

THE BLUES—YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW...

AUGUST 6, 1970

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THE BIWEEKLY MUSIC MAGAZINE

The Legend Of Leadbelly:
New Facts About An Old Master

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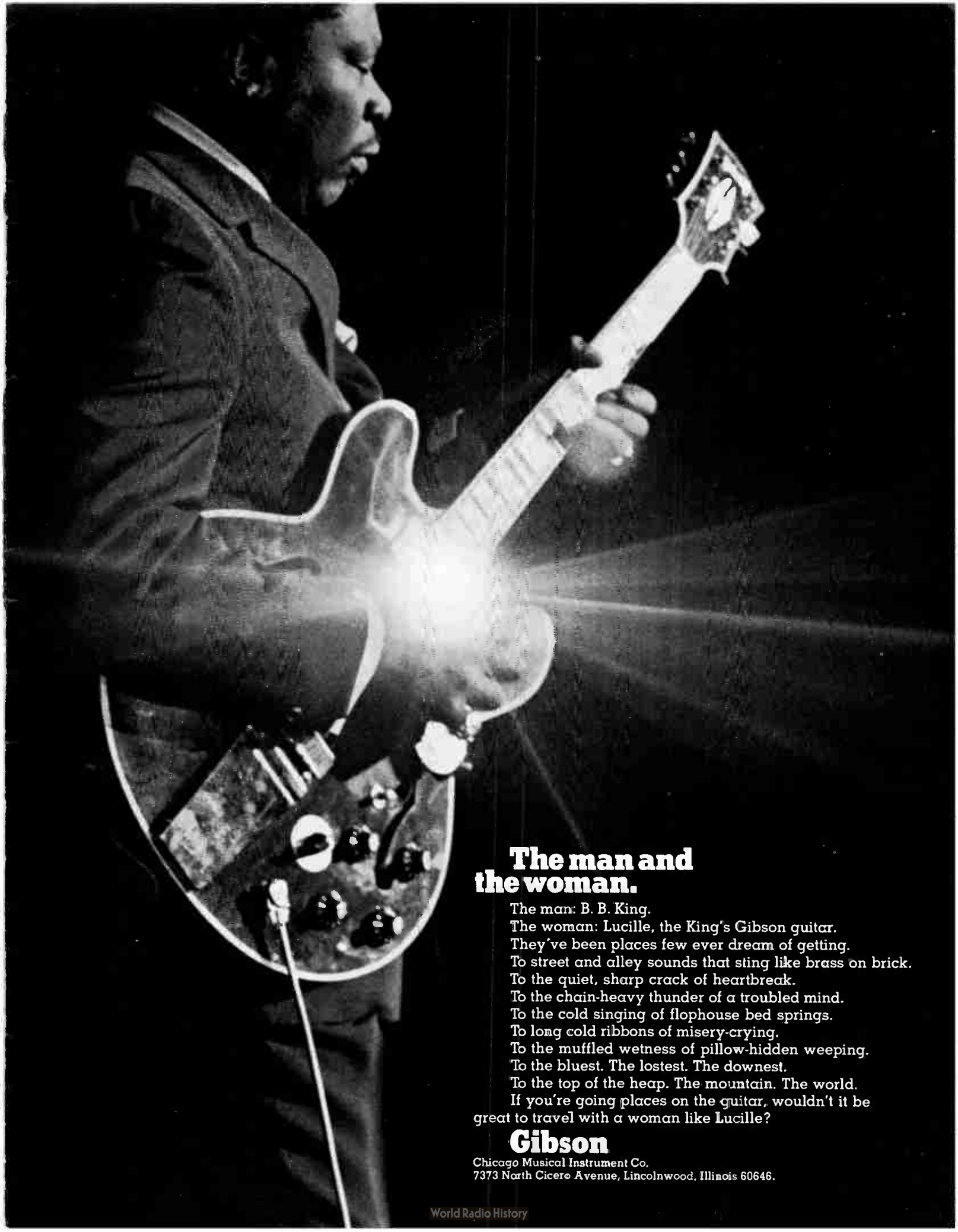
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THE FIRST CHORUS

By CHARLES SUBER

"RESPECT" WAS THE TOPIC of the recent second annual Famous Arrangers Clinic, held at the Univ. of Nevada (Las Vegas). The theme of respect, and variations, seemed to be the basic ingredient from which everyone, students and faculty learned from each other.

The students were mainly college level jazz musicians who were deeply interested in arranging as it applies to jazz phrasing, voicing and composition. The several music educators in the student body regarded the sessions as serious "in-service" teacher training as well as a postgraduate experience of writing for their own ensembles.

The resident faculty—Marty Paich, di-



rector; Billy Byers, Dan Haerle, Wes Hensel, and Keith Moon—scheduled classes all day and one-to-one sessions during the night hours. Guest instructors such as Mel Torme and Dee Barton came in for a day or two or whatever time they could spare, and went into anything and everything the students wanted.

But back to "respect." Here are some examples, implied and explicit.

Student: "How do I come on with my charts when the band is full of heavies?" **Instructor:** "Just don't give them. Beat out the time you want and let your music earn their respect."

Instructor: "Be careful not to come in too strong right after a solo. Write down a few bars so the soloist can take the audience's applause and not have to slink back into his section with the band having crashed down over him."

