James Chirrillo
Freddy Cole Quartet
Dee Daniels Trio
Bill Easley
John Fedchock
Four Freshmen
Jon Gordon
Wycliffe Gordon
Jeff Hamilton Trio
Eddie Higgins
Red Holloway
Henry Johnson Quartet
Tom Kennedy
Kristin Korb
Johnny Mandel
Bill Mays Trio
Andy Martin
Butch Miles
Bob Millikan
Johnny O'Neal Trio
Ken Peplowski
Houston Person Quartet
Claudio Roditi Quintet
Anita Rosamond
Tom Scott Quintet featuring Paulette McWilliams
Lynn Seaton
Marlena Shaw with Trio
Gary Smulyan
Grant Stewart
Helen Sung Trio
Terrell Stafford
James Stuckey
Denise Thimes
Warren Vache
Scott Whitfield
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DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Mingus Replies

In regard to Bill Coss's poor review of my so-called concert:

I knew it was hopeless to make a concert out of a recording session. United Artists' word was that they would tape our final rehearsal so the musicians could hear what I was trying to do. This was stopped when their engineer said he couldn't get into the hall and didn't have speakers but would have them there for the concert. How could Coss, a so-called music critic, miss the fact that I couldn't have had even a good open recording session if the engineer couldn't make playbacks for me or the audience? Even my doctor heard me ask over the mic for a playback of the first tune, which Coss forgot to mention was a success even with the audience. Also, Coss forgot to mention how many people stayed to hear the music while he ran all over the hall until I called his name. But all is well. I'm sure Coss has his belly full of good criticism now. As far as giving an honest review, I taught him the hard way.

Charles Mingus
New York
Jan. 17, 1963

Kenny Clarke Answers a Young Man

In answer to a letter from a young reader and musician, first I'd like to thank you for your letter and your interest. I'm glad that you agree with me on some points and, too, that you disagree. My advice is to enroll in one of the jazz clinics. There you will be able to strive for quality, by playing with other musicians of your age group. To be a good leader, one must first learn to follow. In the '30s and '40s we had a number of big bands to experiment in, and since those bands are lacking today your best bet is the jazz clinic. You also mentioned the "new way" of playing chords by John Coltrane. Well, this may be new to you, but listen a little more to Diz.

Kenny Clarke
Seine, France
Jan. 30, 1964

From One Who Knows

I would like to say how much I enjoyed the article on Billy Higgins in the recent drum issue, and how important it is that young drummers read that article. There's a lot of valuable information there.

Horace Silver
New York
May 2, 1968

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Message From Byrd

My experience with the Stan Kenton Clinic at the National Band Camp has left me in complete ecstasy.

I would like to speak solely from the standpoint of a human being—for once, not from the standpoint of race—because you must remember that jazz was based on European harmony and melodic concepts and didn't come from the Martians, as a good many people think. Contrary to the views of many people in jazz, it is time we joined with other musicians, classical and otherwise, to create music purely for the joy of creating it.

It should be remembered that bigots exist because of ignorance. The camp was interracial, both in the teaching faculty and the student body, contrary to my own previous conception. For the benefit of the bigots, let me say that I stole as many or more things (ideas) from the white musicians with whom I worked than they did from me.

Donald Byrd
New York
Dec. 7, 1961

MICHAEL WILDERMAN

Kirk Responds

I am writing to inform Jim Szantor that when on the outside of something, you're not in position to know what's going on, so I thought I'd bring you on the inside of this which you wrote about me, hoping you're prepared for a butt spanking.

As for coming down on someone's solo, as you said I did, I was providing a riff with the trumpet player, Harry Edison. It stood out like a sore thumb because no one else joined in with us. I've played enough jam sessions and have played with enough people to be justified to be on the set with anyone that plays "black classical music" commonly called "jazz" by you. Until jealous, prejudiced, brainwashed, non-music, non-brained, people like you who say I played two solos instead of saying choruses; you, who say I upstaged someone instead of realizing I was trying to keep something together; you, who say that I have a gimmick instead of realizing it is a true art and a miracle of our times—until you understand this, you're not qualified to write about me.

This is not an ego trip I'm on. To say that I had standing ovations, led by pot-puffing fans, shows me how much attention you were paying to what was going on, or maybe you didn't have enough courage to take a puff yourself.

Rahsaan Roland Kirk
New York
Nov. 23, 1972

CHRISTIAN MCBRIDE
& INSIDE STRAIGHT
KIND OF BROWN

A JAZZ QUINTET TO BE RECKONED WITH
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– Orrin Keepnews

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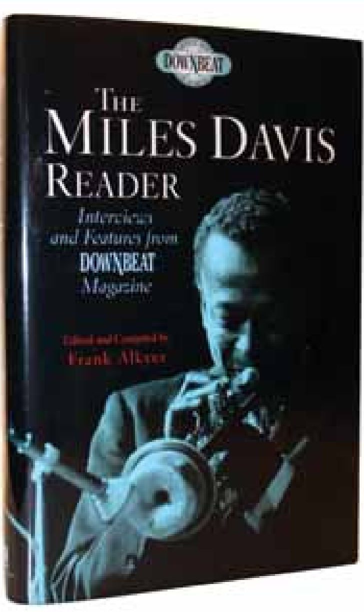

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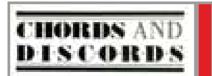


Sweets on Miles

I disagree with Sweets Edison when he says that Miles Davis couldn't play a first part. He also said that Miles is only a soloist, but being a soloist is the highest thing in a band. Sweets was trying to say that Freddie Hubbard is better, which is his opinion; I think Miles is best. He also said that he comes to hear Miles, not his electronics, with which I agree—but if you listen to Miles' electronic stuff, you can dig what's happening.

Wallace Roney III
Philadelphia
March 29, 1973

P's and Q's

Quincy Jones' first film score was *Boy In A Tree*, a Swedish film. *The Pawnbroker* was his first American film score. Quincy says it's all the same to him. Well, it's not all the same to record companies, nightclubs, NARAS, loan officers, record stores, creditors, the U.S. public or me. So if it's all the same to him, why the hell not make one swinging 4/4 album? The jazz world would welcome and it surely could use his support and strength.

P.S. I still love you though, Q.

Phil Woods
Delaware Water Gap, Pa.
June 1985

Thanks for the Memories

I enjoyed reminiscing with the 55th anniversary issue of DownBeat. Happy 55th anniversary.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar
Los Angeles
January 1990

Old Fan

DownBeat has been my Bible for over 50 years. Keep up the good work.

Henry Mancini
Los Angeles
August 1990

The Chairman Speaks

I'm flattered and honored to have been chosen for your cover! It's a fine magazine, and I'm happy to have been a part of your March issue. Many thanks for your special gifts. The sweatshirt is great and I will enjoy wearing it.

Frank Sinatra
Beverly Hills, Calif.
August 1996

JIMMY KATZ

Inspired to Grow

Words can't express the thrill and excitement I feel about the joyous world of music we live in every day. Thank you to the critics and readers alike, for your amazing response to my continued growth and development as an artist. I remember as a kid reading DownBeat in my dad's barber shop. Back then, there was a section in each issue which listed "Happenings" from different cities across the country. His name—Tony Lovano—would be mentioned from time to time playing gigs around the Cleveland area. This was truly an inspiration and a springboard to my career as a jazz musician and fan. I'd like to give a special thank you to all the folks at DownBeat through the years for their passion and insights.

Joe Lovano
New York
May 2002

DOWN BEAT Riffs

DownBeat has always lept at the chance to bring a range of new musicians to wider audiences. This section collects some of our first stories on many of the greats—some when they were young upstarts or students, others as they were starting new career directions. Their ideas often led to bright futures.

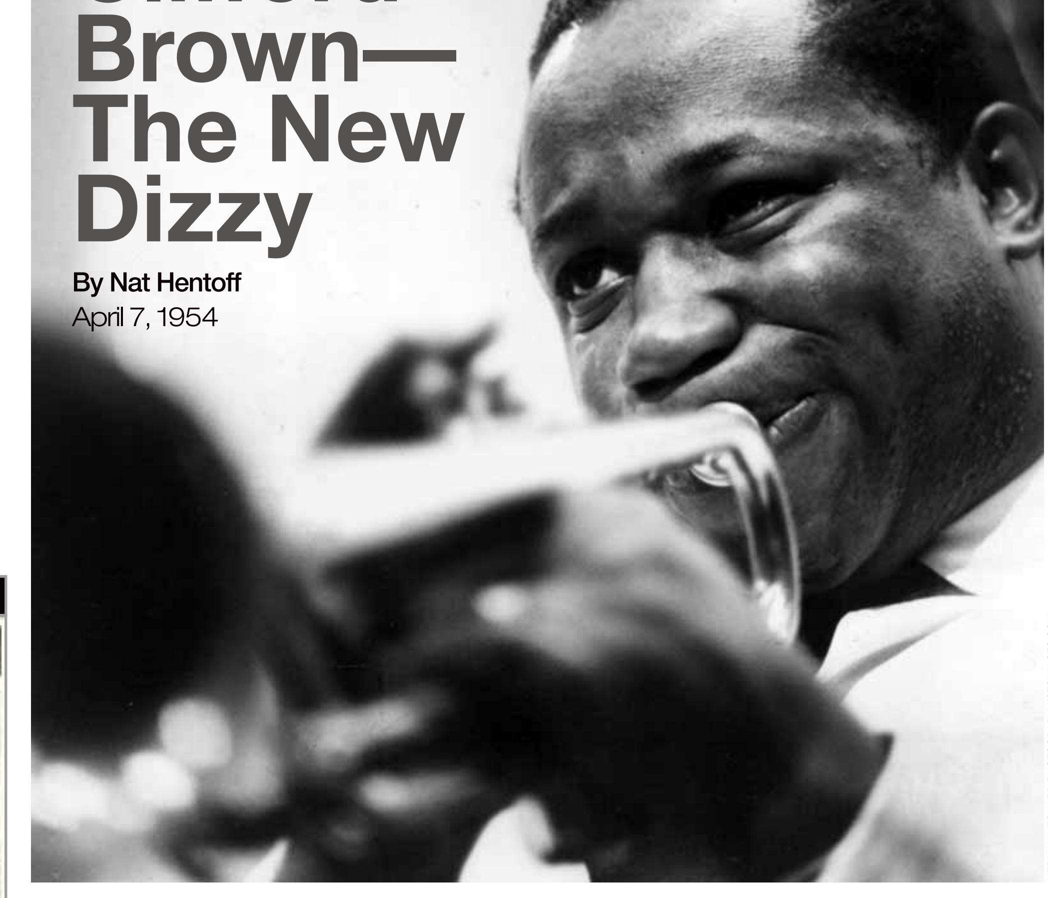
June 1, 1945

New Band

New York — Dizzy Gillespie, that mad trumpet-man whose frantic horn has been the talk of the big town, will front a new 18-piece band and take to the road next month for an extended tour of the south and west. June Eckstine will chirp with the band. Included in the show, set by WMA and tagged *Hepsations of 1945* will be the Nicholas Brothers and comedy duo of Patterson and Jackson.

Clifford Brown—The New Dizzy

By Nat Hentoff
April 7, 1954



HERMAN LEONARD PHOTOGRAPHY/CTSIMAGES.COM

The word among musicians here and in Europe is that a new Dizzy Gillespie has arrived. No hornman in several years has so stirred the interest and enthusiasm of his fellow jazzmen as Clifford Brown. And as a result of his recent records on Blue Note and Prestige, the jazz listening public also is becoming aware of a fresh, authoritative trumpet voice. Brown, 23, was born in Wilmington, Del.

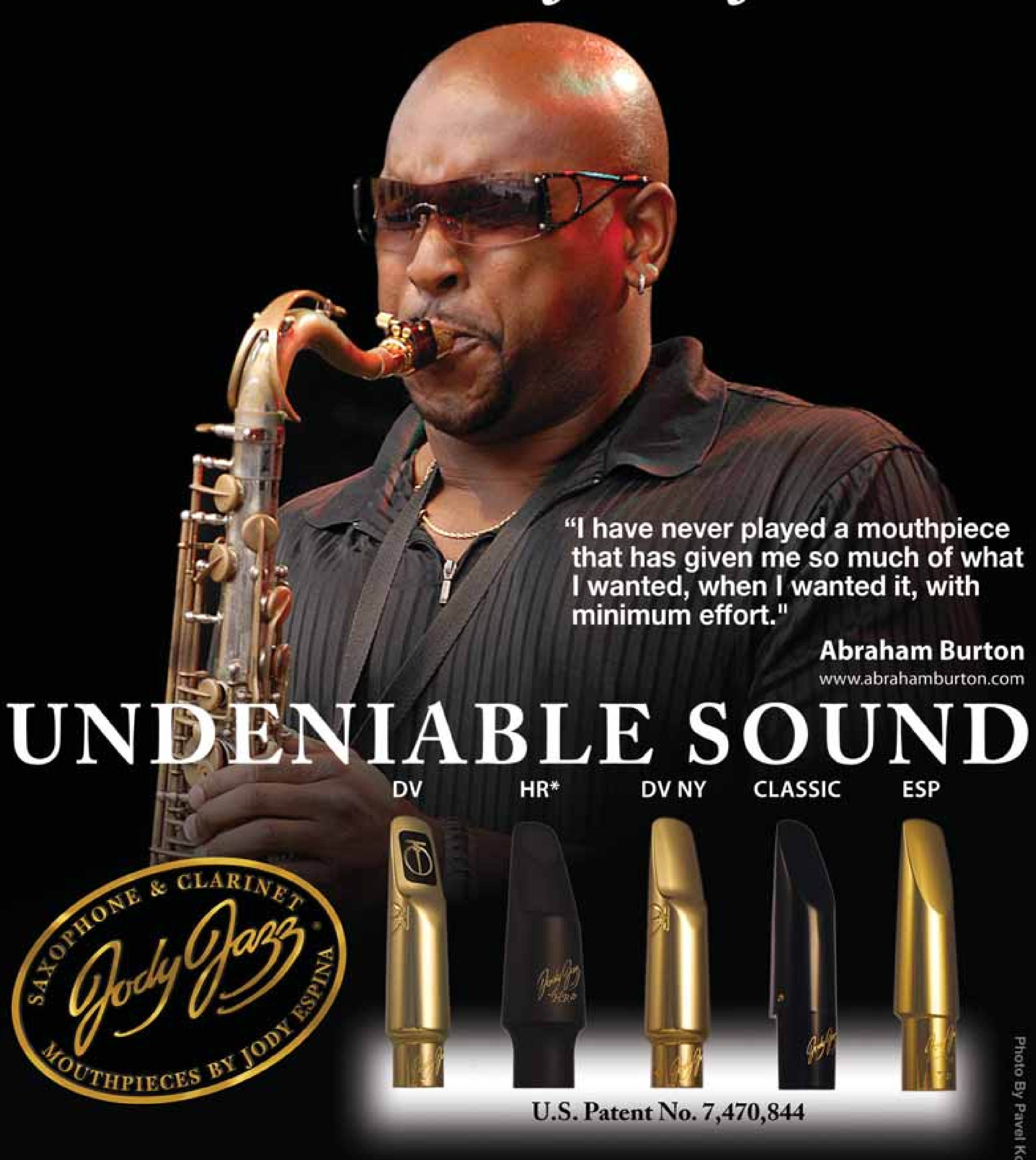
"My father played trumpet and violin and piano for his own amusement," Brown said. "From the earliest time I can remember it was the trumpet that fascinated me. When I was too little to reach it, I'd climb up to where it was, and I kept on knocking it down. So when I was 13, my father finally bought me one—and only because of that fascination for the horn itself. Otherwise I had no noticeable interest in music as such at that time. That developed later through experience with the junior high school band and a jazz group that Robert Lowery, who used to be with several big bands, organized to stimulate interest in jazz among the younger musicians in town."

While at Maryland State College, Brown played as a member of the house band at jazz concerts in Philadelphia a couple of times a month with innovators like J.J. Johnson, Max Roach, Ernie Henry and Fats Navarro. Brown is now based in New York, working with Art Blakey.

"There are always a lot of guys who sound very promising but what happens to them depends a great deal on economics," Brown said. "A musician gets married, has a couple of kids, and then he has to get another job because he has to look for that money.

"But there are certainly many talented guys around. Also, the whole atmosphere is getting healthier. At one time you weren't anywhere if you weren't hung on something, but now the younger guys frown on anyone who goofs. There's a different feeling now, you can notice how things are clearing up."

ABRAHAM BURTON plus
JODYJAZZ DV



www.jodyjazz.com

April 22, 1946

Sarah Sings

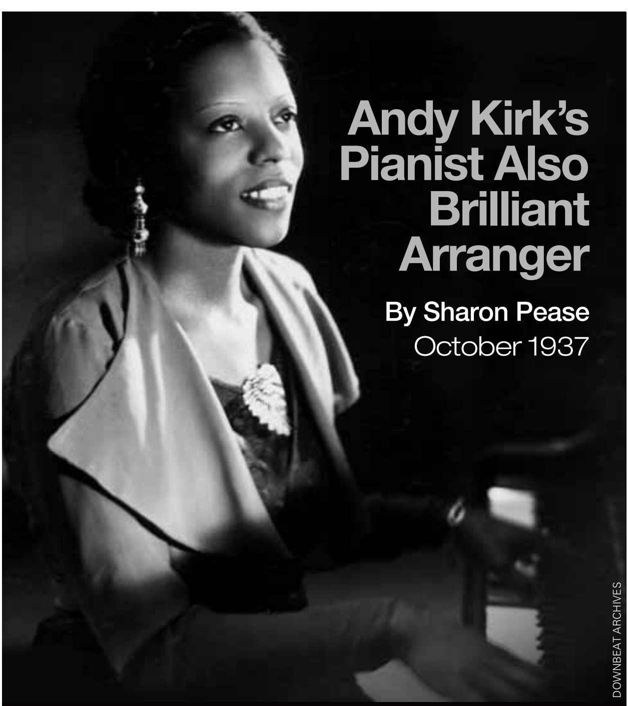
New York — Sarah Vaughan, one of the better of the new singing sensations, just joined the Cafe Society Downtown show last month. Sarah was discovered by Billy Eckstine, and featured with his first band. She just recently appeared at the Copa with John Kirby.

‘Unknown’ Haynes Sparks Bird’s Strings

By Pat Harris
Dec. 1, 1950

When Charlie Parker’s stringed ensemble swings, or rather, when the underlying rhythm is glimpsed through the veil of catgut, you might remember that the man most responsible is a comparatively little-known drummer named Roy Haynes. Musicians, drummers included, agree that Haynes, a 24-year-old Boston boy, is one of the most rhythmically exact, musically meticulous men working over a snare and cymbal today.

“You’ve got to please the fellows you work with,” Haynes said. “At one time I thought solos were it, but now I’m satisfied to take four or eight bars here or there. A lot of drummers are confused nowadays. They’re not swinging. It seems as if they have no conception of where to put the things they learned in school. They don’t concentrate on swinging, just think all the time about technique.”



Andy Kirk’s Pianist Also Brilliant Arranger

By Sharon Pease
October 1937

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

May we present the latest sensation among the “swing” pianists—Mary Lou Williams (nee Winn) featured with Andy Kirk and his Clouds of Joy, current attraction at the Grand Terrace, Chicago.

Mary Lou was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1910 and began playing the piano at the age of 5. At the age of 7 she was considered a child prodigy and played concerts for the students at Pittsburgh University. Gifted with a remarkable ear, she was able to memorize symphonic scores as well as popular tunes after hearing them for the first time.

Her career was almost shattered when her arm was broken in three places as the result of a severe fall. It finally healed perfectly after two settings.

Mary Lou has contributed a great deal to the success of the Kirk band. As well as being the featured pianist, she has developed into a top-flight composer and arranger of “swing” music.

In addition to arranging many numbers for Kirk, she has been arranging some of her own compositions for other leaders.

Nov. 1, 1941

Which One is Gene Krupa?

You might have to study a bit at first but Krupa is the gate on the left in this shot and on the right is Louie Bellson of Moline, Ill., Bellson wins $5 from *Down Beat* for having his photo printed alongside his name leader double. The editors will pay $5 to every other person whose photo is printed beside the name band leader whom he resembles.

May 1, 1941

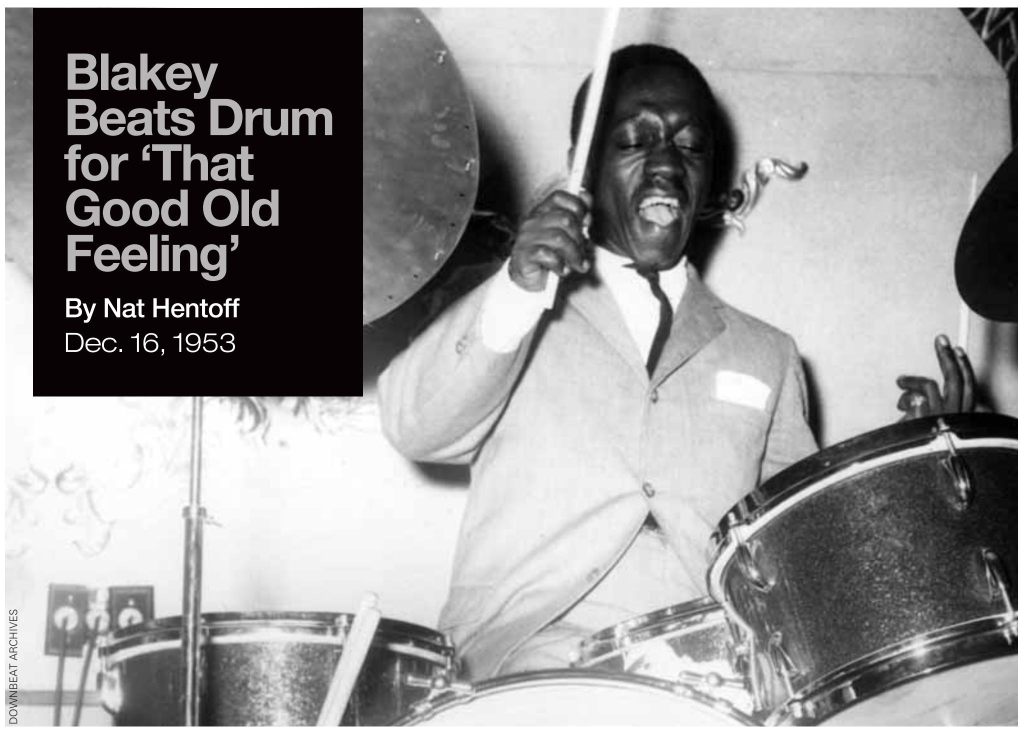
Hines' Chirps . . . Bill Eckstein and Madeline Green are the featured songsters with Earl (Fatha') Hines and his great new band, now touring in the east. But it is still the Fatha's keyboard capers which makes the band a great one. Eckstein sings blues and pop tunes. Madeline is at her best chanting *Everything Depends On You*.

Altoist Paul Desmond Is Vital Factor in Success of Dave Brubeck Quartet

By Nat Hentoff
April 18, 1952

An important reason for the evolving success of the Dave Brubeck Quartet is the rhythmically lyrical alto of Paul Desmond. Though very much involved with the modern jazz methodology, Desmond has created an original, intensely personal style of a caliber equal to such post-Parker innovators as Lee Konitz, Art Pepper and Charlie Mariano.

“I’m now in the incredibly lucky position of getting paid to do what I’d rather do than anything else—playing regularly with Dave,” Desmond said. “As far as eventual goals are concerned, they’re being fulfilled at the moment, except I’d like to be able to play a lot better than I can now. I’d like to reach the point where the technical part of playing requires no conscious thought, and all there is to do is think of ideas and listen to them come out of the horn.”



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Blakey Beats Drum for 'That Good Old Feeling'

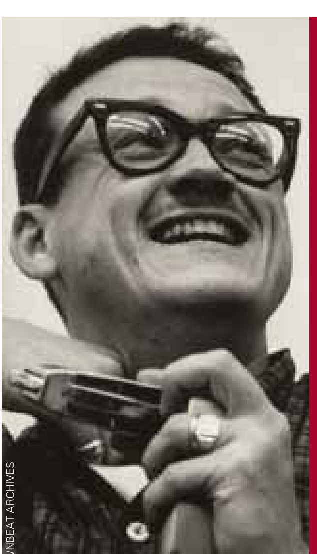
By Nat Hentoff
Dec. 16, 1953

Art Blakey, who most recently traveled the country with Buddy DeFranco, now has his own quintet that includes altoist Lou Donaldson, trumpeter Kenny Dorham, bassist Gene Ramey and pianist Horace Silver. Interviewed in New York, he had a few things to say about jazz in general and the behavior of musicians in particular.

"We're trying to build up a group that has that good old jazz feeling," Blakey said. "We want to blow and have a ball and make mistakes, if necessary, but have that good feeling that used to be in jazz. Remember Dave Tough? That's what I mean. We're trying to get the same thing they do in good dixieland. We'll certainly play modern, but we want to get the people to follow the beat and let the horns do what they want to."

Discussing the tensions that beset musicians, he had this to say:

"As soon as certain modern musicians straighten themselves and their lives out, we can really present our music to the public. The public loves presentation. But when fellows on the stand seem to be asleep when they're not playing, when their appearance is bad, it's bad for modern music. The older jazzmen, by and large, are clean, alert, have a good appearance, and so have been able to outsell us."



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Harmonica Man Tilmans Started Way Back at 3

By Nat Hentoff
Sept. 23, 1953

The cynosure of the current George Shearing quintet is an intense Belgian with a swinging sense of humor, harmonica-guitarist Jean (Toots) Tilmans.

Born in Burssels, the 31-year-old revolutionist of the harmonica began at 3 with a toy accordion. At 7 he graduated to a full-scale accordion and began to play overtures by omnipresent ear.

"If you really want to improvise on the harmonica, you have to know your instrument thoroughly," Tilmans said. "I can get a big tone by blowing softly into the mic. The basic thing is I play the harmonica as an instrument, not a toy."

[Editors' note: This was how Toots Thielemans' name was spelled in the magazine at that time.]

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Christian My Sole Influence: Kessel

By Nat Hentoff
June 17, 1953

Although musicians have been talking about Barney Kessel for several years, it's only been since he joined JATP and the Oscar Peterson trio that Kessel has become known to the general jazz audience. Since that happened, his reputation has justifiably soared. He recognizes Charlie Christian as the only influence.

"I was born 150 miles away from where Charlie lived, and my first experience was gained playing with an all-colored unit in Muskogee that Charlie had played with," Kessel said. "They kept telling me to play like a horn, and I didn't know what they meant until I heard Charlie's first record with Benny Goodman. Then one day I met Charlie himself. What I remember most clearly is his saying, 'The main thing is to concentrate on swing first. Then if you can make some interesting harmony after you know how to swing, that's fine. But to begin with, swing alone is enough to get you by.'"

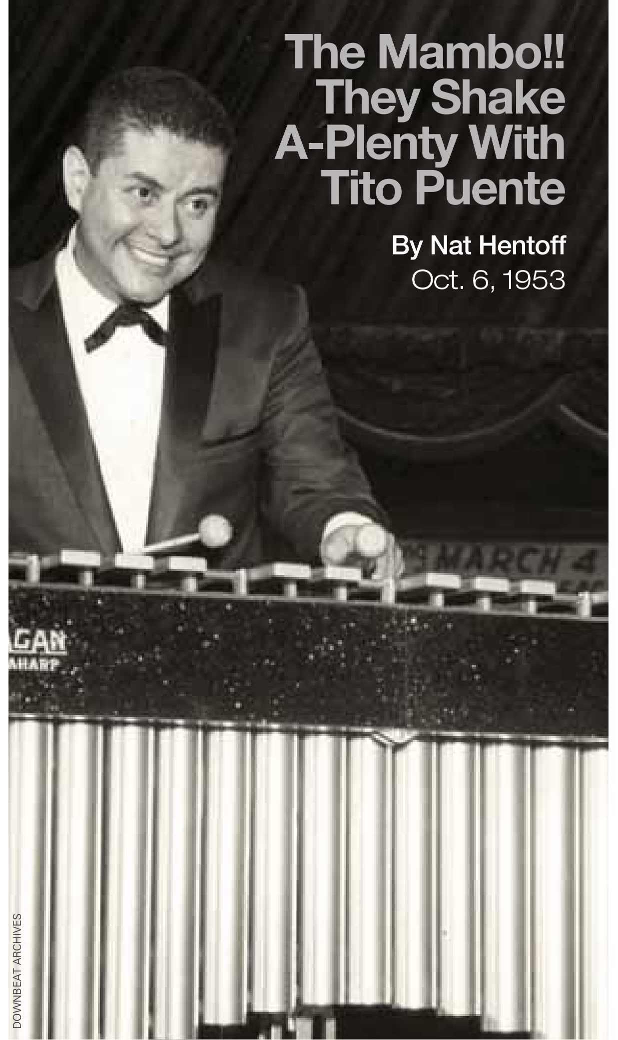
Rhythm & Blues Notes

By Ruth Cage
Sept. 22, 1954

Established r&b stars should be able to look forward to being boosted to new stardom. Unfortunately, in too many cases, a quick record success and haphazard interest in improvement thereafter will make these rises temporary. There will be exceptions to this dismal prediction, and very likely Charles Brown will be among them.

Featured on his own composition, "Driftin' Blues," Brown and the Blazers became record hits and fulfilled the promise of the wax by breaking records on two national tours. After the second one, Brown formed his own combo, the Smarties, and has been steering them through hundreds of one-niters across the country.

A personable guy, Brown was once, of all things, head of the science department of George Washington Carver High School in Bay Town, Texas.



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

The Mambo!! They Shake A-Plenty With Tito Puente

By Nat Hentoff
Oct. 6, 1953

Though the tender pop vocalists still reign, music with a beat is relentlessly returning to national popularity. Evidences include the steadily widening audience for jazz and rhythm and blues—and the growth of the mambo.

Although there are several major mambo leaders, Tito Puente (El Rey Del Timbal) particularly reflects in his success the many signs of the rise in mambo popularity. Puente's career, furthermore, has paralleled the appearance of more night clubs that are solely devoted to the mambo and its polyrhythmic allies.

"Rhythm is what you dance to, and the mambo is popular because its strong rhythms make for good dance music. What is making it even more successful is the combination of jazz elements with the mambo. Bop bands are putting in conga drums and adding a mambo flavor to their work.

"Similarly, in my band, I use certain aspects of jazz. In our arranging, we use some of the modern sounds in the manner of Dizzy Gillespie and Stan Kenton, but we never lose the authenticity of the Latin rhythm."

Puente confirmed that among the frequent famous visitors at the Palladium to absorb his fusion of mambo and jazz are such jazz vanguardists as Kenton, Gillespie, Duke Ellington and Woody Herman, as well as innocent bystanders like Henry Fonda and Mel Ferrer.

"The popularity of the mambo is still in its early stages," Puente said. "All the major record companies will soon be organizing mambo sessions. Any person who digs jazz will dig the mambo."

Meet Mahalia Jackson

By Mason Sargent
Nov. 17, 1954

In Europe, when live performances or recordings of American Negro spirituals are played, they are listened to with the same depth of attention as is accorded classical music. To many European students of the music, the spiritual was this country's first major accomplishment in the creation of a body of important music that was indigenous to America.

It is generally agreed that the greatest spiritual singer now alive is Mahalia Jackson. It is true that extraordinary vocalists like Marian Anderson, Mattiwilda Dobbs and Carol Brice occasionally sing spirituals as part of their art song recitals, but these vocalists no longer sing the spiritual as it was, and still is, sung in its home, the church.

Because Jackson is religious and takes her spirituals seriously as well as joyously, she will not sing in night clubs nor will she sing jazz, though she loves the music. She has appeared in Carnegie Hall five times, and her 1952 tour of Europe was one of the most remarkable, in terms of audience reaction, ever undertaken by an American artist.

"In Denmark when I woke up in the morning and came down, the stairs were lined with flowers," Jackson said. "The children had done it. Things like that make you feel so good inside."

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

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DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Paul Bley: Jazz is Just About Ready for Another Revolution, Says Canada's Young Pianist

By Bob Fulford
July 13, 1955

Jazz is just about ready to soar off into yet another new world in a 1950s revolution that may be as radical as that of the early '40s. That summarizes the opinion of Paul Bley, the 22-year-old Canadian whose piano playing is beginning to fascinate jazz fans. Bley said jazz is now ready for a new revolution.

"Everybody is trying to take in the past schools of jazz," Bley said. "Most of the young jazzmen are listening hard to the schools of the past. They're trying to select the best features of each of them and assimilate them into their own playing. It's a natural cycle, the cycle that's evident in the history of classical music over the last 500 years. First a period of radical change, when all the leaders and their followers reject everything that's gone before—just as in the bop days."

Wherever Bley goes he's likely to be marked as a young jazzman with a difference—if for no other reason than for the answer he gives when he's asked his main influence. He answers with two words and a smile: "Louis Armstrong."

J.J. Johnson (left) and Kai Winding

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

J.J., Kai Find Trombone Team Is OK With Fans

By Nat Hentoff
Jan. 12, 1955

One of the season's dynamic new jazz units has the unprecedented instrumentation of only two trombones, plus rhythm. The fact that the two trombonists—J. J. Johnson and Kai Winding—are among the most respected in modern jazz and are skilled composer-arrangers has proved a guarantee of continually inventive lines and a relaxed, swinging beat.

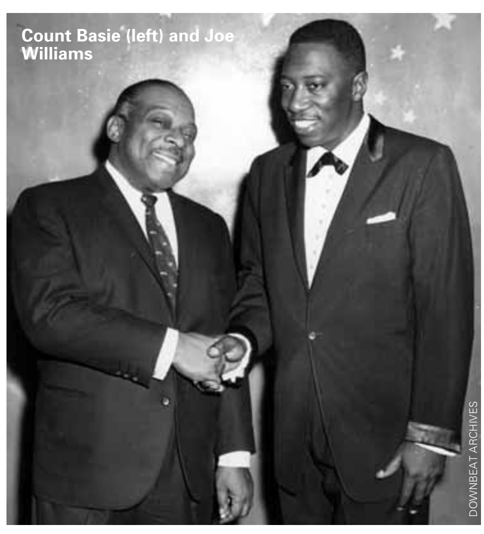
The lack of reed color or of any other kind of brass has caused no monotony; on the contrary, the flexible freshness of these trombones unlimited has created what could become one of the leading combos in jazz.

"We expect to go to the limit with this one," Winding said. "We've been talking about going to Europe, and we'd like to cover this country up, down and sideways. As for the records, right now we're more concerned with not flooding the market."

"The book now is about 80 percent originals," Johnson added. "But there's a lot of good standard material—much of it rarely used—that we can incorporate into the repertoire. There are a lot of tonal effects we haven't had a chance to work out yet. Different kinds of mutes, felt hats to add to the color. We're also toying with the idea of doubling on baritone horn and valve trombone which will give us six brass band instruments going—three apiece."

Joe Williams: Basie's Got a Blues Bawler Again, and Everyone's Starting to Rave Over Him

By Leonard Feather
June 29, 1955



Count Basie (left) and Joe Williams

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

For those who feel that there is more to the blues than "Ko Ko Mo" and the r&b hit parade, it is good news that for the first time since the monumental Jimmy Rushing, there is a blues singer with the Count Basie band. Joe Williams, who attached himself quietly to the Basie personnel just about a half year ago, has been gassing both jazz fans and r&b audiences with his laconic, deadpan delivery and earthy, beat-rich blues bawling.

The first contact with Basie consisted of 10 weeks' work with him in 1950 at the Brass Rail in Chicago when Basie had a septet.

"Basie never lost touch with me after that," Williams said. "Finally one day a few months ago, I stopped by his hotel and he asked me to join the band.

"The other bandleaders never wanted me to sing the blues—not even Lionel Hampton."

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DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Detroit Producing Stars; Paul Chambers a Big One

By Nat Hentoff
Jan. 11, 1956

The Eastern jazz scene has been invigorated during the last year or two by the intermittent arrivals of several young emigrants from Detroit. Among them have been trumpeter Donald Byrd, bassist Doug Watkins and drummer Elvin Jones. A particular impact on the scene has been caused by another young Detroiter, bassist Paul Chambers, who is with the Miles Davis unit.

Chambers is one of the most promising soloists on the instrument to have arrived in several years. He is equally skilled with the bow as he is in pizzicato playing, and his richly imaginative, strongly constructed bowed bass solos have contributed considerably to his rising reputation.

"If a bassist is capable of playing a solo, he should be given a chance to," Chambers said. "The reason why the bass isn't as dominant as other instruments is that bassists don't get a chance to explore. Yet once a bassist's duties in accompanying a horn are over, the bass should have a chance to speak."

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Toshiko: Japan's First Gift to U.S. Jazz

By Dom Cerulli
March 21, 1956

A 26-year-old Japanese pianist is living a dream in Boston—studying, playing and listening to American jazz. Toshiko Akiyoshi arrived in Boston Jan. 14 to start scholarship studies in jazz at the Berklee school. Since then, life has been a fairy tale for her.

Her playing has been described as close to that of Bud Powell, so it was natural that Powell should be playing Storyville the day she arrived. She attended to catch a set, and sat listening with tear-filled eyes as Powell played. The scholarship is a means, a method of self-expression. "I thought classical music was about the best," she said. "But I found out I could express my ideas and feelings in jazz.

"If I learn more, then I can find out how much I don't know."

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Benny Golson

By Harry Frost
May 15, 1958

The small and select group of individuals who specialize in jazz composition and arranging constitute one of the most exclusive fraternities in music. The blowing musicians outnumber the writing musicians by far. Most arrangers have an adequate degree of facility on one instrument or another, but the number of those who excel as writers and instrumentalists is very few.

Benny Golson is one of those few.

It was in 1947, while attending Howard University that Golson began composing.

"I was prompted to write an arrangement on 'Idaho' for the band they had at school," Golson said. "I was nervous when the band was rehearsing because it was the first thing I'd ever written. When they started to play, I tried to follow them on the score, but it sounded so much better than I thought it would that I didn't try to follow the arrangement. I just listened. After that, I began to write, write, write."

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Jim Hall: Some Talk About Guitars, Guitarists From a Good One

By Don Gold
Nov. 28, 1957

Jim Hall is a rarity.

He entered the jazz field for economic gain.

"At first I got into jazz to make a living, to pay for my schooling," said Hall, the guitarist currently assisting in the propulsion of the Jimmy Giuffre 3.

After stints with several West Coast groups, Hall landed the guitar spot with the Chico Hamilton quintet. When he decided to leave Hamilton, he found a place in the Giuffre trio. His experience with Hamilton and Giuffre taught him a good deal.

"Now I feel that jazz is a valid art form," Hall said. "I doubt if I'll ever go back to school, because I'm fascinated by the wealth of material in jazz. Once I looked down my nose at jazz because of having to play in night clubs. After I realized that it seemed to be the right music for me, once I found how much I enjoyed improvising, once I joined Giuffre, then I discovered my future."

TED WILLIAMS

’Trane on the Track

By Ira Gitler
Oct. 16, 1958

Asked about being termed an “angry young tenor” in this publication’s coverage of the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, John Coltrane said, “If it is interpreted as angry, it is taken wrong. The only one I’m angry at is myself when I don’t make what I’m trying to play.”

The 32-year-old native of Hamlet, N.C., has had his melancholy moments, but he feels that they belong to a disjointed, frustrating past. The crucial point in his development came after he joined Dizzy Gillespie’s band in 1951.

Prior to that, he had studied music and worked in Philadelphia, assuming many of the fashionable nuances of the Charlie Parker-directed groups. When the offer to join the Gillespie band came, Coltrane felt ready. The feeling turned out to be illusory.

“What I didn’t know with Diz was that what I had to do was really express myself,” Coltrane remembered. “I was playing clichés and trying to learn tunes that were hip, so I could play with the guys who played them. Earlier, when I had first heard Bird, I wanted to be identified with him, to be consumed by him. But underneath I really wanted to be myself. You can only play so much of another man.”

When the jazz audience first heard Coltrane, with Miles Davis in 1955 and ’56, he was less an individualist. His style derived from those of Dexter Gordon (vintage mid-’40s), Sonny Stitt, Sonny Rollins (the Rollins of that time and slightly before), Stan Getz (certain facets of sound) and an essence of generalized Charlie Parker.

As he learned harmonically from Davis and Thelonious Monk, and developed his mechanical skills, a new more confident Coltrane emerged. He has used long lines and multitoned figures within these lines, but in 1958 he started playing sections that might be termed “sheets of sound.”

“Now it is not a thing of beauty, and the only way it would be justified is if it becomes that,” Coltrane said. “If I can’t work it through, I will drop it.”

Assured that the vast frustration he felt in the early ’50s is gone, Coltrane attempts to behave in terms of a broad code, which he outlined:

“Keep listening. Never become so self-important that you can’t listen to other players. Live cleanly. Do right. You can improve as a player by improving as a person. It’s a duty we owe to ourselves.”

A married man with an 8-year-old daughter, Coltrane hopes to meet the responsibilities of his music and life without bitterness, for “music is the means of expression with strong emotional content. Jazz used to be happy and joyous. I’d like to play happy and joyous.”