Instructor: "If you are conducting a show, particularly a book show, and you have control of the entrance cue, don't put your hand up until just before the attack. Holding your hand up too long means the wind players have to stay blown up and tensed. Another thing, if the light cues and such are being timed, don't ask the band to blow full out. Take care of their chops. Don't waste them."

A college teacher (there on a scholarship from the National Association of Jazz Educators): "Just listening to these pros and their dedication! I can't wait to get back and write some new things."

Instructor: "Don't attempt to make a small group sound like a little big band. Respect it for what it is, an ensemble with its own voices." And: "Consider, if you can, the musicians who are going to play your chart. Don't write a top F for the trumpet if you know he can't make it. But, if he's shuckin', write it so he can't get away!"

The atmosphere of the sessions were distinctly professional, i.e., "characteristic of, or conforming to, the technical or ethical standard of a profession or an occupation." Or, if you wish, everyone dealt with each other with respect. They all got a lot of work done, learned some new ideas and ways to create them. Great. . . .

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education in jazz

by George Wein

I guess I've known about Berklee almost as long as I've known about jazz. It was in Boston, and I was from Boston and although I never studied there, it seems that I kept bumping into fine musicians who did. My impression, at that time, was that Berklee was a small school specializing in jazz instruction that must have been doing a pretty good job of it if the student musicians I met were any indication.



Even after leaving Boston and getting more deeply involved in the producing of jazz festivals, I still found myself constantly reminded of the kind of musicians that Berklee was turning out. Among former Berklee students who have performed in festivals I have produced, the following names come to mind: Gabor Szabo, Gary Burton, Gary McFarland, Toshiko, Steve Marcus, Sadao Watanabe, Quincy Jones, and half of the Woody Herman Band.

After too many years, I recently had occasion to visit the school. It's still comparatively small, still specialized, and still very much involved with jazz, but a great deal more has happened since my Boston days. In addition to a thorough grounding in jazz techniques, students are now trained in all phases of professional music including preparation for studio work and scoring for television and films. A program leading to the Degree of Bachelor of Music provides for those with academic as well as musical interests and the school is producing good musicians who fulfill all of the necessary qualifications for a career in music education.

Believing as I do that the people best qualified to talk about anything are those who have done it, I am delighted to see on the staff men such as Charlie Mariano, Alan Dawson, Herb Pomeroy, John LaPorta, Phil Wilson and others for whom I have great musical as well as personal respect.

As someone who is deeply involved with jazz, I'm glad there is a school like Berklee to help young musicians who feel the same way.

George Wein

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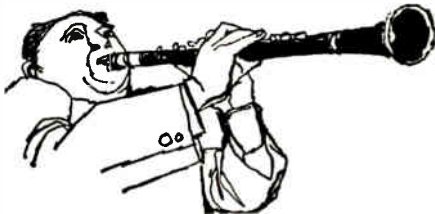
CHORDS & DISCORDS

A Forum For Readers

Blues for Pete

In the June 11th issue, reviewer Chris Albertson gives great cause to lament the disappearance of Pete Welding from the *Blues 'n' Folk* column. Albertson, who previously committed the unpardonable sin of writing liner notes for the Biograph Blind Willie McTell LP in which he mentioned that he never had listened to the Melodeon Library of Congress McTell, an essential disc to the 1949 McTell heard on the Biograph album, has done it again. I refer to his horrendous downgrading of the Albert King/Otis Rush and Howlin' Wolf Chess Vintage series albums.

One star for some germinal Albert King which proves that he is, indeed, a blues singer rather than a Stax/Volt technician? One star for Otis Rush, perhaps the most emotionally taut singer from Chicago, and



much akin to Robert Johnson? And only two stars for early 1950's Wolf, during which time his voice was still a "jazz" instrument of great capabilities?

No one, I believe, has ever accused Wolf's lyrics to tunes like *Smokestack Lightning* of being "pedestrian." I'm sure that Charlie Patton just turned over in his grave. And finally, Albertson strikes out at Little Walter. How long we've waited for this album. Robert Jr.'s guitar work is so tasteful and Walter's harp is just beautiful, the "echo" that Albertson objects to adding to its "ethereal, sax-like beauty" rather than detracting from it.

One last note: Big Bill (Hill's) Copa Cabana went out of business several years ago. The album Albertson reviewed was first issued about six years ago (I believe it was recorded live, *except* for the Sonny Boy Williamson track) as *Folk Festival of the Blues* on Chess' Argo label.

Pete Welding, where are you???

Mark B. Rohrer

Madison, Wisc.

Pete Welding is now a record producer and a&r man for Epic Records, which is why he had to give up reviewing records. We miss him, too . . . but he still does features. Chris Albertson is entitled to his opinions, as is Mark Rohrer. —Ed.

African Minority View

What ever happened to the real jazz coverage in your magazine? Besides the coverage on pop we find ourselves having to put up with pretentious jazz, lukewarm jazz, in fact all types except the REAL jazz, the swinging exciting music we used to have. These days a story has to be told, there has to be a catch or if you

swing—you are out man, out. Let's have some Krupa, Bellson, Goodman, Tough, Ellis (Herb). I'm sick and tired of jazz being produced under the cloak of jazz. It doesn't swing, it has no decipherable tune, and the motto seems to be 'Do anything, but don't let them know the tune, or that we are playing 'heebie jeebie' music.'

How I long to hear and read about the swing era, and dream about a swing resurgence. At least this was an exciting, swinging brand of jazz, with plenty of exuberance, guts and above all, Solid Swing. Remember Duke's "It don't mean a thing. . . ."

Please—even if only to keep me quiet, let's hear some more about the greats

in jazz, men who are being forgotten and who after all started it all.

Tony Howard

Bulawayo, Rhodesia

Ironing Out the Kinks

I have just begun buying your magazine, and I enjoy it very much. Your recent Morrison and Clapton articles were very well done. However, I think **down beat** should do a feature (or interview) with one of the most outstanding rock contributors today, Ray Davies of the Kinks. Also enjoyed articles on Tony Williams and J.J. Johnson (db, May 28).

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APARTHEID DEFIED BY GETZ IN SOUTH AFRICA

When Stan Getz arrived in South Africa last spring for a three-week tour, he didn't know that advance publicity had stated



he would be performing only for white audiences.

At a press conference in Johannesburg, the tenorist was asked if he would play for "all members of the public" (meaning non-segregated audiences). His answer was an emphatic "yes," but most of those present, aware of official opposition and the negative attitude of the tour's promoters, took his response with a grain of salt.

But they didn't know Getz. He hounded the promoters to obtain a permit for him to work in the Black Townships. They finally gave in, and the government granted the permits, but then, in a turnabout, the promoters advised him they were no longer interested in going through with the black concerts. The main reason was that they wanted to bring Getz back later in the year for further appearances.

After playing for whites only in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, Getz returned to Johannesburg and managed to have a concert organized at the Bantu Men's Social Center. An African combo was on the stand when he arrived, and he promptly unpacked his horn and joined them. He then performed with his own group, did a duet with ex-Sergio Mendes guitarist Rosinha de Valencia, who made the tour with him, and continued to jam with the black musicians.

When Getz tried to leave the hall after the long session, he was mobbed by fans, and it took him a good hour to get out.

Getz was the first U.S. jazz instrumentalist to tour South Africa since a Jazz West Coast package (Bud Shank, Bob Cooper, June Christy, and the Claude Williamson Trio) visited in 1958. They, too, insisted on performing for blacks, as had Tony Scott

before them, and as did singer Mark Murphy in 1967.

Getz proved once again that jazz has no racial boundaries. In the words of a local ex-musician and reporter: "Stan Getz, a musician among musicians and a man among men, proved it is better to walk into the lion's den and do something than to stand outside and throw stones."

MANY BASES TOUCHED AT D.C. JAZZ MEETING

A provocative and stimulating blend of talk and music comprised the agenda for the Left Bank Jazz Society of Washington, D.C.'s First National Conference on Jazz, which took place June 5-7 in the nation's capital.

Supported by the Eastern Conference of Jazz Societies and prominent individuals in the jazz community, the event was held at the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History auditorium. Its stated aims were to unite persons interested in jazz, and to seek ways to produce, preserve, and present jazz to a larger audience in the U.S. and abroad.

Attending the conference and taking part in panel discussions were musicians Donald Byrd of Howard University, Willie (The Lion) Smith, Jimmy McPhail, and Julian Euell, and such other notables as Willis Conover of the Voice of America, George London, program director of the Kennedy Center, and Rev. John Gensel, president of the Eastern Conference of Jazz Societies. Also in attendance were representatives from Jazz Interactions, the Jazz Line, and Jazzmobile in New York, and Jazz Spotlight Productions.

The Saturday afternoon panel tackled the development and promotion of jazz. Vernon Welsh, president of the Left Bank Jazz Society of Baltimore, summarized the organization's history, which goes back to 1964. Len Jordan, president of the Left Bank Jazz Society of Washington, patterned after the Baltimore group, stated that his organization is beginning to reach the jazz community in an effort to rebuild and unite it.

The problems of jazz in clubs were discussed, and the suggestion was made to get more jazz into coffee shops to make it available to young people. Jimmy McPhail, owner of the Gold Room, a D.C. club, told of the current plight of night clubs.

Rev. Gensel mentioned the current prevalence of resident jazz musicians in the nation's colleges as a positive development, citing Andrew Hill, David Baker, Cecil Taylor, Yusef Lateef, and Byrd.

Members of the audience were free to participate in the discussions, which provided considerable give and take.

The second panel, *Jazz As An Art*, focused on the critics' "control" of the music and their value and relation to the musicians. It was more or less the con-

sensus that a critic's duty is to give his opinion of an artist or recording in terms of certain musical absolutes based on a thorough knowledge of jazz and broad listening experience.

Sunday's panel discussion was enlightening, with Donald Byrd speaking on the topic of education and communication in the field of jazz. It was an almost unanimous conclusion that education is the basic tool for changing the image of jazz and to erase the myths. All forms of music must be taught in the early grades—not only Western European concepts. A three-fold approach was suggested: at the public school level, the university level, and in general adult education.

Conover said that the Federal Communications Commission charter calls for programming of minority appeal music, of which jazz is decidedly an example. The FCC must recognize that jazz is not commercial and that radio and TV time must be provided for it, he said.

Willie (The Lion) Smith, in red-striped vest, bow tie, and derby, emphasized that musicians must reach out to their audiences. He discussed his fight for larger royalties and a fair percentage of jukebox profits, and the problems of the musician's artistic control over his recordings.