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– KIRK SILSBEE (full review in Downbeat, May’09)

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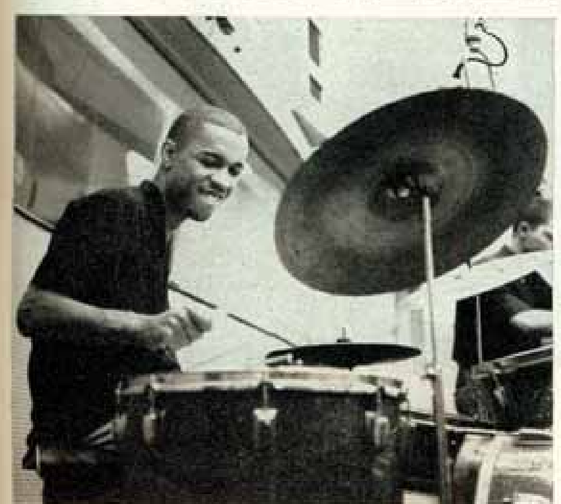

One of the most talked-about young musicians in jazz today is Ornette Coleman, who plays a white plastic alto saxophone with a tone that one critic says "can only be described as weird." Coleman has been around the music scene for longer than most persons realize, but he's been getting major attention only lately. Many critics and musicians think he may be the start of a new direction in jazz. Recently Coleman did a date for Nesuhi Ertegun, jazz a&r director of Atlantic records, to whom he is now under contract. (Another recording was made recently for Contemporary.) These pictures were taken at that date in Los Angeles. Working with Coleman are Billy Higgins, drums; Charlie Haden, bass; and Don Cherry, who seems to be playing Dizzy Gillespie to Coleman's Charlie Parker. Cherry plays a small (but physically heavy) "pocket" trumpet that was made in Pakistan. Someone described it as looking like "an unsanforized horn that got washed." After the recording, the quartet went to New York for a Nov. 16 opening at the Five Spot.

COURTESY OF SONY/LEGACY

Focus on Aretha Franklin

By Pete Welding
Sept. 28, 1961

Virtually unknown a year ago, Aretha Franklin's sudden arrival on the jazz scene has caused a flurry of excitement among jaded critics and casual listeners. In slightly more than 12 months, this 19-year-old singer–pianist—billed (not without reason, it would appear) as the "New Queen of the Blues"—has become the darling of the jazz-club circuit, has had several fast-selling single records, and has had an impressive LP debut on Columbia. To top it off, she was picked as the new-star female vocalist of the year in DownBeat's International Jazz Critics Poll.

Franklin has not had a chance to develop a conscious "pop" style; her manner of treating the blues and blues-based material in her repertoire is almost pure and simple in the gospel style, from which stems the ardor and conviction evident in her singing. The resemblance that critics claim to have found between her style and the characteristic approaches of Dinah Washington and Ray Charles is purely coincidental. Franklin is indebted to no popular singer—she is wholly a product of the gospel world.

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Gary Burton: Portrait of the Artist as a Young Vibraharpist

By Don DeMicheal
July 29, 1965

In the fall of 1961, while he was a student at Berklee School of Music in Boston, Gary Burton made a discovery that was to have a profound effect on his playing—he heard Bill Evans.

"I wasn't influenced by anyone until I discovered Bill Evans," Burton said. "I started listening for hours and hours to everything of his I could find. The concept struck me so much, it was so similar to the way I think. But vibes is my instrument, and I don't think of it in terms of how Bill Evans would play it. My four-mallet voicings may seem somewhat like his, but not really; the voicings I come out with are those that the vibe naturally presents. I'm after richer sounds than the usual four-note voicings."

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April 1986

CHRIS POTTER, 15-year-old saxophonist, appeared on a *Jazz Educators' Journal* cover when he was in the sixth grade. At 12, he won the National Association of Jazz Educators' Young Talent Award—an honor usually reserved for high school and college students. Since then, he's continued improving while winning jazz fellowships to the Aspen Music Festival in 1984 and '85, a scholarship to the Jamey Aebersold Summer Jazz Clinic in 1983, and first-chair alto saxophone berths in the South Carolina All-State Jazz Ensemble and All-State Band (for two and three straight years, respectively).

Potter performs regularly on alto, soprano, and tenor saxes with the Columbia Jazz Quartet, as first-chair tenor with the U. of South Carolina Left Bank Jazz Band and the Ed Crosby Big Band, and with the John Emche Quartet. His teachers include professors Emche and R. Doug Graham of the U. of South Carolina and his first teacher, Bryson Borgstedt (Potter attends Dreher H.S. in Columbia). His influences include John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, and Miles Davis. "I listen to things over and over until I exhaust all the meaning from them," he says. "Then one day I get sick of it and move on to something else."

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Chicago's Richard Abrams: A Man With an Idea

By John Litweiler
Oct. 5, 1967

New York City, the early '40s: Minton's Playhouse; 52nd Street. Chicago, 1967: Abraham Lincoln Center; Hyde Park. What do these places have in common: Although today's new jazz movement in Chicago is isolated, its spirit of excitement and exploration have the aura of a legend in the making.

The Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, a nonprofit organization dedicated to showcasing the original compositions of its membership, training aspiring young musicians and fostering a better public image of the musician, was founded by Richard Abrams and other local musicians concerned about the current conditions and future directions of contemporary music and its exponents. Without pianist–clarinetist Abrams, there might be some kind of avant-garde underground in Chicago today, but few will argue that Abrams' personality and point of view have largely shaped what now exists.

"I always played changes quite successfully, but I always felt caged in," Abrams said. "When all the musicians could copy Bud Powell note for note, I could hear it and play it, but when I got to the stand, my mind would always go off somewhere else—it would always get kind of wild. So I found out from Art Tatum that I needed to adhere to my rhythmic feeling more, and then I would have less trouble keeping up with what wanted to come out."

Behind The Doors

By Michael Cuscuna
May 28, 1970

Several months ago, I received a call from the publicity department at Elektra Records.

"Are you still writing for DownBeat? Good, because Jim Morrison wants to be written up in that magazine."

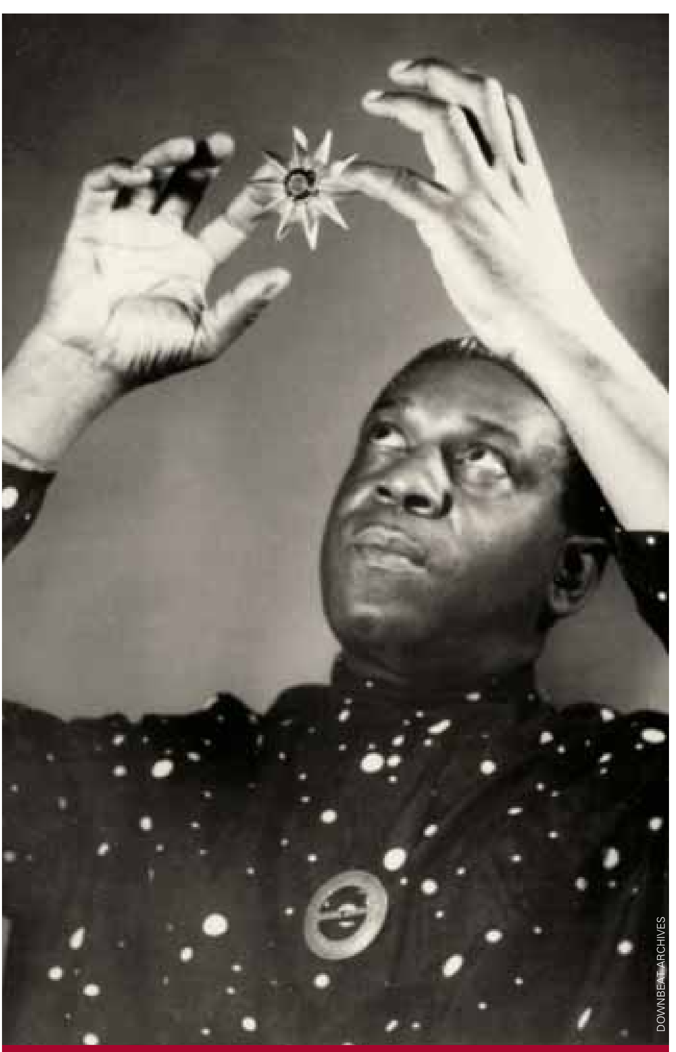
With their first album, the Doors brought many innovations to rock. Essentially, it was the first successful synthesis of jazz and rock. Organist Ray Manzarek, guitarist Bobby Krieger and drummer John Densmore comprise a musical unit that is rooted in the spirit of rock and feeling of jazz.

"I am not an avid or knowledgeable jazz fan, but I do read DownBeat regularly, because it deals with music," Morrison said. "Most of the so-called music magazines cover everything but music. They are fan magazines and sensation-seekers. I have been written about in all of them—but so what.

"One thing I am proud of," Morrison continued, "is that 'Touch Me' was the first rock hit to have a jazz solo in it, by Curtis Amy on tenor saxophone."

"I really want to develop my singing. I love the blues, like Joe Turner and Freddie King. I would like to get into that feeling and sing some old standards, like 'St. James Infirmary.'"

GLORIA STAVERS


DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Sun Ra's Space Probe

By J.C. Thomas
June 13, 1968

Sun Ra and Buddha seem to have things in common.

Both have their own metaphysics and philosophies; complete conceptions of the universe. Each is a teacher, not a preacher; each has his own ideas to express, and others are free to accept or reject them as they choose. And the gentle Sun Ra—polite, soft-spoken—has a Buddha-like confidence that he is traveling the particular path that will take him to his destiny.

"I'm in tune with nature and nature's vibrations," Sun Ra said. "But most people are not. They're getting all kinds of other vibrations from outer space, bad vibrations. The purpose of my music is to counter these bad vibrations. If any force from outer space were to attack this planet, they'd do it with vibrations. My music counteracts these vibrations.

"The planet is in confusion, and so are the musicians. Music is part of some great source, yet most musicians are just tapping in on the line. Early jazz was happy music, and today it's anything but that. There's no brotherhood; everyone's gotten so mercenary. Now, all the musicians talk about is doing their own thing."

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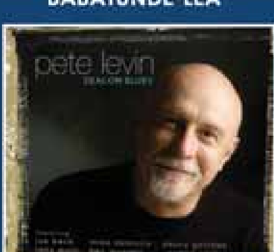

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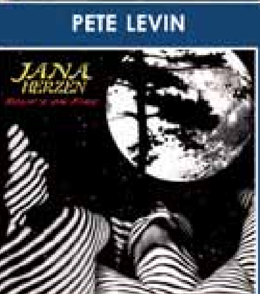

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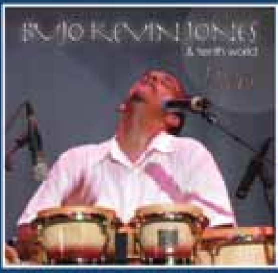
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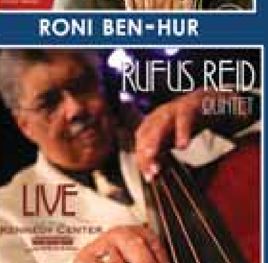

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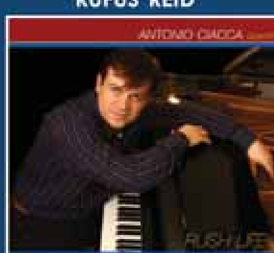

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RYAN COHAN

David Sanborn's Alto Spectrum

By Chuck Berg
Jan. 29, 1976

WARNER BROTHERS RECORDS

It was in Iowa City, Iowa, that I first heard about David Sanborn. That was in 1968 when Tom Davis, the director of the University of Iowa Lab Band, was patiently trying to shape me into a lead alto player. Tom's problem was finding a replacement for his former lead altoist, David Sanborn.

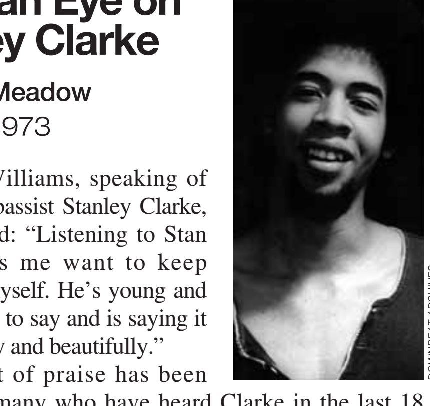
Today, Sanborn's reputation has fanned out considerably from his gigging days in Iowa. After working behind Stevie Wonder, David Bowie, Cat Stevens and Paul Simon, Sanborn has firmly established himself on the New York music scene.

"I don't consider myself to be very skilled at free playing," Sanborn said. "I don't consider myself to be a good improviser."

When I chided Sanborn on his modesty, he corrected me. "Well, I don't think I'm being modest," he said. "I can interpret melodies well and I have a good sound. But I know I have a long way to go as an improviser."

Keep an Eye on Stanley Clarke

By Elliot Meadow
Feb. 15, 1973


DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Buster Williams, speaking of fellow bassist Stanley Clarke, recently said: "Listening to Stan play makes me want to keep extending myself. He's young and has so much to say and is saying it very strongly and beautifully."

That sort of praise has been echoed by many who have heard Clarke in the last 18 months or so with the leaders he has worked with during that time, among them Joe Henderson, Stan Getz, Gil Evans, Pharoah Sanders, Art Blakey and, currently, Chick Corea. So diverse a listing as this demonstrates that Clarke has the capacity to fit himself into many different concepts without losing his identity.

"Communication is one of the things that I've been using as far as my own playing is concerned," Clarke said. "I try to communicate with the people. But in order to play music and get it across to somebody, you have to know a lot about yourself and the things that are going on around you. That knowledge is very important."

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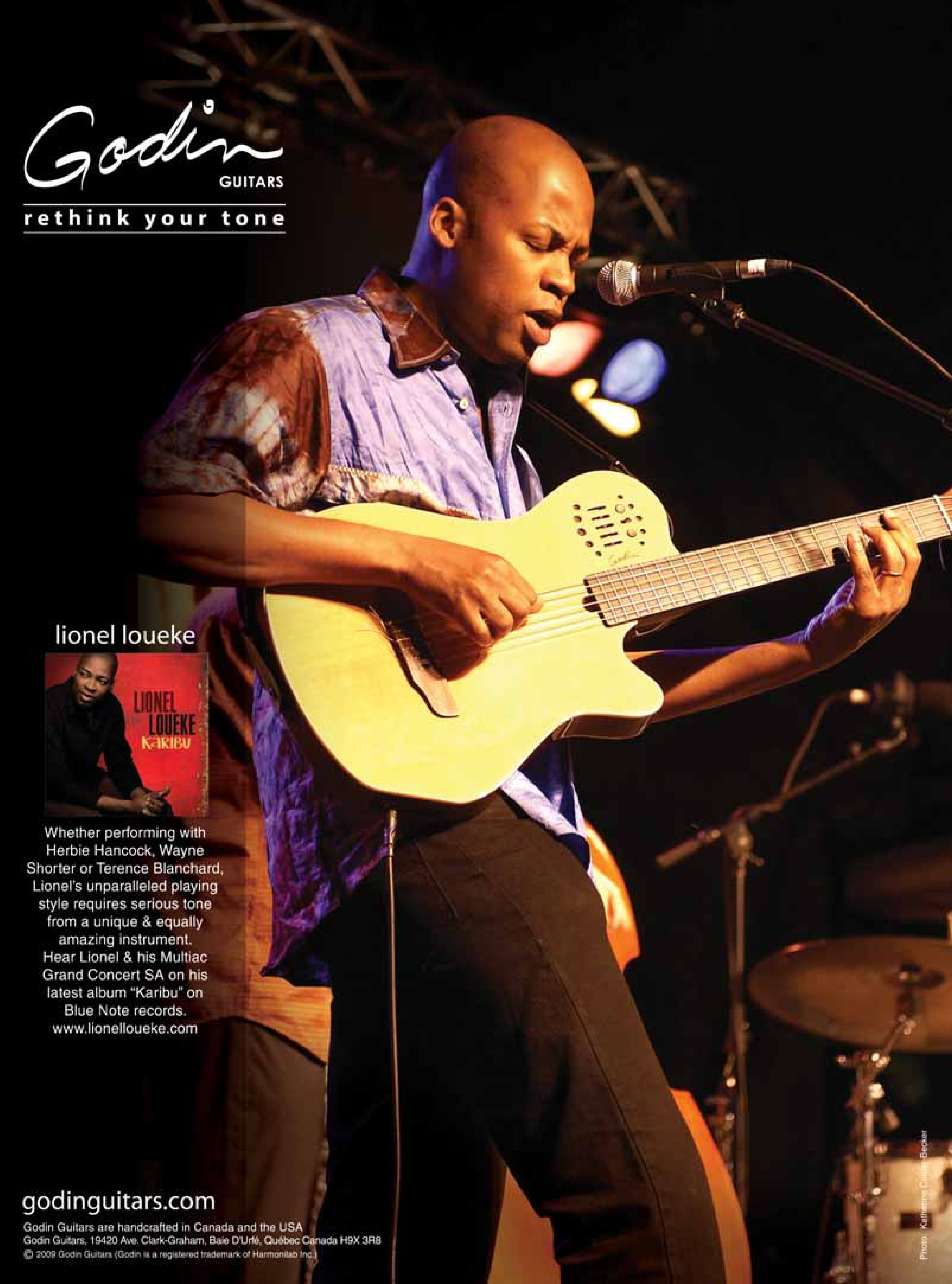

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December 1988

ETHAN IVERSON, 15, of Menomonie, WI, plays bass, drums, and saxophone, but his true love is the piano. He has studied its history from boogie woogie and Fats Waller through bebop and on to the avant garde style of Cecil Taylor. Iverson plays jazz in a local restaurant two nights a week: Fridays solo, Saturdays with the Jim Borgaro Quartet. He also plays in the pit at the Mabel Tainter theatre. He began playing bass when his high school jazz band found itself lacking one. He also plays a baritone sax in the concert band.

For the past two years Iverson has received a top rating as solo pianist at the University of Wisconsin competition. In 1987 he was also the top-rated combo pianist in that competition. This year he was selected as pianist for the Wisconsin Honors Jazz Ensemble. At the Jamey Aebersold Jazz Workshops at Elmhurst (IL) College Iverson was selected to study with David Baker in the top combo class.

June 1996

Terence Blanchard/Donald Harrison: Young, Gifted and Straightahead

By Howard Mandel

December 1986

At a time when straightahead seems to be the new hip direction for jazz, saxophonist Donald Harrison and trumpeter Terence Blanchard are among the most out-front and serious spokesmen of the new young lions.

"Anybody can be original," Harrison scoffed. "But if you come out of a heritage, say like Coltrane did, then your original contribution would have more depth."

Pat Metheny: Ready to Tackle Tomorrow

By John Alan Simon

July 13, 1978

It doesn't appear to bother Pat Metheny that Rosy's is three-fourths empty for the opening night of his return engagement to the posh New Orleans music club.

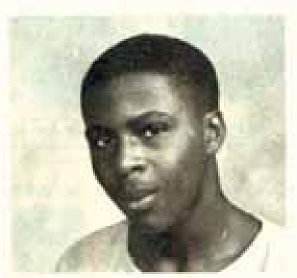
"I don't mind the disappointing turnout," Metheny said. "I have total faith that once heard this band will be popular and that people will start coming to see us all the time."

And the confidence doesn't seem misplaced. The 23-year-old guitarist obviously has plenty of time ahead and his successes to date are already considerable, including last year's breathtakingly flowing and melodic *Watercolors*—his second album as a leader on ECM.

"I have as much chops as anyone playing," Metheny said. "But I don't want to be thought of as a hot, young guitar player. There's a kind of physical thrill to playing fast that's tempting to fall into. But I realize that my strengths are not that I can play fast, but that I can play melody over almost any changes presented to me."

ECM RECORDS

February 1987



ROY HARGROVE, a 17-year-old trumpeter, was a first runner-up in the National Association of Jazz Educators' Young Talent Competition, which led to his performing at the NAJE Convention in Atlanta this January. Hargrove, who doubles on flugelhorn, is a member of the Arts Magnet High School (Dallas, TX) **down beat** Student Musician Award-winning jazz combo and lab band, as well as the school's wind ensemble orchestra and brass quintet. Hargrove won his own **down beat** "deebee" award in 1986 for his work as a soloist. Other honors include an outstanding soloist award at the 12th annual NAJE Convention and numerous soloist awards from regional jazz festivals.

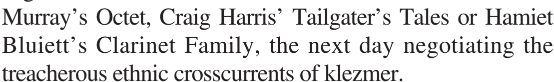
Hargrove performs in the Dallas area with a pair of commercial music ensembles, The Feature and Difference. His instructor at Arts Magnet, Bart Marantz, says, "I have met only a few young players with the talent Roy possesses. He reads extremely well, both lead trumpet and jazz changes, with the depth and clarity of a polished musician many years his senior."

Don Byron: Finding New Vocabularies for the Clarinet Is This Young, Adventurous Artist's Goal

By Jeff Levenson
January 1988

CORI WELLS BRAUN

Don Byron has a global, world music perspective that finds him navigating difficult and varied waters—one day manning his clarinet through the tricky, free-blowing trade winds of David Murray's Octet, Craig Harris' Tailgater's Tales or Hamiet Bluiett's Clarinet Family, the next day negotiating the treacherous ethnic crosscurrents of klezmer.



"As a clarinet player I've had to be accurate about which language and grammar I need to be using in any musical situation," Byron said. "Playing different musics requires separate skills. When I learned to play klezmer it wasn't that I came in there thinking I'm a really hot jazz player. What I've found is that I tend to gravitate towards whoever is playing the trickiest, outest stuff—in whatever idiom I'm working in."

John Scofield: Music for the Connoisseur

By Sam Freedman
September 1982

ARISTA/NOVUS RECORDS

It has been a perfect and ironic misconception to identify John Scofield by his associations: not incorrect, but rather like seeing light as its spectrum when refracted rather than the original, direct strand. Scofield surely has no shame for the supporting roles—with Charles Mingus, Billy Cobham and Jay McShann—that made his name as a 26-year-old guitar prodigy, a sideman nonpareil. Now the 26-year-old prodigy is 31, married and a father; the sideman nonpareil is the leader of his own trio. The music they make, most recently on a live European album, *Shinola*, is some of the first of his own that Scofield can bear to hear twice.

"It's not like I even want to think about the old stuff," Scofield said. "Some people are to the point of real neuroticism, where you just can't listen to it. I feel much more secure now. It's not so scary anymore. The reason I know I have my own identity is because I don't worry so much about my playing. I just realize I do sound like me."

KYLE EASTWOOD metropolitain

KYLE EASTWOOD
metropolitain

Bassist **Kyle Eastwood**, co-composer of soundtracks to ***Gran Torino***, ***Flags of Our Fathers***, ***Letters from Iwo Jima*** and ***Mystic River*** displays a refined and verbose orchestral compositional skill working in the jazz idiom with an international cast of players including **Till Brönner**, **Manu Katché** and French singer **Camille**.

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RENDEZVOUS

CANDID

Benny, Meet DownBeat. DownBeat, Benny.

At the celebration of Benny Goodman's centennial birthday and DownBeat's 75th anniversary, we look back at the symbiotic relationship forged between the magazine and clarinetist. Through extensive and insightful reporting, DownBeat helped Goodman become a band-leading star. On the flip side, covering Goodman during his ascent shot a small Chicago musician's journal to international prominence.

By John McDonough

A successful magazine brand doesn't happen by itself. It needs help. DownBeat's destiny might have been very different had its early trajectory not converged with an unknown clarinet player—Benny Goodman.

A magazine is a mirror that exists symbiotically with the objects it reflects. Each needs the other. It is a natural, often intuitive expression of its time, often a manifestation of a vague sensibility groping for identity. Great magazines find half-formed themes, gather and amplify them into a critical mass, and cycle them back into the culture with magnified impact. The New Yorker tapped into a revolt against provincialism in the '20s and became the voice of cosmopolitan wit. Life Magazine's photojournalism found its calling in World War II, and Rolling Stone made itself the crossroads of rock and youthful protest in the '60s. Each intersected with its special moment with a unique precision.

DownBeat's special moment came in a critical confluence between two themes that found each other in Goodman. The first was a new spirit of modernism in art and design inspired by new laws of motion and freedom. The second was a restive frustration in the ranks of a new generation of virtuosos, bored with the tedium of playing sweet music in bands led by singers and showmen who wore funny hats.

In the 18-month period between late 1934 and early 1936, a series of clean, ground-breaking new aerodynamic shapes appeared that would define the spirit of the 1930s: Raymond Loewy's Hupmobile, the Chrysler Airflow, the Budd Zephyr, the DC-3, Flash Gordon's rockets, the sleek shrouds of the 20th Century Limited that sliced through air like projectiles on rails and even the soft curves of Carole Lombard sheathed in a silhouette of silver satin. All were cultural expressions of motion, velocity and the leanness of streamlining. The legato flow of swing was a direct extension of that modernism into music, and Goodman, though no student of art or design, was its decisive agent.

The second theme flowed from the first. A brilliant virtuoso, Goodman had grown prosperous but restless playing mind-numbing drivel under a succession of bandleaders who viewed music as a business and whose principal instrument was the baton. It seemed unjust

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that great players should squander their skills supporting hacks and clowns. It was a hunting cry that had the convincing ring of reform in a reformist New Deal era.

Goodman became a personification of that frustration, and DownBeat became a principal editorial advocate and booster within the trade. When Goodman finally broke through, basically on his own terms—no funny hats, no snappy patter—his triumph became the musicians' Magna Carta. And DownBeat could say, "we told you so."

Soon, the best and the brightest would become the great brand names of swing: Count Basie, Artie Shaw, Benny Carter, Lionel Hampton, Coleman Hawkins, Gene Krupa, Harry James, Buddy Rich and Glenn Miller. Established greats such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Jimmie Lunceford would bask in newly honored glory. Justice and art, it turned out, fit hand in glove.

DownBeat was born in July 1934 as a newsletter with no greater journalistic mission than to help a Chicago insurance peddler sell annuities to Midwestern musicians. For 13 years, Albert Lipschultz had built a successful insurance business serving musicians. As a service to his clientele and at the urging of one of his salesmen, a lanky saxophonist from Dixon, Ill., named Glenn Burrs, he launched DownBeat during the second summer of the Chicago Century of Progress Exposition, which was bringing tourists to the city and prosperity to many of the town's musicians. Lipschultz was editor, Burrs associate editor. They hoped to make their eight-page paper an advocate for the interests of working players. Had DownBeat remained in Lipschultz's hands, it might have lived and died the drab life of an insurance company teaser and musician's bulletin board.

Music News from Coast to Coast

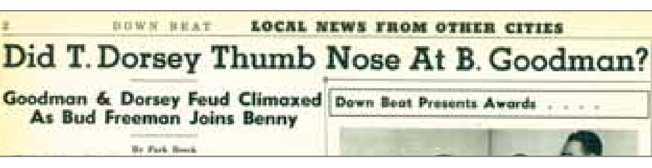
DOWN BEAT

CAN GOODMAN ERASE COLOR LINE?

September 1939

15c

But it didn't, in part because Chicago musicians already had a powerful advocate who was unwilling to share authority. James Petrillo was a tough, well-connected Chicago king-pin who had run Local 10 of the Musicians' Union with an iron hand since 1922. He was the voice of the city's musicians. If Lipschultz wanted to play newspaperman, Petrillo warned, he could kiss his insurance clientele goodbye. Lipschultz got the message. After two issues of DownBeat, his name mysteriously disappeared from the masthead, and on Nov. 28, 1934, he officially divested to Burrs, who left insurance for a life in music journalism. DownBeat's sale price has grown elusive with time: $873 according to one source; $1,500 to another. Either way, the difference is not much.


DOWN BEAT — LOCAL NEWS FROM OTHER CITIES

Did T. Dorsey Thumb Nose At B. Goodman?

Goodman & Dorsey Feud Climaxed As Bud Freeman Joins Benny

Down Beat Presents Awards . . . .

So with the stroke of a pen, DownBeat's mission changed from customer relations to guerrilla journalism. Now free to find its own place in the spirit of its time, it would search, seek, argue, inform, provoke, offend and rally the insurgent forces that would soon transfigure American music. At a time when no other American publisher was interested in full-court jazz coverage, Burrs immediately steered DownBeat into this lonesome beat. The change in management was palpable. In a December column headlined simply "Swing"—perhaps the earliest deployment of the word as a noun—DownBeat began sounding less commercial and more crusading. "Primarily music is an art," it proclaimed. "[M]any get away with saying—well if the public doesn't like it, it's no good. This a contemptible idea. In a majority of cases public taste is of a decidedly poor quality."

Burrs assembled a posse of passionate, mostly Ivy League contributors, all equally contemptuous of populist taste: Marshall Stearns, George Frazier, Helen Oakley, George Avakian, Leonard Feather and above all John Hammond. All were intrepid jazz fans in their mid-20s, politically and socially liberal, and eager to change the world. Burrs' timing was an exquisite act of faith. A tide was quietly gathering that would soon take jazz to the epicenter of mass acceptance. But none of that was apparent as 1934 wound down. Like the Stephen Stills lyric would warn in the mid-'60s: "There's something happening here; what it is ain't exactly clear."

DownBeat not only rose on that tide. Its destiny became uniquely and intimately intertwined with its two most celebrated personifications. In getting behind

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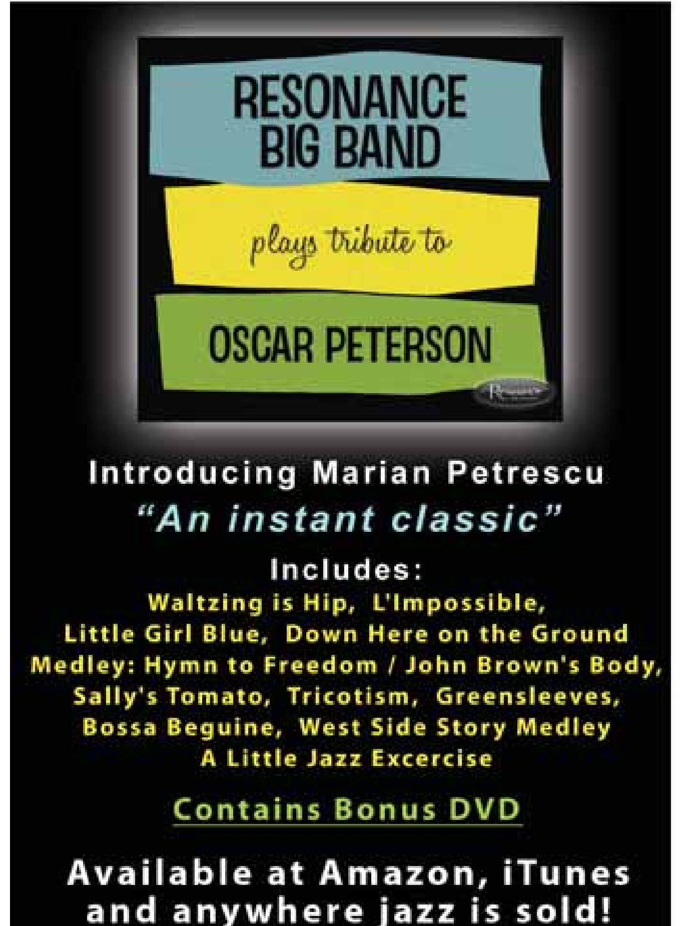
Impressive beginning for a new label

Resonance Records is a division of the Rising Jazz Stars Foundation, a California non-profit corporation created to discover the next jazz stars - passionate, brilliant musicians from around the world. Founder, producer, engineer, president George Klabin's bold and innovative plan is designed to assist and support them through recording, performance opportunities and distribution of their art. Every Resonance CD and DVD is produced without compromise, to create and preserve the artists' jazz legacy. The Los Angeles based label released its first recordings in March of 2008.

According to JazzWeek, America's only weekly national jazz radio chart, only six imprints fared better than Resonance in 2008. Resonance appears to be off to an even better start in 2009, already charting releases from Bill Cunliffe, Claudio Roditi and German B-3 ace Jermaine Landsberger. Add to that new releases by Resonance Big Band (a classic new tribute to Oscar Peterson) & Northwest jazz diva Greta Matassa. Still to come in 2009, Kansas City vocalist Angela Haggenbach, a set of rare recordings from legendary bassist Scott LaFaro, another unreleased live recording from pianist Gene Harris (both on the labels' Heirloom Series) and another set from pianist John Beasley with Bennie Maupin and Jeff "Tain" Watts. Resonance Records web site offers plenty of music to listen too as well as a rich assortment of live performances on video. It's all part of Klabin's way of giving back to an artform he has loved since he was a teenager. □*Ricky Schultz*



Jermaine Landsberger
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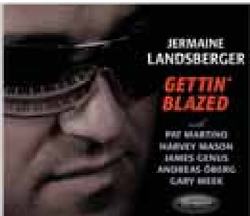
★★★★
"demonstrates skill and creativity...highly recommended...soulful jazz"
- Audiophile Audition



Claudio Roditi
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"Roditi's crisp, energetic delivery conveys gem-hard notes with tremendous sensitivity" - DownBeat

Bill Cunliffe
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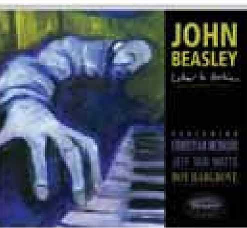
John Beasley
Letter to Herbie
"a supremely inspired effort"
- Urban Network
"a mother of a session"
-MidwestRecord.com



Other fine releases from Resonance...

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Christian Howes feat. Roger Kellaway *"Heartfelt"*
Cathy Rocco *"You're Gonna Hear From Me"*
Andreas Öberg *"My Favorite Guitars"*
Gene Harris *"Live in London"*
Mike Garson *"Conversations with My Family"*

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Goodman, and then Basie, early and often, the magazine bet heavily on their success. When they—and a succession of others—broke through and swing swept the culture, DownBeat found itself a charter equity holder in a revolution it had helped wrought. The payoff was brand credibility. To tote a copy of DownBeat in conspicuous view in 1936 was to flash a badge of authority that signaled true insider status. It made DownBeat, according to Time, "certainly the most faithful reflection of the whole noisy medley of U.S. dance music, from the blues to the samba, from the mechanical to the inspired."

Goodman's coattails would be long and crowded soon enough. But in July 1934 jazz—hot music—was still a backwater of the American music landscape. Swing was a seldom-used adjective, not yet a noun, and Goodman was an obscure New York studio man known mostly to other musicians. His name did turn up in one tiny reference on Page 2 of the maiden DownBeat, calling him "one of the foremost 'hot' clarinet players." The magazine cast the word "hot" in quotes, as if to tint it with a scarlet pastel of illegitimacy and distinguish it from the established musical order. The quotes may have been a bit condescending, but not the word itself. Jazz musicians actually invented the coinage, albeit without the quotes, to set themselves in fervent opposition to the loathsome drip of "sweet" music that prevailed virtually everywhere in 1935.

Music News from Coast to Coast

DOWN BEAT

BALLROOM - CAFE - RADIO - STUDIO - SYMPHONY - THEATRE

"Goodman Came, Saw, And Laid A Golden Egg!"

Jazz may have subsisted in proud impoverishment, but as early as 1933 a few young partisan moles were already smuggling themselves into influential places to stir the sweet vs. hot debate. That year, Wilder Hobson, 27, published a seven-page profile of Duke Ellington in a most unlikely venue, Fortune. He cited heroes—Ellington, Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson, Earl Hines, Jack Teagarden, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, and Goodman, who "blows the hottest clarinet in the world." He cited fall guys—Guy Lombardo, Russ Columbo, Rudy Vallee and Paul Whiteman. And he summed up the almost ideological zealotry that characterized the tiny community of jazz lovers for which DownBeat would be advocating in just over a year. "The jazz cult is apathetic to nine-tenths of modern dance music," he wrote. "But the cultist will often go to preposterous lengths to hear or collect records of the remaining tenth, the genuine hot music."

The true cultist, of course, is empowered by his purity. But even within a cult there can be different views of purity. In Chicago, that debate was argued among members of the Chicago Rhythm Club, an organization of jazz fans and promoters that had sprouted two distinct wings by 1935. One, led by co-founder Squirrel Ashcraft, leaned toward the music's white trad heritage of Bix Beiderbecke, Eddie Condon, the Austin High group and the Dorseys. The other, led by co-founder Oakley, favored the Harlem and Chicago bands of Henderson, Ellington, Benny Carter and Hines. But there was one person on whom they all agreed, and that was Goodman. He was "The Man," and DownBeat became the prime staging area of support.

The first tremors of change began to rumble in the summer of 1934 with Goodman's first working band in New York. When it went national in December on NBC's three hour "Let's Dance" program, DownBeat was listening in Chicago on WMAQ. "Magnificent," it said. "The smoothest and fastest thing heard yet. ... This is the band of the year."

Benny Goodman Shows Long-Hairs How Swing Music Is Played

A few months later John Hammond, reporting from New York, wrote in DownBeat that, "Benny's orchestra is the only one both daring and astute enough to realize the commercial value of sincerity."

Meanwhile, the word "swing" was escaping the hip slanguage of 52nd Street and popping up in more provincial conversations, cued perhaps by new tunes like "Swing Gate Swing," "Swingin' On The String" and "Swing Brother Swing," all recorded in the first two weeks of 1935. By May, the new music had found a name, and DownBeat was suddenly using the word everywhere as a freshly minted common noun. Even Variety, the show business paper, was running an unbylined "Swing Stuff" column by none other than DownBeat's Stearns.

Goodman and swing were still in launch mode as he wrapped up his radio commitments in July and hop-scotched west to Los Angeles. The closest the band passed to Chicago was the Modernistic Ballroom in Milwaukee, but it was close enough. DownBeat got its first look at Goodman up close. Oakley did the honors, and was beside herself with awe over Henderson's charts, Krupa's drumming and Bunny Berigan's trumpet solos. As for Goodman, his playing "defies adequate description," she wrote. "Frightening … unbelievable."

By Goodman's own accounts, though, many of the audiences were far less stirred by the music than Oakley. Time and again, he faced down indifferent audiences and grave doubts. "Sometimes I'd stand outside the front door," he told Richard Sudhalter in 1981, "and think, 'Shall I go inside or not? Maybe I should just get out.'"

ALL PHOTOS DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES EXCEPT #8: LAWRENCE MARX/CARNEGIE HALL.

1: Benny Goodman with Fletcher Henderson; 2: André Previn and Goodman; 3: Goodman with Steve Allen on the "Steve Allen Show";

4: Goodman plays Europe; 5: (clockwise from upper left) Lionel Hampton, Dave Tough, Teddy Wilson and Goodman; 6: Backstage at the Apollo Theatre, from left: Milton Ebbins, Count Basie, Lynne Sherman, Goodman, Sonny Burke and Charlie Christian; 7: On the set of *Sweet And Lowdown*; 8: Goodman at Carnegie Hall; 9: Harry James (left), Goodman and Gene Krupa; 10: Goodman circa 1932; 11: Helen Forrest with Goodman; 12: The King of Swing; 13: George Avakian (left), John Hammond, Goodman and an unidentified man check out a new LP.

DECEMBER 15, 1939

I Wasn't Kidding Myself!

By Benny Goodman

A great many things have happened to my band during the past 12 months. Three out of four saxes were changed (Jerry Jerome alone remaining). A third trombone was added. Two out of three trumpets were changed and the entire rhythm section was overhauled.

In our smaller groups, the trio for example, first Jess Stacy replaced Teddy Wilson and now Fletcher [Henderson] has replaced Jess. Meanwhile, the quartet has blossomed into a sextet with bass and electric guitar added.

The changes were dictated by necessity. I wasn't kidding myself last year at this time. The band was going through a period of slump that had me worried more than I cared to admit. In addition, competition began to be noticed. At one time last year new bands were springing up so rapidly it was hard to keep track of them. The combination of events indicated that if we were to maintain our position as top band of the country, we would have to do some fast work. I decided then to begin the process of overhauling and revitalizing the Goodman band. ...

Hampton a Mainstay

All of which brings us to Lionel Hampton (the Barrymore of the band—if you've listened to some of our recent commercial programs), who in my opinion is unquestionably a great musician. Very few people, it seems to me, realize how good a musician Lionel really is. Ever since he joined my band, I have been convinced of his extraordinary ability. Lionel is a mainstay of our new sextet and I am very proud of that little unit.

Our most recent discovery is Charley Christians (sic). Charley's chorus on "Stardust" is one of the most imaginative solos I've ever heard. Frankly, I never liked the electric guitar. It didn't make much sense to me in a band like ours. But Christian's is different. With the possible exception of Floyd Smith, Charley is head and shoulders above the competition in the guitar field.

Henderson on Spot!

There has been a deal of talk about Fletcher at the keyboards. Swing critics and well-meaning fellows have told us day in and day out that Fletcher is the greatest arranger in the world—but Fletcher at the keyboard with the Goodman sextet?—impossible! First of all, let's get this straight. There are very few pianists who can play with the sextet. I mean pianists who are available and good enough to do so. It's a tough assignment, and maybe Fletcher isn't the best pianist going, but at least he knows what we want. He is the first to admit that he is an arranger first and a pianist second. He would prefer to devote his time solely to arranging for the band—and maybe we'll work that out soon. But that is one of the things we'll have to give over to the future. DB

Happy 75th, DownBeat!

Thanks for supporting the music!

To the music business at large, Michael Bloom is a knowledgeable, experienced publicist who garners widespread coverage and golden references. To his talented clients—some of the greatest musicians ever assembled under one media relations firm—he is a figure of tireless enthusiasm and innovative ideas, whose life is dedicated to promoting good music. To the media he is a persistent flack whose phone calls and emails are seldom equaled for smart pitches, timely interviews, and headline-generating excitement.