London emphasized that the Kennedy Center is committed to jazz and other mainstream areas of American music, going on to say that education should expose children to a "vast grab-bag of art"—jazz, country music, folk, and classical. A jazz artist in residence at the Kennedy Center would be a matter of funding, he stated.

A diversity of talent was brought to Washington by the non-profit Left Bank Jazz Society in the evenings, for a minimal admission charge.

The Elvin Jones Quartet held forth on Saturday with George Coleman and Frank Foster, tenor saxophones, and Wilbur Little, bass. The Freddie Hubbard Quartet provided interesting contrast with Cedar Walton, piano; Wayne Dockery, bass, and the phenomenal Louis Hayes, drums.

The Hank Mobley Quintet, performing on Sunday evening, played a large variety of music. With the tenor saxophonist were Bill Hardman, trumpet; Stanley Cowell, piano; Mickey Bass, bass, and Jimmy Hopps, drums.

The National Conference on Jazz will probably become an annual event, says Jordan. He indicated that the conference program will be expanded in the future.

—Martha Sanders Gilmore

POTPOURRI

Drummer Joe Morello has formed his own group, with reedman Lou Marini Jr. (ex-Woody Herman and North Texas State); Rich Matteson (ex-Dukes of Dixieland) on euphonium, bass trumpet, tuba, and piano; Jack Peterson (formerly of the Berklee College of Music and Southern Methodist Univ. faculties) on guitar and

piano, and **John Monaghan** (another Herman-North Texas product) on bass. The quintet will make its debut at Lennie's-on-the-Turnpike near Boston Aug. 3, and has been signed by Ovation Records.

The 1970 lineup for the annual American Folk, Blues and Gospel Festival fall tour of Europe shapes up as follows: **Sister Rosetta Tharpe**, **Bukka White**, **Sonny Terry** and **Brownie McGhee**, **Champion Jack Dupree**, and **Willie Dixon's Chicago Blues All Stars** (**Shakey Horton**, **Clifton James**, **Johnny Shines**, and others).

TV SOUNDINGS

By LEONARD FEATHER

KCET, LOS ANGELES' educational station (Channel 28) is the point of origin of *Homewood*, a weekly hour-long series that has done much in recent months to clear our climate of the musical smog that generally blankets all television.

The shows, which will be up for syndication via other educational channels, delve into areas no commercial station would cover. An outstanding example was *The Barrelhouse*, in which was recreated a piece and place of American musical history.

The Barrelhouse was a Watts rhythm and blues center of the early 1950s. Its music provided the bridge between jazz and rock, with singers and instrumental combos whose contributions have become legendary, though some of the legends have been left in limbo while Johnny-come-lately imitators of their styles, often white, have cashed in on their innovations.

Johnny Otis, chef for the musical banquets at the old Barrelhouse, served as the caterer at this nostalgic and musically exciting revival. In addition to coordinating the show, he emceed, sang a couple of numbers (including *Willie and the Hand Jive*, his r&b best seller of the late '50s), and played piano and vibes.

Essentially this was a vocal presentation. For starters Big Joe Turner, looking a little old and tired but still loaded with conviction, shook, rattled and rolled his mountainous midriff through the blues by that name and his other big hit, *Chains of Love*.

Roy Milton, another singer who has been unfairly neglected, had difficulty projecting above the overexuberant band sounds. Lowell Fulson, a tart and incisive yea-sayer, did better with the accompaniment and rounded things out with some B.B. King-like guitar.

Esther Phillips, who in her teen-age days with Otis' 1952 band was known as Little Esther, came back strong, nasal and provocative in *Misery* and *Confessin' the Blues*, helped out on the latter by the true blue guitar funk of Otis' remarkable 16-year-old son Shuggie.

Eddie Cleanhead Vinson, the one-time Cootie Williams orchestra vocalist and alto saxophonist, still sings the same sardonically humorous lyrics about his baldness, still uses a shuffle-rhythm background on *Kidney Stew Blues*, still plays a mess of collard-greens alto. His absence from the

scene through the years is inexplicable.

No less evocative of a where-has-he-been reaction was Charles Brown, who of course took us back to *Driftin' Blues*. Brown's warm, pleading manner has lost little of its potency.

The program reached its peak when T-Bone Walker and Shuggie Otis took off



T-Bone Walker: Program's Peak

on a guitar battle the likes of which I had never before seen or heard on television and am unlikely to witness again. T-Bone is as wise as his years and Shuggie is wise beyond his own.

The setting, a reconstruction of the old club, captured the authentic atmosphere with complete conviction. Camerawork was effective without resorting to tricks. The house band, used mostly for backgrounds but occasionally spotting a good solo, comprised Otis Sr. and Jr.; Melvin Moore, trumpet; Gene (Mighty Flea) Connors, trombone; Plas Johnson, tenor; Preston Love, baritone; Wilton Felder, electric bass, and Paul Lagos (of Kaleidoscope), drums.

Robert Foshko produced and Allan L. Muir directed. Charles Champlin, host for the *Homewood* series, provided an introduction that set the right tone for the informal mood of the show.