ECM

Steve Kuhn Trio w/Joe Lovano
Mostly Coltrane

Joe Lovano: tenor saxophone and tarogato
Steve Kuhn: piano
David Finck: double-bass
Joey Baron: drums

Miroslav Vitous
Remembering Weather Report

Miroslav Vitous: double-bass
Franco Ambrosetti: trumpet
Gary Campbell: tenor saxophone
Gerald Cleaver: drums
Michel Portal: bass clarinet

Egberto Gismonti
SAUDAÇÕES

Egberto Gismonti: guitar
Alexandre Gismonti: guitar
Camerata Romeu
Zenaida Romeu: conductor

Andy Sheppard
Movements In Colour

Andy Sheppard: soprano and tenor saxophones
John Parricelli: acoustic and electric guitars
Eivind Aarset: electric guitar, electronics
Arild Andersen: double-bass, electronics
Kuljit Bhamra: tabla, percussion

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At this point the story becomes a chapter of jazz legend: Goodman finally reached the Palomar in August, found another lethargic crowd and decided to go down on his own terms. He called for "Bugle Call Rag," "King Porter" and other Henderson charts. The band cut loose and the young crowd suddenly exploded in cheers. This, it turned out, was the music they were waiting to hear. "Goodman wakes up West Coast with 'Swing' style," DownBeat reported. "Kruppa (sic) and Berrigan (sic) flare up famously to wow the musical elements into hysterics."

A single broadcast from the Palomar survives, and the "wow" factor is frankly negligible. Heard through that small window, the band sounds agreeably sedate and restrained, playing mostly at moderate to ballad speed. But the balloon was in the air and the talk of swing was everywhere. Goodman's stay at the Palomar was extended—a first in his career. Behind all the talk about swing was a long list of new artists suddenly getting wide recognition: Teddy Wilson, Billie Holiday, Red Norvo, Roy Eldridge, Mildred Bailey, Art Tatum and others. After Los Angeles in October, the band's next major stop would be right in DownBeat's own back yard, the Congress Hotel on Michigan Avenue.

Music News from Coast to Coast

DOWN BEAT

B.G. INVADES SANCTUM OF LONG-HAIRS

Goodman came to Chicago in early November 1935 as a work still in progress. He left six months later a made man, an international star and a transforming figure in American musical history. Stardom struck Goodman with a swiftness and completeness almost unimaginable now. Today, thousands of individual media platforms cater to self-segregated micro audiences, each mostly ignorant of the other. It enhances efficiency and accommodates infinite choice. But it encourages no peripheral vision, and none of the shared national sense of wonder that greeted Goodman—and later, Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley and The Beatles, all equally transformative figures. Modern stardom tends to be culturally local and isolated today. In 1935, however, network radio was a vast coast-to-coast party line in which everybody was obliged to listen to everybody else's favorites. And once in Chicago, Goodman's music smothered the country nightly over NBC from the Congress.

For the next six months, hardly a month went by without a major Goodman story on DownBeat's first page. In December, the Chicago Rhythm Club presented the band in the first in a series of Sunday afternoon "tea dances." Eight hundred fans flooded a room built for 550. When one couple tried to dance they were booed. "Society and musicians sit spellbound by the brilliance of Goodman's band," Carl Cons wrote. "One of the most thrilling 'listening sessions' ever [and] a landmark in swing history."

It was. DownBeat had just covered the world's first jazz concert. It was only the beginning.

A second Sunday concert on March 8, 1936, upped the ante in more ways than one. This time Goodman and Krupa sat in with Henderson's band with Eldridge and Chu Berry. "A brilliant climax," DownBeat reported, "Roy on trumpet, Choo (sic) on tenor sax and Benny on clarinet grouped around in front of the mike and each took turns in out-doing each other on a better and different chorus each time."

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Vista Records

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INTELLIGENT SONGS, ENDEARING LYRICS, SERIOUS PLAYING.
"BLUSION – IT ALL GROWS OUT OF THE BLUES... JUST DOESN'T ALWAYS END THERE." DEANNA BOGART

MATT WIGLER
EPIPHONY

MATT WIGLER
EPIPHONY
"MARK YOUR CALENDARS WHEN HE COMES YOUR WAY. I KNOW I WILL." BIG CITY RHYTHM & BLUES MAGAZINE.
"WHEN I WATCH MATT PLAY PIANO ... I SEE THE FUTURE." BLUES REVUE MAGAZINE
"SENSATIONAL KEYBOARDIST FOR ANY AGE." BLUES SOCIETY OF TULSA

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A photo preserved the moment on the front page of DownBeat's next issue under a five-column banner headline: "WHAT IS SWING? HERE IS THE ANSWER!" But in all the excitement, no one seemed to notice that in a town where black and white musicians had always worked in segregated locales, a major downtown venue had just broken the immutable color line. Yet, all anyone talked about was the music.

6 DOWN BEAT FEATURE NEWS

Hysterical Public Split Goodman & Krupa..

Gene Broke Contract, But B.G. Refused to Hold Him to It

were a number of factors which might not have occurred to musicians, and it seems like a good idea to enumerate them.
Benny likes good, simple, relaxed

Hammond, who had been filing to DownBeat from New York, drove to Chicago for the final precedent-shattering Rhythm Club bash at the Congress on Easter Sunday. This was the one in which Wilson appeared with Goodman and Krupa, and the Benny Goodman Trio officially became the first integrated working group in American history.

Hammond's restless ear was already hearing a new siren song. Late one night during that trip, while sitting in his car in front of the Congress Hotel, he turned his radio on and was stopped by a faint short-wave signal up the dial. Suddenly, a new avenue opened up that would dominate DownBeat's pages for the next 18 months. "Since writing last month's squib in DownBeat about Kansas City's bands," Hammond wrote in June 1936, "I have become a nightly listener to W9XBY and its parade of bands. I want to say categorically and without fear of ridicule [that] Count Bill Basie has by far and away the finest dance orchestra in the country. … If Basie can keep this band intact for another month or two there is an excellent chance for him to become one of the names of the country."

Hammond and DownBeat would become Basie's earliest and most persistent advocates. Within a year he (along with Basieites Lester Young, Buck Clayton, Jo Jones and others) would join Goodman as the most decisive influences of the swing era.

The collateral aura of Goodman's commercial victory fell on everyone around him and rippled out across the decades. Hammond's ear for new talent became the wonder of the industry over a 50-year career that would find and mentor Basie, Young, Charlie Christian, Billie Holiday, Ruby Braff, Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan, Denny Zeitlin, John Handy, George Benson, Bruce Springsteen and Stevie Ray Vaughan.

Serious American jazz criticism and historiography were born in the wake of Goodman's success, largely through DownBeat and enabling long careers in which Stearns, Leonard Feather, George Frazier, Avakian, Stanley Dance, Barry Ulanov, Paul Eduard Miller, Charles Edward Smith and others would serve the music in many vital ways.

As for DownBeat, it made jazz journalism a viable enterprise in American publishing. Metronone, which had focused on more formal music since its founding in 1883, quickly caught the scent, hired George Simon, and became a major competitor until its end in 1961. Music and Rhythm, H.R.S. Society Rag and Jazz Information were among the more short-lived music magazines that followed in DownBeat's tracks. Non-music publications also covered the new music as well, often with freelance DownBeat writers. Stearns wrote a "Swing Stuff" column for Variety. Hammond appeared in The New Masses under the name Henry Johnson, and The New Republic set a high standard with its own Otis Ferguson.

If all this seems unimportant because it happened 75 years ago, listen to the music. **DB**

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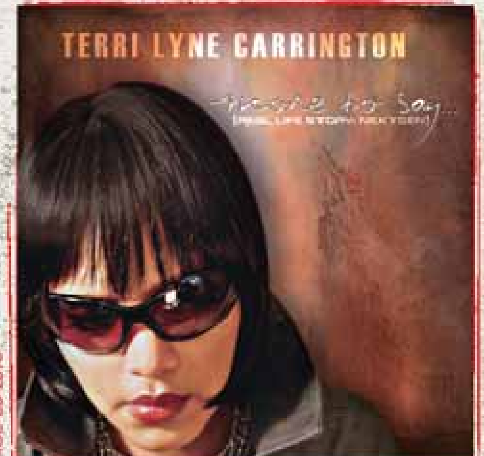

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DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Themes such as a quest for excellence, modesty, seclusion, self-doubt and spirituality weave throughout the Sonny Rollins story told over 50 years in DownBeat.

By Ted Panken

Consistent Path

Several hours into reminiscing on a half-century of DownBeat's copious coverage of his career, Sonny Rollins paused. "I hope you understand that it's emotionally jarring to go over your life," he said.

That qualifier aside, Rollins treated the process with customary thoughtfulness and good humor, offering blunt self-assessments and keen observations on the changing scene described within the articles in question. His comportment brought to mind Joe Goldberg's remark ("The Further Adventures of Sonny Rollins," Aug. 26, 1965): "It is almost impossible to talk superficially to Rollins. He examines whatever is under discussion in much the way he examines a short phrase in one of his solos: over and over, inside out and upside down, until he has explored all possibilities."

Rollins will observe his 79th birthday in September. Even in his Old Master years, a life stage when artists of parallel stature—filmmakers Akira Kurosawa and Ingmar Bergman come to mind—pare down to essences, he continues his efflorescent ways. Over the years, Rollins' larger-than-life appearance and relentless style belied the notion that self-doubt could never impede his forward motion. But much of the DownBeat narrative describes a character around whom Bergman might have framed a film—a gifted artist less than fully confident that his abundant talent suffices to satisfy his aspirations, engaging in a continual process of introspection and self-criticism, and, furthermore, possessing the courage to act upon his convictions by removing himself from the public eye during three extended sabbaticals.

How consistently Rollins hewed to his path is clear from a comment that Nat Hentoff places at the end of his 1956 cover story, "Sonny Rollins," which appeared a mere 11 months after Rollins, already dubbed "saxophone colossus" at 26, had left Chicago, his home during his first self-imposed hiatus. "I was thrown into records without the kind of background I should have had," he told Hentoff, expressing a concern that his career was developing too fast. "I'm not satisfied with anything about my playing. I know what I want. I can hear it. But it will take time and study to do it."

This theme would recur in different variations over the next quarter century, as would several others expressed in Dom Cerulli's 1958 followup. By then Rollins had already investigated the possibilities of the pianoless tenor trio on *Way Out West*, *Live At The Village Vanguard* and *The Freedom Suite*, each an enduring classic. He explained this direction as a response to his difficulty in finding band personnel who could fulfill his vision. He also elaborated on the pros and cons of nightclub performance vis-à-vis the concert stage, expressing concern about "setting aside enough time to keep up to his horn" and his "hang-up" with "finding time to rehearse."

Certainly, Rollins circa 2009 connected to concerns expressed a half-century ago. "Everything here seems like I could write it today," he said.

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Sonny Rollins

By Nat Hentoff
Nov. 28, 1956

Next year I may take some time off, go back to school, and stay away from the scene until I'm completely finished. I've continued studying off and on by myself and with teachers. I've just started. I've just scratched the surface. That's an honest appraisal of myself, so I don't dig this being an influence. I'm not trying to put myself down or anything. Being considered an influence admittedly is more of a challenge because people look for me to produce. But that bugs me, too, because I really don't feel I'm as great as they think I am. Being considered that good creates a mental thing, too. Honestly, what I am is because I've been lucky enough to have been with the best people. I've got a lot of work still to do, a lot of work.

"I've been really serious about music for about two years. Music is the main thing now. It's a commitment—that's stronger than a decision—to make it a career. I want to learn as much as I can about music and be as sincere as I can be in every aspect concerning it."

Theodore Walter Rollins: *Sonny Believes He Can Accomplish Much More Than He Has to Date*

By Dom Cerulli
July 10, 1958

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Right now, I feel like I want to get away for a while. I think I need a lot of things. One of them is time ... time to study and finish some things that I started long ago.

"I think if I could go to Europe ... or even get away from the New York scene for a while, I could assess things, judge myself more objectively. Being a leader takes up a lot of time. Most of the time I'm working on band business when I should be working on the music. I never seem to have time to work, practice and write. Everything becomes secondary to going to work every night, and wondering how the band sounds and whether our appearances are OK."

Rollins' Take Today

"I'm vindicated. I always claimed that my motive for going on the bridge was as I stated, but people said, no, Sonny's just going on the bridge because of the ferment in the music world, the competition from new people coming to the front, like Ornette and Coltrane. Everything I said in 1956 and 1958, I still speak about. I still practice every day. I still have a vision that I haven't yet achieved in my improvisations. I mentioned that I always wanted formal music training, which my brother and sister had. I didn't. I was always trying to catch up on my education.

"This shows my conscience about the clubs, as well. They were great, and I played in them until I was able to realize my ambition. But they were problematical because of the lifestyle—and also I thought that doing concerts would elevate the public perception of jazz."

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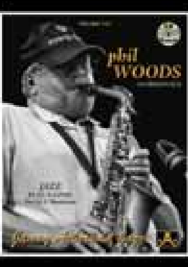

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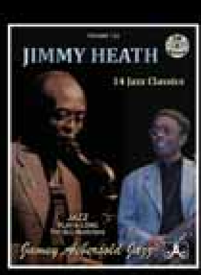

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The Return of Sonny Rollins

By Bill Coss

Jan. 4, 1962

A few weeks ago, tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins returned to the public jazz world from which he had voluntarily retired two years ago. On his opening night at New York's Jazz Gallery, the large audience had an unabashed air of expectancy more familiar to a football stadium than a night club.

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

When he moves toward the bandstand, there is a ripple of sound and movement preceding him, shouted hellos and exhortations. It is reminiscent of a championship fight, as Sonny is reminiscent of a championship fighter. ... Nowadays he even sounds like ex-heavyweight champion Gene Tunney, advocating clean living, study and lots of exercise. "I've stopped smoking," he says, "and cut down on the drinking, and I lift barbells every day." Then he begins to play, and he wins every round. ...

In order not to disturb others, he looked long and hard for a deserted enough place to practice while he was retired. "Then I discovered the Williamsburg Bridge," he said. "It's right near where I live. You should come down there some time. It's really amazing. Very few people walk along it. Probably most people don't even know there's a sidewalk on it. But the ones who did walk there paid very little attention to me. ...

"You're just suspended out there. You feel as if you're on top of everything, and you can see so far and so much, and so much of it is beautiful. I can blow as hard as I want there and be impressed. It gave me a kind of perspective about music, people, everything really, that I never had before.

"Everything began to jell after that. You see, when I quit, I suppose I had the intention of changing myself drastically, my whole approach to the horn. I realized after a while that that wasn't what was needed or what was bothering me. So, instead, I began to study what I had been doing, and explored all the possibilities of that. ... I knew I was beginning to control my horn."

Rollins' Take Today

"In 1956, I moved to 400 Grand Street, between Clinton and Norfolk, a block below Delancey Street. I was walking on Delancey Street, shopping in that area, and I looked up and saw the steps leading up to the bridge, and sort of thought about it, 'Gee, where does that go?' I walked up there and said, 'Wow, that's it.' There was my place to practice.

"I didn't do any performances during those years, although I did go out a couple of times to clubs. I went to see Coltrane at the Jazz Gallery. Steve Lacy had a loft on the Bowery, and I might have gone there. I heard Ornette at the Five Spot when they first came to town. I met Ornette, Don Cherry and Billy Higgins when I went to California for the first time, in March 1957, at the time I did *Way Out West*. I hadn't known them before. They all came out, and we got tight and practiced together. After I began to want to change the *Bridge* group, I remembered their playing and called Don and Billy.

"Opening night was rough. There was so much hoopla, so much press buildup that I was doomed to fail. But I had to do it. Like Bill wrote, I was fighting like I always do—trying to get something happening."

The Further Adventures of Sonny Rollins

By Joe Goldberg

Aug. 26, 1965

Rollins showed up to take me to his home. He was wearing blue jeans, a T-shirt and a baseball cap, was smoking a cigar and driving an Impala. A cigar was all right, he explained, because you don't inhale. He negotiated the heavy traffic with the ease of the cabdriver he once was. He lives in a Brooklyn apartment near Pratt Institute with his wife, Lucille, and two German shepherds named Major and Minor. The decor consists of paintings by the Detroit painter known as Prophet and souvenirs from overseas trips. The music on the phonograph ranged from old Basie records with Lester Young through Indian and Japanese music to operatic arias. He talked about the things that were on his mind. ...

"The average Joe," he said, "knows just as much as I do—he knows more than I do. I'm the average Joe, and I think people recognize that. That's why I play standards. Everybody knows 'Stardust.'" ...

Rollins said he never particularly wanted to be a leader, that he would have been content to remain a sideman with none of the nonmusical worries and responsibilities that go along with leading and stardom.

Rollins' Take Today

"I never actually drove a cab. That might have been a little exaggeration. A job was offered to me, but I never did consummate the act, if I can put it that way.

"I really had it together. My wife, Lucille, and two German shepherds named Major and Minor. A Chevy Impala. Nice paintings on the wall. It was a nice, big apartment. I didn't look like I was suffering any.

"I think 'average Joe' is an exalted term. To me, it's really Everyman. What I meant is that the audience is pretty savvy and not to be downplayed. They know what's happening. The audience pays their money, and it's up to me to give them what they paid for. If I have a night when I am more or less satisfied with my work at any particular concert performance, the audience is satisfied. Now, there are some nights when I am not satisfied, but the audience may still be satisfied to some degree. That's OK, because I am always my worst critic.

"In the kind of music we play, where everybody is extemporizing and has their platform, you have an advantage over the leader. A

sideman can play great or not so great, without responsibility. A leader has to play great all the time. On the other hand, everybody has enough ego to want their name in lights. The fact that you devote your life to creating this music and want acceptance for creating something personal is also a big ego trip—hopefully in a less negative sense. We have to be careful about the ego."

Music Is an Open Sky

By Ira Gitler

May 29, 1969

Rollins had played a very short set, and then emphatically gestured that the curtains be closed. The audience, stunned for a moment, instigated a concerted clamor, and after a few minutes Rollins reappeared, saxophone in hand. His fans, eager to shower affection on him and listen to more of his music, began calling out their favorite selections. Sonny, at odds with himself and his adulators, responded with halting words of explanation and then played snatches of various standards and an abortive calypso. It must be said that he made an effort, but a lot of disgruntled people left Town Hall that night. ...

At the [Village] Vanguard, he exhibited that staggering brand of gigantic tenor that makes you feel as if you are the instrument being played. The music does more than surround you with grandeur; it gets into your circulatory system and courses through your body. ...

Constant shifts in personnel has become the expected pattern within Rollins' groups. Players come and go like guests in a hotel for transients.

"There are not that many good players around," the saxophonist explained. "The good ones are working." Since he works so sporadically, Rollins cannot command the full-time services of superior sidemen. He can only borrow, as in the case of Heath, who is regularly with Herbie Hancock, or Louis Hayes, who went with him on a weekend gig in Philadelphia, but whose main allegiance is to Freddie Hubbard.

"There are a lot of guys I can work with, and who can work with me," he said, "but until I get a steady itinerary and offer steady work." ...

Why doesn't a major figure like Rollins work more frequently? In the past, he has chosen to take sabbaticals of varying length, for reasons ranging from dissatisfaction with himself to disenchantment with the jazz scene. One factor these days is salary. Rollins has spent many years to reach his high plateau of artistry, and feels that this entitles him to a certain basic compensation. ... The saxophonist began studying yoga on a formal basis when he went to Japan in 1963. During the next five years he maintained contact with his teacher, Master Oki, and with the Yoga Institute of Japan. When he returned at the beginning of 1968, he visited temples and shrines and spent time at his teacher's school in Mishima, near Mt. Fuji.

"The atmosphere creates an attitude for meditation," Rollins said. "There is a feeling of peace. Some of the students were jazz fans."

The Japanese experience led him to India and an ashram—"a religious colony of Hindu monks and women, yoginis"—on Powaii Lake, about an hour's travel from Bombay. ... He meditated and took courses in Vedanta philosophy.

JAN PERSSON

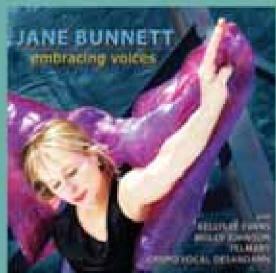
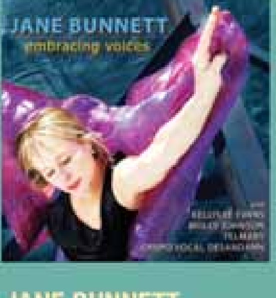
Rollins' Take Today

"This is what makes Sonny Rollins' career so interesting or so different. Once I got a name, everything I did wasn't a success. I had a lot of unsuccessful concerts, like this one, which was a big venue, Town Hall. I had to regroup and come back. Most people, once they've made it, then it's all staying on that level, or going uphill. But Sonny Rollins was, 'Oh yeah, Sonny Rollins, terrible concert; gee, how can he recover?' Then, 'Oh yeah, good concert.' I can create a scenario of what happened on the concerts that were not successful. Technical matters probably played a big part. But in exceptional times, I can overcome a lot of things.

"Business problems certainly would be part of my story. I always felt that jazz musicians not only should be appreciated more, they should be paid better. I certainly expressed that, and maybe Ira was right that I was pricing myself out. I consider myself an open sky, and I am open to all kinds of stuff. I'm not a moldy fig, so I felt a fairly substantial amount of interest in everything that was going on, especially Miles—I'd played with Miles. The business was fracturing around that time. A lot of other influences were coming in, and mainstream jazz (if I can put myself in that category) was not getting accepted. Well, it was never accepted, which meant things were even worse for jazz musicians. Everybody knows how the music business is.

"When I first came out on my own, I worked for Joe Glaser, from Associated Booking, and he had an agent handling me who had also worked for boxers in the fight game. He told me, 'Sonny, I've been an agent in the fight game, I've been an agent in the music game. The music business is worse.' So those were the conditions that we had to work under, and I was getting disillusioned with it.

"Somebody else might feel, 'This is just the way jazz is.' Well, I might take it a little more seriously than other people, and want to fight back. I felt that my name would give me the wherewithal to do something."

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Needed Now: Sonny Rollins

By Gordon Kopulos
June 24, 1971

Once again Sonny Rollins has disappeared from the public jazz scene. No one has heard the saxophonist–composer play in person for almost two years now. No one seems to know where he is. Rumors there are galore, of course; some frivolous and some serious. The darkest one has it that this time he's put down his horn for good and is living on bread, water and agony, the most likely that he is in the Far East, meditating. ...

With just two or three other living tenor players, Rollins shares the distinction of having an original tone. It is deep, strong and full-throated, even in the upper register. In the lower ranges, it is reminiscent of Coleman Hawkins, and occasionally in the middle octave he calls Ben Webster to mind.

His tone is certainly not without its influences, but the way he twists or bends about every third note sets him apart from everyone else in the known universe. ...

Though the full tone isn't exactly popular, traces of the Rollins approach are discernible in some contemporary saxophonists: Archie Shepp, for instance. Pharoah Sanders, too, has recently displayed a tone much fuller than the one he was using with Coltrane. ...

[Rollins'] contribution consists of much more than just this, though. Rhythmic innovators in jazz can be counted on two hands with fingers to spare. Rollins is one of those who must be counted. ... His use of space is possibly the greatest imaginable object-lesson in how to make the absence of sound create rhythmic and melodic tension.

Rollins' Take Today

"So far, I like this one the best. Some of the things he's saying in there are not conventional wisdom. I think he's very prescient and right on.

"My sense of time is probably unique to me. The things he says about my tone could have been written any time; I've been working on my sound all the time. I really got into harmonics through studying Sigurd Raschèr's book, *Top Tones For Saxophone*. He'd demonstrate with a saxophone that had no keys, and would play all these notes to demonstrate the way the harmonics fell in. I wasn't working so much with multiphonics, which is a term used more by guys who created fingerings that allow them to play two tones at one time. That was a worthy technique, except you couldn't really control the volume. But I was working on breathing and embouchure to play the natural harmonics, playing two notes at once, to increase the vocabulary of the instrument, and enhance my own expressiveness.

"There is something avant-gardish about my playing, even though people might think of me in terms of Ben Webster or Coleman Hawkins, or more conventional playing terms like bop, hard-bop and so on. Ornette put out a record on tenor, and everyone said, 'Gee, that sounds like Sonny Rollins.' People look back and say, 'Well, he played like this in 1948, and then he played like this in 1953, and he played like this in 1965.' Well, I have to accept the fact of my history in music. It's on record, if you'll excuse the pun. Somebody might hear me today, and say, 'Oh, Sonny's gone back and he's playing tunes again.' Which is OK. Yes, I was playing tunes at that time. But I'm not going to play the way I did in 1948 or 1965. I don't like to be caged. I might feel like playing tunes, but then at another moment I might not. There's a lot of things on my mind. I need to learn and increase my arsenal of things to do. Performance is when you get a chance to go through the attic, and I can't perform as much as I'd require to really stretch out and do all the different things I want to do."

Reentry: The New Orbit of Sonny Rollins

By Tam Fiofori
Oct. 24, 1971

What were the influences responsible for your playing tunes like "St. Thomas" and "Brownskin Girl"?

SR: My mother is from the Virgin Islands, and when I was fairly small I remember going to dances with her and listening to some of this type of music—"Brownskin Girl," "St. Thomas" and calypso things. Of course, when I got into playing jazz they were not thought of as being jazz music, and a lot of people would even try to make a big separation, and I did, too. I didn't actually begin my jazz career playing those types of songs. I just began to really incorporate that at a later stage. But the fact that I had heard a lot of them as a child made it so that I was able to play them particularly well. Then I felt that it was good if I could play them and people liked them, and it was something I could do in a natural way and it proved to be a sort of a trademark. Then again, I've heard some African music, which is I think somewhat similar to calypso in a way ... some of the music they call highlife.

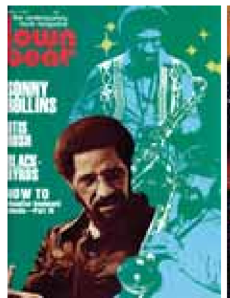
Rollins' Take Today

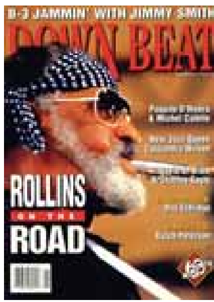
"I would say that it's unfortunate for Sonny Rollins that I made such a searing impression when I came out on the scene, like that was me. Because that's not me. I'm a very eclectic player. I'm open to a lot of things. Music is an open sky—back to that again. My first guy that I liked when I started playing was Louis Jordan, a real rhythm-and-blues man. I'm a little like Dizzy. Dizzy did a lot of things like, 'Who Stole My Wife, You Horse-Thief' and so on. I tend to go that way sometimes, and I don't feel that it diminishes anything else I did, just like it didn't diminish when Dizzy was playing 'Groovin' High.' So in the period after that article, I might have gone that way, but that was part of me. I didn't decide to do anything that was antithetical to what I believed in. I'm not a good enough musician to do that. My playing is too natural. If I play some kind of way, it's got to be that I have a deep feeling about it.

"In the '50s and '60s I was talking about needing to get away from music for different reasons. Well, during the '70s I moved out of the city. I got the place where I live now, where I could practice more or less whenever I wanted to, away from the maddening crowd.

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

So I was able to stay 'active' and still have the chance to meditate and do the things that I needed to do, but couldn't do in the '60s because I was right in the middle of everything, and had a lot of pressures and so forth. Lucille and I made it so that we didn't overwork. The booking agency used to call my wife 'Mrs. No.' We wouldn't work that much. We'd only take things that we thought were really good in many respects. That's probably why I haven't felt the need to take sabbaticals away from the music scene."





JACK VARTOOGIAN/FRONTROWPHOTOS

Back to the Bridge

By John McDonough
September 2005

Sonny Rollins finds himself on yet another bridge these days. On Sept. 7 he turns 75, and within the last year his wife, Lucille, died. The two had been married for about 40 years. ...

"I've been suffering from an overload," Rollins says in a husky, hoarse voice, apologizing for being late for this interview. "I lost my wife, and she did most of these things. I've been completely swamped with interviews, appointments, taxes. I don't like to operate like that. When a time is set, it's not my usual method of operation to be late."

Rollins' Take Today

"I've always been a guy who's stood out, who's pretty much been my own man. At this age, it's better for me to keep everything more compartmentalized, and reduce the things that I have to do so I can just concentrate on my music. I can only practice about two hours a day now. I have a group of people who I feel fairly comfortable working with; it's somewhat of a loose family, and it makes life a little bit easier. But I still have to oversee everything. I can't not be involved, like I was when my wife was with me and I could live like a baron and just go out to the studio and play all day.

"You never want to get too accustomed to any other person. We're born alone and we have to leave the planet alone. So it's a matter of adjusting to life's different knocks. I'm able to deal with things a lot easier now than four years ago. I never feel that the burden is too heavy. Obviously, I'm in a privileged position. I don't live like a baron now. But I'm making my own statements and doing what I want to do." **DB**

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DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

A Curious Relationship

Dave Brubeck and DownBeat have not always gotten along. But through numerous features, reviews and news stories, the magazine has told the sometimes controversial story about how a musically rebellious cowboy became a jazz legend.

By Jason Koransky

"It was interesting to watch Dave get mad all over again," Iola Brubeck said, referring to her husband's rereading of the batch of DownBeat stories that had been sent to him.

Dave Brubeck expressed a similar sentiment when told that some of his DownBeat archives would be reprinted in this feature. He winced, then offered a contained laugh, which conveyed less a sense of humor and more a feeling of, "here we go again."

"Early on, I had great reviews," the pianist said while sitting in the music room of his Connecticut home, reminiscing about his DownBeat stories. "Then, the typical thing is the more known you get, the bigger target you become. The more polls you win, the more people come after you."

Over the past 40-plus years, Brubeck has been more or less heralded as a jazz pioneer in these pages. For example, Michael Bourne's September 2003 cover story, "Classic Time," deemed him "one of the most popular and honored jazz musicians" of all time, and called his visage more akin to an emperor than a jazz artist. Today, he's unquestionably considered a master of the music. Time has the ability to change perceptions.

Not long after Brubeck first appeared in DownBeat in 1947, he started his meteoric rise to fame. The magazine covered him extensively—and he wrote two features for the magazine—yet this coverage reflected the polarizing effect that Brubeck had on the jazz world. Some people loved him, while others called him an overhyped artist who did not play "real" jazz.

Take the magazine's infamous review of *Time Out*, written by Ira Gitler. One of the most popular and influential jazz albums of all time could only muster 2 stars in the magazine.

"In classical music, there is a kind of pretentious pap, sometimes called 'semi-classical,' which serves as the real thing for some people," reads the April 28, 1960, review. "As a parallel, Brubeck is a 'semi-jazz' player. There is 'pop jazz' with no pretensions like that purveyed by George Shearing—and everyone accepts it for what it is. Brubeck, on the other hand, has been palmed off as a serious jazzman for too long. ... If Brubeck wants to experiment with time, let him not insult his audience with such crashing-bore devices."

"The review wasn't all negative," Gitler recently said.

Brubeck can laugh off Gitler's review today. "Ira eventually came around," Brubeck said. "The critics who put me down the most came and asked me to forgive them."

Perhaps Gitler didn't ask Brubeck for forgiveness. But a peace has been made. And most have come to respect Brubeck and his music. At 88 years old, Brubeck is a proud man, someone who believes strongly in his music. He still has a confidence that encroaches on but does not become cockiness. And he deserves it. After all, reading through these DownBeat archives shows just a glimpse of the battles he fought in order to make the music in which he so strongly believes.

Jazz's Evolvement as an Art Form

By Dave Brubeck

Feb. 10, 1950

(This story was part two of a lengthy feature the pianist penned for DownBeat.)

No matter what the future of music has in store for us in the way of harmonic surprises, the jazzman's criterion of adoption will always be tempered by what he can hear. I know from experience that the jazz creator while improvising is somewhat like a mountain climber walking on the brink of a precipice. He is protected on one side by the mountain of tradition and exposed on the other to the abyss of the unknown. ...

Jazz (for various social and cultural reasons) has primarily emulated its European harmonic heritage, and in so doing has unfortunately lost a great deal of the rhythmic drive which African music offers. The tendency, until recently, has been toward a more subtle, Europeanized syncopation, as typified in the change from two to four beats in the measure. ...

New and complex rhythm patterns, more akin to the African parents, is the natural direction for jazz to develop when the jazz musician has progressed to the point where he can no longer "hear" what his logical mind tells him he must play. ...

This new interest in the African heritage of jazz is but one of many awakening forces. ... Because the jazz musician creates music, interprets music as he hears it, it is natural that his improvised compositions should reflect every kind of music to which he has been exposed. Jazz has taken into itself characteristics of almost every type of folk music which can be heard in America. It absorbs national and artistic influences, synthesizes them so that they come out in the jazz idiom and no longer typify just New Orleans, the South, the Negro or the Italian street song which may have inspired it—but American music.

I would not be surprised to hear a jazz musician who had been exposed to Chinese music use devices from the Oriental system while improvising a chorus. It is fitting that the country which has been called "the melting pot of the world" should have as its most characteristic art form a music with as mixed a parentage as jazz.

Brubeck, Duke Ellington and Buddy DeFranco

ROBERT PARENT

Brubeck's Take Today

"I predicted so much that people didn't know what I was talking about. World music, without specifically saying world music. I said that all of the different cultures that we play in would come back into jazz.

"Darius Milhaud told me to travel the world and keep my ears open. We talked about the different influences that come into music. He talked about Bartók knowing more about Hungarian music than anyone else, and documenting it and writing it down. So much of what is written so-called classical comes from folk music. Jazz is America's great folk music. You listen to everything, and anything you've listened to is part of you. If you don't like it, it's part of you. You just don't play it. If you love it, it's part of you.

"*Jazz Impressions Of Eurasia* is a good example of our touring at that time. Things like 'Blue Rondo À La Turk,' the rhythm of that. A lot of the people who weren't following the direction I wanted to go didn't understand the direction jazz had already gone. I was convinced that New Orleans was the place where so many cultures met. When I talked that way, people did not think I was honoring the African. I'm honoring the African as being the strongest. But it was ridiculous for writers and critics to think there was a pure African beginning to the music."

Dave Brubeck Answers His Critics

By Don Freeman

Aug. 10, 1955

Dave Brubeck is sick and tired of the bulk of the written criticism which he considers manifestly unfair, often misinformed, at times irrelevant and frequently, he says, based on a woeful lack of understanding and background.

"I don't expect critics to be great musicians. But I do think they should have put in a number of years studying music, and they should know what they're trying to evaluate. …

"Since we're constantly improvising, a critic should spend, say, 30 nights in a row seeing us in a club. I know that's impossible. But fans do it, night after night. And that's the only way the critics could get a thorough idea of what we're doing. …

"The critics deny it, of course, but it's too obvious not to be true. They don't like success. They're restless, these jazz critics today. They want to discover an unknown talent, build him up but make sure he doesn't get too popular because that's when they start getting picayune in their criticisms. When an artist gets popular, the critics hunt for flyspecks."

Brubeck's Take Today

"John Hammond gave me my first East Coast review. He basically said to listen to what this guy in San Francisco is doing. Duke [Ellington] came in, told me I had to go to New York and arranged for me to play at the Hickory House. At the same time, Joe Glaser arranged for me to go to Birdland. There I played with [Charlie] Parker, who was there, and Bud Powell. Bud listened to me the rest of his life. A French writer, who lived with Bud, wrote in a story, 'I'm so tired of hearing Brubeck.' Bud was playing my music all the time.

"Most of the jazz musicians who I thought were interesting, creative and doing it right, they all liked me. I could never put together how some critic thought he knew more than Duke Ellington, Mercer Ellington or Charles Mingus. Miles [Davis] took back the bad remark he had made about me. If the criticism got too bad, I just remembered Chet Baker, [Gerry] Mulligan, Paul [Desmond], all of these genius players thinking I was OK.

"Dr. Willis James, the African-American musicologist, when I was being put down, went to a meeting in Lenox, Mass., at the Music Inn. He went up to the lectern and started singing. He asked, 'Can anyone tell me what time signature this is in?' I didn't know. I knew it wasn't 4/4 or 3/4. Gunther Schuller, John Lewis, so many guys were there. When he finished singing that, nobody raised their hand. He said, 'That's 5/4 time. It's an African work song and the Brubeck Quartet is on the right path.' I couldn't believe that someone with his authority was defending me."

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Jazz Pianists: 2
By John Mehegan
June 27, 1957

For someone extremely sensitive to criticism, it has been a painful experience for a man as sincere and serious as Dave "to laugh all the way to the bank."

Critics have been mixed in their reactions to the Brubeck quartet; musicians have been fairly unanimous in putting down the quartet as a dull, unswinging group. Just as some of the problems of the Modern Jazz Quartet evolve from the instrumentation of the group, so the Brubeck quartet, although probably less so, suffers from a lack of timbre. … A second apparent weakness in the quartet is that Dave is not by jazz standards a good pianist, although he somewhat makes up for this by his excellent musicianship, which no one questions.

However, even good musicianship without an adequate array of technical tools begins to pall after a while. …

What Dave lacks as a performer he makes up for as an entertainer. There is no doubt but that an aura of total conviction dominates all his playing; this quality more than any other has brought him the rampant success he enjoys with fringe jazz audiences. …

Like any messiah, Dave would like more than anything else to possess devoted apostles who would go out into the world and preach his gospel.

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Brubeck's Take Today

"That was the critic who hurt me the most, because he was my friend. Two of my kids had studied with him. He had come here, and his wife loved my playing. After he wrote that article, he came to the club where I was working and told Joe Morello to get me to come over and talk to him. He wanted to tell me how sorry he was that he wrote those things. I said to Joe, 'Don't let me near him. I don't know what I might do to him.'

"His wife and daughter told me that he had been drinking for three days, and had got so many phone calls saying he shouldn't have written that, that they didn't know what was going to happen. They said, 'He's come into the club where you're working so you can tell him it's OK.' I said, 'No.' But I finally said OK. His wife and daughter were so desperate to have him forgiven.

"[As far as being called an entertainer], when I started I couldn't even introduce the guys in the band, I was so bashful. I didn't want to go near the microphone. One of Joe Glaser's guys said he would not represent me unless I learned how to introduce my men and talk about what I am doing. 'What do you want me to talk about? All I am here to do is play.' This was at Birdland. He said, 'I'll be here for the next set. Try to be the leader we want you to be.' I was panicked. So, I started saying, 'We came in from Philadelphia, and our bass player got sick. Philadelphia is a bad place to get sick.' The whole front table broke up laughing. What's so funny? So I kept on talking about being sick, troubles on the road. These guys would break up. Anything I said was funny. Desmond was looking at me cross-eyed, wondering what was going on. At that table were *The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial* actors. Henry Fonda was sitting there. That was my beginning of being able to speak on the microphone."

Brubeck: For the first time, read how Dave thinks, works, believes and how he reacts to critics
By Ralph Gleason
July 25, 1957
(This excerpt comes from a three-part feature that ran in the magazine.)

In 1942, Brubeck enlisted in the army. … "I was 21 then, and I was amazed. All the guys in these bands were wonderful musicians and very competent, but I was shocking everyone. I don't know of a pianist who's ever come along that has shocked the accepted guys like that. They just completely wigged over me; there were so many new ideas.

"And, of course, they all thought I was too radical. The first time I wrote an arrangement for the band nobody would play it. So I took it to Kenton in L.A. Stan said, 'Bring it back in 10 years!' It was my first big-band arrangement, and I wouldn't be ashamed for Stan to play it today.

"I would say it predated a lot of things. It didn't have a tremendous jazz, swinging feeling, but it was very polytonal and harmonically it was tremendously advanced, and it had a message you don't usually find in jazz." …

While at Camp Haan, Brubeck got a weekend pass and went into Los Angeles to try to arrange to study with Arnold Schoenberg.

"We didn't get along at all," Dave says. … "I had written something, and he wanted a reason for every note. I said, 'Because it sounds good,' and he said that is not an adequate reason, and we got into a huge argument in which he was screaming at me. And I asked him why did he think he was the man who should determine the new music, and he screamed, 'Because I know more than any man alive about music.'"

Brubeck's Take Today

"Ralph came around to like my music after 'The Real Ambassadors,' with Louis Armstrong, live at the Monterey Jazz Festival. That night converted a lot of guys.

"Considering that arrangement [I took to Kenton], I was further out than I could get on paper. Arrangers, when I first started playing in Hollywood, movie arrangers, NBC guys, told me that if I could only write this down, I'd have something. I couldn't. I struggled so much to learn how to finally write things down. It wasn't easy. That first arrangement I wrote for Kenton isn't as good as I sound like I'm talking about. But I was playing way more into improvisation than I wrote into that arrangement. This would knock Kenton out. He'd say, 'Where did you hear voices like that?' Coming from him was amazing. He was a giant.

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

"[In regard to Schoenberg], oh boy, he got angry. He told me to go into the next room. I went into the next room. He told me, 'See all of these scores? I know every note in every one of these scores. That's why I can tell you what notes you should write next.' I wasn't going to play to those conventions. I can't believe that I would argue with him, but it's true."

Mrs. Dave Brubeck Discusses Jazz Abroad

By Ralph Gleason

July 19, 1958

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

At a train station in Wroclaw, Poland

"We should send more jazz groups to Poland," said Iola Brubeck, wife of jazz pianist Dave Brubeck. "The Poles consider jazz an art; it means the free expression of the individual to them."

Mrs. Brubeck had returned to her Oakland, Calif., home from Europe, where she had accompanied her husband and his quartet on an extended tour.

The highlight of the tour was a two-week series of concerts in Poland, sponsored by the American National Theater association. The Brubeck quartet was the first small jazz group ever to visit Poland (Ray McKinley's large orchestra went there two years ago) and the first racially mixed jazz group ever to appear in that country.

During the two weeks from March 6–19 that the Brubeck group was in Poland, the quartet played concerts in small auditoriums on all but two nights, were fêted by Polish jazz fans, acquired a small entourage of young jazz buffs who followed them from city to city, and met many citizens of Poland who were avid jazz fans. …

Although the Brubeck quartet received enthusiastic response throughout Poland, perhaps the warmest reaction came in Stettin on the night of March 7. As an encore, the jazz critic [Roman] Washco introduced the two Brubeck sons, Darius, 11, and Michael, 10, who then played a piano-and-drums version of Duke Ellington's "Take The 'A' Train."

"It was my first public appearance," said Darius, who is named after his father's classical mentor, Darius Milhaud. "I was real nervous. I started to fumble around, and my father yelled, 'Play the melody!' So I played the melody. It didn't sound too bad, really, but when it came to the breaks, Michael just looked at me. I wouldn't want to do it in this country, though. It would be kinda corny."

Some idea of the attraction jazz has for the Poles may be gained from the fact that Brubeck accepted a request to play a concert in Warsaw at the Palace of Culture on only 24 hours' notice, yet filled the hall. With no publicity except a few announcements on the radio, 3,000 Poles jammed the hall to hear the Brubeck group.

Brubeck's Take Today

"We went back to Poland for the 50th anniversary of this. A lot of the same musicians who followed us town to town for 12 concerts were 50 years older, and still wanted to remember those wonderful days. There were underground organizations that followed jazz. On the last day of the 1958 tour, they gave us a party because we were leaving Poland. One man stood up to give a toast, and he said, 'When you leave here, remember that us Poles love freedom as much as you in the United States.' It was so touching, as jazz was the symbol of freedom behind the Iron Curtain. You can't realize how important jazz is to people in a dictatorship."

An Appeal From Dave Brubeck

By Ralph Gleason

Feb. 18, 1960

HANK PARKER/COLUMBIA/LEGACY

Brubeck (left), Paul Desmond, Joe Morello and Eugene Wright

An appeal to Southern jazz fans "to cooperate in helping us demonstrate that jazz music is one of the best aspects of American democracy" was issued by Dave Brubeck on the heels of the cancellation of his 25-day tour of Southern colleges and universities because his quartet is racially integrated.

"We know the problem is not with the Southern jazz fans," Brubeck told DownBeat. "They know us and they know who we are. And they want us. And we want to play the Southern colleges and universities. All we want is that the authorities accept us as we are, and allow us—and all other integrated jazz groups—to play our music without intimidation or pressure."

Brubeck's 25-date tour was originally scheduled for February. As it became evident that he would not accept a lily-white clause in contracts, the tour dropped from 25 to 15 to 12 to 10 colleges. When the final 10 were notified by telegram that the Brubeck quartet was integrated, only three would accept the group.

"Let me reiterate," Brubeck told DownBeat, "we want to play in the South. The jazz fans want us to go there. They bought our group. They must want us—they voted for us in the DownBeat poll." …

Brubeck, of course, has toured in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the Middle East and Poland for the U.S. Cultural Exchange program.

Eugene Wright, Brubeck's bassist, said, "I think it's a shame we can go and travel all over the world and have no problems and come home and have such a silly problem. But it doesn't bother me. It's a shame they can't get themselves together. If they ever do get themselves together, they're in for a treat."

Brubeck's Take Today

"Eugene Wright was so great about accepting the bad conditions that were going down. He contributed so much to making things better, by not being angry. He used to say, 'I'll handle this my own way. Don't worry. I understand the situations we'll get into. I'll protest in my own way.'

"My band right now, two guys in it have been in it 30 years. This group has been together longer than the old group. People don't realize that. I put a high value on a working group. The old group, we were together more than with our families. You have to respect each other, and it becomes a situation like you're all brothers. Paul Desmond—my kids thought he was my brother. Even when they grew up, they called him Uncle Paul. I learned how to be a mediator and moderator. With Gene, I never had to say anything. But with Joe and Paul, I'd have to sidestep, keep them from being angry with each other. Paul had such a sharp wit. If I did something he didn't like, the next phrase he'd play would be 'Don't Fence Me In' or 'You're Driving Me Crazy.' Nobody would know except me. Sometimes I'd let it happen, other times I'd give him something a lot worse."

Two Generations of Brubecks: A Talk With Dave, Darius and Chris

By Dan Morgenstern
May 25, 1972

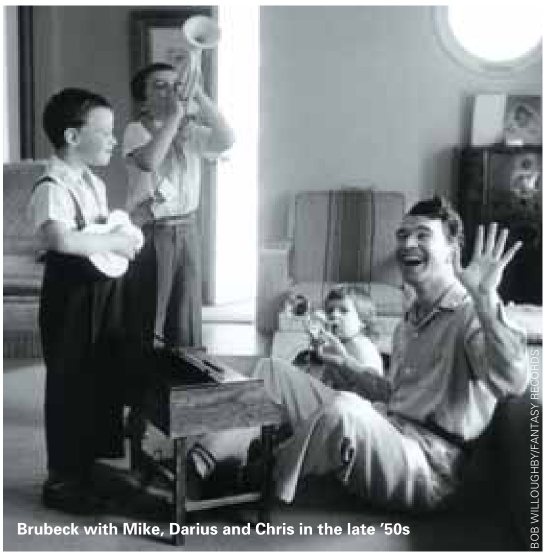
Dave: When we moved into the house before this one, there was a newspaper article saying to expect all-night jam sessions and a different quality in the neighborhood.

Darius: Poppy fields.

Dave: The kids have had a really tough time living down that they're mine.

Darius: Nothing caused me to snap out of my revolt against jazz because no decision was made. By the time I was old enough to revolt, I played three instruments—maybe not well, but it was still my favorite thing to do. I never thought of music vocationally, and that's what Dad considers my great revolt. I went through a period I'm just coming out of, of being very bored with AABA-type choruses. …

Chris: I'm the white sheep of the family. I've yet to have my big revolt. Maybe one will come up. The thing in school is that the kids who mature the fastest, who are basically brightest, want to become hoods more than anything else, and I was kind of into that.


BOB WILLOUGHBY/FANTASY RECORDS

Brubeck with Mike, Darius and Chris in the late '50s

Brubeck's Take Today

(An amazing part of Brubeck's story is how it has involved his family. This has been an angle covered in DownBeat, from interviews with Iola to this interview with his children.)

"Right now, I'm preparing a new piece with Chris based on Ansel Adams," Brubeck said. "There will be a screen over the orchestra with his photos. Then it'll be done with seven different symphonies. I wrote the piano part. Chris has put together the Ansel Adams photographs and orchestration. I just did a thing with Yo-Yo Ma and my son Matthew. My son Darius has done such great work in South Africa, and he'll be out at the University of the Pacific [in April] for the premier of the Ansel Adams piece. It's so gratifying. That's going to be a big day in my life." (Unfortunately, Brubeck got ill before the event and could not fly from Connecticut to California for the premier.)

"[My sons] naturally fell into careers in music. I didn't want them to be jazz musicians, or musicians. Right in this room it all happened. There was a bass under the piano, a drum set right here. And the kids would see Paul Desmond, Joe Morello, Eugene Wright and Gerry Mulligan. One day, Gerry and I were playing in this room. The kids came home from school. Gerry said, 'Do they play? Well, why don't we have them sit in.' He said, 'You're lucky. You have a rhythm section. You can rehearse right in your own house, with your own kids.'

"My wife is writing all of my sacred texts, some of my art songs and some songs like 'In Your Own Sweet Way.' We work as a family. It's great."

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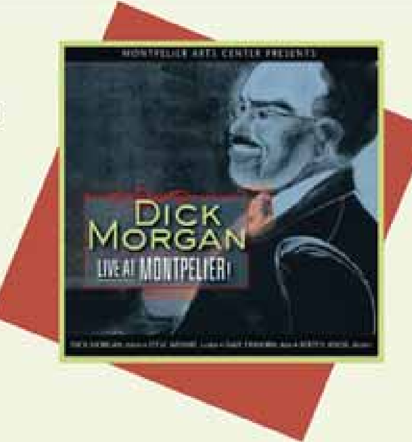

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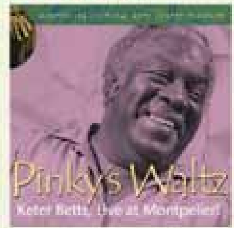

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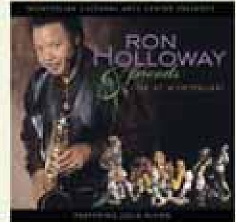

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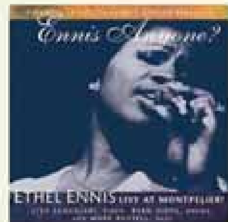

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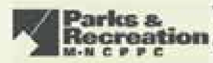

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About This Man Brubeck … Part 2

By Gene Lees
July 20, 1961

Brubeck impresses this writer as being one of those rare truly happy human beings.

Maybe this is because he has a wife who evidently understands him. The remarkable Iola Brubeck is an intelligent and articulate woman with a keen sympathy for her husband's problems. Perhaps this is because she is creative herself. She has written the words to many of Brubeck's tunes, and is, if the music business ever discovers it, one of the best lyricists in America today.

But probably the basis of Brubeck's contentment is a deep faith in himself.

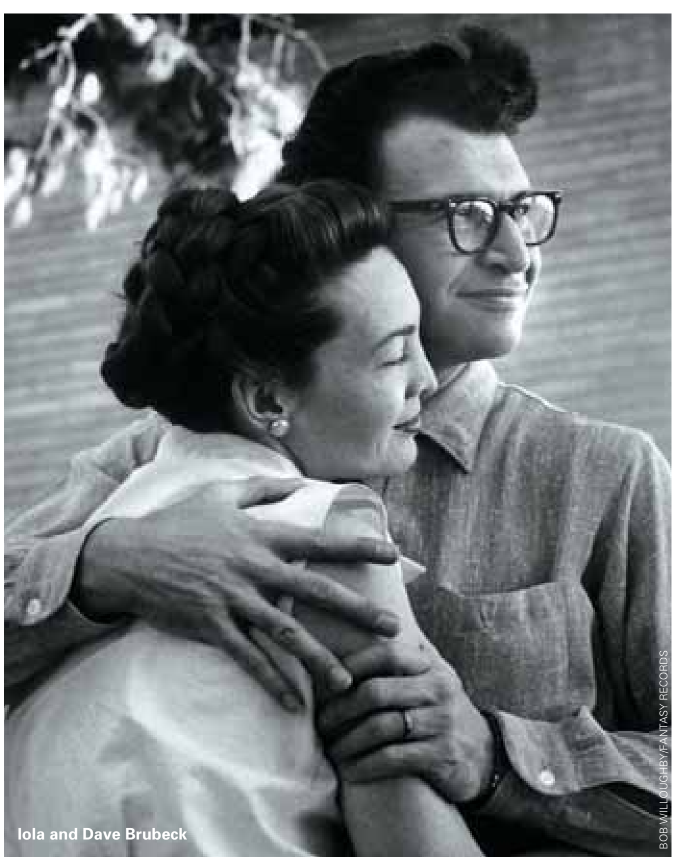
His wife recalls an incident that indicates that this faith has always been with him.

When Brubeck, unknown and with no money, began talking of marriage to her, he told her of his many aspirations, and warned her how hard his struggle would be. "It's funny," she said, "I can still remember the exact spot crossing the Oakland bridge where he talked about it."

"It may take me a long time, and it may be very hard," he told her, "but I know I can do it."

Brubeck's Take Today

"We've been married now 67 years. And we decided to get married the first night we went out. All of the dreams we had, a lot of them have materialized. Things like 'The Real Ambassadors' and the sacred services. This year we'll again be doing the piece that Iola and I wrote using Chief Seattle's speech. Boy, that's a dynamite speech. It's the first great lecture on ecology. It's been quite the ride." **DB**


Iola and Dave Brubeck

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DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

From Her Piano to Her Pen

Grande dame of jazz Marian McPartland has worked both sides of the aisle in DownBeat over 60 years, being covered as a top pianist and writing about the music as an insightful journalist.

By Paul de Barros

Many musicians have written for DownBeat over the years, but few, if any, have experienced the kind of immediate impact Marian McPartland did in the spring of 1971.

Long before McPartland was thrust into the limelight by her National Public Radio show, "Piano Jazz," she contributed a "Woodshed" column about her new composition "Ambiance." A gorgeous modal ballad inspired by Herbie Hancock (and recorded first on McPartland's 1970 album on Halcyon of the same name), McPartland's transcription of "Ambiance" so inspired DownBeat reader Jerry Dodgion, alto saxophonist for the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, he wrote a big-band arrangement of the tune.

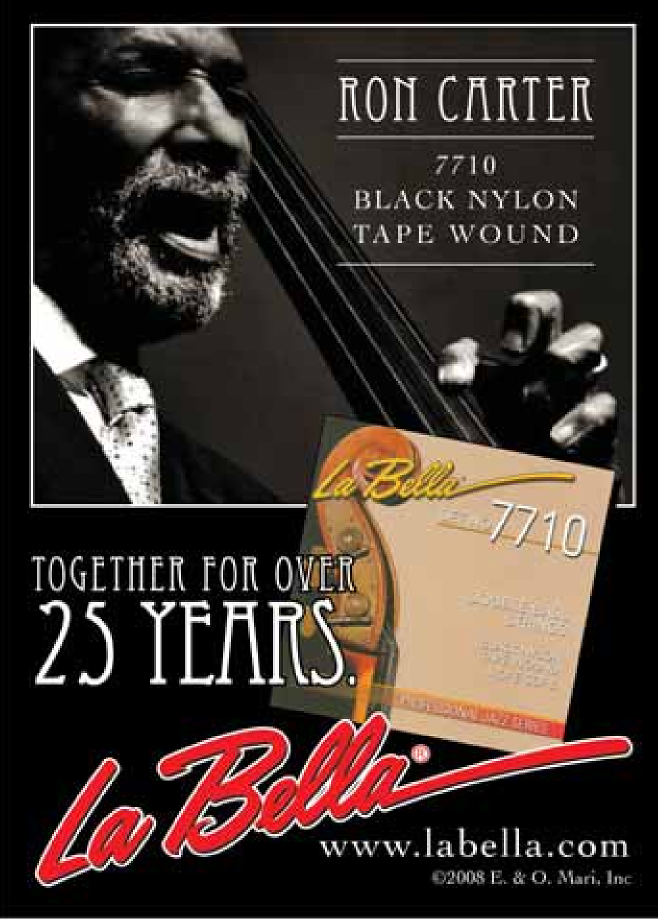
"He didn't say a word to me," McPartland recently recalled in an interview at her Long Island home. "He went ahead and made the arrangement, then he called me up and said, 'We just recorded your tune.' I was floored."

The tune appeared on the now-rare 1974 LP *Potpourri*, on Philadelphia-based International Records.

That's just one example of the many ways in which DownBeat and McPartland have intersected over the years. Since her first appearance in these pages in 1949, the pianist, composer, educator, radio personality and author has written dozens of reviews, profiles and features for the magazine, as well as being the subject of two cover stories, two "Blindfold Tests" and dozens of reviews and features.

"I've always taken DownBeat and I've always read it," said the 91-year-old pianist. "It has well-written articles, record reviews, great ads. I've tried to keep up with who's doing what and now, of course, I'm looking for people for 'Piano Jazz.'"

Today, McPartland is one of the most recognizable names in jazz, broadcasting in more than 240 markets around the country. The winner of a Peabody Award for Excellence in Broadcasting, she has recorded more than 50 albums, performed for the Supreme Court and two presidents in the White House and in 2004 was presented a Grammy Trustees Award for her contributions to education.



Paris Correspondent

Back when she little known, writing for DownBeat served McPartland well, publicizing her career while also offering a vehicle for her insights and opinions about the music. Many of the pieces excerpted here are classics, particularly the one about Mary Lou Williams, later included in McPartland's collection, *Marian McPartland's Jazz World: All In Good Time* (University of Illinois Press). Though she says writing does not come as easily to her as playing the piano, McPartland is a superb prose stylist with a succinct, smart style and a knack for finding the right words.

"I went to a good school," she said, "and my father criticized anything I ever wrote. Anytime I had to write thank you letters, he always had to see what I wrote. You couldn't cross anything out. It had to be perfect. And if he didn't like the way I said certain things, I had to rewrite them."

A manuscript copy of her first piece for DownBeat, a review of the Paris Jazz Festival of May 1949, reveals that little rewriting—or editing—was needed. McPartland's late husband, Jimmy McPartland, the cornetist and Chicago jazz pioneer, was playing the festival, so Marian, who tagged along, thought she "should make a contribution." Living in Chicago at the time, Marian approached editor Ned Williams—"a very fatherly guy," she recalled—and proposed a review of the festival. Today, of course, DownBeat wouldn't allow a writer to review her spouse. But back then, conflict of interest rules apparently were a little looser.

Crowds Jam Paris Jazz Festival

By Marian McPartland

July 1, 1949

PARIS—Backstage at the Salle Pleyel, an excited crowd shuffled back and forth. Musicians were warming up, stage technicians barked last minute directions, critics and kibitzers conversed excitedly and craned their necks as, 15 minutes late, a French emcee sidled in front of the curtain and announced, "Le Festival Internationale de Jazz est ouvert."

For a whole week the 25,000-capacity auditorium was jammed. Devotees of New Orleans music rubbed shoulders with bop disciples. When, on opening night, the first notes of Vic Lewis' bop-styled, 15-piece British band were heard, purists in the audience booed and hissed. And, when Carlo Krahmer's Dixie band held the stage, the progressive element loudly registered disapproval.

But when Tadd Dameron's quintet, with Miles Davis, trumpet; James Moody, tenor; Bass Speiler, bass; and Kenny Clarke, drums, was announced, the entire audience settled to hear, if not always to understand, some of the most controversial music of the day.

Bespectacled, goateed Parisians nodded bereted heads sagely at each exciting harmonic change, screaming and whistling their approval of every soloist. ...

Jimmy McPartland, with a French group ambiguously called the New Sound Chicagoans, brought down the house with his driving choruses on "China Boy" and "Singing The Blues," the latter dedicated to Bix. ...

Bringing the boppers to the edges of their seats was the Charlie Parker quintet, with Kenny Dorham, trumpet; Al Haig, piano; Tommy Potter, bass; and Max Roach, drums. … The band had a tremendous beat, and Parker, displaying his prodigious technique and originality of ideas, wove in and out of the rhythmic patterns laid down by Roach to the accompaniment of ecstatic cries of "Formidable!" from the fanatics.

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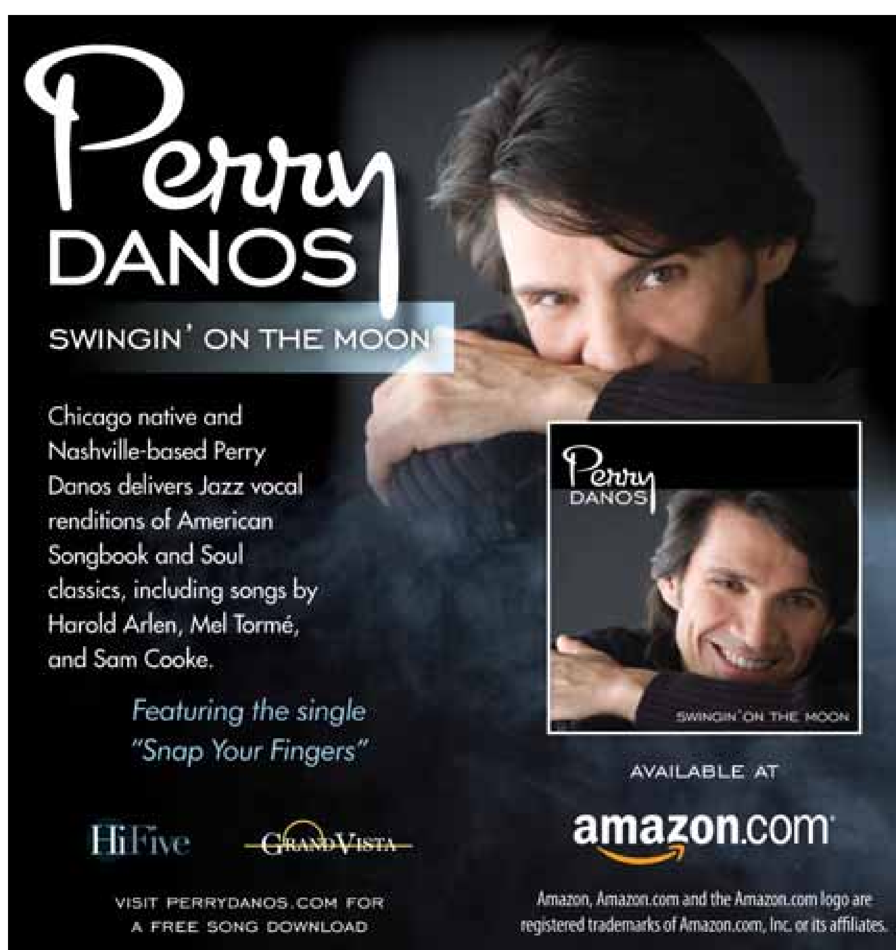

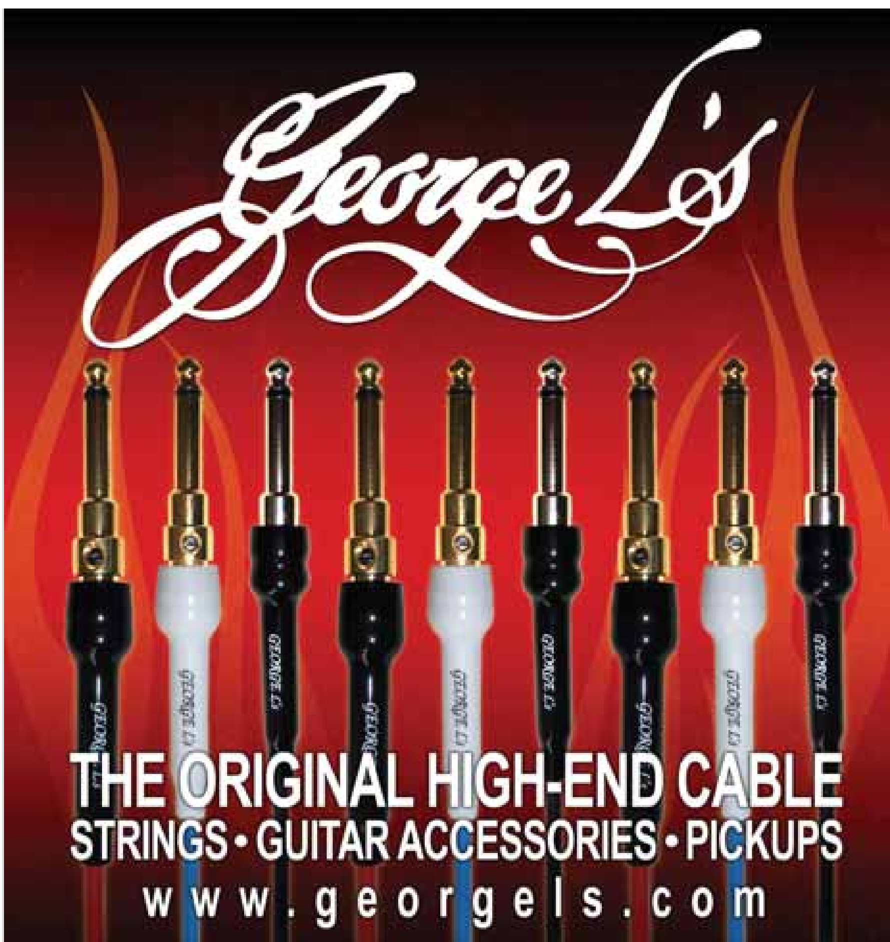

Breaking Glass Ceilings

In 1951, Marian and Jimmy moved to New York, where Marian began to work with her own trio. Fellow Brit writer Leonard Feather took notice. In a DownBeat cover story that would follow McPartland the rest of her career, Feather wrote, "She is English, white and a girl—three hopeless strikes against her."

Feather actually made this remark as a facetious set-up to highlight how much he disagreed with it. But the story stuck. And whatever his intentions, today it reveals a lot about what it was like for women in jazz in the '50s. The story ran under the heading "Girls In Jazz," with pictures of three singers—Helen Forrest, in a bathing suit; Connie Russell, at a makeup mirror; and Janet Blair, having her hair done. (The only other photograph on the page featured guitarist Perry Botkin, fully clothed, holding a lute, apparently having had his hair and makeup done earlier.) Even Feather concluded his complimentary review with a period chestnut: "She is one of the most talented girls in jazz."

"It never really bothered me," McPartland said of Feather's piece, but she added that something else did.

"The thing they always wanted first was your age," she said. "And if you didn't tell them, they'd go and look it up somewhere. So I tell all the girl piano players, when you do an interview, take five years off your age. Then you can get ahead of the game."

Ironically, Feather got Marian's birth date correct, but shaved two years off of it in the first edition of his famous *Encyclopedia Of Jazz*. Until her 80th birthday party at New York's Town Hall, everyone thought McPartland was two years younger than she was.

Girls In Jazz
East Saw West; Twain Met

By Leonard Feather
July 13, 1951

From the standpoint of a French fan, Marian McPartland might very easily be voted "the musician we'd least like to accept as a jazz artist." She is English, white, and a girl—three hopeless strikes against her from the Gallic angle.

Yet if you ask Coleman Hawkins, Roy Eldridge, Ed Safranski, or any of the other cast who worked with her at the Embers recently, you'll know from their enthusiasm that Marian has nothing to worry about. She's a fine, swinging pianist and one of the most talented girls in jazz. ...

The McPartlands are an amazing couple, and, incidentally, one of the nicest and happiest couples you're likely to meet in this business. They have a remarkable understanding and respect for each other's work.

It was because he felt she was limited by working in his combo that Jimmy encouraged Marian recently to go out on her own.

Marian's individual career seems to be well under way. After cutting four unusual sides for Federal, she went into the Embers, where, as she modestly puts it, "I would sometimes say to myself, 'Is this me?' I just couldn't believe that there I was on the same bandstand with Coleman Hawkins and all these musicians that were my idols."

Cover Time

Marian opened at the Hickory House, in Manhattan, in 1952 and her trio there, with drummer Joe Morello and bassist Bill Crow, established her reputation. In 1957, DownBeat ran a two-part cover story on her by Dom Cerulli, in which she talked about how Britain had "shackled" her spirit. Note, too, that even in the 1950s, McPartland was thinking about doing a radio show.

Meet Maid Marian

By Dom Cerulli
Sept. 5, 1957

Margaret Turner of Eastborne, England, would love Marian McPartland.

Actually, Margaret Turner of Eastborne, England, is Marian McPartland, but there's more than the obvious ocean of difference between the two.

Marian is bright and sunny, as Margaret always hoped to be. And Marian plays swinging piano with her own trio, something Margaret had vague dreams about back in Britain.

Most important, Marian is finding her personality and letting it take over. That's something Miss Turner's background and setting never would have permitted.

"I've spent so much time in the past worrying about *People*, *Everybody* and *They*," Margaret smiled.

"I don't anymore," Marian said. ...

"I never would have been able to find myself if I had stayed in England." ...

Marian, like many leaders of small jazz groups, has made countless guest shots on radio and television. She gets a meatier role when she appears solo on the opening show of "The Big Record," Sept. 18, with Patti Page.

But, while interested in TV, Marian has firmer plans for radio.

"Jimmy and I have talked about getting a format together. I guess it might be a record show with interviews."

In the second installment, McPartland and Cerulli broached the subject of women in jazz. Neither complaining grievously about prejudice nor decorously claiming she "enjoyed being a girl," McPartland took a middle road, offering observations that still stand up well today.

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Marian McP

By Dom Cerulli
Sept. 19, 1957

What are your comments on being a woman in a man's world, the world of jazz? Are there advantages and disadvantages?

"I have come to the point where I try not to think about it at all. I just try to concentrate on improving my playing. ... I guess I must be old-fashioned or something, but I don't want to be clingingly feminine and get my own way because I'm a woman. And the opposite is true, too. I don't want to be domineering, either.

"There may be a feeling that it's sentimental or sissified to play with rich harmony. I do love full and interesting harmony, like the way the Ellington band is voiced. The funky players will find they're not losing anything if they play ballads with more varied harmony. Let them go home and play some Debussy or Ravel."

Cecil Taylor with McPartland at a taping of "Piano Jazz"

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Interviewing Chops

Anyone who has listened to "Piano Jazz" knows McPartland is a perceptive interviewer, a skill she apparently honed while writing for DownBeat. In 1960, when she decided to profile alto saxophonist Paul Desmond—flying high with Dave Brubeck's hit "Take Five"—she discovered he was quite a reticent subject.

"He didn't want to tell me anything," she recalled. "But then at the Hickory House, I showed him what I did write, and he didn't like it. Then he opened up! I guess he thought if that's the way she's going to write, I'll help her with it."

Perils of Paul: *A Portrait of Desperate Desmond*

By Marian McPartland
Sept. 15, 1960

Desmond's status in the group, and in fact in the music business, is unique. With Brubeck, he has all the privileges of a leader, much of the acclaim, and few, if any, of the headaches and responsibilities. It is, as Paul puts it, "a limited partnership." He and Dave consult on choice of tunes, tempos, choruses, and so forth. He also takes a generous percentage of the group's earnings. ...

One might assume, therefore, that Paul has a dream job. But on closer look, one is tempted to wonder if, for a man of Paul's talent—in many ways, untapped talent—it might be a gilded cage.

For Desmond has a mind that can only be called brilliant—incredibly quick, perceptive, sensitive. He is also remarkably articulate and witty, with a skill at turning apt and hilarious phrases that leave his friends in hysterics. …

Of Vogue fashion models, he said, "Sometimes they go around with guys who are scuffling—for a while. But usually they end up marrying some cat with a factory. This is the way world ends, not with a whim but a banker." ...

"If you think Dave plays far out now, you should have heard him then. He made Cecil Taylor sound like Lester Lanin." ...

In answer to the oft-made observation that "Dave never would have made it without Paul Desmond," Paul says stoutly, "I never would have made it without Dave. He's amazing harmonically, and he can be a fantastic accompanist. You can play the wrongest note possible in any chord, and he can make it sound like the only right one.

"I still feel more kinship musically with Dave than with anyone else, although it may not always be evident. But when he's at his best, it's really something to hear. A lot of people don't know this, because in addition to the kind of fluctuating level of performance that most jazz musicians give, Dave has a real aversion to working things out, and a tendency to take the things he can do for granted and spend most of his time trying to do other thing. This is OK for people who have heard him play at his best, but sometimes mystifying to those who haven't.

"What would kill me the most on the jazz scene these days would be for everybody to go off in a corner and sound like himself. Let a hundred flowers bloom. Diversitysville. There's enough conformity in the rest of this country without having it prevail in jazz, too."

From a sidebar of "Desmondisms":
Ornette Coleman: "I like the firmness of thought and purpose that goes into what he's doing, even though I don't always like to listen to it. It's like living in a house where everything's painted red."

Covering Her Inspirations

In 1963, McPartland spent an ill-fated few months with a Benny Goodman touring band, which ended with her leaving the group.

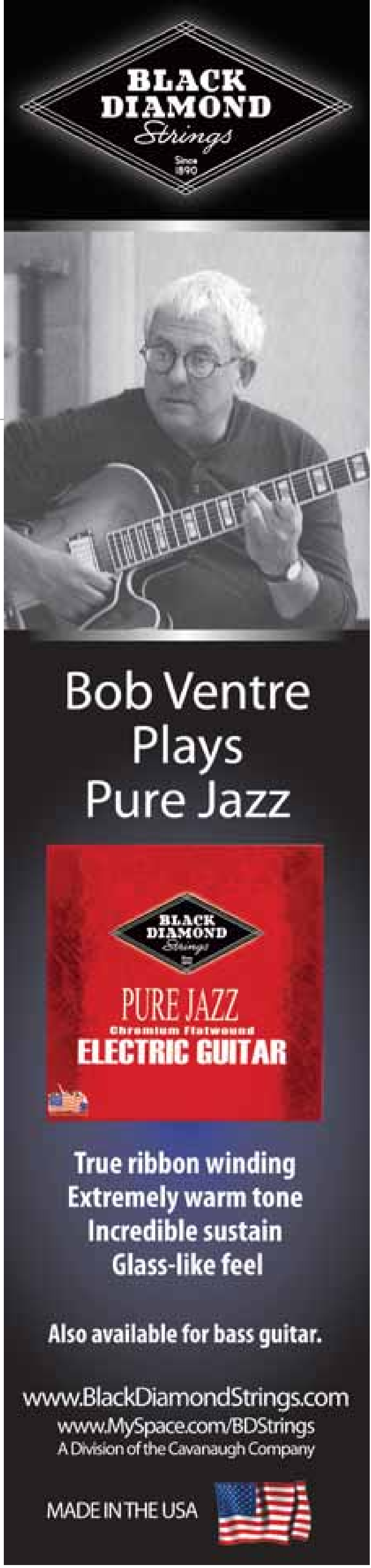
"I thought, very arrogantly, I've had my own group, and I'm sure I'll be able to handle Benny very well," she recalled. "And I did, for a little while. But when Red Norvo and Bobby Hackett came into the band, Benny would have Hackett say, 'Oh, Benny thought it would be better if you played so and so.' If I hadn't been so insecure, I would have left. But I didn't. I kept trying to please him. [After I left], I was so disgusted with him, I wanted to write a piece about him. Everybody said I was too nice."

Playing with the Goodman Orchestra
DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Looking back at the article, which ran April 7, 1964, McPartland agreed she had, indeed, been "too nice." Though she wrote that Goodman could be "caustic, inconsiderate or thoughtless" and "would make Emily Post faint," she also said that "working for him was a great experience."

In truth, McPartland found Goodman's behavior toward his sidemen reprehensible and his music "nostalgic" and old-fashioned. Their bone of contention was McPartland's modern approach to voicing chords, or at least she thought so. He never really told her.

"I could have said some of the things that actually happened," McPartland admitted. "Like, we were at a party and I happened to be sitting on a sofa next to him and I said to him,



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'Benny, I'd really like to know, you don't like my playing, why did you hire me?' And he looked at me in sort of astonishment and said, 'I'm damned if I know.'"

The most probing, poetic, personal article McPartland contributed to DownBeat was about Mary Lou Williams, a pianist McPartland had admired even before coming to the U.S. and whom she actively sought out the moment she got to New York.

Into the Sun:
An affectionate sketch of Mary Lou Williams, jazz's leading female musician

By Marian McPartland
Aug. 27, 1964

Her early records are collectors' items. Her writing and playing have become part of the pattern of jazz history. She has transcended the difficulties experienced by women in the music field and through several decades has held a position of eminence as one of the most original and creative of pianists. She speaks softly: "Anything you are shows up in your music—jazz is what you are, playing yourself, being yourself, letting your thoughts come through." ...

Mary Lou's mood is dark, brooding—like a pearl diver, she searches along the depths of the lower register of the piano and then, as if triumphant at a sudden discovery, she shifts to the treble, launching into a series of light, pulsating, chordal figures. ...

Mary Lou has found the way to put her emotions, thoughts and feelings to good use. They come out powerfully, and sometimes prayerfully, for the spiritual side of the blues is always strong in her work. Yet there is a mysterious air, an enigmatic, slightly feline quality about her, which contrasts strangely with her direct, down-to-earth way of speaking.

One senses the inner fires, the inner tensions, and though she keeps her voice low, at times there is in it a note of bitterness. ...

Here is a woman who is conscientious, introspective, sensitive, a woman who, with her quiet manner and at times almost brusque, non-committal ways of speaking, has been misunderstood, thought to be lacking in warmth and compassion. The reverse is true. She feels keenly the various factions, contradictions, inequalities of the music business, wants to help people, to give of herself. A woman vulnerable. A woman hurt so many times she tends to withdraw from, and be suspicious of, others. ... In many ways, she is still confused, still searching, still figuring things out for herself.

At the Eastman School of Music in 1974

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Jazz Education Calling

Musicians are famously critical of one another in private, but putting critiques of one's colleagues in print is quite another proposition. For 20 years McPartland managed to dodge potential conflicts—mostly, she said, because she chose to write about players and albums she liked. But when she received a copy for review of a posthumous, late-John Coltrane album—she doesn't remember which one—she balked.

"I couldn't stand it," she said. "And I thought, gee, if I'm going to say I don't like John Coltrane, that will be terrible. I can't do that."

Instead, McPartland wrote a "Music Workshop" piece about "Giant Steps," a tune she admired.

John Coltrane
By Marian McPartland
May 1, 1969

The music of John Coltrane is a source of inspiration to young musicians everywhere. …

Judging by letters I have received, many young musicians seem more interested in Coltrane's later work—*Meditations*, *Crescent* and so forth, than they are in his playing of earlier days, with Miles Davis (*Kind Of Blue*) or when he made his own *Giant Steps* album. The title piece from this album, and some of his other compositions ("Naima" and "Red Planet") all show Coltrane's great originality and should be in every musician's repertoire.

"Giant Steps" is, to me, one of the most perfectly put together compositions I have played—the harmony and the chord structure are so well planned. The discipline involved in playing this piece may have led some musicians to avoid it and turn instead to the freer forms, but I think that in order to earn the right to play in a completely free style one has to first gain mastery of one's instrument and a knowledge of repertoire—not just tunes of today, but of yesterday and the day before.

Lifetime Achievement

Though McPartland stopped writing for DownBeat, the magazine didn't stop covering her career. In 1994, when she won the magazine's Lifetime Achievement Award, WBGO disc jockey and long-time jazz scribe Michael Bourne wrote a marvelous account of her career.

Our Dame of Jazz
By Michael Bourne
September 1994

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

"I never intended to do what I'm doing," said Marian McPartland. "If somebody told me I was going to marry a musician, come here, work here, I'd have thought they were crazy. I just fell into it all—and I'm glad I did,"

We're all glad she did—and for all she's done and continues to do as a pianist, composer, broadcaster, and especially educator.

I was amazed once when Marian said she never naturalized. Marian even bristled at the thought. "I didn't marry Jimmy to become an American citizen. I married Jimmy for love." They eventually divorced but were always the best of friends and, just before Jimmy's death several years ago, Jimmy and Marian remarried. ...

Marian's style, like her accent, is elegant—although just because she's an English lady, don't presume she's only "genteel" at the piano. Marian McPartland swings. ...

I suggested a while ago that inasmuch as she's still a British citizen, she deserved to be Dame. And though she scoffed at the notion, Marian McPartland is certainly our own very classy Dame of Jazz. **DB**

Paul de Barros is currently working on a Marian McPartland biography for St. Martin's Press.

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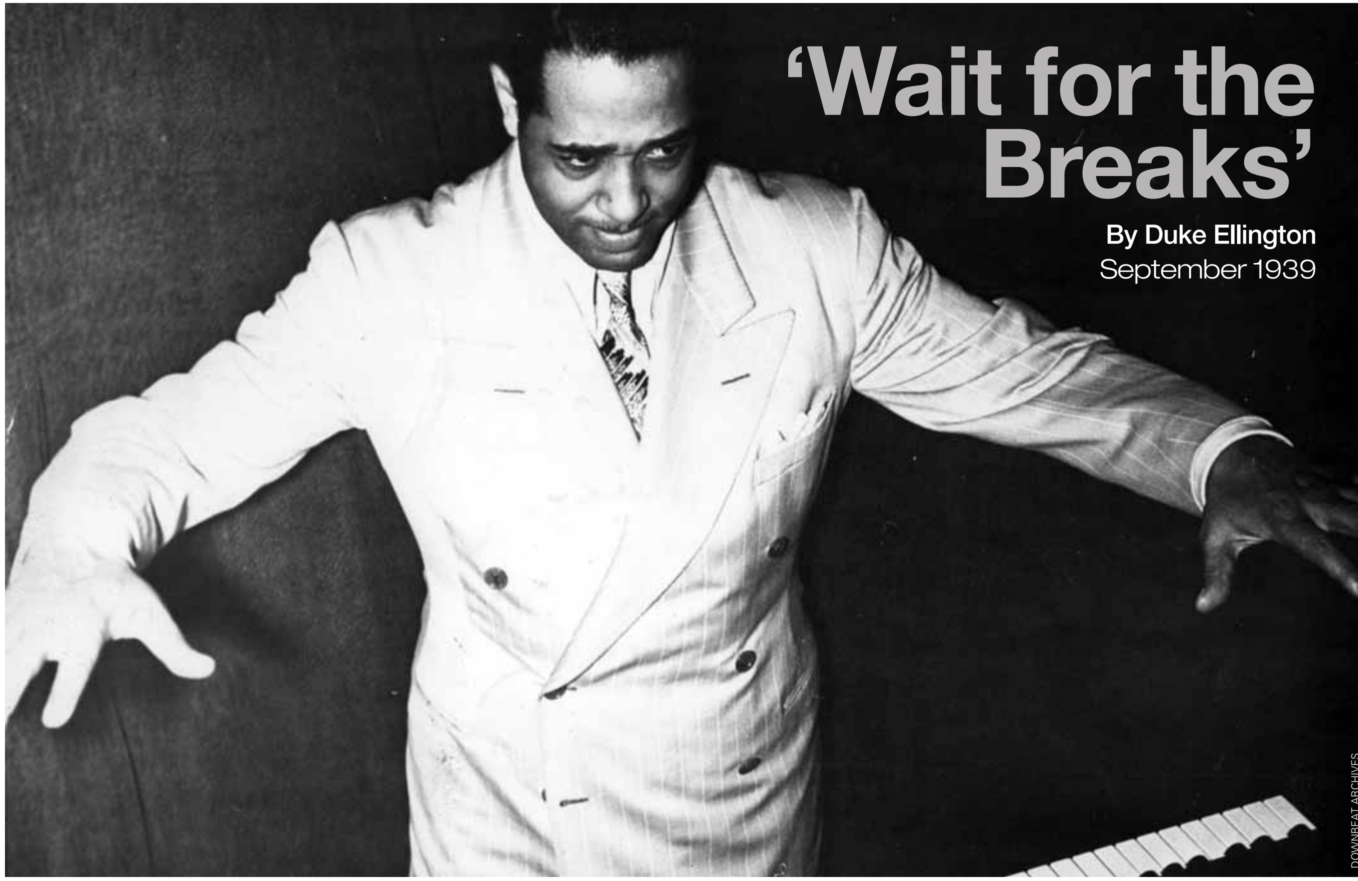


DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

'Wait for the Breaks'

By Duke Ellington
September 1939

It was pretty tough getting started as a composer, and Joe Trent and myself wore out many pairs of shoes walking around from publishers' offices to more publishers' offices. However, having a band was a break because band leading and song writing help to support one another. One always has the correct medium for showing off one's tunes and the inspiration for creating them.