Now that young audiences everywhere are beginning to pick up on the genuine, like-it-was blues as recounted by they-were-there people, perhaps there will be room now and then for an Otis-type presentation on the networks—certainly at least on one of the late-evening desk-and-sofa programs. Otis, by the way, plans to take a similar package on a concert tour.



STRICTLY AD LIB

New York: The Museum of Modern Art's *Jazz in the Garden* series had its first jazz July 2 from the **Elvin Jones Group** (**George Coleman** and **Frank Foster**, tenor saxophones; **Wilbur Little**, bass). Prior concerts featured **Country Joe McDonald** and the **Jam Factory**, and the **Stars of Faith**. T-Bone Walker was scheduled for July 9, followed by **Les McCann** (July 16); **Odetta** and **The Fourth Way** (July 23); **Jimmy McGriff** (July 30); **Muddy Waters** (Aug. 6); the **Pazant Brothers** and **Betty Barney** (Aug.

13), and a Moog concert with **Dick Hyman** and the **Children of All Ages** (Aug. 20) . . . **Jazz on the Hudson**, a June 19 boat ride, provided four and a half solid hours of jazz and was a resounding success. The groups of **Pharoah Sanders**, **Freddie Hubbard** and **McCoy Tyner**, the **Ro-Mas Orchestra**, and jam groups including altoists **Gary Bartz**, **Jackie McLean**, and **Sonny Red**; trumpeter **Cal Massey**; trombonist **Curtis Fuller**; tenorist **Archie Shepp**; pianist **Cedar Walton**; bassist **Reggie Workman**; drummer **Sunny Murray**, and many others performed . . . Drummer **Rashied Ali's** quartet (**Carlos Ward**, alto; **Fred Simmons**, piano; **Stafford James**, bass) made its debut at **Slug's** June 23. **Alice Coltrane** guested on harp for two nights. The club also had **Hank Mobley** for a week, and the tenorist worked with **Kenny Dorham** at the **East Village Inn** the week of June 22 . . . **Miles Davis** and **Laura Nyro** headlined at the **Fillmore East** . . . **Ornette Coleman** was set to make his first New York club appearance in several years at the **Village Gate** in early July, with **Alice Coltrane** added to his group . . . **Elvin Jones' Village Vanguard** stint was followed by **Freddie Hubbard's** group (**Carlos Garnett**, tenor; **Kenny Barron**, piano; **Junie Booth**, bass; **Louis Hayes**, drums) . . . **Mose Allison** and **Charlie Haden** were at the **Top of the Gate** in June . . . **Tyree Glenn** continued the new jazz policy at **Trude Heller's** in the **Village** . . . **The World's Greatest Jazz Band** was at the **Roosevelt Grill** through June . . . **Dakota Staton** and the **Norman Simmons Trio** were held over at the **Downbeat** . . . **Gene Krupa**, who returned to work after a long convalescence with a gig at **Plaza 9**, was in the hospital at presstime with an ear infection . . . **British pop singer-organist Georgie Fame** did a week at **Ungano's** with **Shorty**, a group of top **Albion jazz men**, including **Colin Green**, **Brian Odgers**, **Alan Skidmore**, and **Harvey Burns**. He was followed by **landsman Brian Auger's Trinity** (**Auger**, organ; **Gary Boyle**, guitar; **David Ambrose**, bass; **Clive Thacker**, drums). The group plays everything from *Maiden Voyage* to *Sly* and the *Family Stone* tunes and **Gabriel Faure**. The club's amplification system needs overhauling . . . **Singer Joe Lee Wilson** was at the **Apartment** supper club the week of June 22, accompanied by the **Nina Sheldon Trio**. **Georgie Fame** dropped in on opening night . . . **Sam Rivers** did a weekend at **Pee Wee's** . . . **Charles McPherson** was at **Diggs Den** with a group including pianist **Barry Harris** and drummer **Roy Brooks** . . . **The 360 Degree Music Experience** (**Grachan Moncur III**, trombone; **Gato Barbieri**, tenor; **Dave Burrell**, piano; **Jymie Merritt**, bass; **Beaver Harris**, drums) is doing weekends at **Space Station**, 204 **Lenox Ave.**, an uptown loft . . . **Pianist Burton Greene** returned from Europe . . . The word is that **Chick Corea** will leave **Miles Davis** in August, taking bassist **Dave Holland** along, to lead his own trio, with drummer **Barry Altschul** as the third member. **Keith Jarrett** is the rumored candidate to take over the keyboard with **Miles**, with no bassist set as yet . . . **Carmen McRae** was at the **Rainbow Grill** through June

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ILLUMINATING THE LEADBELLY LEGEND

HUDDIE LEDBETTER, king of the 12-string guitar, was one of the archetypal blues men who sang and played through the southwest during the period between the two wars. A contemporary of Blind Lemon Jefferson and of the generation before T-Bone Walker and Lightnin' Hopkins, Leadbelly was the most versatile of all singers in the Afro-American tradition and was deep-rooted in its folkways. Besides the country blues, and the urban blues, his bag included many types of folksongs—the field holler, country dances and reels, cowboy songs, talking blues, and ballads.

He died in 1949 in New York City. He was one of the big figures.

Following his discovery in 1933 at a prison farm in Angola, La., by John and Alan Lomax, who were field recording men for the Library of Congress, Leadbelly was pardoned, publicized, and presented to awed listeners on a concert tour.