The song writing business is particularly hard because it is so unpredictable. One never knows which tune may be the hit. The one you mostly favor is the one which never gets anywhere, and the one you pass up hits the top a long time later when you have forgotten about it.

'Solitude' Started Slowly

"Solitude" waited a whole year before it even started and then it was very slow getting on the way, although it eventually turned out to become something of a standard. "Solitude" was a band number and it was many months before a lyric was put to it.

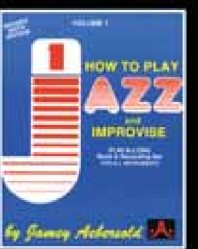
Most of our tunes have been band numbers and it has been the music in them which has eventually popularized them with musicians, thus inspiring the addition of lyrics. Perhaps this is a more solid way of really establishing a tune, and it seems to point to a longer life. Our most popular numbers have been written at the oddest times and in the oddest fashion. "Mood Indigo" was written while waiting for dinner. It was scored in 20 minutes. We had been having trouble previously with a "mic tone" encountered in recording studios which refused to be eliminated, therefore we decided to utilize this tone in "Indigo" and make it the fourth tone. Therefore the setup was trumpet, clarinet, trombone and mic tone.

The Breaks Count!

Most of our things were written quickly. "Solitude" was written in 20 minutes while waiting outside a record studio for another band to get through. The main strain of "Sophisticated Lady" was written in a few minutes, though it took a couple of weeks to properly develop the theme.

Breaks play a big part in successful song writing and we would advise all young song writers just to keep plugging. For even in our case, where we are lucky enough to have established some reputation with a few hits, still we find that there are songs we have had on hand for years which we like and which we are unable to market in the song field.

It is also a fact that there are many good tunes which due to range or some such technical point may be uncommercial. Such has been the case with our latest song, "Prelude To A Kiss," which has won the apparent approbation of the musicians but which is difficult material for the average singer. So once again we suggest that those who feel that they have talent in the song writing field should make up their minds not to be easily discouraged but to keep working and wait for the breaks. **DB**



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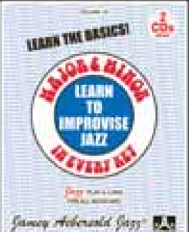

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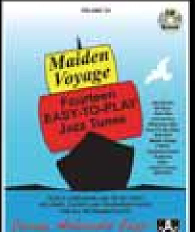

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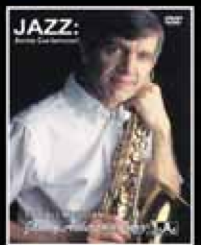

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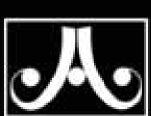

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Tormé Raps None, Advises All

By Mel Tormé
(as told to Ted Hallock)
April 21, 1948

Gee, dad! A chance to say a few words! First: unlike [Stan] Kenton, I'm going to set down my obvious likes, leaving it to the reader to figure out my dislikes ... without naming names. That's where I disagree with Stan's interview: he made a mistake rapping people, and certainly didn't change my views. Good or bad, we're all in the business. If certain guys are not capable of playing better than they do, I'll admit the business would be better off if they didn't play at all.

"But if there were no bad bands, how would any basis for comparison exist? We'd live in a musical utopia, with no ratios ... in a stagnant vacuum. The Kentons, Hermans and Ellingtons excite us, whereas certain other outfits prove how dissolute we can get."

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Modesty Best Policy

"I don't begrudge fame to anyone. I've been taught that humility accompanies great musical accomplishment. Realizing that I've been typed 'cocky,' I won't argue the point save to say that I'm humble about whatever talent I may have. For one thing, the great talent emanating from the country and small cities stops me from having a big head. If I think I'm tops, along comes a guy from Boise who's better.

"There's not a soul living who can't be a good singer. Anyone can sing. Music is a common commodity in this era. Records, motion pictures and radio have brought music into every home. That's the reason for this current crop of new musicians. In 1900 the populace was one-tenth as well versed."

At Low Ebb

"Yet it's odd that we are at our lowest ebb, musically, today. In 1938 the ratio of good songs to 'novelties' was reversed. For every 'Hut Sut Song' there were three good tunes on the Hit Parade, show tunes. There are a few songs today of the show caliber of the '30s. Then, with radio still little more than a fad, people depended upon sheet music to familiarize themselves with hits of the day. The future of discs was nebulous. The Five and 10s were musical purveyors to the nation. The home piano got a workout. The layman learned songs by playing them. By having to figure out the intervals, and discovering how beautiful some of the chord structures were, the consumer came to expect good music, and got it. People learned and played the good tunes then, they didn't just listen and expect novelty.

"Song writers used to want to turn out fine scores, to make their musicals the most outstanding on Broadway. They didn't care whether their songs would be lifted from the shows, recorded, filmed and radioed to death ... they weren't forever thinking about those extra royalties.

"Song writers wrote show tunes then, not melodies designed to fit a movie scenario. A 'Broadway technique' kept musical standards high. New York and Hollywood weren't vying with each other. Authors wrote for posterity, not prosperity. Today there are seven New York musicals in three years, as compared with half as prolific an output in the '30s. Today they're writing commercial song hits, not for the shows themselves, but designed to reach the Hit Parade. Two decades ago the boys didn't care. A New York show grossed enough to make it financially worthwhile to concentrate on its music. Today commercialism has got it. The dough is important, not the song.

"I'm all for the 'futuristic' singing of today, where the voice is used as an instrument, is used for improvisation, not merely to sing written choruses. That's my first reason for thinking Ella [Fitzgerald is] the greatest. Her ability to sing lightning-quick changes; her talent for tying an idea into her throat and singing it demonstrates that improvisation is the only true art in modern vocalizing. It's the only element in singing today that's original and pure every time."

Scatting Difficult

"Anyone who thinks so called 'scatting' is simple is nuts. The sincere jazz singer is no different from any jazz instrumentalist. He should sing with freshness and vigor, and different ideas, at every performance. The advanced singer should be able to improvise around the melody; to sing notes of the same value as those written, but different notes in the same chord ... in other words, a counter melody.

"The marriage of words and music is often a happy marriage, but sometimes completely incongruous. I think the day will come when popular music will lose words and retain only vocal sounds. Bob Wells and I write music and lyrics together. Neither of us is completely responsible for either all the words or all the music. The words for 'Born To Be Blue' were written after the music was composed; written to fit the score, not vice versa.

"Unit-wise it's impossible to apply the criterion of improvisation. It would have been a potpourri for the five Mel-Tones to have improvised during a chorus. However, each of five masters cut on 'That's Where I Came In' differed from the others during my and Les Baxter's solo spots." **DB**

Gilberto "El Pulpo" Colón Jr.

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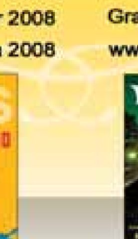

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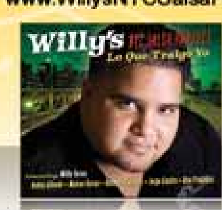

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Sure, I Helped to Wreck the Dance Biz

By Stan Kenton
May 19, 1950

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Everybody can blame Woody Herman, Dizzy Gillespie and me for ruining the dance band business, and I'll agree with them. Sure, we ruined it. We ruined it because we were bound and determined to play the kind of music we wanted to play. What we wanted to play wasn't dance music, but despite this, agents and promoters insisted on handling us just as they would handle a dance band.

They'd book us for a dance in St. Joe, Mo. The dance fans would come to hear some dance music and the Kenton fans wanted to hear progressive jazz. We'd give a little of both and everybody went away unhappy.

Can't Book All

You can't book Freddy Martin, Stan Kenton, Tex Beneke and Woody Herman all in the same way and expect anything but ruin.

If the dance bands can make a comeback now, it's going to help us, even though we play nothing but concerts. The more strong bands there are in the business, the more chance there is for all bands, including us, to get bigger box offices.

That's the way it was years ago when a one-night operator would have a string of big names coming through each week, with each band trying to top the ones which went before it. There was competition then. The heat was always on.

Biz Fearful

But today, the whole music business is obsessed with fear—the fear of insecurity. Agents and operators are so afraid that they'll lose money that they don't want to do anything. Everybody is waiting for some fool to tread out on a bridge and, if he doesn't fall through, they'll follow after him.

The agents are sitting in their offices with their feet up on the desk waiting for a wire to see if Art Mooney drew in Atlanta. If he did, they'll book Blue Barron.

Then they find seven guys waiting for them who want to start bands. "Don't bother me," the agents say, "this is no time to gamble with new bands." And they go out and have a drink.

The Miller Ghost

Suddenly everybody has picked up the Glenn Miller style as a safe bet. But how long can the Miller ghost last? These bands that are using Glenn's style aren't creating. Soon they're going to come to the end of that street and then what do they do?

One thing you've got to realize is that Miller was a great and progressive musician. If he were alive today, his band wouldn't still be sounding the way it did seven or eight years ago. One day, some little guy is liable to come out of Des Moines with a band that has something the people want and the Miller copycats will be finished.

Companies Learned

One important thing about the return to dance music is that it shows that the record companies have learned something. They have found that they could take one man, a singer like [Frank] Sinatra, back him up with a few instruments, and make just as much money as they could with the circuses that Tommy Dorsey and Glenn Miller were dragging around with them. So they plugged the singers and gradually ignored the bands.

But then the record companies found that the singers which they had successfully built up just wanted to sit around their swimming pools. They weren't interested in getting out in front of the public and making a personal presentation, which sells records.

Booked Own Tour

I had to book and promote my concert tour because the established agents and promoters were too scared to do it. I'll keep right on doing it myself until the agents and promoters wake up or until—and this is more likely—new blood appears in the field which is alive to the potentialities of the business today.

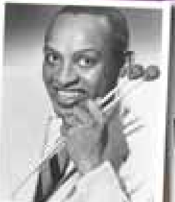
It will be only with the appearance of new blood that we'll get away from the current obsession of trying to play a safe thing. There is no such thing as "a safe thing" in the music business. People are liable to change their taste at any time.

This is nothing new. It has always been true, but band leaders and agents and promoters have got to realize it. They've got to realize that this business is a gamble, and either you take that gamble or there's no business. DB

Paquito D'Rivera

Dexter Gordon

Bennie Golson


Lionel Hampton

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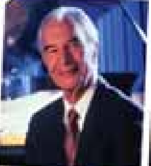
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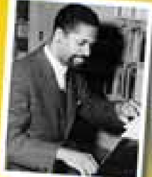
Kenny Clarke (SACEM)

James Moody

Anita O'Day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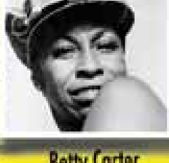
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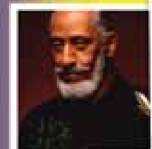
Jimmy Smith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Sun Ra

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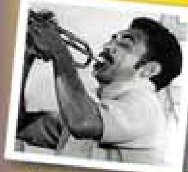
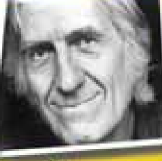

Gerald Wilson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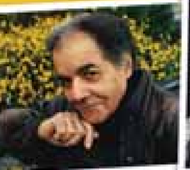
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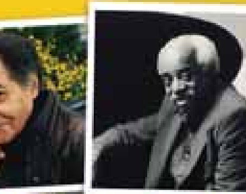
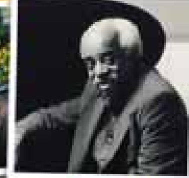
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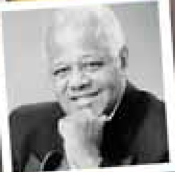
Joe Henderson

David Baker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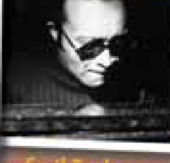
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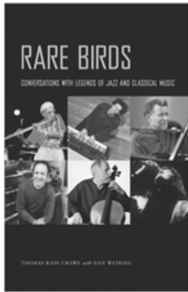

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I Want to Create My Own Music

By Anita O'Day
July 28, 1950

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

I love music, and enjoy listening to everything from King Oliver to Schoenberg, but when I sing I don't want to follow others, I want to create my own styling, my own music. Even though there are just so many notes and so many ways to play them, I feel we still have a long way to go before all those ways will be discovered and exploited.

I want to make music. That is, use my voice like an instrument. When a singer steps up in front of a big band, she's usually all alone, and not part of the orchestra. Either she or the band is stuck on as an afterthought. The vocalist is expected to wear a flashy gown, dance around, give the fans a thrill. That's not music.

Voices can be used as instruments. Beethoven proved this long ago when he wrote his "Ninth Symphony," but there are very few people orchestrating for voices today. The opportunities for a singer, like myself, who wants most of all to be a musician, are few. Working with a small group is one of the ways a contemporary singer can get the chance to experiment with her voice.

Something New

In commercial music, the swing is definitely towards melody and happy music. The public is finally getting over the extreme sentimentalism of the post-war years, and is looking for something new.

The fact that the public is looking to the past is both a blessing and a curse. It will give Dixieland musicians a big break, but the old, free-wheeling Chicago jazz will probably be ignored, as will be contemporary innovations and bop.

We have big followings in Chicago and other large cities, though, and as long as the cats can find enough work to keep them going, they'll make music.

Biggest Problem

The biggest difficulty that presents itself to the vocalist like myself, who must work with a combo, is the present system of booking. Bop singers are often booked as singles, and a group is brought in to back up the singer. This is like booking Benny Goodman as a single, bringing in five men to stand behind him, and calling it a sextet.

That's why I'm now trying to build a combo that can work with me as a team, a team in which my voice will be one of the instruments, making music.

Need Advice

One more thing. I don't think a singer ever gets so good that she can't stand a little professional advice. That's why I periodically take voice lessons and study harmony.

It's like playing a good game of golf. Even the best pros see another golf pro periodically to freshen up their game, and get new ideas. Musicians can take a tip from golfers by not relying on their own criticism, or the flattery of their fans, but by checking ever so often with another professional for sound technical advice. **DB**

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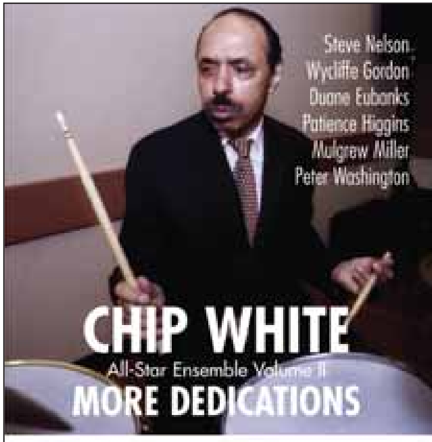

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—*David Miele, JazzImprovNY, July 2008.*

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McPartland Looks Back on Days of 'Bix and Me'

By Jimmy McPartland (as told to Nat Hentoff)

January 13, 1954

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

When I was making the album I naturally thought about Bix [Beiderbecke] a lot. In a few places I played some of his best-known phrases directly—sort of a tribute within a tribute. But otherwise I blew as I felt, with Bix in mind. And these are some of the things I remember.

The first time I heard him was by way of the Wolverine records on Gennett—"Copenhagen," "Oh Baby," "Riverboat Shuffle" and the others. They flabbergasted those of us in the Austin High gang. Up to then we'd patterned ourselves after the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, but this seemed to be more musical with a better beat. What impressed me most were Bix's flowing style and his lovely tone.

Copied the Numbers

We copied the numbers off the records and then worked out our solos our own way. About six months later, I received a wire from Dick Voynow, the Wolverines' leader, asking me if I wanted to replace Bix. They were in New York at the Cinderella Ballroom. I thought it was a gag, but the guys suggested I at least wire for transportation money and that way I'd find out. The money order came right back, I was offered $87.50 a week, and so at the age of 17, I left high school. That was about 1924.

It turned out the Wolverines' drummer, Vic Moore, had recommended me. We'd played a job together in Chicago. Bix was leaving to join Goldkette, but he stayed on an extra week until I was broken in. That first afternoon at rehearsal they asked me what I wanted to play. I knew all their arrangements in their key so I took right off on anything they called.

Called Me 'Kid'

Bix said, "Move in with me, kid. We'll get a double room, and maybe I can show you a few things." He called me "kid" for the next two or three years. He was 21 at this time. He also picked out a new cornet for me and had Voynow pay for it.

And so every morning as soon as we got up, we got out our horns and he'd show me phrasing and certain little figures that I still play. The way he put it was, "You may be playing along, and if your mind goes blank, you can always fill in with one of these. They sound good anywhere."

Bix knew I had a background in harmony so he could explain freely, and then we rehearsed with the band every day, too. There was no written music, but he'd show me the various parts.

Bix Joins Whiteman

Sometime before I began to travel with Ben Pollack, Bix had already joined Paul Whiteman. They were on a tour and were heading for

Chicago. I got a call at 8 one morning from Bix. He'd left his tuxedo at the cleaners in the last town, and he asked if he could borrow mine. Then and always he could have anything I had.

All during the date at the theater, a troupe of us gathered between shows and at night at the Three Deuces and jammed. Bing Crosby would play the cymbals or the drums if there were no drummer. Bix always preferred to play piano at a session, and this time he asked me to play his new Bach cornet, the best horn he'd ever had.

I fell in love with it, and Bix asked, "Would you like to have a horn like this?" He took me over to the Dixie Music House after the next show, put down $100 and said, "That's all the money I have with me. But I guess you can scrape up the other 50. You can give it back to me sometime."

I'll never forget that week. We played almost all the time he wasn't on stage. I never did see the tux again. Do you think I cared? I still have that horn, by the way. Bix warmed it up at the theater for a few shows, then I used it for some time. Now my 4-year-old grandson, Dougie Kassel, has it.

My last period of association with Bix was in New York. The Pollack band hadn't been working for almost two months. Eight of us, including the Goodman brothers, were in one hotel room, and we were really scuffling for food. Then at a cocktail party on Park Avenue I ran into Bix who'd just come back into town with the Whiteman band. I told him that this was pretty ironic. Here I could get all the drinks I wanted for free but didn't have enough money for a sandwich.

Bix Puts Up Again

Bix took me into a corner and pulled out $200. I told him $10 was enough but he said, "Don't worry about it, kid. You'll be making money soon. Then when you see your way clear, you can pay it back." I did, in about eight months after I'd been working for some time in the pit for *Sons Of Guns*.

In the last months of his life I'd see Bix quite often at a little speakeasy on 53rd Street called Plunkett's. Most of the musicians hung out there. I'd see him, too, backstage whenever Whiteman played in town. We'd jam in the dressing room with Bing always on the cymbals or snare drum.

At Plunkett's we'd sit and talk. Bix was ill, looked bad, all swollen up. He drank, didn't eat, stayed up late, got very depressed. Whiteman had sent him home to Davenport for a while, but it didn't seem to help.

I remember one night he had a very bad cold, and he was broke besides. I told him to go home and stay there until he got over the cold and lent him some money. "Thanks, kid," he said. "I'll be all right. I've got a job at Princeton in a couple of days." That was the last I saw of Bix. Naturally I cried when he died. I loved him both as a person and as a musician.

Lived for Music

People have asked me often what Bix was like as a person. Well, he was very reticent. His main interest in life was music, period. It seemed as if he just existed outside of that.

I think one of the reasons he drank so much was that he was a perfectionist and wanted to do more with music than any man possibly could. The frustration that resulted was a big factor, I think.

He didn't talk much, and there was certainly no conversation when a record was on. After it was over, we'd talk about how the chords resolved and, in Stravinsky or Holst, how different and interesting the harmony was. **DB**

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Hit The Road, Men

By Count Basie

April 20, 1955

Foreground: (left) Charles Fowlkes, Count Basie and Freddie Green; Background: (left) Jerry Lewis and Sonny Payne, others unidentified

Not too long ago there was a real "crazy" dog in our household with a pedigree a mile long, and natch we called him "One O'Clock Jump." All housebroken and lovable, he was a nice little fella, but we had to get rid of him because he just couldn't get used to the two-legged man of the house; namely me.

You see, in the past so many years, I just haven't been around home long enough for him to dig me. The last extensive tour we took did the trick. I came home several jumps beyond 1 a.m., beat to my index finger and ready for the long sleep. As luck would have it, Mrs. Basie was out on one of her civic missions and the babysitter was told never to let anyone in who didn't have a key. Of course I had one, but you know that darn "mutt" wouldn't let me get past the first crack in the door.

Therefore you get the idea that I am not home long enough these days for even "man's best friend" to show his canine hospitality. However, don't get me wrong. I love the road. It may be a little tough on my wife and kid, never seeing their father and husband until Birdland time comes around, but it has and will remain a great thrill and challenge to me.

Out there on the road you come face to face with life and the folks who live it in so many different environments, moods and places. It probably affords a man the greatest knowledge he can get about people, for it allows him to get with them, understand them and, above all, appreciate them.

Of course there was a time when I, like many bandleaders, didn't feel this way, because, man, the road was rough, the ulcer trail of the band business, and the one-nighter was the Siberia of the musical profession. However, today an iron curtain has been lowered on the past and the difference has made the "road" inviting. Now you can get a good night's rest in clean, well-kept motels and hotels where good hot meals are either on hand or as close as the telephone in most rooms. This way a band can stay refreshed from one engagement to another, for hand bowls have been replaced by showers, and bathtubs with running hot and cold water.

Not only has there been a change in living conditions, but a vast change has taken place in the people that bands are hired to entertain. This great change is pinpointed in both their character and their acceptance of what they are offered in the way of music. This change has given my band a drive and a new inspiration which finds each man giving the best he has to offer for the money and beyond. Because of it, we're always experimenting with new notes and sounds in an effort to give back what we receive.

From minute observations and conversations with folks from Maine to Florida and out to California, the fact has been borne out that the big reason for this human upsurge is that people are doing better, living better and have gained a better understanding of each other regardless of their race, creed, color or religion. Advancing democracy has given my race more hope while it has lessened the tension of the whites who in the past felt that they just had to draw a sharp line between "me and thee."

Every place my band has played, people seem to be coming closer and by their own will are coming down front from the spectator's seat. As a result in the once "bad (South) lands" the specter of bias and segregation isn't as ugly as it used to be, and in some places it seems to wear a smile. This alone spreads its good emotion and everything you play you get the feeling it should be the great American tune.

Speaking of music, those who crowd the dances (there are some that are not so crowded) have developed a more sensitive ear for the sharps and flats, the moods and sounds of the band and its personnel. Today you can't just give them anything out there in the hinterlands. What you give must have the proper beat and must be programmed with a style and personality that embodies all that is new in music.

At dances, your audience is divided into two types—those who come to dance and those who come to listen. It's the listeners that you've got to beware of on the road. They're the makers or the breakers who stand shoulder deep around the bandstand, every movement, every facial expression telegraphing either acceptance or rejection of what you've got to offer.

Through these people I have learned that "Rhythm and Blues" isn't all powerful and hasn't cut as deep a salient across the musical world in the dance halls as it seems to have in the tallow factories. However the blues is a great favorite everywhere from the standard brand point of view. You know, à la Bessie Smith. ...

The "Road" however doesn't seem to go too much for the smoother rhythms, but you have to throw in a few waltzes now and then with a ballad or so in self-defense. This you must do as a change of pace so that the boys can rest their chops. In short, for the hinterlands you must have the same well-rounded program you would expect to render on Broadway. It must be well-seasoned with good musicianship and entertainment know-how—the gyrations and the jive will get you nowhere. You see, the folks out where the one-nighters begin not only know what they want, but what you're giving them. **DB**

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Composer

By Jimmy Giuffre
November 30, 1955

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

When a musician plays or writes a certain way, he doesn't mean that he's trying to preach a sermon and straighten everybody to that way. Also, many times, certain records are designed to sell to a larger public, but are thought of from a jazz standpoint. I've been very fortunate in that I've been allowed on my records so far to use my own discretion and do anything I wanted.

This last Capitol album, for example, *Tangents In Jazz*, with the quartet. In this album I've taken out the ride cymbal and the walking bass completely. The bass plays a part as a bass sax would, and the drums play only fill-ins and solos. The drums are never used against the other three.

The horns should be the dominant characteristic for the kind of thing I wanted to do, and I didn't want a continually beating rhythm section conflicting with the solo melody lines. I firmly believe, however, that the constant beat belongs in jazz. I've been misquoted to the effect that it's "sheer insanity" to play with a driving beat behind a solo. This I do not believe. It would be grossly insulting to every fine drummer and rhythm section man playing today to say that their work is productive of musical insanity.

But in *Tangents*, I wanted the pulsating beat to be felt rather than heard. This isn't meant to replace the more traditional, wailing jazz, but I think there's lots of room to explore in this direction. The album may not be the complete answer, of course. It's a step.

As you know, when you're trying new techniques and ideas you're reaching in the dark.

But we're happy with the results. It was very difficult at first, but after awhile, we had no tempo troubles. I tried to present the four of us (Jack Sheldon, trumpet; Ralph Pena, bass; Artie Anton, drums) and not just one or two. One thing I wanted was to be heard and to hear the others with me.

Actually, this idea is needed more in the clubs than on records. There are no engineers in the clubs. In other words, I'd like to present jazz in the same manner as a string quartet is presented without losing that old feeling we call jazz. I'd like the music to be written. Or if not written, I'd like the players to be so aware of each other that everything can be heard.

In general, with regard to my writing, I've become interested in writing atonally because it affords a larger abundance of melodic possibilities, thereby giving me a broader sense of melodic freedom. I write contrapuntally as much as possible, the melodies creating the harmony. This gives the music a horizontal flow and provides each player with an interesting melody to play.

Also, in order to achieve more variety as well as unity, I'm cultivating the use of many rarely used (in jazz) forms and devices. The main idea is to attempt the creation of music that is so well constructed that it will be lasting. That thought applies to my playing, also.

I attempt to speak for no one but myself, but I know there are many jazz musicians on both coasts who feel the same way about the future of jazz. With regard to my own work, I've found many who like the idea of what I'm doing as illustrated in *Tangents*, and I've found many who don't. It'll always be that way. **DB**

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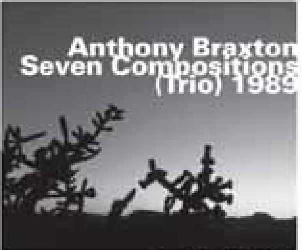

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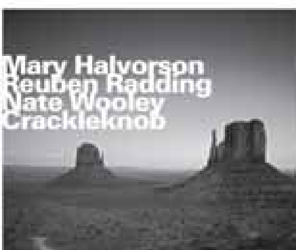

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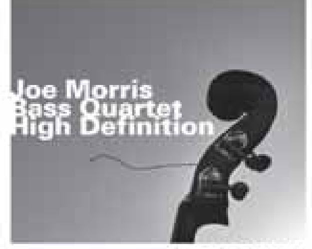

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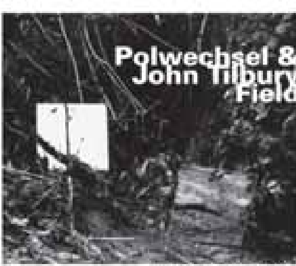

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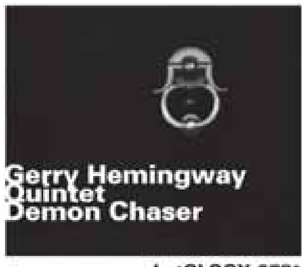

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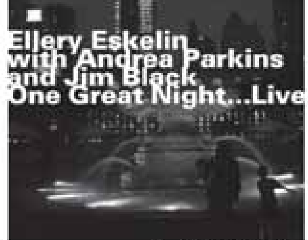

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VERYL OAKLAND

The Function of an Artist, Part II

By Chick Corea
May 10, 1973

What a beautiful feeling it is for an artist to play music to people and see them experience your own joy and exhilaration in the playing!

What a joy to see them bounce and bubble and dance when you do, to see them experience your caress of a particular phrase and the serenity of a broad, long and restfully expanding passage—and just flow with you through so many lovely games and be left, you and they, totally fulfilled. This is the joy of a true art experience—and this is a very powerful thing. This is also the goal of art, and the basis of art is communication. So much is placed before us every day. The radio and TV blare and ooze with sounds, opinions and enticements. The record shops are spilling over with albums, 45s and cassettes, packaged in every imaginable way from gimmicked-up sensationalism to vague and complex mysticism.

This, compounded by the multitude of diverse viewpoints and the funny little mechanism in people which compels them to like something so they can be accepted by this or that group, adds up to one thing: Chaos!

Well, where is it at?

There's something which can be known, felt and experienced, given honesty with oneself. And that is how something makes you feel. Not what you "think" about it, or analytical computations about it, or how "they" feel about it—but how does it make you feel? This is a very true way to evaluate anything, especially music and art. Does it make you feel heavy or light? Happy or sad? Exhilarated, content, bored, angry, grieved, apathetic or dead? Are you awake after it's over? Does it brighten you up or give you a headache? Does it make you feel loose and spacious, or does it make you tight and nervous?

There's a beautifully easy thing to relate to, which is something that is true is easy and simple. There's no effort involved. And another thing is that truth makes you feel good and has a cleanliness and rightness about it. These are some effective tools for knowing "where it's at."

Now, there's another thing which is observable. It's that if there's any group of people in the world that has the ability to influence the course of things in all areas of life, it's the artists. The masses of people look to artists for a lifestyle and a dream of the future, not to those with apparent power, such as government, the medical profession, the educational system, newspapers and the mass media. Though these institutions have a functional job to do, it's the artists who ultimately influence the masses of people and promote and seek agreement on how life should be.

So you see, the artist has a very important and great responsibility. For if he uses his art to promote false or bad things or a low way of living, and gets enough agreement on it, conditions will get worse.

But the beauty of it is that the artist also can conceive of the most beautiful things, the most loving and free-flowing way of living, the most wondrous not-yet-created universes—and he can begin to live this and create his art and communicate it with these things in mind. And if he pays attention to all the aspects involved, and develops his ability to communicate well, wonderful things can and will happen—and conditions around us will improve and our environment will become safer and more beautiful. This is what true art can do, and there's nothing more fulfilling than doing that.

So let's do it. **DB**

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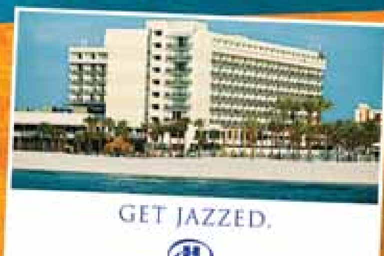

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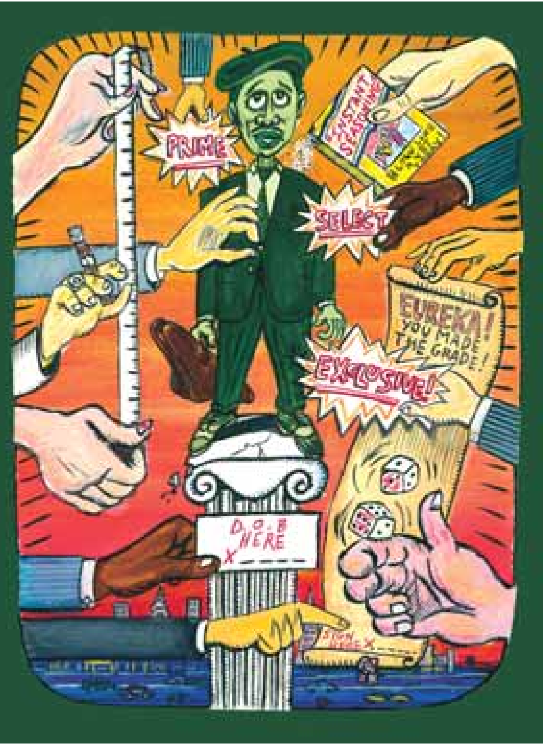
New Kid In Town

'Making It' and the Young Jazz Artist

By Benny Golson
March 2002



MICHAEL JACKSON

Upon my arrival in New York City, I was too green to comprehend it. Only after much experience and observation over many years did I become fully aware of the inner workings of the business of jazz, particularly the business's effect on the new kid in town.

"Am I ready? Will it ever happen for me? When will it happen?" Young, hopeful jazz musicians ask these questions, with "it" a pronoun for success. These questions are based not only on talent and opportunity, but on the uncertainty of what time will evince.

At any given time a constant flow of young musicians from around the world come to New York to fulfill dreams of acceptance. Success grows directly out of acceptance. Without acceptance, one could play indefinitely in the privacy of one's bedroom.

Some of these musicians arrive with great potential. These newcomers should raise their eyes from their provincial selves and pursue the entire realm of possibility, letting no one micromanage their creative lives—managers, agents, producers and so on. This is difficult for them when they have such an intense desire to move ahead while possessing only developing abilities and perceptive powers. To make things worse, many bones are waved in front of them. Some of these aspirants are heard in public earlier than others, depending on the intensity of their talent, opportunities, other surrounding circumstances, and the effectiveness of agents' clever and well-timed forays. Unfortunately, a few of these agents are Janus-faced people dedicated to the highest form of deception. I call these people "talent merchants."

Even though an unending flow of talent comes into New York, this talent is only potential, potential that often needs seasoning. One summer evening in 1998 in Genova, Italy, I was speaking with bassist Buster Williams about this subject. In an annoyed tone he said, "It's like an orchard of beautifully developing peaches that are still green. Who rushes out to eat them? One must patiently wait until they're ripe before fully enjoying the reward of their taste."

He was right on. I've often heard the expression, "Don't trust anyone over 30." However, over 30 is where one usually finds maturity and experience.

Maturity and experience never come all at once. It's accumulative, which is good because as increments of things learned are added to one's life, one tends to remember and appreciate the value of them as they use this experience. Learning everything at once is like cramming for a college exam the night before and forgetting most of what was memorized. One needs time to make it stick, just as potential needs the undisputed value of experience.

No one usually sees the heavy, hidden hand of the clever talent merchant pushing on the scale of assessment while the new kid's talent is weighed. After being snatched up by managers and/or record companies, things often move along rather quickly for the new kid in order for these talent merchants to amortize any expenses incurred by taking them under wing. This is often where unfairness to the new kid begins to creep in. They are charged exorbitant fees by some managers and/or attorneys who egregiously push and squeeze for a financial place in their portrait of hope, aspiring to affix their signatures in the lower right hand corner of the kid's portrait. They approach record companies looking for a recording contract. However, if the record company gets to them first, the kid's often underpaid for his developing talent, sometimes signing long-term, oppressive contracts for little money. **DB**

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THE ARCHIVES

Jimmy Dorsey on the set of *The Fabulous Dorseys*

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Jimmy Dorsey: Pleasing the 'Cats,' Customers at Same Time is Tough!

November 1937

"Pleasing the cats and the customers at the same time is tough!" almost shouted Jimmy Dorsey between high C's. "I love this mellow atmosphere (The Three Deuces) and nobody can play too loud for me (Roy Eldridge) but there are too many people who disagree!"

And that's Jimmy anchored in ink ... a musician's musician ... who loves the blast and the unrestrained blare of the jam cellar ... a sensitive realist who will shush his band to please an elderly party ... an intelligent leader who realizes he must please the patrons who take the checks ... and having pleased them, still the musicians who must play arrangements, and the way he feels.

Jimmy is the oldest half of the famous Dorsey Brothers. His band is the old Dorsey Brothers Orchestra with a few changes. A leap-year kid, he has had only eight birthdays! On Feb. 29, 1904, Jimmy joined the Thomas F. Dorseys, and at 6 he took up cornet. Tommy came along two years later, started out on trumpet, too, but didn't make the grade. (That is, on trumpet.) Their father played cornet and taught brass bands. So when Mary Dorsey entered the scene, he organized the first "Way Back When Dorsey Orchestra." The Dorsey Quartet (they were all weaned on cornet, says Jimmy) consisted of Mary on ballet horn, Pop Dorsey on baritone sax and cornet, Thomas, Jr. on tenor sax and euphonium, and Jim (now 12 years old and in the gawky stage) on cornet and alto.

There was no swing in those days, but concerts at church socials! "Once," recalled Jimmy, "we played a whole overture that lasted a half hour. One of those things that goes on for days. And after we finished each page, we would stop and wipe our lips and look around. The orchestra at this time consisted of Tommy on alto and myself on cornet. That's all! And we were so young, we didn't know when to get off ... and the poor devils in the audience had to listen." ...

At 16, Jimmy and Tommy formed what they called their "Way Back When Dorsey Brothers Orchestra" and went to Baltimore. They followed the Louisiana Five into Carlin's Park there. "We all made $45 a week," says Jimmy, "except the piano player. We paid him $60 because he was married! But here's the pay-off: When we got to set up for the job, the man told us we couldn't play any of the publisher's tunes. So all we played from that time on was the blues. Blues fast. And blues slow. Blues in E♭ and the blues in B♭. But the job lasted about 16 weeks, anyway, before we returned home to Lansford, Pa." ...

Jimmy believes that relaxation is the key to a band's success. "As mush as I love swing, it's being beaten into the ground by most of the bands," he says. "Music is music, and there are all kinds, but swing is only one limb on a tree. Contrast, expression and interesting harmonies have been overlooked too long by dance bands." **DB**

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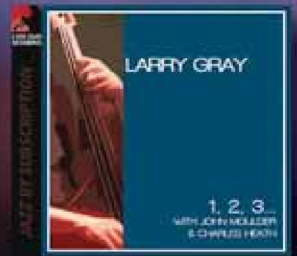

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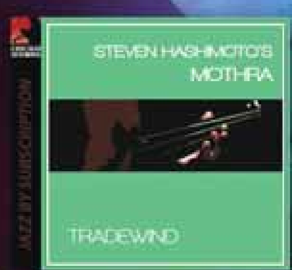

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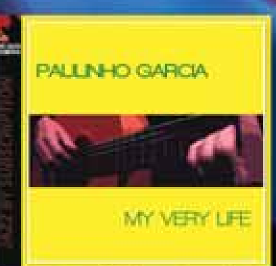

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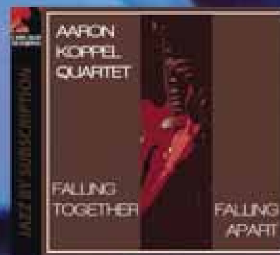

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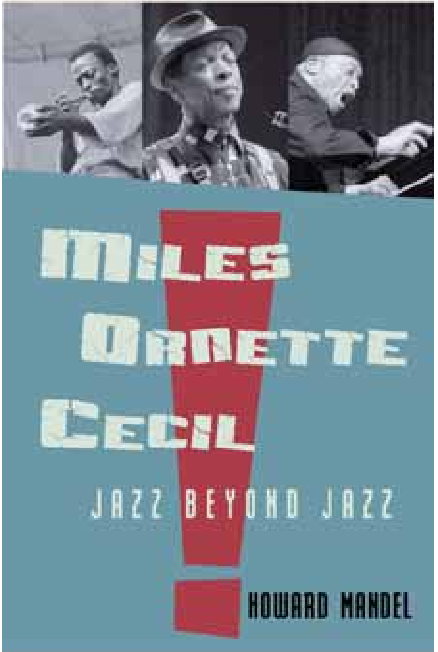

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THE ARCHIVES

Swing 'No Flash-in-Pan' Says Berigan

May 1938

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Type of Band: Swingiest of swingers. Bunny [Berigan] rates right at the top of the swing trumpeters, and he has surrounded himself with men who can follow right along. They are designed to draw the cats wherever they play—and that's precisely what they do.

Radio: Almost immediately after the band was organized, last spring, they were heard for Admiration Shampoo on MBS; since then, they have been on tour, and heard from various cities on national hook-ups. They have done guest appearances on the Columbia Swing Session (CBS) and the RCA Victor and RCA Magic Key programs (both NBC). He has a regular WOR-Mutual wire from the Paradise Restaurant in New York.