He'd twice sung his way out of prisons where he had been sentenced to long terms for manslaughter and made great copy. He was the real thing, a minstrel from the cotton fields and chain gangs of the Deep South, but the grand tour was too much for everyone, including Leadbelly, who soon tired of genteel university audiences, and the Lomaxes, who had their hands full trying to keep the singer under control and on schedule.

Leadbelly quit and returned to Shreveport, La. The Lomaxes published *Negro Folk Songs as Sung by Lead Belly* (Macmillan, 1936) and the singer, except for an occasional record date and night club or concert appearance in New York, dropped out of sight.

Ten years later Leadbelly turned up in Hollywood, where I was operating a jazz and blues record store and installed himself as a favorite of the left-wing motion picture colony. To his bag Leadbelly added songs of social significance, beginning with his then newly-coined *Bourgeois Blues* and reaching fearsome levels with *The Gallis Pole*, a song about lynching.

Leadbelly and I met at the home of a Hollywood writer, and the singer took to dropping into my shop. We began a series of note-takings that I hoped would yield a definitive biography of this remarkable man. That was not to be. His involvement with concerts and my own with Dial Records, just begun as a jazz label, led to separate ways, and in 1946 it did not seem possible that this vital, electric man, who had survived calamities enough to have killed nine other mortals, would be dead within three years.

Not only did time run out, but the notes disappeared as well, to turn up only recently during a sorting of Dial files. While they cover only certain phases of Leadbelly's life and in some cases duplicate biographical material appearing in the Lomax book, they do throw new light on the life and times of the blues man, his early influences, and views on music.

Leadbelly was not exceptionally big—in the 6-foot, 180-pound category. It's just that he seemed bigger. And taller and more formidable—everything about him was projected in larger-than-life dimensions. He was of dark mahogany color, the red hues coming from his mother, Sally, who was half Cherokee. His face was broad and his

features strong, the eyes penetrating and the teeth as solid and as white as a row of tombstones. A scar, lighter than the flesh, circled his neck from ear to ear, a sinister memento of a knifing fray in which he was left for dead, one of those he didn't win (those he won led to the prison sentences).

Energy exuded from this man. When Leadbelly performed, he would sit for 30 seconds or more in a Zen-like trance, composing himself before he began, while those in the audience looked on uneasily and a little embarrassed. Shortly they would be rocked out of their seats by the explosive force of the 12-string guitar and a voice that ran the gamut of Afro-American song style from soft, moaning blues-drenched tones to fierce, accusative shouts. A song like *Gallis Pole* could well leave its listeners strung out:

*Only takes twenty-five or thirty dollars to
save him from the gallows,
But they gonna hang him if he don't
bring up a little money . . .*

But to return to the missing notes—Jan. 20, 1889, is the date Leadbelly gave for his birth, not 1885 or 1886, as has appeared elsewhere. He was called variously Leadbelly (an easy distortion of the name when taking into account his reputation for endurance), Lead, and himself seemed to favor Huddie, which he pronounced Hue-dee. He was born Huddie William Ledbetter, five miles south of Mooringsport, La., a town of a few hundred on Caddo Lake, near the Louisiana-Texas border in the Red River country. His father was Wes Ledbetter, the son of a South Carolina slave and a native of Louisiana.

When Huddie was a child, the family moved across the state line to Harrison County, Texas, where Wes Ledbetter brought 68½ acres of land on Caddo Lake for \$2.50 an acre—money laboriously saved by share cropping.

Working like a demon 16 hours a day cutting trees and burning brush, Wes Ledbetter cleared the parcel, built a home for the family, and began farming in this wilderness land. It was a five-mile ride on horseback to get the mail and a two-mile walk to the nearest school at Lake Chapel, and there were no white people for 20 miles around. In this sealed-off world of Afro-American pioneers, music was an indispensable part of life. Work songs were still functional—Huddie remembered singing *Ho-Day, Who Ready?* as a get-up song on the way to school every morning.

Wes Ledbetter did not sing but played the six-string guitar. Two uncles, Terrell and Bob, were accomplished singers and guitar pickers. When Huddie was 7, his Uncle Terrell returned from Mooringsport one evening by mule with Huddie's first instrument, a windjammer, a small Cajun accordion, and Huddie remembered staying up all night until, as he said, he "whipped it." His mother taught him his first tune, a jig titled *Dinah Got a Wooden Leg*. The blues were not sung so much in the farming community. The music that Huddie heard all around him was in the form of jigs, schottisches, breakdowns, field hollers and shouts, children's guessing songs, and play songs like *Skip to My Lou* (Folkways). His early repertoire included

Goin' to Dig a Hole to Put the Devil In, Green Corn, Poor Howard, Yellow Gal and Corn Bread Rough (Electra 301-02).

Violence was to run like a purple thread through Huddie's life. His father was a quick-tempered man who had been compelled to leave another area after a near killing in a share-cropping dispute. Huddie remembered interceding between his mother and father during frightening altercations. Leadbelly said, "My daddy used to knock mama down if she disagreed with him, and I would go and stand under the shotgun on the wall until they would stop."

But Huddie was Wes Ledbetter's pride and joy. Except for a sister adopted when he was two, Huddie was an only child. Wes Ledbetter never laid a hand on him. When Huddie was 16, his father, a man of some substance in the community, presented him with a fine horse and new saddle—the 1905 equivalent of an imported sports car—and a new pistol, to be used "only in self-defense," an admonition interpreted rather freely by Huddie in later life.

By this time, Huddie was a good accordion and harmonica player, a performer on the six-string guitar, and possessed of a substantial repertoire of songs and in demand as a singer and entertainer at sukey jumps, country dances, suppers, and parties. His style had been modeled on those of his uncles and two local singers named Bud Coleman and Jim Fagin.

Huddie also had a reputation as a field hand capable of outworking anyone except his father, and, by night, a ladies' man.

"I could pick more cotton than any man in Caddo Lake country except my daddy and play and sing until midnight and then devote my attentions to the ladies," he boasted.

He began a common-law relationship with Margaret Coleman, whom he had known since childhood. A daughter, Artha Mae, was born to them, but when Margaret became pregnant a second time, public opinion forced Huddie to leave the community.

His destination was Shreveport, and Leadbelly still retained vivid memories of his two years there from about 1906 to 1908. Whisky and gin were 50 cents a quart and the town wide open. Honky-tonks, gin mills, and brothels lined Fanning St. Here he heard for the first time the fast Texas or boogie-woogie piano players.

"Boogie-woogie was called barrelhouse in those days," he said. "One of the best players was named Chee-Dee. He would go from one gin mill to the next on Fanning St. He was coal black and one of the old-line players, and he boogied the blues. At that time anybody could walk into a barrelhouse and just sit down and start playing the piano. I learned to play some piano myself by picking it out."

Leadbelly also heard pianists named Pine Top Williams, Dave Alexander, and Dave Sessom, of Houston, Tex., although he was not sure if he heard them in 1906 or later in his travels. In Shreveport, Huddie capitalized on his guitar playing, singing, good looks, and charm. He was kept by one of the Fanning St. "easy riders" and spent his nights on the town. He picked up the rolling bass he heard from the barrelhouse pianists, adapting their style to the guitar. *Fannin' Street* (Musicraft 225)

is a memento of Huddie's Shreveport days:
*When I was a boy, I put on long pants,
 And I'm going down on Fannin' Street
 And I'm going in the barrelhouse,
 Oh, follow me down. . . .*

In Shreveport, Leadbelly began to add blues to his song bag. They were in greater demand than the country songs he knew. His first blues was *I'm on My Last Go 'Round*. Another song from this period was *One Dollar Bill, Baby, Won't Buy You No Shoes*. In 1909 he got as far as New Orleans, where he heard many of the famous bands and singers, including Jelly Roll Morton, in a place on Rampart St. Leadbelly's carousing led to a serious

singer, another of the major figures of the southwestern blues. The two worked at the Big Four, the largest club on "the track," and toured Fort Worth, Austin, and smaller towns.

About this time, Leadbelly switched from six-string to 12-string guitar. "I saw one of the old 12-string Stellas sitting in the window of a Dallas store," he recalled. "The year before I'd heard a man play it in one of the traveling medicine shows where they sold cure-all for 50 cents a bottle. The price of the guitar was \$12, and I knew I had to have it."

That week he hired out and picked cotton at the going rate of \$5 a thousand pounds

for homicide. Wes Ledbetter came to his aid, selling the Caddo Lake property and using the money to retain able attorneys, but the evidence weighed heavily against Huddie, and he was sentenced to 30 years in the penitentiary.

Once in prison, Leadbelly sang his way to the coveted position of lead man, or caller, who provided the music and rhythm for work gangs. After several years on various prison farms, Leadbelly caught the attention of Gov. Pat Neff on one of the latter's official visits to the Sugar Land State Farm and became Neff's favorite unpaid entertainer. In 1925, by means of a politic and moving pardon song, composed expressly for the governor, Leadbelly was given his freedom (*Gov. Pat Neff, Electra 301-2*).

After making a vain attempt to bribe guards and win his son's freedom, Wes Ledbetter died while Huddie was still at Sugar Land. The marriage with Eletha had broken up. Huddie went to Houston and obtained a steady daytime job with an automobile agency, but the attraction of show business was irresistible. He began attending the local theaters and heard Ethel Waters and Bessie Smith for the first time. He remembered Bessie singing *Ground Hog Blues* and *Death Letter Blues*. Soon Leadbelly was playing local barrelhouses and then was back on the road and working vaudeville.

This time his travels took him to Louisiana. He went to work for the Gulf Refining Co. at Mooringsport and spent his evenings in nearby Shreveport playing and singing. Violence flared again in a fight followed by his arrest and imprisonment for assault with intent to murder. He was sentenced to 10 years at the Louisiana state prison farm at Angola, and here the Lomaxes found him in 1933.

This long period of his life, together with the details of his two prison terms, and the circumstances of his pardons, are covered in the Lomax book. Once again a pardon song was composed for the governor, O. K. Allen, and, according to Leadbelly and the Lomaxes, was instrumental in his release, though that is denied by officials (*Gov. O. K. Allen, Electra*).

As a protege of the Lomaxes, the singer then began a two-year tour of southern prison farms, universities, and concert halls. In Wilton, he married Martha Promise, a Shreveport girl. Meanwhile, his voluminous recordings for the Library of Congress continued under the supervision of the Lomaxes, running to a 144 titles. They were done between 1933 and 1940, in Angola, Shreveport, Atlanta, Washington, New York, Wilton and other cities. A selection of 24 of these recordings have been reissued on *Electra 301-2*.