Box Office Draw: High grade clientele; collegians. Has done very well on theatrical dates in the year since the band was organized. Considering its age, it is one of the fastest rising bands in orchestra history. On Victor Records, the band was featured in a swing album with three others—Tommy Dorsey's, Benny Goodman's and Fats Waller's—which is fast company for a band less than a year old.

Leader's Conception of Purpose: Berigan says, "Swing has withstood the jeers of every skeptic who has decried it as a flash in the pan. We are not going to argue about whether swing is here to stay; though we think it is. But we know there are plenty of swing fans in the country asking for it—and we propose to give it to them. We feel that every instrument in the band has something to say to dancers and listeners, and we try to put those things across. We feel that there are comedy and pathos and many other things in those horns, and we want to get them across. There's something about real swing that won't let a dancer be unless he's dancing, or at least following the rhythm, and we want to get that over too. We try to keep from being raucous and too loud, but there's something powerful in real swing at its best, and we try to put over that power as we feel it. We play for listeners, in theaters and on the radio, and we play for dancers. We want those dancers to enjoy listening to us and we want those listeners to feel our rhythms." **DB**

Swing Condemned

PITTSBURGH—Barney Rapp, opening at the New Penn here, confided to Maurice Spitalny and Milton Karle, DownBeat rep: "Swing is a condemned matter as far as I am concerned." Barney said that Gene Krupa is the beginning of the last swing band. "There isn't any place for swing," Rapp asserted.

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'I'll Never Sing With a Dance Band Again' — Holiday

By Dave Dexter

November 1, 1939

You sit with Billie Holiday and watch her smoke cigarettes chain fashion. The first thing that strikes you is her frankness.

"I'll never sing with a dance band again," she tells you. "Because it never works out right for me. They wonder why I left Count Basie, and why I left Artie Shaw. Well I'll tell you why—and I've never told this before.

"Basie had too many managers—too many guys behind the scenes who told everybody what to do. The Count and I got along fine. And the boys in the band were wonderful all the time. But it was this and that, all the time, and I got fed up with it. Basie didn't fire me; I gave him my notice."

Bad Kicks with Shaw

"Artie Shaw was a lot worse. I had known him a long time, when he was strictly from hunger around New York, long before he got a band. At first we worked together OK, then his managers started belly-aching. Pretty soon it got so I would sing just two numbers a night. When I wasn't singing, I had to stay backstage. Artie wouldn't let me sit out front with the band. Last year when we were at the Lincoln Hotel the hotel management told me I had to use the back door. That was all right. But I had to ride up and down in the freight elevators, and every night Artie made me stay upstairs in a little room without a radio or anything all the time.

"Finally it got so I would stay up there, all by myself, reading everything I could get my hands on, from 10 o'clock to nearly 2 in the morning, going downstairs to sing just one or two numbers. Then one night we had an airshot Artie said he couldn't let me sing. I was always given two shots on each program. The real trouble was this—Shaw wanted to sign me to a five-year contract and when I refused, it burned him. He was jealous of the applause I got when I made one of my few appearances with the band each night."

Never Paid for Record

You ask Billie why she didn't make more records with Shaw. You remember that the only side she made, on Bluebird, was a thing titled "Any Old Time" and was really wonderful.

"That's a laugh," she answers. "Artie never paid me for that record. Just before it came out I simply got enough of Artie's snooty, know-it-all mannerisms, and the outrageous behavior of his managers, and left the band. I guess Artie forgot about 'Any Old Time.' I know he never paid me. With Basie I got $70 a week—with Artie I got $65. When I make my own records I get $150. That's another reason I left Shaw.

"One afternoon we were driving along in Artie's car to a one-night stand. We passed an old man on the road who had a beard. I asked Artie if he had ever worn a beard, and that I'd bet he sure'd look funny if he wore one.

"Chuck Petersen, George Arus, Les Jenkins and a couple of other boys in the band were also in the car. So we were all surprised when Artie said, 'I used to wear a beard all the time—when I was farming my own farm a few years back.' I asked Artie if he looked good or bad with a beard—and I was just joking, you know, to make conversation on a long drive.

"'Indeed I did look fine with a beard,' Artie said. 'I looked exactly like Jesus Christ did when he was young.'"

Billie slapped her pudgy thigh, lighted another cigarette, and continued.

Gave Him a Name

"You should have heard the boys and me roar at that. We got a bang out of it. Artie looked mad, because he had been serious. So I said, 'We'll just call you Jesus Christ, King of the Clarinet, and his Band.'

"Now here's the payoff—the story got out around Boston and even today, we hear a lot of the musicians refer to Artie as 'Jesus Christ and his Clarinet.'"

You figure you've heard enough dirt about the pitfalls of a young girl with a dance band and you ask Billie to tell you something about herself. She comes through with the word that she is Baltimore born, and that she got her first job when she was 14 years old, after she and her mother moved to New York.

Billie Gets Desperate

"This is the truth. Mother and I were starving. It was cold. Father had left us and remarried when I was 10. Mother was a housemaid and couldn't find work. I tried scrubbing floors, too, but I just couldn't do it.

"We lived on 145th Street near Seventh Avenue. One day we were so hungry we could barely breathe. I started out the door. It was cold as all-hell and I walked from 145th to 133rd down Seventh Avenue, going in every joint trying to find work. Finally, I got so desperate I stopped in the Log Cabin Club, run by Jerry Preston. I told him I wanted a drink. I didn't have a dime. But I ordered gin (it was my first drink—I didn't know gin from wine) and gulped it down. I asked Preston for a job … told him I was a dancer. He said to dance. I tried it. He said I stunk. I told him I could sing. He said sing. Over in the corner was an old guy playing a piano. He struck 'Travelin'' and I sang. The customers stopped drinking. They turned around

and watched. The pianist, Dick Wilson, swung into 'Body And Soul.' Jeez, you should have seen those people—all of them started crying. Preston came over, shook his head and said, 'Kid, you win.' That's how I got my start."

Goodman Uses Her

"First thing I did was get a sandwich. I gulped it down. Believe me—the crowd gave me $18 in tips. I ran out the door. Bought a whole chicken. Ran up Seventh Avenue to my home. Mother and I ate that night—and we have been eating pretty well since."

Benny Goodman used Billie on a record (Columbia) of "My Mother's Son In Law" when [Jack] Teagarden, [Gene] Krupa and others were in his recording band—before he really organized his present combo. The disc is an item today, not only because of the fine instrumental work, but because it was Holiday's first side. She was pretty lousy. You tell her so and she grins. "But I was only 15 then," she said, "and I was scared as the devil."

She Doesn't Sing

You tell Billie you think you've got enough dope for a little story, but that one thing worries you. That is—why does she sing like she does—what's behind it?

"Look Dex," Billie answers. "I don't think I'm singing. I feel like I am playing a horn. I try to improvise like [Lester] Young, like Louis Armstrong or someone else I admire. What comes out is what I feel. I hate straight singing. I have to change a tune to my own way of doing it. That's all I know."

Sad Love Life

You ask her one more thing, recalling how at various times Billie has been reported ready to marry. She shows her frankness again. "I've loved three men," she tells you. "One was a Marion Scott, when I was a kid. He works for the post office now. The other was Freddie Green, Basie's guitar man. But Freddie's first wife is dead and he has two children and somehow it didn't work out. The third was Sonny White, the pianist, but like me, he lives with his mother and our plans for marriage didn't jell. That's all."

Billie says she isn't satisfied now. She wants to get somewhere. Maybe on the stage. She wants to make money—a lot of it. She wants to buy a big home for her mother. She doesn't expect any happiness—she is used to taking hard knocks, tough breaks. And she admits she is envious of Maxine Sullivan and other colored singers who have gotten so much farther ahead than she. Someday, she thinks, she'll get a real break. But she's not very optimistic about it. Billie Holiday is convinced the future will be as unglamorous and unprofitable as her past. **DB**

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My true story of Perfect Pitch by David-Lucas Burge

IT ALL STARTED *when I was in ninth grade as a sort of teenage rivalry . . .*

I'd slave at the piano for five hours daily. Linda practiced far less. Yet somehow she always shined as the star performer at our school. It was frustrating.

What does she have that I don't? I'd wonder.

Linda's best friend, Sheryl, bragged on and on to me, adding more fuel to my fire.

"*You* could never be as good as *Linda*," she would taunt. "*Linda's* got *Perfect Pitch*."

"What's Perfect Pitch?" I asked.

Sheryl gloated about Linda's uncanny abilities: how she could name *exact notes and chords*—all BY EAR; how she could sing any tone—*from memory alone*; how she could play songs—after just *hearing* them; the list went on and on . . .

My heart sank. *Her EAR is the secret to her success* I thought. How could I ever hope to compete with her?

But it bothered me. Did she *really* have Perfect Pitch? How could she know notes and chords just by *hearing* them? It seemed impossible.

Finally I couldn't stand it anymore. So one day I marched right up to Linda and asked her point-blank if she had Perfect Pitch.

"Yes," she nodded aloofly.

But Perfect Pitch was too good to believe. I rudely pressed, "*Can I test you sometime?*"

"OK," she replied.

Now she would eat her words . . .

My plot was ingeniously simple . . .

When Linda least suspected, I walked right up and challenged her to name tones for me—*by ear*.

I made her stand so she could not see the piano keyboard. I made sure other classmates could not help her. I set up everything perfectly so I could expose her Perfect Pitch claims as a ridiculous joke.

With silent apprehension, I selected a tone to play. (She'll *never* guess F♯, I thought.)

I had barely touched the key.

"F♯," she said. I was astonished.

I played another tone.

"C," she announced, not stopping to think.

Frantically, I played more tones, skipping here and there all over the keyboard. But somehow she knew the pitch each time. She was AMAZING.

"Sing an E♭," I demanded, determined to mess her up. She sang a tone. I checked her on the keyboard—and she was right on!

Now I started to boil. I called out more tones, trying hard to make them increasingly difficult. But each note she sang perfectly on pitch.

I was totally boggled. "*How in the world do you do it?*" I blurted.

"I don't know," she sighed. And that was all I could get out of her!

"How in the world do you do it?" I blurted. I was totally boggled. (age 14, 9th grade)

The dazzle of Perfect Pitch hit me like a ton of bricks. I was dizzy with disbelief. Yet from then on, I knew that Perfect Pitch was real.

I couldn't figure it out . . .

"How does she DO it?" I kept asking myself. On the other hand, why can't *everyone* recognize and sing tones by ear?

Then it dawned on me. People call themselves *musicians*, yet they can't tell a C from a C♯? Or A major from F major?! That's as strange as a portrait painter who can't name the colors of paint on his palette. It all seemed so odd and contradictory.

Humiliated and puzzled, I went home to work on this problem. At age 14, this was a hard nut to crack.

You can be sure I tried it out for myself. With a little sweet-talking, I got my three brothers and two sisters to play piano tones for me—so I could try to name them by ear. But it always turned into a messy guessing game I just couldn't win.

Day after day I tried to learn those freaking tones. I would hammer a note *over* and *over* to make it stick in my head. But hours later I would remember it a half step flat. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't recognize or remember any of the tones by ear. They all sounded the same after awhile; how were you supposed to know which was which—just by *listening*?

I would have done anything to have an ear like Linda. But now I realized it was way beyond my reach. So after weeks of work, I finally gave up.

Then it happened . . .

It was like a miracle . . . a twist of fate . . . like finding the lost Holy Grail . . .

Once I stopped *straining* my ear, I started to listen NATURALLY. Then the simple secret to Perfect Pitch jumped right into my lap.

Curiously, I began to notice faint "colors" within the tones. Not *visual* colors, but colors of *pitch*, colors of

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sound. They had always been there. But this was the first time I had ever really "let go"—and *listened*—to discover these subtle differences.

Soon—to my own disbelief—*I too could name the tones by ear!* It was simple. I could hear how F♯ sounds one way, while B♭ has a *totally different sound*—sort of like "hearing" red and blue!

The realization struck me: THIS IS PERFECT PITCH! This is how Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart could mentally hear their masterpieces—and know tones, chords, and keys—all by ear!

It was almost childish—I felt sure that *anyone* could unlock their own Perfect Pitch with this simple secret of "Color Hearing."

Bursting with excitement, I told my best friend, Ann (a flutist).

She *laughed* at me. "You have to be *born* with Perfect Pitch," she asserted. "You can't *develop* it."

"You don't understand how Perfect Pitch works," I countered. I sat her down and showed her how to listen. Timidly, she confessed that she too could hear the pitch colors. With this jump start, Ann soon realized she also had gained Perfect Pitch.

We became instant celebrities. Classmates loved to call out tones for us to magically sing from thin air. They played chords for us to name by ear. They quizzed us on what key a song was in.

Everyone was fascinated with our "supernatural" powers, yet to Ann and me, it was just normal.

Way back then, I never dreamed I would later cause such a stir in the academic world. But when I entered college and started to explain my discoveries, professors *laughed* at me.

"You must be *born* with Perfect Pitch," they'd say. "You can't *develop* it!"

I would listen politely. Then I'd reveal the simple secret—*so they could hear it for themselves*.

You'd be surprised how fast they changed their tune!

In college, my so-called "perfect ear" allowed me to skip over two required music theory courses. Perfect Pitch made everything easier—my ability to perform, compose, arrange, transpose, improvise, and even sight-read (because—without looking at the keyboard—you know you're playing the correct tones).

And because my ears were open, music sounded richer. I learned that music is truly a HEARING art.

Oh, you must be wondering: whatever happened with Linda? I'll have to backtrack . . .

Flashback to my senior year of high school. I was nearly 18. In these three-and-a-half years with Perfect Pitch, my piano teacher insisted I had made ten years of progress. And I had. But my youthful ambition wasn't satisfied. I needed one more thing: *to beat Linda*. Now was my *final chance*.

The University of Delaware hosts a performing music festival each spring, complete with judges and awards. To my horror, they scheduled me that year as the *grand finale*.

The fated day arrived. Linda gave her usual sterling performance. She would be tough to match, let alone surpass. But my turn finally came, and I went for it.

Slinking to the stage, I sat down and played my heart out with selections from Beethoven, Chopin, and Ravel. The applause was overwhelming.

Afterwards, I scoured the bulletin board for our grades. Linda received an A. This was no surprise.

Then I saw that I had scored an A+.

Sweet victory was music to my ears, mine at last! —D.L.B.

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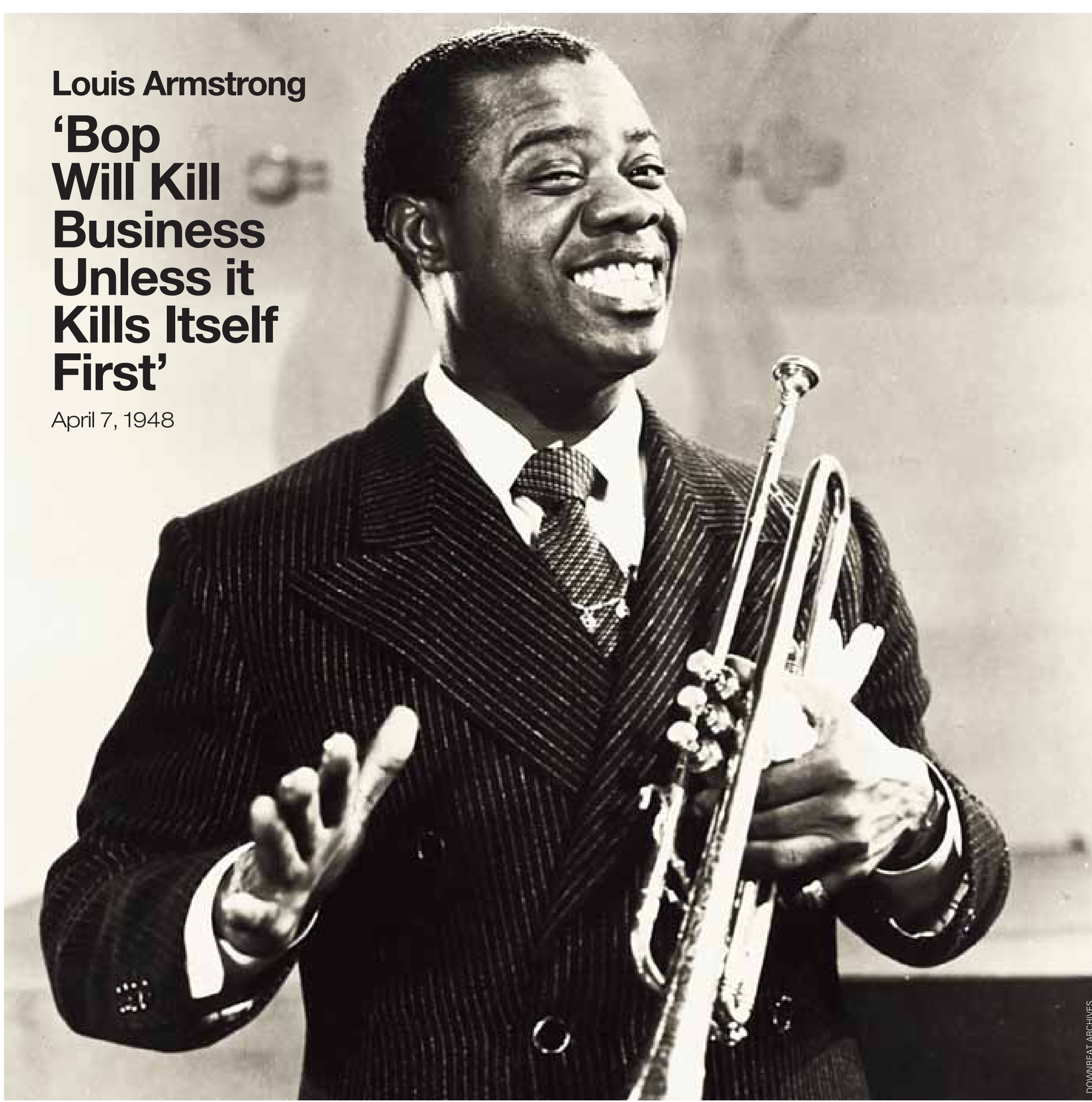

Louis Armstrong

'Bop Will Kill Business Unless it Kills Itself First'

April 7, 1948

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

At the end of the international jazz festival, correspondent Ernest Borneman spent the night in Louis Armstrong's room at the Negresco hotel in Nice, talking to Louis, Mezz Mezzrow, Barney Bigard, Sid Catlett and others about progress and tradition in jazz until the sun came up and it was time to catch the early morning plane for Paris. Others present were Velma Middleton, Louis' featured singer, and Honey Johnson, Rex Stewart's vocalist.

Louis asked that some of the things said be considered "among friends." These parts of the conversation have therefore been kept off the record. The transcript seems to cover nearly all the points of opinion that have recently divided the old school of jazz from the novelty school. The interview might also be considered as a fitting reply to Stan Kenton's statement that, "Louis ... plays without any scientific element" and that "all natural forms of inspiration in music have been exhausted." The actual text of Mike Levin's interview with Stan had of course not reached Louis yet at the time of the Nice festival, but some of Louis' statements sound almost telepathic in view of their direct relationship to the questions which Stan raised simultaneously in New York.

Well, now that it's all over, what do you think the verdict is going to be in the cold light of the morning after?

Mezz Mezzrow: If it proves anything, it shows that jazz is the greatest diplomat of them all. Did you dig those young French cats playing like Joe Oliver. Man, that's old Johnny Dodds on clarinet and Baby on woodblocks. And that's 30 years later and in another country. If that's not the great leveler, I

don't know what is.

Barney Bigard: You must mean Claude Luter? You must be kidding.

Mezzrow: What do you mean kidding? Those cats sound real good to me.

Bigard: They're out of tune so bad it hurts your ears.

Louis Armstrong: What's that you're saying, man? Ain't you never played out of tune?

Bigard: Sure, man, but I try to do better. I learned a few things all those years since I was a kid in New Orleans. And if you blow wrong you try to keep it to yourself.

Armstrong: How about records? How about that thing you made with Duke, the one about the train?

Bigard: "Happy Go Lucky Local"? I didn't make that.

Armstrong: No, the other one. "Daybreak Express."

Bigard: That was the trumpet, and maybe they just cut him off in the end.

Armstrong: Yeah, maybe.

Bigard: And how about the one you made with the big band on "Struttin' With Some Barbecue"? How about that clarinet?

Armstrong: That was half a tone off, but it sold all right.

Bigard: Yeah, but were you satisfied with it?

Armstrong: It sold all right. Them cats know that a guy got to blow the way he feels and sometimes he hits them wrong. That's better than them young guys who won't blow for fear they'll be off.

Mezzrow: I'll tell you why he hit it wrong that time, Barney. The guy was playing tenor at the time and then switched to clarinet and his embouchure knocked him out.

Bigard: Embouchure, huh! I was playing tenor too. I had two embouchures. For tenor on this side and for clarinet on that one. So what about that?

Armstrong: That's not what we're talking about. You're always knocking somebody, pops. I say that little French band plays fine. I could take them youngsters up to the Savoy and bring the walls down with them any day.

Bigard: That's because you can take any kind outfit and blow everyone else out of the room.

Armstrong: That's a fine band, pops. That little cornet player sounds like Mutt Carey to me. I can hear all them pretty little things Mutt used to do when that boy gets up and plays. That's the real music, man.

Bigard: Real music! Who wants to play like those folks 30 years ago?

Armstrong: You see, pops, that's the kind of talk that's ruining the music. Everybody trying to do something new, no one trying to learn the fundamentals first. All them young cats playing them weird chords. And what happens? No one's working.

Bigard: But Louis, you got to do something different, you got to move along with the times.

Armstrong: I'm doing something different all the time, but I always think of them fine old cats way down in New Orleans—Joe and Bunk and Tio and Buddy Bolden—and when I play my music, that's what I'm listening to. The way they phrased so pretty and always on the melody, and none of that out-of-the-world music, that pipe-dream music, that whole modern malice.

What do you mean by that, Louis?

Armstrong: I mean all them young cats along the Street with their horns wrapped in a stocking and they say, "Pay me first, pops, then I'll play a note for you," and you know that's not the way any good music ever got made. You got to like playing pretty things if you're ever going to be any good blowing your horn. These young cats now, they want to make money first and the hell with the music. And then they want to carve everyone else because they're full of malice, and all they want to do is show you up, and any old way will do as long as it's different from the way you played it before. So you get all them weird chords, which don't mean nothing, and first people get curious about it just because it's new, but soon they get tired of it because it's really no good and you got no melody to remember and no beat to dance to. So they're all poor again and nobody is working, and that's what that modern malice done for you. **DB**

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Charlie Parker (right) and Billy Eckstine

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Charlie Parker Counterpoint

By Nat Hentoff

January 28, 1953

"When I recorded with strings," said Charlie Parker, "some of my friends said, 'Oh, Bird is getting commercial.' That wasn't it at all. I was looking for new ways of saying things musically. New sound combinations.

"Why, I asked for strings as far as 1941 and then years later, when I went with Norman [Granz], he OK'd it. I like Joe Lipman's fine arrangements on the second session and I think they didn't turn out too badly.

"Now," said the always far-ranging Bird, "I'd like to do a session with five or six woodwinds, a harp, a choral group and full rhythm section. Something on the line of Hindemith's 'Kleine Kammermusik.' Not a copy or anything like that. I don't want ever to copy, but that sort of thing."

Charlie is really in love with the classics, and unlike a number of people who say they are, Charlie knows them intimately. "I first began listening seven or eight years ago. First I heard Stravinsky's 'Firebird Suite.' In the vernacular of the streets, I flipped. I guess Bartók has become my favorite. I dig all the moderns. And also the classical men, Bach, Beethoven, etc.

"It's a funny thing, listening to music, any kind," Bird went on. "What you hear depends on so many things in yourself. Like I heard Bartók's 'Second Piano Concerto' over here and later, I heard it again in France. I was more acclimated to life then, and I heard things in it I never heard before. You never know what's going to happen when you listen to music. All kinds of things can suddenly open up."

Charlie doesn't feel as some musicians do, that modern jazz and classical music are becoming too closely interrelated. "They're different ways of saying things musically, and don't forget, classical music has that long tradition. But in 50 or 75 years, the contribution of present-day jazz will be taken as seriously as classical music. You wait and see."

Bird went on to talk about some of the men in contemporary jazz he especially admires. "As long as I live, I'll appreciate the accomplishments of Thelonious Monk. And Bud Powell plays so much.

"As for Lenny Tristano, I'd like to go on record as saying I endorse his work in every way particular. They say he's cold. They're wrong. He has a big heart and it's in his music. Obviously, he also has tremendous technical ability and you know, he can play anywhere with anybody. He's a tremendous musician. I call him the great acclimatizor.

"And I like Brubeck. He's a perfectionist as I try to be. And I am very moved by his altoist, Paul Desmond."

Talk of perfectionism led Charlie to ruminate about his records. "Every time I hear a record I've made, I hear all kinds of things I could improve on, things I should have done. There's always so much more to be done in music. It's so vast. And that's why I'm always trying to develop, to find new and better ways of saying things musically."

And that is also why Charlie Parker has become so respected here and abroad as one of the focal figures in the evolutionary history of jazz. **DB**

1934
WHAT A YEAR

Birthdays

Hank Aaron
Woody Allen
Brigette Bardot
Bill Bixby
Willie Bobo
Pat Boone
Wilford Brimley
Van Cliburn Jr.
Leonard Cohen
Judi Dench
Sam Donaldson
Barbara Eden
Jamie Farr
Orrin Hatch
Florence Henderson

DOWNBEAT Magazine
Marilyn Horne
Shirley Jones
Sonny Jurgensen
Don Kirshner
Charles Kuralt
Tina Louise
Loretta Lynn
Charles Manson
Roger Maris
Wink Martindale
Garry Marshall
Shirley McClaine
Rue McClanahan

Sophia Loren
Ralph Nader
Sydney Pollack
Gena Rowlands
Carl Sagan
H. Norman Schwarzkopf
Willard Scott
Bud Selig
George Segal
Gloria Steinem
Donald Sutherland
Rip Taylor
Stanley Turrentine
Frankie Valli

Events

Apollo Theatre in Harlem opens
Bonnie & Clyde are ambushed and killed
First All-American soap box derby is held in Dayton, OH
Franklin D. Roosevelt signs the Securities Exchange Act
Adolph Hitler becomes Führer of Germany
John Dillinger is killed outside Chicago's Biograph Theatre
"It Happened One Night" wins Academy Award
First Flash Gordon comic strip is published
St. Louis Cardinals win World Series
Alcatraz becomes a prison
Einstein visits the White House
Gloria Vanderbilt custody trial
DOWNBEAT Magazine publishes first issue

Happy Anniversary DOWNBEAT!

Miles: A Trumpeter in the Midst of a Big Comeback Makes a Very Frank Appraisal of Today's Jazz Scene

By Nat Hentoff
November 2, 1955

After a time of confusion and what appeared to be a whirlpool of troubles, Miles Davis is moving rapidly again toward the forefront of the modern jazz scene. He has just signed a contract guaranteeing him 20 weeks a year in Birdland. He has been added to the three-and-a-half-week all-star Birdland tour, and there are reports—at present unconfirmed and denied by Prestige—that Miles may leave Prestige for one of the major record companies.

Miles already had shown clearly this year how important a jazz voice he still is by his July performance at the Newport festival, a performance that caused Jack Tracy to write: "Miles played thrillingly and indicated that his comeback is in full stride." A few weeks later, Miles surprised the international jazz audience by tying Dizzy for first place in the DownBeat Critics Poll. ...

Miles is an unusually knowledgeable observer of the jazz scene. In a recent, characteristically frank conversation, he presented his views about several key figures and trends in contemporary jazz.

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

The West Coast: "They do have some nice arrangements. Jimmy Giuffre plays real good and Shelly is good, but I don't care too much for the other soloists. Carl Perkins, though, is an exception—he plays very good piano, but he doesn't record enough. I wish I could get him to work with me. You know, that man can play bass notes with his elbows!

"My general feeling about what's happening on the coast is like what Max Roach was saying the other night. He said he'd rather hear a guy miss a couple of notes than hear the same old clichés all the time. Often when a man misses, it at least shows he's trying to think of something new to play. But the music on the coast gets pretty monotonous even if it's skillfully done. The musicians out there don't give me a thrill the way Sonny Rollins, Dizzy and Philly Joe Jones do. I like musicians like Dizzy because I can always learn something from him; he's always playing new progressions, etc. Kenny Clarke, too, is always experimenting."

Dave Brubeck: "Well, Dave made one record I liked—'Don't Worry About Me.' Do I think he swings? He doesn't know how. Desmond doesn't swing, either, though I think he'd play different with another rhythm section. Frankly, I'd rather hear Lennie [Tristano]. Or for that matter, I'd rather hear Dizzy play the piano than Brubeck, because Dizzy knows how to touch the piano and he doesn't play too much. A lot of guys are so conscious of the fact that the piano has 88 keys, they try to do too much. Tatum is the only man who plays with a whole lot of technique and feeling too. Along with Bud Powell, he's my favorite pianist.

"Getting back to Brubeck, I'd say first he ought to change his drums. Another thing is that if Brubeck could play the piano like that pianist in Sweden—Bengt Hallberg—in combination with the way he himself already thinks, he would please a lot of musicians. Brubeck has wonderful harmonic ideas, but I sure don't like the way he touches, the way he plays the piano."

Tristano and Konitz: "Lennie has a different problem. He's wonderful by himself. He invents all the time, and as a result, when he works with a group, the bass player generally doesn't know what Lennie's going to do. I don't think, therefore, that Lennie can be tied down to writing one bass line. He should write three or four bass lines, so that the bassist can choose.

"As for Lee Konitz, I like the way he plays. With a different rhythm section, he swings—in his way. Sure, there are different ways of swinging. You can break phrases and you can play seven- or 11-note phrases like Lee does, and they swing, but you can't do it all the time."

Bird: "Bird used to play 40 different styles. He was never content to remain the same. I remember how at times he used to turn the rhythm section around when he and I, Max and Duke Jordan were playing together. Like we'd be playing the blues, and Bird would start on the 11th bar, and as the rhythm section stayed where they were and Bird played where he was, it sounded as if the rhythm section was on one and three instead of two and four. Every time that would happen. Max used to scream at Duke not to follow Bird but to stay where he was. Then eventually, it came around as Bird had planned and we were together again. Bird used to make me play, try to play. He used to lead me on the bandstand. I used to quit every night. The tempo was so up, the challenge was so great.

"Of the new altoists, Cannonball plays real good. He swings and has real drive, but he doesn't know the chord progressions Bird knew. Bird used to play things like Tatum. But if Cannonball gets with the right musicians—men like Sonny Rollins—he'll learn."

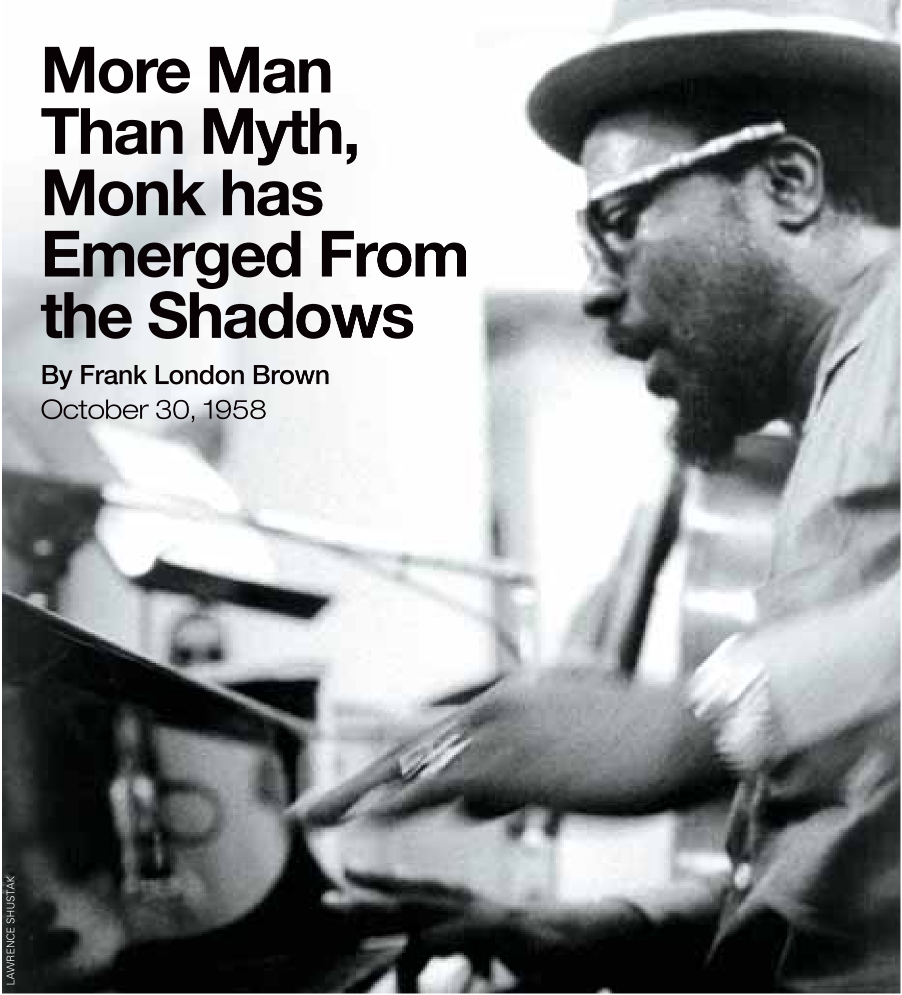
Writing: "With regard to big bands, I liked some of the arrangements this last Stan Kenton band had at Birdland, and, of course, Count Basie sounds good, but that's just swinging. I also admire the big band writing Billy Strayhorn does. Do you know the best thing I've heard in a long time? Alex North's music for *A Streetcar Named Desire*. That's a wild record—especially the part Benny Carter plays. If anybody is going to be able to write for strings in the jazz idiom or something near to it, it'll be North. I'd recommend everyone hearing that music.

"Now as for Kenton, I can't think of anything he did original. Everything he did, everybody else did before. Kenton is nowhere in the class with somebody like Duke. Duke has done more for jazz than anyone I could name. He takes in almost everything when he writes.

"You can really tell how a man writes when he writes for a large band. But funny things happen, too. Like if it weren't for Neal Hefti, the Basie band wouldn't sound as good as it does. But Neal's band can't play those same arrangements nearly as well. Ernie Wilkins, on the other hand, writes good, but the Basie band plays Neal's arrangements better.

"About the kind of things Charlie Mingus and Teo Macero are writing for small groups, well, some of them are like tired modern pictures. Some of them are depressing. And Mingus can write better than that. 'The Mingus Fingers' he did for Lionel Hampton is one of the best big band records I ever heard, but he won't write like he did on that number any more. For one thing, in his present writing, he's using the wrong instrumentation to get it over. If he had a section of low horns, for example, that would cut down on some of the dissonance, he could get it over better. I heard one of Teo's works at Newport, but I don't remember it. And if I didn't remember it, I didn't like it.

"My favorite writer has been Gil Evans. He's doing commercial things now, but if you remember, he did the ensemble on 'Boplicity' and several other fine things around that time. In answer to that critic who recently asked why a song like 'Boplicity' isn't played by modern groups, it isn't played because the top line isn't interesting. The harmonization is, but not the tune itself." **DB**



More Man Than Myth, Monk has Emerged From the Shadows

By Frank London Brown
October 30, 1958

LAWRENCE SHUSTAK

Thelonious Sphere Monk finally has been discovered.

For years a mystery man of modern jazz, Monk now has emerged from a six-year involuntary absence from New York's nightclub circuit to win first place in the DownBeat Critics Poll, surpassing such men as Duke Ellington, Erroll Garner, Oscar Peterson and Dave Brubeck. In the year since his return to the jazz clubs, Monk has received rave reviews in The New York Times for his Randall's Island jazz festival appearance, offers to compose for French films and notice in magazines that customarily ignore jazz.

How did this taciturn creator of far-out music get that way? What made him different? What has he done in music that others haven't?

Mrs. Nellie Monk, his articulate wife, said about his complex personality:

"Thelonious was never like ordinary people, not even as a child. He always knew who he was. Sometimes when he plays the blues, he goes way back to the real old-time pianists, like Jelly Roll Morton and James P. Johnson. I'm always amazed, because I know he hasn't spent a lot of time listening to these pianists—yet it's there in his music.

"He has smaller hands than most pianists, so he had to develop a different style of playing to fully express himself."

To say that Monk is doggedly individual becomes something of an understatement when one considers the whole man. He is singular in the strict sense of the word.

One phase of the interview for this story took place while Monk was in bed. It was 4:30 p.m. "Often Monk doesn't go right to bed after coming home from work," Mrs. Monk explained. "He talks, writes or sometimes just lays in the bed without closing his eyes. Sometimes it's daylight before he goes to sleep."

He is a tall, rugged-appearing man, a 200-pounder, and "when he walks into a room, he dominates it," according to [Monk's manager Harry] Colomby. "The force of Monk's personality intimidates you."

Monk himself said of his power of concentration, "I've even composed while sitting in my son's wagon in front of the house."

Monk Jr.'s red wagon figured in a dispute Monk Sr. had with Riverside Records, his current recording company, over the cover of the *Monk's Music* album.

"They wanted me to pose in a monk's habit, on a pulpit, holding a glass of whiskey," the pianist said. "I told them no."

Then with a wry smile, Monk added, "Monks don't even stand in pulpits.

"Then they wanted to dress me in evening clothes, white tie and all. I told them I would pose in a wagon, because I have actually composed while sitting in my kid's wagon on the front sidewalk."

And that is the way it was.

Monk is clothes conscious, for all his indifference to the usual worldly affairs. Nellie Monk, referring to her husband's clothes at a time when work was scarce and money scarcer, said, "He was always neat, no matter how hard times got."

Then she elaborated:

"Monk is a proud man. He doesn't suffer on the surface. He never let people know how bad off he was, even when he couldn't find work. Not even when he was sick in the hospital. He's like a rock. I think that's why people admire him. He proves that one can keep his integrity under the worst circumstances. It's interesting that some of the letters Monk gets thank him for just being himself. He couldn't be any other way."

Monk received his New York City police work permit only a year ago, and things have been happening nonstop ever since. He not only has kept pace in his field but also has continued to contribute new concepts upon which many established musicians rely.

Monk's secret is that he has pushed ahead in the study of musical problems which have not yet been thoroughly investigated. In making a study of specific concrete musical problems, Monk has been able to rely upon his own findings and not on the general truths that attract and satisfy the large majority of today's modern jazz musicians. Monk said of his technique:

"Everything I play is different. Different melody, different harmony, different structure. Each piece is different from the other one. I have a standard, and when the song tells a story, when it gets a certain sound, then it's through … completed."

Monk's playing ability frequently has been a matter for discussion, particularly since his Critics Poll designation as the No. 1 jazz pianist.

Seldom does one hear the flashy, long, single-line runs that characterize so many refugees from Bach, Bud Powell and Art Tatum. The avoidance of this technique, more than anything else, has offended the tradition-conditioned ears of today's modern-jazz listeners.

Monk can make these runs. I recently heard him do it at the Five Spot. He did it so adeptly that he stopped all conversation for the rest of the set.

The controversial father of an 8-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl continues to live in the rear

apartment of an old tenement building on East 63rd St., surrounded by housing projects and warehouses.

Monk's tan, polished baby grand piano stands like a throne in the same room in which there is also the kitchen sink, an icebox and a small kitchen table. The living room and bedroom are not much larger than a good-sized closet.

That this cramped space is orderly and attractive is a tribute to Mrs. Monk. Several pieces of new furniture indicate the slowly changing fortunes of the Monk family.

But there is another reason: The old furniture, including Monk's piano and some of his uncopyrighted music, was destroyed by a fire that burned out the apartment. Everything went—clothes, letters, precious clippings. Mrs. Monk had removed most of her husband's music to the one shelf in the house that escaped the flames. ...

One interview or 10 cannot shatter the protective wall Thelonious Monk has built around himself. His answers to questions are guarded, cryptic and even defensive, yet they are honest, intelligent responses when it is considered that he has been cuffed about a good deal and that much of this has resulted only because he will be different.

"I want to achieve happiness in life, in music—the same thing," he said. "My influences? I am influenced by everything and everybody. There used to be a time when I would go around joints where there would be just piano players and you played piano by yourself, no rhythm section. … A lot of piano players would be playing. You know people have tried to put me off as being crazy. Sometimes it's to your advantage for people to think you're crazy. A person should do the thing he likes best, the way it pleases him."

When asked where he thinks modern jazz is going, he replied (to the exasperation of his wife):

"I don't know where it's going. Maybe it's going to hell. You can't make anything go anywhere; it just happens."

At this point, Mrs. Monk, slightly piqued by Monk's reticence, exclaimed, "You must know how you feel. Are you satisfied with where it's going? Is it going on the right direction?"

Monk glanced at the foot of the bed, where she sat, and said, "I don't know where it's going. Where is it going?"

Mrs. Monk, not to be defeated, countered, "Do you think anything can be done to educate the coming generation? So that they know quality when they hear it, so that they have discriminating taste? Are they listening to the right sounds except for yourself? Are you satisfied with what you are presenting to the public?"

Monk answered, "Are they doing something about it? I don't know how people are listening."

By this time, Monk appeared to be undergoing a third degree in a precinct back room. The microphone of a tape recorder sat on his night stand. I sat in a chair near the night stand, his niece and wife sat on the edge of the bed, and Monk lay propped on a pillow, his chest rising and falling rapidly, perspiration ridging his brow. But his hands were calm, twisting his goatee.

Nellie then had settled down to a nice, relaxed interview.

"Why don't you do some of those corny jokes down at the Five Spot like you did in Philadelphia?" she asked her husband.

Then to me, she said, "He would make remarks that were so timely that you would have to laugh. He doesn't even have a mic at the Five Spot because he wants to keep the singers away."

Here Monk protested.

"That's [the mic's absence] because the horn would be playing into the mic," he said. "It would be too loud."

Mrs. Monk added, "Most of the people have never seen that [joking] side of him. He won't do it down there. Like last year he did a dance … during the solos."

Monk's comments on various subjects are always revealing:

"My music is not a social comment on discrimination or poverty or the like. I would have written the same way even if I had not been a Negro."

Monk is definitely aware of the racial conflicts throughout the world, but even this has not penetrated his world of music.

On the sudden prominence of Sonny Rollins, John Coltrane, Frank Foster, Wilbur Ware, Johnny Griffin after each had become associated with him, the pianist said:

"I have noticed that with a lot of musicians."

Then, with a wry smile, "I don't know why it happens."

About the records he listens to:

"I listen to everything."

About a Charlie Parker–Dizzy Gillespie–Monk recording session:

"Just another session."

About a Miles Davis–Milt Jackson–Monk session:

"They're all just sessions."

The world now seems to be "ready" for Thelonious Sphere Monk.

"Why are people afraid of me?" he asked. "I've been robbed three times; they must not be afraid of me."

He has been through disappointments, malicious rumors, exile, sickness and a destructive fire.

Now, his bandwagon seems to be rolling. The onetime skeptics are hopping on.

Monk has withstood failure. Now the question is: Can he withstand success? **DB**

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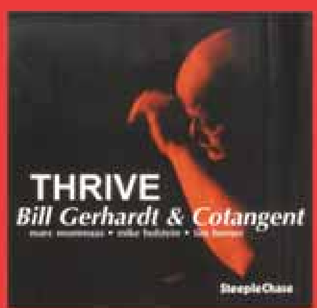
Bill Gerhardt



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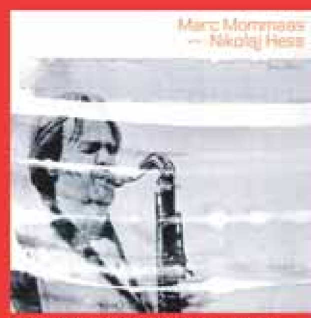

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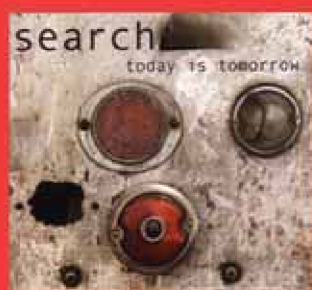

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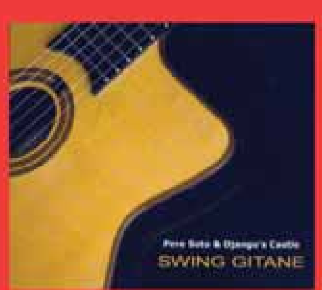

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Backstage With Louis Prima and Keely Smith

February 19, 1959

In an era when musical monkey-shines seem to be at a premium in the nation's niteries, the hottest music variety act today is a frenetic free-for-all billed as Louis Prima and Keely Smith.

Perpetrating happy havoc at a decidedly adult level, the 47-year-old New Orleans trumpeter and his appealing dead-pan singer–wife specialize in lasagna-flavored bedlam socked home with unpredictable rapidity and instinctive timing. ...

Credited as primarily responsible for the fantastically successful show business phenomenon known as the "Las Vegas lounge act," the duo first began vying with the Sahara hotel's one-armed bandits in 1956 and soon became a bigger draw than the name acts which played the establishment's so-called "big room."

Long since divorced from the "lounge" category in terms of wider audience appeal—and

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assertedly the highest paid—Louis and Keely nonetheless still prefer the obbligato of slot machine clank and roulette table whir to the more formal atmosphere of the big room.

While Mr. and Mrs. Prima changed clothes backstage after their final show at the Moulin Rouge, leading witness Sam Butera, heading for the band room, tenor in hand, paused long enough to offer a few observations on Prima, the band and the roughhouse brand of music that keynotes the act's performance.

"The present band is really a new outfit," explained stocky, swart-complexioned Butera, "and I feel it's the best band we've ever had." He listed the personnel: Lou Scioneaux, trombone; Bobby Roberts, guitar; John Nagy, piano; Rolly De Orio, bass; and Paul Ferrara, drums.

"Except for some sketches of routine, we have nothing prearranged." he continued. "As for music cues, there are none. You've got to be on top of the beat all the time; there's no chance to lag behind. This is the way Louis wants it; this is what he wants to hear. We're telling our own little story. We're selling Louis Prima."

Since 1934, when he began a long series of records for the Brunswick and Vocalion labels as leader of "The New Orleans Gang," Louis has been successfully selling himself in his own happy groove. Originally taught trumpet by his brother, Leon, the younger Prima early set for himself a pattern of trumpet playing and throaty vocalizing in a Louis Armstrong vein. Until 1939 he led his small group on the crest of the swing wave playing top dance locations throughout the nation.

"We were originally supposed to get the National Biscuit radio program that made Benny Goodman such a hit," he recalled, as he and Keely relaxed in his dressing room. "After we lost the broadcast I took the group to the West Coast, then back to the Hickory House in New York. That's when I began rehearsing the big band.

"Something you probably didn't know," he smiled, "is that Guy Lombardo was chiefly responsible for my big band. We were playing the Blackhawk in Chicago at the time. Lombardo was convinced I'd do great with a big band and he talked to MCA about it. But the agency wanted to stay with the small group; didn't offer any help at all with the big band."

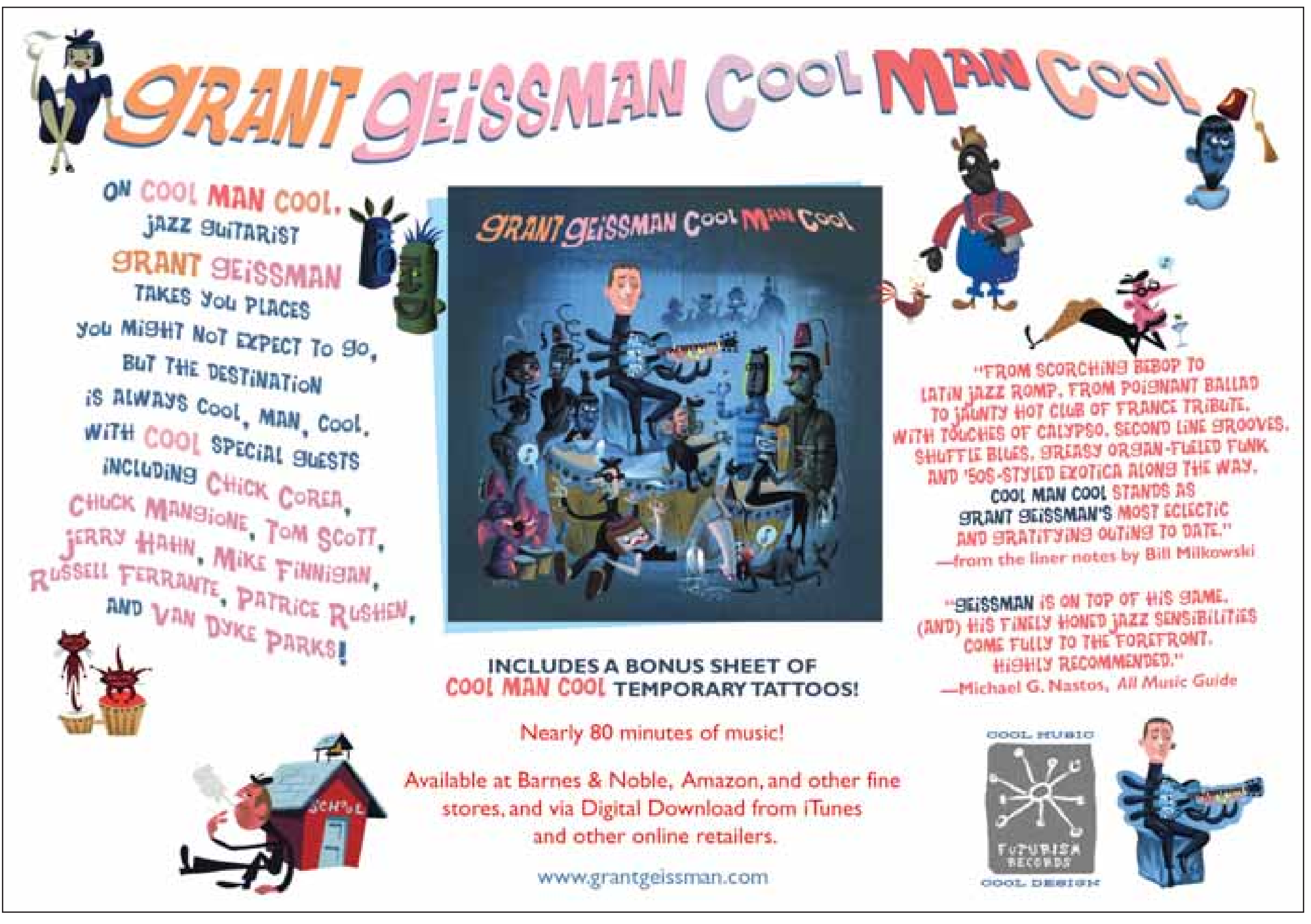
After the big unit was rehearsed in New York, however, MCA finally got interested, booked the band on the circle of top theaters that included New York's Apollo, the Royal in Baltimore, and the Paradise in Detroit. Prima was clearly launched as a big band leader and the subsequent record hits ("Robin Hood," "Brooklyn Bridge," etc.) kept him in the van of the pop parade for many years.

One of those pop hits was instrumental in forging the gold-plated Prima–Smith alliance.

"When I was a kid in Norfolk, Va.," brunette Keely reminisced, "I fell madly in love with Louis' music, particularly with his record of 'Civilization.' Hearing that set me to thinking how it'd be to work with his band. Before that I'd had no ambitions to be a singer. Oh, I bought just about everybody's records—Ella Fitzgerald's, Stan Kenton's, Tony Pastor's, Sinatra's, Doris Day's—all those I considered tops in the business."

In her soft, Virginia accent, she continued, "After years of admiring Louis, finally I had a chance to hear him in person when he played Virginia Beach, just 20 miles from Norfolk.

"By then I'd decided that I had to sing with his band. But I didn't have the nerve to go to Louis and ask for an audition. My brother went and asked for me. Well, I sang for Louis; he liked my singing and I joined the band." **DB**



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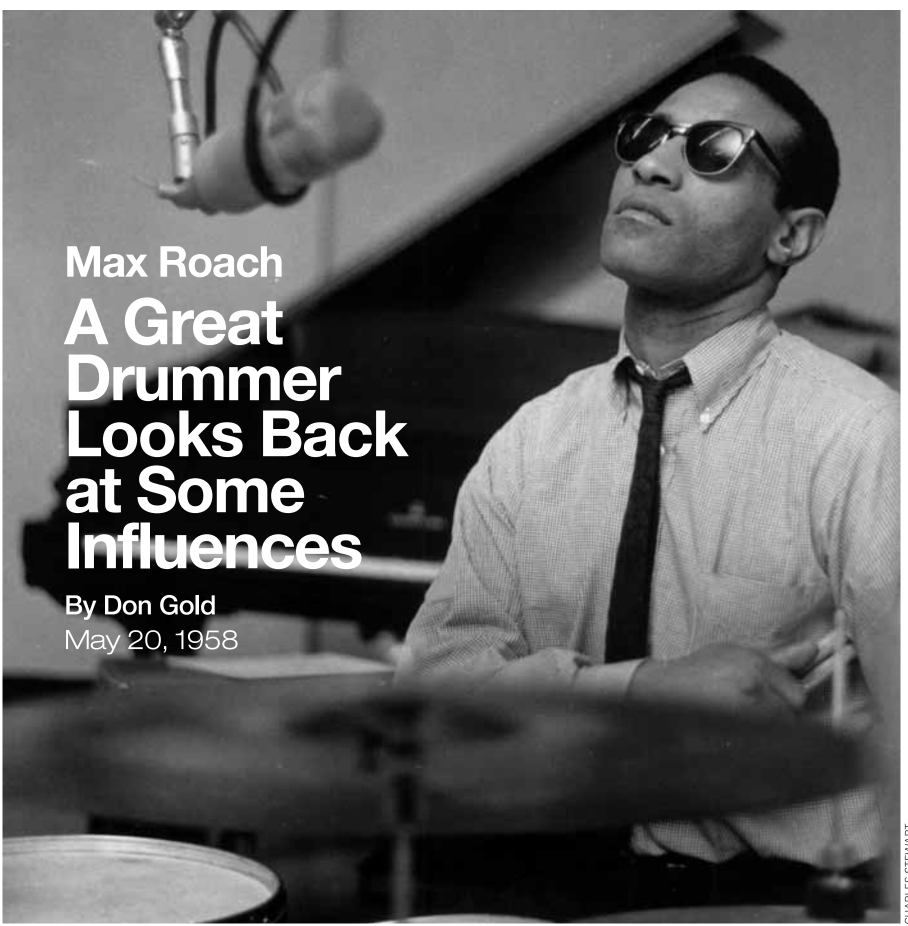


Max Roach

A Great Drummer Looks Back at Some Influences

By Don Gold

May 20, 1958

CHARLES STEWART

There is a handful of jazzmen whose prominence is unquestioned by all factions of the jazz audience. Max Roach is a member of that elite. The career of the 33-year-old drummer reads like a history of modern jazz. He shared the stand with Charlie Parker shortly after he was graduated from high school, and he's been sharing stands with illustriously creative jazzmen ever since.

For more than 15 years, Roach has served as authoritative mentor, directly and by influence exerted, to hundreds of developing jazz musicians. The mastery of the instrument that he manifests is the result of an astute devotion to jazz and an unqualified desire to assist in its evolution. The early '40 were the beginning.

"Billie Holiday, Sid Catlett, Don Byas, Milt Jackson ... the early years," Roach recalls nostalgically. "I never had too much trouble, because I was in the right crowd. I came to 52nd St. with Dizzy, Hawk, Pettiford; what we were doing was a new thing. When people began to talk about us, we got criticism which made all of us suffer. I felt the new music, although I like all forms of jazz, and I stayed with it. We just kept on plugging, without changing to meet any of the criticism. We evolved naturally—all of us."

He remembers, too, the emotional force of those early years. "I remember in 1949 in Europe, with Bird, Byas and Dizzy, where we came off the stand so full of inspired music we'd have to relax," he says.

"George Wallington would freeze at the piano from the force of the music. We would sit down during intermissions and talk about little things. We'd make jokes. The power of the music excited us so," he says.

Roach gets that same feeling today. "I get that feeling when I play with Kenny Dorham or Sonny Rollins now," he says. "Kenny is another trumpeter who is wonderful to work with. And people aren't aware of his ability as a composer. Miles says that the only people he can hear on the horn today are Dizzy and Kenny. And I know what he means. When he wants to hear an inspired horn he listens to them. He doesn't hear emulation in them.

"I've always been fond of Art Blakey and Jo Jones," he continues. "Blakey is a creative person. He plays with the sincerity of a dedicated person. He does things that make sense. However, Sid Catlett has been my main source of inspiration.

"I remember coming to Chicago to play a concert. He was in the wings. He came to see me, as he always did. While we were on stage he laid down and died right there. Somebody said that Big Sid was sick and I saw them open-

ing his collar. He left us right there. Funny how tragedy strikes without warning, when you don't even know it's coming yourself. I don't think he knew it was coming."

Roach returns to thoughts of an inspired past. "I've heard Bird in some of his best moments. And Dizzy, too, who was sensational at Lenox last year. You know, when I first got to New York Monk was like a brother to me. We used to make the after-hours spots. Once Lester Young and I—just the two of us—had an amazing session. I was so nervous—just out of high school. We never made any money then, but we had some of the most exciting musical moments. Then Bird came to town. He was troubled, socially and economically. I never saw him have trouble musically. He was happiest when he was working on the bandstand." ...

Playing with the major figures in modern jazz has led Roach to determine the appropriate function of the drums in jazz, on his own terms. "One of the prime functions of the drums is to serve as an accompanying instrument," he says. "This can be developed by listening to everything around you and by fitting yourself in without being smothered or smothering others.

"It's difficult to do, due to the timbre of the instrument. You can't help smothering the horns unless you're very careful. And if you're too delicate, you can't say anything. You need proper balance and respect. It takes a good drummer to get a lot out of the instrument. Some guys have fabulous drum setups, but don't get anything out of it," he feels.

"You can play lyrically by phrasing and dynamics. You set up lyrical patterns in rhythm which give indications of the structure of the song you're playing.

"I think it's important for the drummer to know what's going on around him—harmonically and melodically. Our better musicians are composers, too. They know harmony and melody. And, of course, drummers should, too. The better drummers, like Kenny Clarke, do. The most important thing is the music, and the musician and instrument are subservient to it. And the only way to accomplish this is to study constantly."

It is this kind of constant study that keeps Roach busy during most of his off-stand hours. "Music is the dominant force in my life," he says. "And you have to be a part of the whole picture—all of music and understanding it—to be a well-rounded musician, regardless of instrument.

"I'd like to teach. Lenox showed me this. And I'm going to continue studying. I'm studying composition now. I find this most gratifying, because it's so stimulating. I've been playing vibes, too, and I'd like to cut an LP playing vibes. I had a set once, but after hearing Milt Jackson I sold it. Now I intend to do something on vibes, because I've never really stopped playing it. I've studied constantly for years.

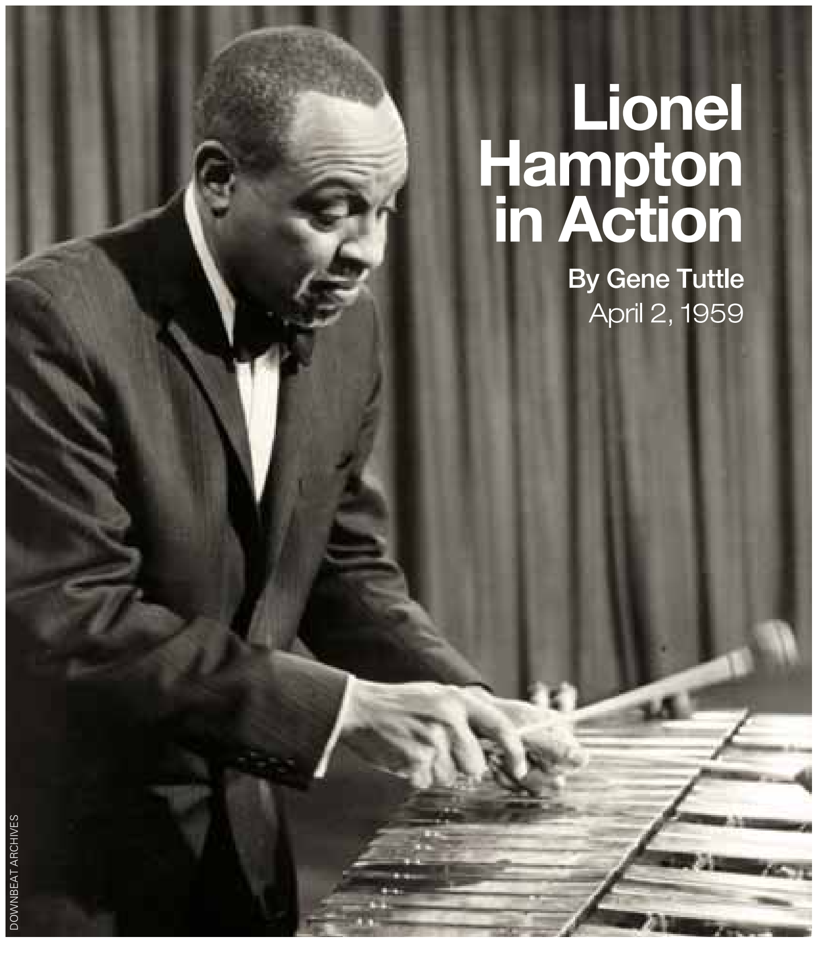
"I'm interested, too, in cultivating tympani in jazz and eventually playing tympani with a large orchestra. Right now, my desires are all jazz-based, but in time I'll work legitimate shows, playing-wise, and spend time getting as much out of composition as I can.

"I hope to write some things that mean something, some larger works than those I've done," he concludes.

This statement, coming from a musician whose playing has been consistently significant for years, is like a Christmas bonus. As a peerless drummer, a jazzman with an increasing concern for composition, and now a performing vibist, Roach illustrates the kind of growth, on a personal level, that will help make "the evolution of jazz" more than a stock phrase. **DB**

Lionel Hampton in Action

By Gene Tuttle
April 2, 1959



DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Known as the master of the vibes, king of the drums, and creator of the two-fingered piano, Lionel Hampton has endeared himself to millions of people throughout the entire world. But, it's not only his music that has brought about his popularity; it's his generosity.

As far back as 1936, the artistry of Lionel Hampton was recognized, when DownBeat magazine rated him the most exciting artist of that year. Since that time, Hampton has heaped more glory upon his humble person until, as Red Skelton recently said, "Hamp's the greatest exponent of jazz alive today!"

Hampton's 17-piece band enjoys itself while in action more than any other band in the country, because they prance all over the stand as they entertain the crowds. During their latest Las Vegas session in the Starlight lounge of the Riviera Hotel, every star entertainer along the famed Strip turned out nightly to listen to his jazz.

"An entertainer's entertainer," is the way Hamp is known to all those in the business, which has helped make him one of the most successful bandleaders in the world. Last year, Hampton grossed more than $1 million and he did it without particular benefit from record sales.

The first instrument Hampton learned to play was the drum, and this when he was a mere lad in a Catholic school in Wisconsin.

"You know who taught me to play the drums?" asked Hamp with a grin. "It was a nun. She was strict! I wanted to play the skins left-handed, and she'd take the sticks and beat my knuckles. Man, she was a hard nun!"

When he was 16 and out of school, Lionel began his quest of music by visiting with bands and asking all kinds of questions. Seeing that the band future was on the West Coast, Hamp headed for California where he worked at many jobs, but he didn't lose his rhythmic ideas.

He landed a drumming job with Paul Howard's Quality Serenaders and made his first records, singing some of the vocals himself. From this, he joined Les Hite's band, working in motion pictures. Then along came Louis Armstrong and Lionel joined him on the drums at the Los Angeles Cotton Club.

It was during this engagement that Lionel received his first national acclaim for his work. While recording with Armstrong, Hamp started to play around with the vibraharp in the studio, and Louis had him play it on record, "Memories Of You." It became a top seller, and from that point on, Hampton was on his way to the top, where he has been ever since.

It was during his recent stay in Las Vegas that Hamp dreamed up a new idea—a correspondence course in music for small children.

"Education in music is the finest thing that could happen to a child," said Hamp, as he outlined his program, which he hopes someday will develop into a series of music schools across the nation.

"Big Hamp's" system, which is now being instituted, has already received the approval of many orchestra leaders who are of the same opinion as Hamp regarding music and children. The new idea is in the form of a correspondence course at the present time.

"A lot of the success of this venture depends upon the parents," said Hamp. "They will receive the training information and then pass it on to the child so they can enjoy playing with the drums and vibraharp."

The Rogers Drum Company is cooperating with Hampton in making drums and vibraharps for children. Included with each instrument is an instruction sheet which displays scales and chords, using numbers to assist the youngsters in finding the right chord. Both instruments are miniature in size, and two octaves in range.

"When the child completes the primary course, the parents can send in for the advanced course," explained Hamp. "It's so arranged that a child of 3 or 4 can learn to play. When they progress through the courses, they will be ready to attend music school."

Hamp's idea is catching fire, and it should help to develop new musicians. Being a man of many ideas, he is never satisfied to sit back and let his music speak alone for him. He is always seeking new fields to conquer.

Most of Hamp's popularity is due to himself. Whether he's working on a chorus on a drum, hammering away on the piano with his famed two-finger technique or improvising an intricate riff on the vibes, he always exudes a kind of spontaneity and exhilaration that's highly contagious.

He plays the drums and vibes in nearly every number and still leads the band, not with a baton, but with his body, throwing himself about like a dervish. He juggles drum sticks and hurls them into the audience; he tap-dances and turns somersaults. The only time he is still while on stage is when he's crouched over the vibes, and then the stillness is relative. He bounces up and down in rhythm, singing to himself in a sort of half-chant, half-grunt. The audience always picks up his tempo and joins with him.

When Lionel Hampton and Red Skelton got together at the Riviera Hotel, where they were both entertaining, things began to fly, and before one realized it, these two were mulling over an hour-long jazz show for television. Red loves jazz, and he spent his spare time in the lounge listening to Hamp as he beat out many of his favorites.

When Hamp and Red got their heads together, ideas flowed and most of them were taped. They planned the show right there in a hotel room and are now working to smooth it out.

Hampton and his band will provide the jazz music to fit into a pattern narrated by Red Skelton showing the origination of jazz and its growth.

After several hours of batting the suggestions back and forth, both men agreed that this was really something. The information, music and jokes are recorded on tape. It was the birth of a TV spectacular which may appear shortly on a national network.

"How can it fail?" asked Red. "Lionel's music is the greatest and with these ideas incorporated into it—it will be a success."

But Hampton has a very serious side to his nature. He is a great student of the Bible. "I trust in God—and always turn to Him for help and guidance," said Hamp seriously. "I owe all my successes to His guidance. He's one I can never forget."

One of Hamp's greatest thrills was playing in Israel at the personal request of President Itzhak Ben Zvi, who asked that Hamp and the band come as a morale-builder.

"I went there and the welcome they gave us was beyond our wildest dreams," said Hamp as he recalled his 48 concerts played in four weeks at concert halls, Kibbutzim and army camps. "In Beersheba, we played to an enthusiastic audience of 5,500 border guards near the Gaza Strip. They were mere teenagers. Just boys and girls—but they showed their appreciation by beating time to the music on the butts of their tommy guns. I'll never forget that day—and I don't think they will, either."

While in Israel, Chief Rabbi Herzog honored Hampton with the title "Chief Rabbi of Jazz." Banners across the street read: "America's Ambassador of Good Will" and "America's Heartbeat."

Hamp was received by Rabbi Herzog in his home. "I was armed with a newly gained knowledge of Hebrew and I hoped to have a Bible discussion, but instead, the rabbi insisted on a lively discourse on boogie-woogie," he remembered.

After showing Hamp a treasured ancient scroll of the Torah and a scale model of an ultra-modern temple, Rabbi Herzog presented Hampton with a Bible inscribed, "To a true friend of Israel, Mr. Lionel Hampton. May God watch you and save you from any ill from now on and forever."

As Hamp left, the Rabbi whispered in his ear a lengthy Hebrew prayer that the Lord would protect him during his travels. America's "Jambassador" thereon astounded his Israeli friends by translating the prayer word for word in perfect English.

"Jazz speaks an international language," said Hamp. "No matter where we went, our music was accepted."

While traveling in Europe, Hamp and his band visited Italy, Spain, Germany, Luxembourg, France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, Switzerland and Israel.

"I was privileged to be the first American jazz bandleader to perform in Spain and Ambassador John David Lodge honored me with his presence at our jazz session in Barcelona, where we played before 19,000 persons."

Later Hamp told Ambassador Lodge, "Man, we didn't bring any bulls there—but we had plenty of horns!"

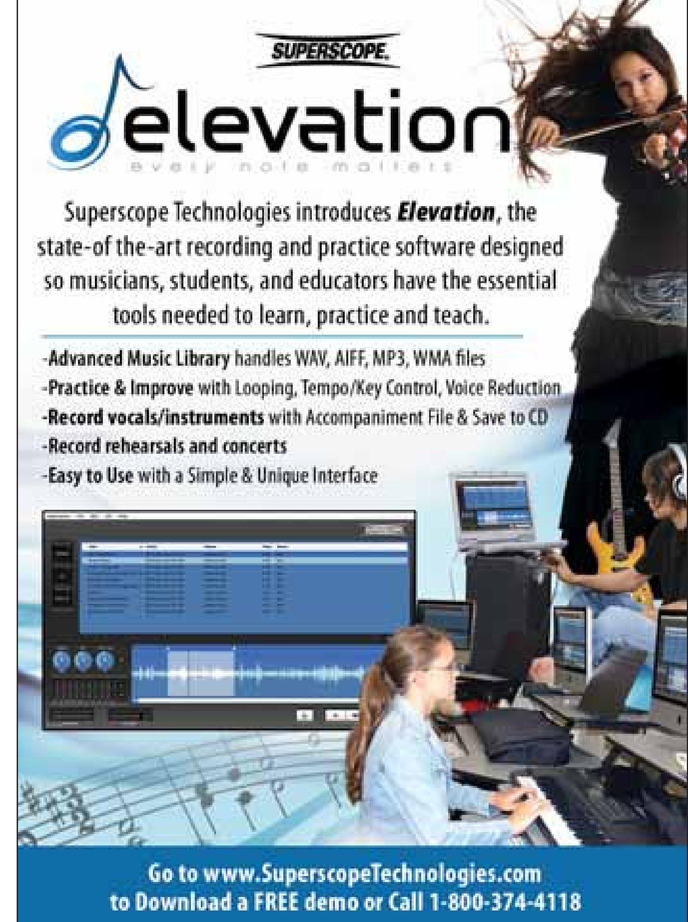
Hamp's concerts in all the countries were memorable. He recalls that while playing in Paris at the Olympia theater the fans danced in the aisles. In Berlin, the band drew 22,000 patrons in two shows at the famed "Sportpalast"—the same hall where Hitler condemned American jazz as "decadent."

In Brussels, 5,000 had to be turned away from the theater, so Hamp rounded up his band ahead of time and marched them out onto the sidewalk and did some numbers for the folks who couldn't get tickets so they could hear and wouldn't be disappointed.

"It was this same way in every country that we visited," explained Hamp. "The thirst for jazz seemed unquenchable."

Hamp thought over his past. "I've been a very fortunate man," he said softly. "And I owe it all to God. Without Him, I couldn't amount to anything."

When asked about his plans for the future, Lionel Hampton grinned and replied, "Man, as long as people want to hear jazz, I'll give it to them." **DB**



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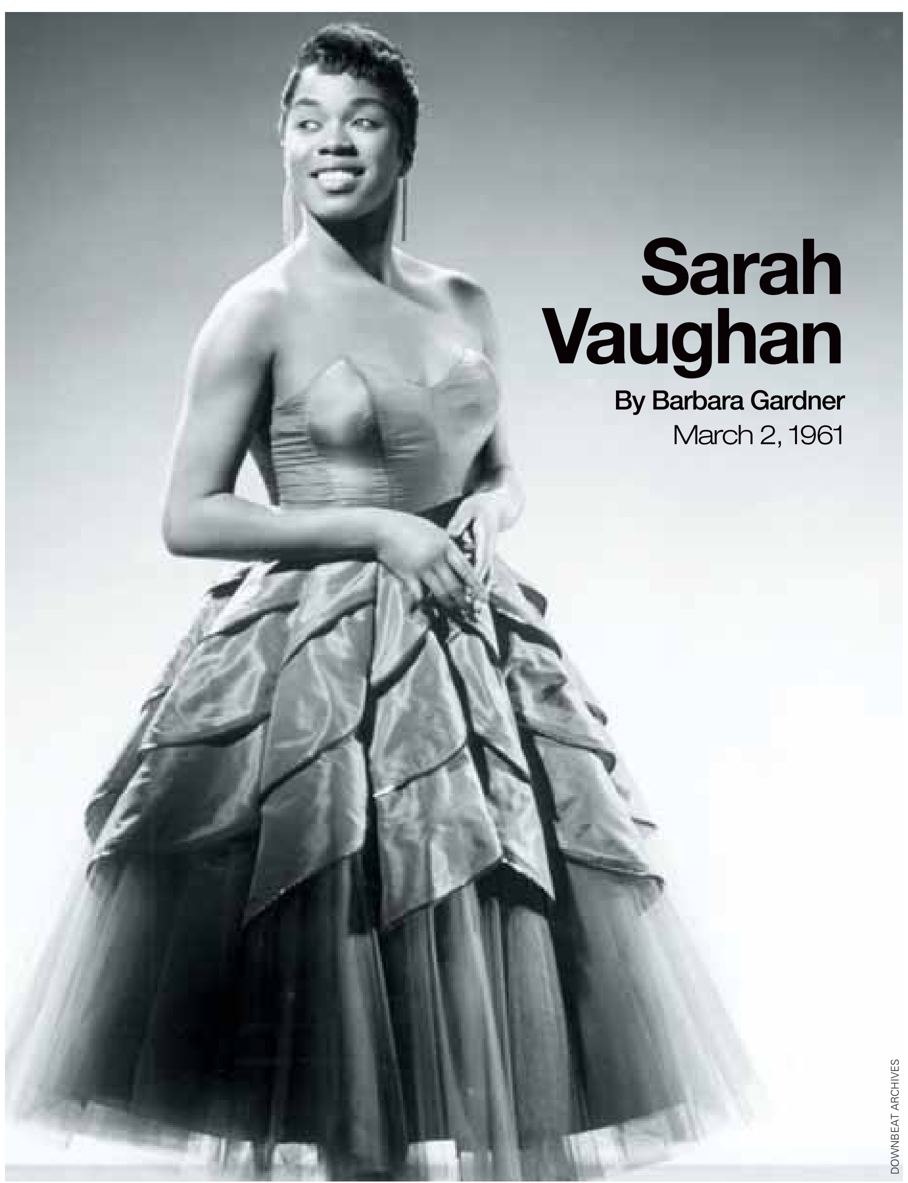


Sarah Vaughan

By Barbara Gardner

March 2, 1961

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Complexes of one sort or another are often byproducts of greatness.

As Sarah Vaughan recalls it, her life began with a devastating, unutterable resentment of being dark-skinned and unattractive.

"I often wished I was a medium-brown skin color," she once said. "I imagined people that color were regarded more highly than I. To most persons who knew me, I thought, I was just another little black girl for whom the future was just as dark as it was for thousands of others like me."

As a child, Vaughan remembers, she had dreams of being rescued by a fairy prince—only to be shoved from his horse when he discovered she was dark.

Even then, she wanted to sing. She dreamed of winning great acclaim. But in the midst of her triumph, a light-skinned girl would start calling her names.

Too young to understand the social shame inherent in race prejudice, the young Sarah Vaughan shifted the responsibility of the rejection and injustice she suffered to herself and her color. As she grew older, understanding came. But nothing could ever repair completely the emotional and psychological hurts she had suffered.

Not all her nightmares happened when she was asleep. Some were real, the kind you can't wake up from, and they have contributed to her tendency to minimize herself. Despite the fame, glamour, commercial success and acclaim she has achieved, she still says simply and quietly, "I don't feel like a big star."

And how does she think a great star should feel?

"I don't know," she admits. "I just feel like me, plain Sarah Vaughan."

During most of her life, that description was painfully accurate. Sarah Vaughan was just that—plain. "I was nothing much to look at," she says.

Even after she had begun to sing professionally, her looks were a cross she bore gravely. In the mid-1940s, a New York writer cut her to the heart when he wrote:

"She is not exactly handsome to look at, having a toothy face with a flattened, ski-jump nose, almost oriental eyes and a low forehead oppressed by a pile of black hair." ...

The winsome singer with the bright smile who, beautifully gowned, graces the stage today, is actually a composite put together by her two husbands.

Her first husband was George Treadwell, a trumpeter who later became her manager. Treadwell was prompted to begin her metamorphosis by an experience she had at the Chicago Theater some 10 years ago.

Waiting in the wings, the duckling had not yet become a swan and was going through great inner struggles. But Dave Garroway was the emcee, and the glowing terms with which he introduced the new star dissolved much of her fear. Suddenly she was no longer just an unattractive little girl, but someone special, and she loved the feeling. She glided onstage and stood before the audience ready to pour out this newfound confidence and affection in music. Then she saw a streak in the air, felt a sharp pain in her head and saw red stains spreading down her white dress.

"I've been shot!" was her first terrified thought. But the bullets were tomatoes, and they kept raining on the stage as the frightened singer stood petrified. Young bigots in the balcony did their damage and scurried away.

Garroway was livid with rage. He delivered an infuriated statement against bigotry while the confused, humiliated singer huddled in the wings with her husband.

From the audience came thunderous applause for the singer, and a demand that she return. She went back to the microphone in tears, and looked out into what she felt was the last audience she would ever face. She tried to sing. She could not utter a sound.

After several futile starts, she left the stage, positive she would never sing again. But so sympathetic was public response to the incident, and so immediate was it, that she was persuaded not to give up her career.

Treadwell decided something must be done to give her confidence. He invested all the money he had, about $8,000, in the building of a star. He arranged for nose-thinning plastic surgery on her face and the straightening of her teeth and sent her to a beauty salon to have her figure streamlined. He paid for special arrangements and elocution lessons, and personally selected and bought becoming clothes for her.

It worked. So transformed and elated was she that he gave her a nickname. That's how she came be known as "Sassy."

Yet Miss Vaughan today doesn't like to talk about her first marriage. "I want to forget that," she said. "I never want to think about that again." ...

Miss Vaughan's second husband is C.B. Atkins, a Chicago businessman and taxicab company owner whom she married in the summer of 1958 after a whirlwind courtship. ...

Extremely defensive and sensitive offstage, Miss Vaughan allows almost no one to penetrate the shell of polite disinterest into which she has withdrawn. Outside her immediate family, she has only one female friend.

Her reticence leaves reporters and other interviewers nonplussed. After talking to her for hours, they will come away shaking their heads, utterly bewildered. She, for her part, hates interviews. She consents to them only when Atkins insists.

"They always ask the same questions," she complained. "Where was I born? When did I start singing? Who have I worked with?

"I don't understand why they can't just talk to me without all that question bit. I just freeze."

And freeze she does. So cautious is she, so fearful of being misquoted or misunderstood, that natural responses are choked at the source. All that comes out is a rush of colorless, harmless, impotent words.

As a result, there is a widespread belief that she is a shallow woman, with no more to her than meets the eye. Nothing could be more inaccurate. When she is comfortable in a familiar environment, she emerges as a dynamic and powerful woman with a sharp sense of humor—and, at times, a sharp tongue.

Recently she sat in a club with acquaintances, silently watching her husband send a stream of bills across the bar as he bought drinks for friends. A merrymaker said that, at this rate, the party could go on all night.

Freezing the grin from the woman's face with a cold stare, Sarah snapped:

"Not hardly. When the time comes for us to go, we'll go. You can believe that, honey!"

Within the hour, she and her husband left the club.

Miss Vaughan has developed her stony stare to perfection. When she uses it, however, it's "because somebody is really dragging me," she said. "Usually, it's somebody who walks up to me and calls me Sarah. They don't know me, and they should say Miss Vaughan, or Mrs. Atkins, or something. That's what I would do. So I just keep walking."

The lighter side of Sarah Vaughan is something few people see, except when she feels particularly frisky onstage.

She is, in private life, a mimic and comedienne of no mean skill who can keep friends entertained for hours, re-creating scenes and situations from her travels. These are situations she observed with poker face and apparent disinterest.

There is another myth about Miss Vaughan that deserves exploding—the idea that she is a "natural" singer with little knowledge of music. It is an assumption made by people who don't know about her years of piano studies.

While it is true that she was a professional singer before her first husband induced her to take voice lessons, she has, from the beginning, been equipped with an excellent knowledge of the mechanics of music. She credits much of it to training she received at Newark's Arts High School.

"While I was playing piano in the school band," she said, "I learned to take music apart and analyze the notes and put it back together again. By doing this, I learned to sing differently from all the other singers."

That is probably the nearest thing to an analysis of her style as you are likely to get from her. Beyond this, she simply says that she sings songs a different way each time because she would get bored singing them the same way.

Her skillful, natural and frequent changes of key, and her use of improbable intervals, give each of her performances a freshness and originality unmatched by any other singer. With her, enunciation is completely subservient to music.

Miss Vaughan doesn't waste her singing. She loves to sing but does so only for a purpose. She must have an audience she cares about. It need not be large. Once, reportedly, she sang for an audience of one. Shortly after her engagement to Atkins, she called him in Chicago from New York and sang one of her best-known ballads, "Tenderly."

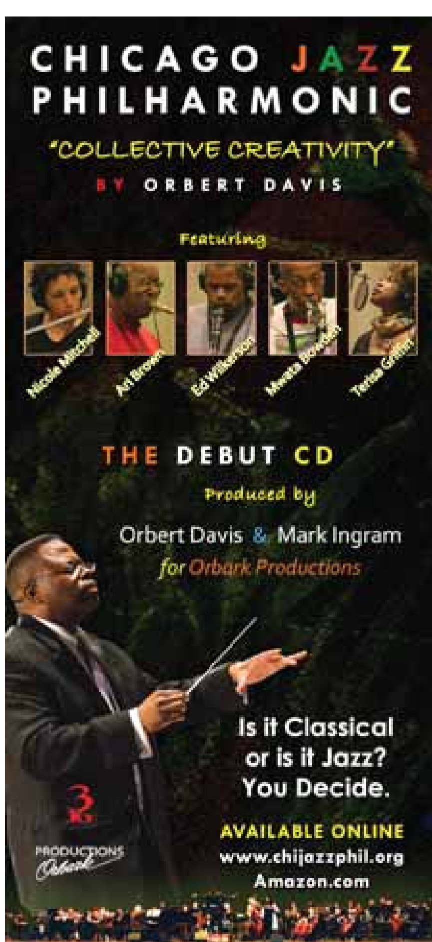
Onstage, she alternates between revealing herself as the pixie-ish Sassy and the sedate Miss Vaughan. At those moments when the old fears and nightmares peek through, it is the little church organist from Newark who stands there with the cloth of her skirt between her fingers, holding on tightly. It is then that she wants to slow the pace and spend more time as Mrs. Atkins.

"What's the use of having a home if you can't enjoy it?" she asked. "Of course, I want to keep singing as long as anybody will listen. But I want to spend more time at home."

She is tired of the public demands on her and, although she remains gracious when she is talking to them, she resents autograph hounds and pushy people generally.

When her husband reminded her recently that this was a part of her responsibility as a star, she replied, a little pathetically:

"Honey, I'm tired of all this. Let me just be Mrs. Atkins, and you be Sarah Vaughan." **DB**



An Evening With Harry Carney

By Bill Coss

May 25, 1961

Harry Carney has a good-humored unpretentiousness that reminds you of your favorite next-door neighbor. He and his wife have secured a life rich in the better things and alive with interest, carving it out of 36 years of hectic professional musicianship.

I wasn't prepared for their serenity when I visited them recently. And the serenity did not prepare me for the avid interest they have in everything around them. By any criteria, the Carneys are among the youngest people in jazz.

That amuses Harry because, after 33 years as a Duke Ellington sideman, he is running into a second generation of listeners. "Kids come up to me and say, 'Mother and Dad said to say hello to you.' Almost always they add, 'We thought you'd be an old man.'"

If you browse along Carney's bookshelves, you find a catholic selection: *The Power Of Positive Thinking*, *The Prayers Of Peter Marshall*, *Hot Discography*, *The Invisible Man*, *Mein Kampf*, *Marjorie Morningstar*, *The Picture Of Dorian Grey*, *Star Money*, *Appointment In Samara*, *The Little Prince*—all interspersed with the many DownBeat plaques he has won.

But Harry's main relaxation is music. He has most of the Ellington records, a few others and an extensive classical collection. "I like to listen to the legitimate reed players, so that I don't get too far away from first base," he said. He has the same trouble most of us have in finding a favorite record: "I've been meaning to catalog what I've got, but I never get around to it."

Lack of time is a major problem. The Ellington band practically never sits still. Yet Harry says that this is the reason he's stayed with the band so long.

"There was always something going on," he said. "The music never sits still either. Duke is always experimenting. Even today. I'll call him up and his wife will answer the phone. You can hear Duke banging the piano in the background. He's still rushing into rehearsals with new music. He's always anxious to hear what he's written, and so are we."

Talking about Duke's playing brought up the subject of a proposed solo concert by Ellington. "It would be most interesting," Harry said. "I've heard him do that kind of thing for hours after a job or when he's supposed to be resting in his hotel suite."

That, in turn, turned on the reminiscences.

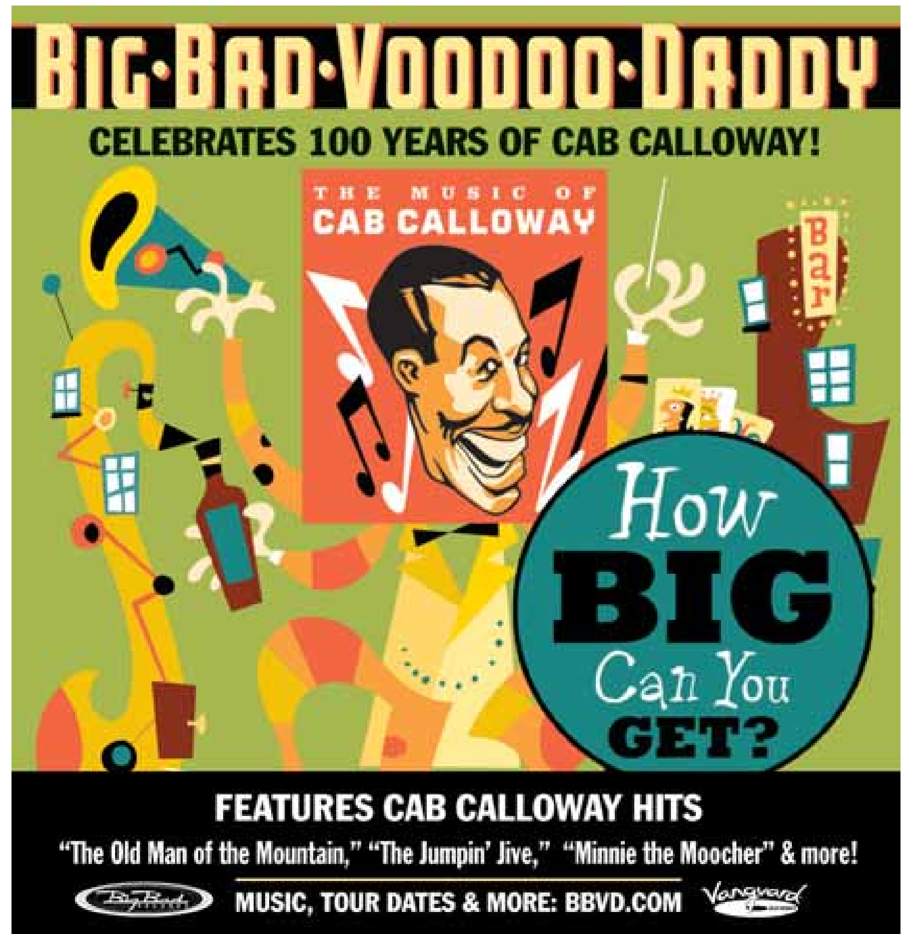
DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

"You know, I began on piano when I was 6. I never was any good. I took the lessons and had to practice like a demon, but my brother, who never studied, could sit right down and play."

Several years ago, Harry said the real reason he began playing reed instruments was that he noticed how the girls flocked around a clarinetist in a Boston club. He discovered that by joining the Knights of Pythias band, he could get a clarinet for free.

About the time he met Johnny Hodges (in the seventh grade), he switched to alto. "I found it easier to get a better sound," he recalled. "Johnny and I used to listen to records together. I copied Sidney Bechet, Joe Smith of the Fletcher Henderson Band and Coleman Hawkins. He was my ideal. He still is."

In 1927, Carney moved to New York. "Those were the days, even when I wasn't working. I'd go to Mexico's on 131st St. and listen all night. They'd have all-piano nights. You'd get Duke and Art Tatum and Seminole, lots of others, all in one night. I remember they even had tuba nights. You could hardly move around in the place for all that hardware." **DB**



Cecil Taylor's Struggle for Existence

By Bill Coss
October 26, 1961

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Cecil Taylor believes, "Your contribution to jazz is your whole life—before, now and after. You're in love. That's why you're there."

This has to be a personal story, because I have been involved with it for several months. One night I sat and watched Norman Mailer dance burstingly, or burst dancingly, into a club where Taylor was playing, announcing, as if he were the village voice, that Taylor "is the only interesting piano player in town."

Mailer thinks of New York City as his town. Cecil Taylor thinks of New York City as the place where he is seldom hired and less often allowed any prolonged engagements. That night, the special coil within the tight, tense spring that sings "Cecil" up and "Taylor" down, must have tightened again. He had just been told that he and his group were being replaced the next night.

Whether Taylor is really "the only interesting piano player in town" is hard to discover, considering his lack of employment. And that lack of employment appears to be caused by three sources of information.

It is generally considered by one source, the jazz fan, that Taylor's music is too cerebral. But I have seen his audiences grow, as in this last engagement, over a 30-day period—it takes that long to build an audience for something out of the ordinary—and I saw this audience put mind to mind and then beat feet, nod heads and clap hands.

This talk has been reinforced by critical assessments. Taylor has been written off as a

pianist who is "stylistically limited," a phrase more exactly used almost anywhere else. For if any special thing has hurt his commercial possibilities, it is that he plays so many kinds of music and in so many kinds of ways.

What Taylor might be accused of is the special failing of being consistently different. It is an area hard to judge, and that, in itself, quite understandably, calls up a special wrath. ...

His major involvement, or course, is with music. He doesn't study formally anymore, but he does practice hours each day and devotes much of the rest of his time to composition. He has made himself a concise and purposeful work world. He is like a monk, but without a cloister, or, perhaps the cloister is his outer-self, and within the gates, besides his daily sacrifices, he has the time and need to meditate. Those thoughts are as much an explanation of his music as anything could be. In fact, they sound like the music itself. Following is a condensation of several conversations:

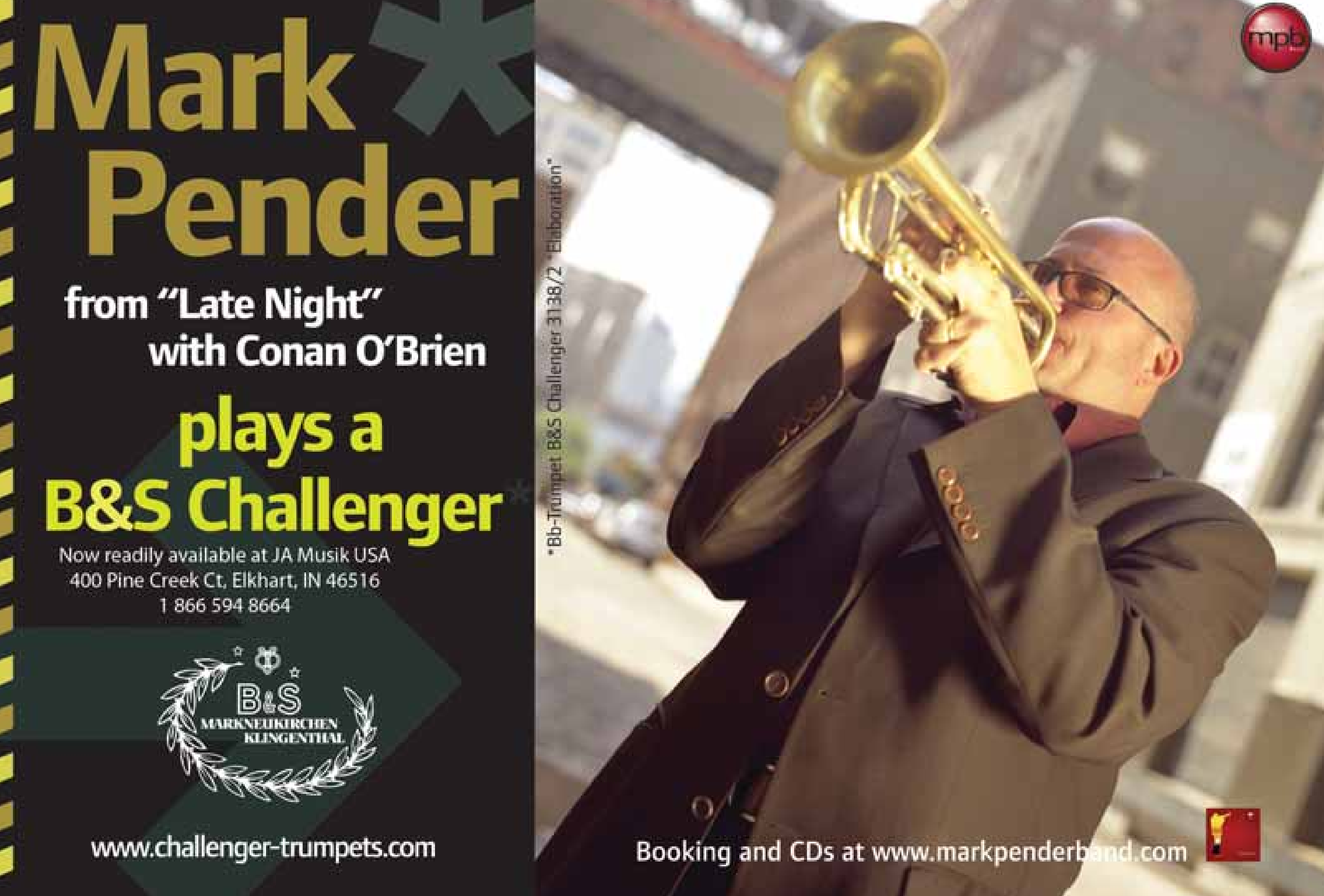
"The pride in playing has been lacking since 1955. Now jazz is recognized as a money maker. Now the young Negro musician can play it safe. Right now, in that place we were talking about, there are two groups. They're playing exactly the same way; even the same tunes. All the people I've admired always play hard. When they don't, it's because they can't. So you wait; wait for Duke, Coltrane, Ornette's group and Ornette, Monk and Miles, those people and Billie Holiday. You wait, and when they do, it's worth waiting for.

"I think we frighten some people. I know that they work harder when we are playing opposite them. You know, music isn't only supposed to satisfy you. It's also work. If it intimidates you, that's good, too. That makes you work harder. But I haven't heard anything for a long time that intimidated me, frightened me. I should explain that. Music that does that is my fault. It means I've forgotten my ears. It makes me angry, not afraid—angry because I couldn't hear it.

"The first modern pianist who made any impression on me was Dodo Marmarosa, with Charlie Barnet. In 1951, I heard Tatum, Silver, Peterson and Powell. Oh, I guess Bud was the first. He and Dodo were the first I heard. Then I heard lots of Tristano, Mary Lou Williams and Brubeck. Brubeck made an impression because of the horizontal approach he made, the harmonic sounds, the rhythm—not so jazz oriented, but academic. What I said before about music being your whole life is germane here. You can't expect Dave Brubeck, who grew up in a rural area, to play like a guy from 118th St.

"In any case, the greatness in jazz occurs because it includes all the mores and folkways of Negroes during the last 50 years. No, don't tell me that living in the same kind of environment is enough. You don't have the same kind of cultural difficulties I do. I admire someone like Zoot Sims, because he accepts himself. He is unique. He tries to come to grips with everything, musically, not socially. But even Zoot, and Lennie Tristano, only simulate the feeling of the American Negro—the way American composers concern themselves with Stravinsky, Webern and such.

"Jazz is a Negro feeling. It is African, but changed to a new environment. It begins in the Negro community, and it is the only place for Negro hero worship. Economic pressures did away with the Negro tap dancer. The Negro actor has no historical perspective—I'm very interested in historical perspective. Sidney Poitier is more related to Marlon Brando than he is to Bert Williams. But jazz has had the continuation." **DB**



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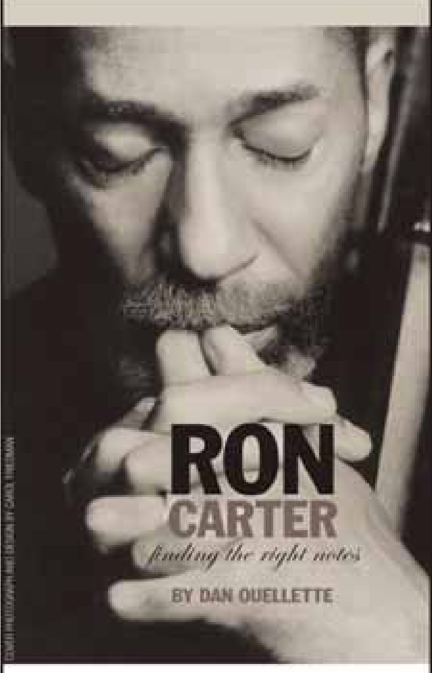

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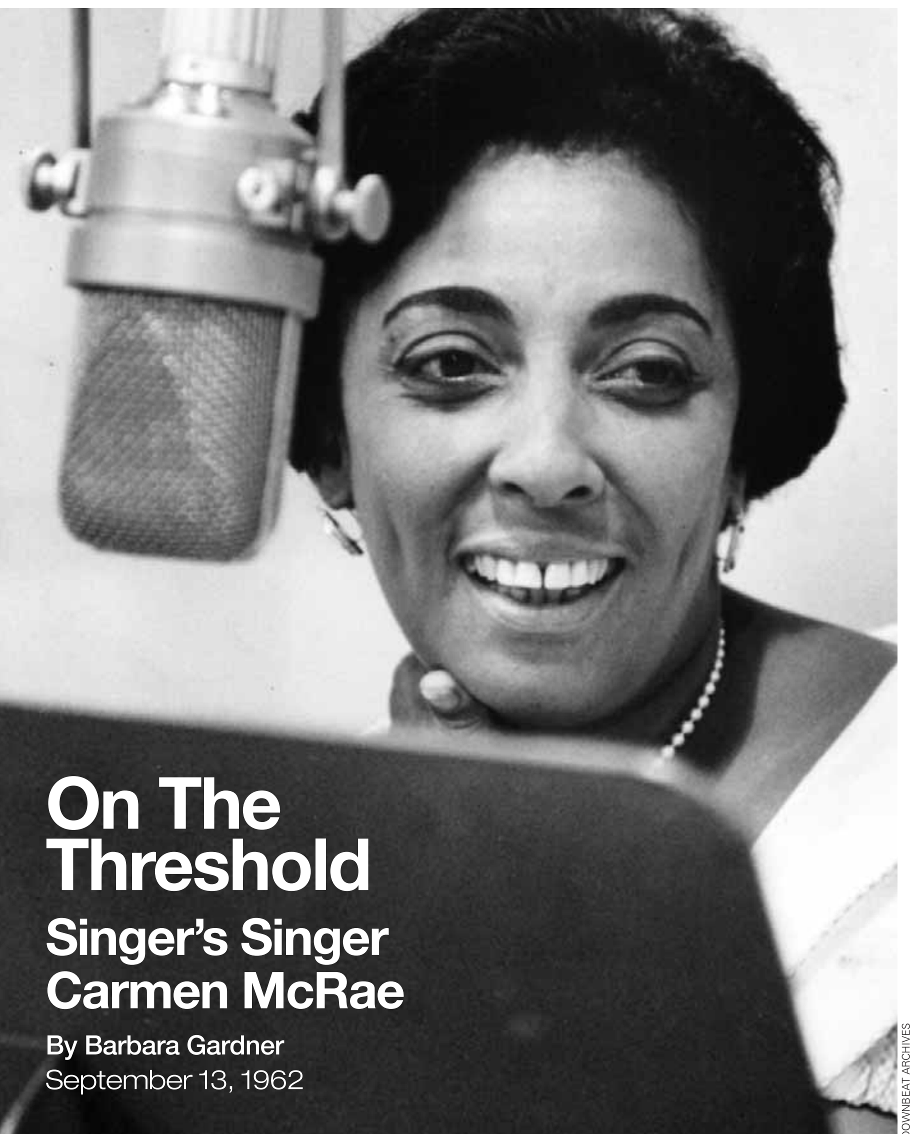

On The Threshold

Singer's Singer Carmen McRae

By Barbara Gardner
September 13, 1962

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

Spotlight! A tiny frown, then a smile, drooping eyelids. She sings, and she comes alive.

It is a long way from the warmth of childhood dreams to the spotlight. For a person who is self-confident, it is a long way. For one who is less sure, the distance is almost immeasurable. Armed with talent and desire, a shy, uncertain vocalist has made the trek. Today she stands in the light of success, but with questioning eyes.

She will not be consumed by the flame that generates this light, for it was not the dazzle of the success that has drawn her forward; it was the desire to reach a safe level where she could express herself—as Carmen McRae.

Who is Carmen McRae and what does she have to express? She is a little girl with a longing, who has grown up. She is an artist with a universal way with songs.

There is inherent in her emotional make-up the need to please, to be accepted. This desire goes back as far as the singer can remember. If she had been favored with more self-confidence, the task would have been less frustrating.

As a little girl, she privately dreamed of the world of the stage. For years, the dreams lay unrealized, and she never dared believe she would be successful. In fact, she never really believed she would become an entertainer at all.

"I studied piano when I was little," she recalled, and added a little sadly, "I could have been a very good pianist. I used to play and sing when I was in high school, but my parents didn't go for the idea of my going into show business. So when I came out of high school, I took a secretarial course."

For two years in Washington, D.C., Miss McRae led the circumspect, routine existence of a government employee, a role acceptable to her parents. In 1943, she returned to her native New York and continued as a clerical worker by day and an entertainer by night.

"Those were the good ol' days," she remem-

bered, with an edge of poignancy biting her laughter. "I was singing and playing around the clubs in New York, just working weekend gigs and one-nighters. I was making about $5 a night—when I was lucky."

A disarming quality about Miss McRae is her unvarnished honesty. She is direct and outspoken and never could be the ultra-glamorous show business figure she envisioned herself as a youngster. She dresses conservatively and tastefully. When she dares to become shocking with colors, she is modest with the cut of the garment.

Offstage, she would draw little attention—unless one looked into her face. The entire personality and make-up of Carmen McRae is captured and reflected in her eyes. Almond-shaped, limpid and grave, they peer out at the world with apprehensive wistfulness and certify her affinity, discerned early in her career, for ballads. ...

There have been many attempts to describe Miss McRae's ballad mastery, but she gives what is, after all, the most uncluttered explanation:

"Experience and emotion take over when I sing. I try to convince the audience of what I am singing about. I try to entertain the people, not just myself."

To her, nevertheless, singing is a deeply rewarding emotional experience. In lieu of an immediate family or entourage of friends, Miss McRae pours her mood of contentment or depression on her audience.

"I can't hide my emotions," she said. "My voice is not as clear, quality-wise, as it was when I started, but I have learned a great deal more about singing, and I've had a lot more experience, which helps. I am not standing still, and I don't want to go back to where I started. I hope I am progressing all the time."

Though as a fellow professional she is held in high regard by entertainers, charmin' Carmen, as they often call her, has a close friendship with few of them, a situation entirely of her own choosing.

"I don't get around much," she said. "I stay mostly to myself when I'm off."

Staying to herself has been a life-long habit. Each rung on the ladder of success was climbed alone.

"There should be people around to help newcomers," she said. "There is no sure-fire formula, but everybody, or somebody, could help. I remember that nobody did it for me. I had to make it the best way I could. No friends helped me."

Even this observation is not voiced in bitterness; it is offered in fact. This year finds Miss McRae perched on what appears to be the threshold of great success. She is singing better than she ever has, emotionally. She maintains her solid core of discriminating admirers in writers and musicians. She is working the major festivals and clubs throughout the country.

Still, what does one do when there is that trace of gnawing insecurity still hacking at one's equilibrium? Sometimes one walls that insecurity within an acceptable public image, and it smolders there undetected. In the book *Hear Me Talkin' To Ya*, Carmen McRae talks of Billie Holiday. She speaks of the late vocalist with sympathetic insight. In one passage, while ostensibly speaking of Billie Holiday, she is actually summarizing the essence of Carmen McRae:

"[S]he sings the way she is. Singing is the only place she can express herself the way she'd like to be all the time. Only way she is happy is through a song. I don't think she expresses herself as she would want to when you meet her in person. The only time she's at ease and at rest with herself is when she sings." **DB**

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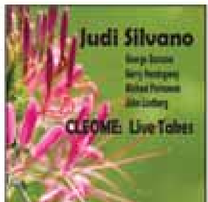

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Hank Mobley
The Integrity of the Artist—The Soul of the Man

By John Litweiler
March 29, 1973

HERB NOLAN

In January 1961, Miles Davis hired [Hank] Mobley for the longest continuous association of the tenorist's career. The Davis years began with travel through the U.S. and a record date with an old friend, the post-*Giant Steps* Coltrane. "I told Miles I'd never played with somebody who plays like Art Tatum on the saxophone. Miles said, 'That's why I hired you. I want to put your interpretation with his.'"

Davis was an easy-going leader to work for. Mobley recalls a Los Angeles sojourn: "I remember me and Philly Joe got to the airport minutes before the plane left—we were both wandering all over town, and you know how big that city is, no subways, you can't get anywhere. You take Wynton Kelly, he's probably over at that hotel partying and talking about, 'Yeah, see you when I get back'—him and Paul Chambers. Miles is off talking to Boris Karloff—he and Miles lived in the same house on the Strip in Hollywood. Boris'd get up early and go sit on the bench like this (*pant, pant*) watching the young girls walk up and down the strip. We had to send for Harold [Lovette], the lawyer, to take care of business, tidy up the tax—after six nights. Wynton had about a $50 tab. Paul must've had about $50, Miles must've had a couple hundred. We hung out, the four of us, and sometimes we'd run into Miles on the street.

"But when I left Miles, I was so tired of music, the whole world, man, I just went back to drugs." That was exactly the wrong course of action. He'd already done time on a narcotics charge; in 1964 he was arrested and imprisoned again. In the mid-'60s, he and Lee Morgan formed a cooperative group that performed steadily; Mobley continued to write for Blakey and freelance as well. He also teamed up with Kenny Dorham.

One of the happiest periods in his life began when he was called to London in March 1967. It was his first trip out of the U.S.—"I missed it and Art Blakey, Dizzy, Miles"—and after seven weeks at Ronnie Scott's Club, Mobley toured Europe. Then, in 1968, Slide Hampton called from Paris—would Mobley come to take his place?

"Soon as I got there they had the fight at the Sorbonne. The whole city was on strike; you couldn't get a taxi, you couldn't get nowhere. The train left me way out in the desert, it seemed, and I had to work at the Chat qui Peche that same night. Slide Hampton's niece, I think, came to pick me up, finally. People going around with rifles, all that kind of stuff. I said, 'I didn't have to go 4,000 miles—I saw all this at home.' I checked into the hotel and just stayed there and looked out the window."

Paris had several jazz clubs and a goodly number of Americans on hand. "In Paris there's a lot more communication between musicians than in the States. An American in Paris is a long way from home. I hung out with Johnny Griffin and Art Taylor all the time. Steve McCall was on the outskirts of town, Kenny Clarke was way out in the country, and we all used to meet at the Living Room in Paris." There Mobley met one of his boyhood heroes, Don Byas. "He mellowed with age, but he never lost his youth. He was all muscle, all strong.

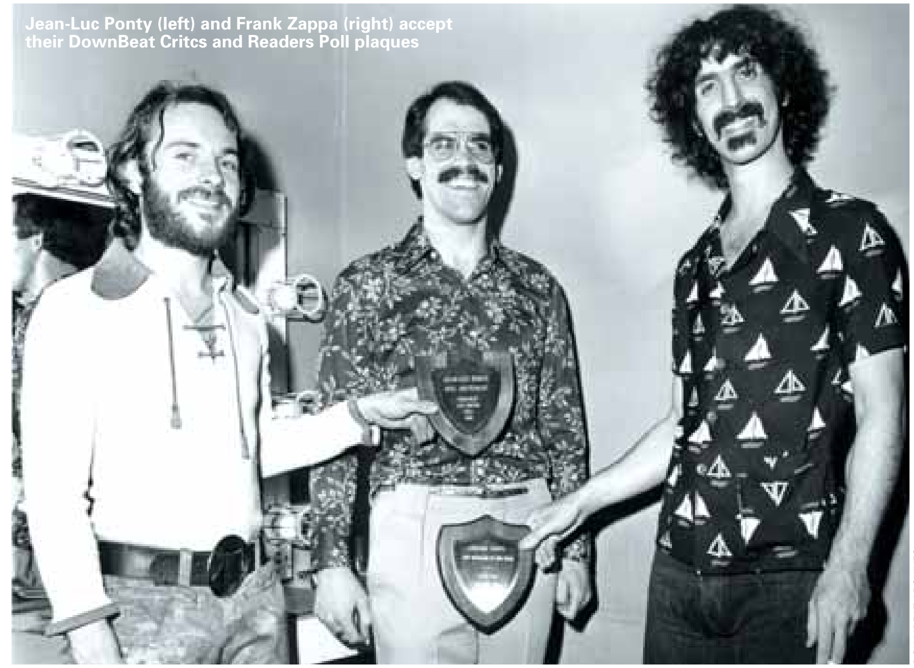
"I remember one night there were four nuts, Paul Gonsalves, Don, Archie Shepp and me, we came from the club, and we had a bottle on the floor; everybody said, 'We ain't going to drink anything, now. Course I know when Paul and Don start drinking they might go crazy. We were at a round table talking shop and we had to stay up for Paul; he had a habit of missing the bus. At 6 or 7 in the morning we got Paul on the bus, then we went back to Archie's crib, and we still aren't finished. Now we had a cooking contest. I started off making breakfast, Don baked a cake and Archie made lunch. When I got home that afternoon, I was, whew." **DB**

The Aesthetics of Freakery

An Interview With Frank Zappa

By Michael Bourne

Music '71 Annual Yearbook



Jean-Luc Ponty (left) and Frank Zappa (right) accept their DownBeat Critcs and Readers Poll plaques

DOWNBEAT ARCHIVES

On the Fourth of July, Frank Zappa played the second of two Indianapolis concerts. At that time, the new Mothers of Invention revealed themselves as surely the most consummately brilliant ensemble of musicians performing in the rock idiom: Ian Underwood, keyboards, tenor sax; George Duke, keyboards, ring modulator; Zappa, guitar; Jeff Simmons, bass, vocals; Aynsley Dunbar, drums; Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman, percussion, vocals. Yet Zappa proved himself, as he has consistently since his popular emergence, hardly the rock artist most may have expected, nor simply a "jazz/rock" artist or any other expressive amalgam, but a serious composer of contemporary music, whose bizarre wit and often quasi-perverse stage presence have perhaps prevented (for an audience stoned on image) the ready perception of the true genius in his art—which is certainly formidable. We spoke in the sterility of his Holiday Inn motel room.

How does it feel to spend Independence Day in the heart of middle America?

Painless so far, except for the Holiday Inn scallops.

According to the press, your group isn't supposed to be officially together.

Well, we were offered an extremely large amount of money to play a festival in England. I didn't think it would be such a bad idea.

Is this another get-your-chops-together tour?

No, we already did that one. This group has been together for about four or five weeks. We rehearsed for about 10 days before we went out on the road, and we've played San Antonio, Atlanta, a TV show in Holland, a festival in England and then Ravinia. And that job last night was our sixth job with that instrumentation.

You made this line about "most people wouldn't know good music if it came out and bit them on the ass."

I didn't even say "good" music—I said "music."

That poses the question of who is your audience to be. Who is it? Who do you want for an audience?

Who are they really? Well, judging from the letters we get, they're boys between the ages of 14 and 17, middle-class homes, with short hair, and not too rich, and not too poor, not too weird, not too straight, just sort of middle Americans actually. We don't have a very strong following among what you would call your hippie fringe or your bomb throwing lefists or extreme right. We've got pretty much a middle-of-the-road audience.

Who would you want your audience to be?

I just wish there were more sort of middle-of-the-road people; then we'd have a bigger audience. The problem in the United States today is that everything is becoming so polarized. It's a constant pressure on everybody to choose up sides, to be either right or left, and to live your life according to some idiotic dogma that will allow you to be in the club.

What about the degree of musical appreciation in your audience?

Well, I don't want the people to be different, you know. Let's put it this way: I would just as soon have those same people who were out there in that audience last night, with a little bit broader background by which to compute the musical events on stage. The introduction to "Call Any Vegetable" is the opening part of "Agon" by Igor Stravinsky. Nobody recognizes that. We played it at that concert in Los Angeles with the Philharmonic—Zubin Mehta didn't recognize it! And we're playing it exactly off the score; we voiced it out, the exact same things that are on the page, there's nothing left out, just that it's being played by electric instruments. The only person that knew that we played "Agon" in L.A. was Lalo Schifrin. Nobody in the orchestra even recognized it.

Do they not recognize it out of context or maybe can't see beyond ...

No, it's more likely they've never heard "Agon."

The one aspect I noticed most about your performance was the great theatrical precision. The music has that precision as a score, but the dialogue is also that exact—like the moment in "Call Any Vegetable" where you say, "You and your little green buddies ... maintaining, your coolness together."

Well, that's right off the record, that's the words to the song. That's not an improvised monologue.

That's what I mean. I suspect many people assume that these are improvised ad-lib bits.

I don't think that, because judging from the response to the opening line of "Call Any Vegetable," which is, "This is a song about vegetables; they keep you regular, they're real good for you"—well, that's the automatic clue that we're now going to play "Call Any Vegetable." Teen audiences respond strongest to material that they've already heard on record. And judging from the applause or whatever noises are coming out of the audience, they already knew the song, which was recorded in 1967.

You know, it's been out, so they had a chance to hear it and know what the thing is. And whether they like it or not, they respond to it because they remember it. It's like: somebody

is gonna play something off their record! So you've got to compute that into their response, too, and you have to compute all their responses by that criteria. They'll respond best to things they've already heard at home, things that they've lived with already, things that are familiar, things that they believe they already understand and can make value judgments about. But when we play "The Hunchback Duke," they don't say or do anything, in spite of the fact that 80 percent of the material in it appeared on *Burnt Weeny Sandwich* under the title of "Little House I Used To Live In." And also the closing movement of "The Hunchback Duke" medley is "Cruisin' For Burgers" from *Uncle Meat.* So individually they might recognize those things when they hear them, if they heard the record. But if I say the name of the song is "The Hunchback Duke," there's no response.

Yeah, like when you got to the lines of "Cruisin' For Burgers," that's when you got the ovation. But do you think the theatricality in the band obscures musical appreciation? Or do you feel this is what they really want to see?

Neither of those things. I think it's integral to the music. It's as integral as any piece by John Cage; like for instance, the one where he has the trombone player who wanders around stage and first blows his horn into a bucket of water, and then lies on his back under a piano and plays one note, and then gets up and pulls an apple out of the end of his horn and throws it. You know, it's part of the music. For instance, the point where we're just scratching on the strings of the guitar and the bass and doing all these poses around the stage: it's necessary that it be in there. It would be extremely dull during that section if we just stood there and went glonk, glonk, glonk.

Dull visually, as far as a concert is concerned.

Well, on a record you can do certain things to enhance the sound. But to keep the momentum of the piece, we've tried it before without the movements, and it's always more effective, it carries better, if there's some physical movement to enhance that very sparse section, because it's just a few little clicks and that.

Do you think your music can be as spontaneous as you would like it to be?

We're not doing spontaneous music to the extent the old Mothers group used to do it. I've more or less abandoned that until the audience got a chance to comprehend it. I mean, there were elements in what we did that were completely spontaneous, like at the point where I start conducting and breaking up the tunes; that's all 100 percent spontaneous, nobody knows where it's gonna go. **DB**

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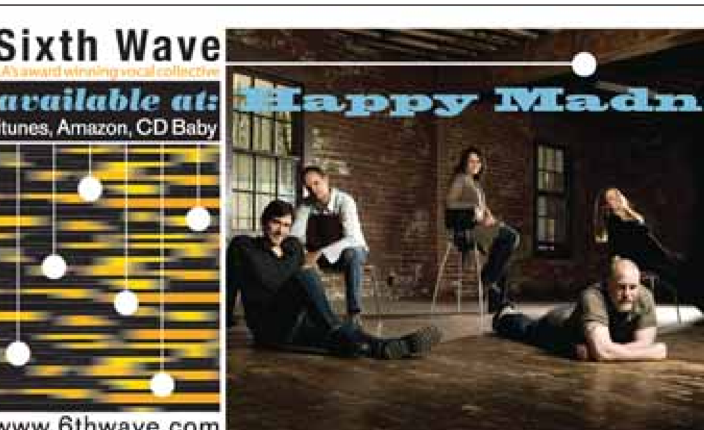

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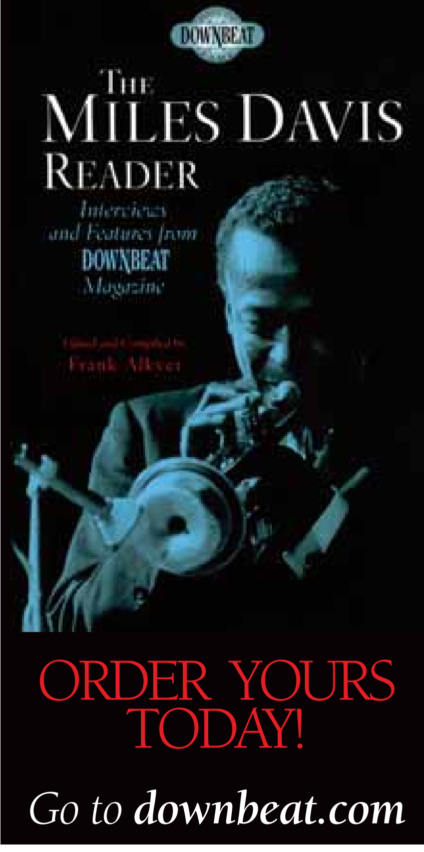

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Louie Bellson & Dizzy Gillespie

By Leonard Feather
March 23, 1967

This Blindfold Test came about in an unusual—in fact, entirely accidental—manner. It was Dizzy Gillespie's day off, and he had arranged to drop over for a chat. When he arrived, he had Louie Bellson with him. We started reminiscing and then decided to keep the tape running.

Teddy Hill

"King Porter Stomp" (from *Dizzy Gillespie*, RCA Victor). Recorded in 1937. Gillespie, trumpet.

Louie Bellson: I couldn't tell who most of the soloists were. But I knew it was Dizzy's record. It's amazing that he sounded so much like Roy Eldridge in those days.

Dizzy Gillespie: I'd never recorded before. One minute I had my horn pointed at the mic, and the other minute I was over here somewhere. They said, "Take your horn and point it at the microphone." I said, "Oh, I thought it picked up everything in the room."

LB: What year was that?

DG: 1937. That chunk, chunk, chunk was typical of rhythm sections, they weren't loose. A little later on, we got in the groove—we got Kenny Clarke. Teddy didn't like Kenny's boom-bah-doom on the bass drum. He'd say, *hrrrrrrop boom*, *hrrrrrrrrrop boom*, so Teddy called him "Klook Mops," and that's how he got his name. Teddy was going to get rid of him because he didn't like them klook mops.

LB: I'm giving the record the highest stars because I'm thinking of the records in those days with all the solos. They were great.

Dizzy Gillespie

"Lover Come Back To Me" (from *Dizzy Gillespie*, RCA/Victor). Recorded in 1948. Gillespie, trumpet; Al McKibbon, bass; Teddy Stewart, drums.

LB: How high can you go with the stars? Is there a limit? I was going to say that's one of the greatest trumpet players of all time, and I'm not just saying it because he's sitting here. That's one of Diz's early big bands; everything is so modern. The fact that it's in three, too—3/4 was a waltz in those days.

DG: How it came about, we were getting ready to go into the Strand Theater and the theater manager says, "Listen, Gillespie, I like the way you sound on the trumpet, but why don't you make something with the melody?" My lip got this long when he said that to me, so I said, "I'll fix him! 'Lover Come Back To Me' in three-quarter time."

Clark Terry–Chico O'Farrill

"Happiness Is" (from *Spanish Rice*, Impulse). Recorded in 1966. Terry, vocal; O'Farrill, arranger.

DG: Well, in the first place, I give it no stars because with all those lyrics about different musicians, it didn't mention my name (*laughter*). I liked that, though, very much. But it didn't have solos in it, so I'm not equipped to judge. I'll give it 2½ stars, and if it had somebody on there that played a beautiful solo, it would have been way up there.

LB: I might be criticized all the time, and people may say, "Well, you always give somebody four or five stars," but knowing what it is—it's a little commercial ditty, and with Clark's talent—I'd give it 5 stars because of Clark. But every time I think of Clark, if he's going to sing, I like to hear him play—it would be like listening to Dizzy and he only sang.

Howard McGhee

"Sunset Eyes" (from *Maggie's Back In Town*, Contemporary). Recorded in 1961. McGhee, trumpet; Phineas Newborn, Jr., piano; Leroy Vinnegar, bass; Shelly Manne, drums.

DG: It's got to be somebody from my era, because of the bridge. If I'd written the bridge, I'd have tried to do something a little more different from my era. The bridge is strictly a 1940 bebop bridge, and I would think it was Howard McGhee. If I were judging this by the standards of 1947, 1945, at that time, it would have been sort of new progressions, and I would have given it a great many stars. But judging by what's happening now, I wouldn't be able to give it much. Well, for Howard McGhee's trumpet—which I adore—I'd have to give it at least 3. For the composition, it would be down to a rather low ebb.

LB: I was going to say it was recorded maybe in the late '50s or middle '50s. I would agree with Dizzy. I would give it 3 stars too. The drummer gets a good clean recording sound.

Buddy Rich

"Sister Sadie" (from *Swingin' New Big Band*, Pacific Jazz). Rich, drums; Jay Corre, tenor saxophone.

LB: That's got to be Buddy Rich.

DG: That's Horace Silver's tune. I like Horace better than all them other horns in this band.

LB: I give it the ultimate in stars because of Buddy, because he's a great player, and even though the band doesn't have any outstanding soloists, they sound great.

DG: Lou is judging it solely because of Buddy Rich. I don't particularly like the ensemble.

LB: I'll give it 5 stars because of Buddy, but I agree with Diz. You've got to be honest—it's a new band. We can't compare a band like that with a Basie or an Ellington.

DG: We must be honest with the stars, too. We can't say "A" for effort. Anything you give the playing on it, you give the stars for Buddy.

LB: I'd give the band 2½ stars. db

The "Blindfold Test" is a listening test that challenges the featured artist to discuss and identify the music and musicians who performed on selected recordings. The artist is then asked to rate each tune using a 5-star system. No information is given to the artist prior to the test.

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