Leadbelly claimed that his first commercial record date was made for Columbia in 1935 and recalled doing *Pig Meat Papa* and *East St. Louis Blues*, but neither this session nor the titles appear in his discography. The year 1935 saw his first session for the old American Record Co., on June 23, a concern with many house labels, Romeo, Melotone, Banner, Perfect, among them. The records were sold through chain stores.

Leadbelly made more than 40 titles for ARC, but only a handful were ever issued.



COURTESY MRS. G. O. ROBINSON

illness, and about 1910 he returned to his home on Caddo Lake to recuperate. Within a year or two he was on the go again, this time to more westerly parts of Texas—Marshall, Longview, Tyler, Fort Worth, and Dallas, all with their rising black populations and good-time districts.

Dallas was the liveliest place of all. Barrelhouses, gin mills, speakeasies, and night clubs were strung along Elm St. and "the central track," as Central Ave. was called because of the railway line running down its middle. Here Leadbelly met and formed a close association with Blind Lemon Jefferson, the most popular of the local blues men. Leadbelly became Jefferson's guide and acquired guitar techniques and new material from the blind

and acquired the Stella. It became his main performing instrument, although he continued to play the accordion, harmonica, and, occasionally, piano and string bass.

From 1912 to 1917, Leadbelly divided his time between farming and performing. He had married Eletha Henderson from Rockwell County, and the two settled down on rented land in the Red River country near De Kalb. But neither marriage nor share cropping was meant for the foot-loose, party-loving Leadbelly.

He was imprisoned for a year after an altercation and served the time on a chain gang. In 1917 in a fight at a dance in nearby New Boston, Leadbelly shot and killed another man with the revolver his father had given him and was arrested

A few have been picked up by Folkways, and 16 will soon be issued on a Columbia LP. On April 1, 1939, Leadbelly made an important session for Musicraft. The titles, including *Boll Weevil*, *Frankie and Albert*, and *Bourgeois Blues*, appeared in a now-rare 78 rpm album, which has not been reissued although some of the songs have been duplicated on other labels. Leadbelly recorded for RCA Victor in 1940, as a single and with the Golden Gate Quartet.

In 1941, Moe Asch first met the singer and began recording him. These performances first appeared on the Asch and Stinson labels, later on Folkways LPs. When Leadbelly went to Hollywood at the end of the war, he recorded several of his major songs for Capitol (*Ella Speed*, *Take This Hammer*, *Rock Island Line*, and two piano solos, *Eagle Rock Rag* and *Hot Piano Rag*).

At one end, Leadbelly's repertoire begins with simple country material like *Corn Bred Rough* (Asch), a sukey jump sung in a light tone and self-accompanied on the Cajun windjammer. This is not the musical exercise one hears from the folklorist. It is a genuine performance of the kind that Leadbelly gave many times as a young man while singlehandedly supplying music for a country dance in the Red River country. The same pastoral quality is found on the children's song, *Skip to My Lou* (Asch).

Leadbelly's ballad masterpiece, *Ella Speed*, tells the story of the murder of that popular woman of the "central track" by her paramour, gambler Bill Martin, and Martin's sentencing, incarceration, and bitter remorse. Material handed down from Anglo-Saxon sources also finds its way into Leadbelly's repertoire. *Frankie and Johnny* emerges as *Frankie and Albert* (Musicraft) and is called by Johnny Lomax "Leadbelly's small opera with stage directions." White folk sources contributed Leadbelly's most popular number, *Goodnight Irene* (Folkways, Capitol).

Leadbelly also composed such things as *De Titanic* (Library of Congress) and *The Hindenburg Disaster* (Electra), which comment on those headline-making events. As a singer of cowboy songs, Leadbelly brings the tough, realistic philosophy of the Afro-American blues man to material usually done in a sentimental vein—*When I Was a Cowboy out on the Western Plains* (Folkways). And he was a convincing singer of spirituals—*Rock of Ages*, *Amazing Grace*, *Must I Be Carried to the Sky on Flowered Beds of Ease?*, (Electra).

No one has better demonstrated the work song than Leadbelly, perhaps because of those long terms in the medieval prison farms of Texas and Louisiana. Under his handling, the majestic chain gang song *Take This Hammer* (Capitol) becomes a kind of American *Volga Boatman's Song*. Other work songs include *Pick a Bale of Cotton* and the ominous 'Ol Rattler (Library of Congress), named for a bloodhound that led hunts for escaped prisoners. The field holler, first cousin to the work song, is represented by *Looky, Yonder, Where the Sun Done Gone; Ain't Going Down to the Well No More* (Musicraft); and *Bring Me a Lil' Water, Silvy* (Library of Congress), the last song created from a plowman's across-the-field cries on a hot

summer's day.

Social comment set to compelling rhythm is heard on *Boll Weevil* (Musicraft), which tells of the scourge of the cotton parasite and the plight of Texas farmers ruined by its infestation. Here Leadbelly starts with commonplace detail ("got a brand new cotton dress, and it's full of holes, it's full of holes . . .") and by means of taut phrasing and sharp poetic imagery creates an artistic miniature. *Scottsboro Boys* (Electra) is in the same tradition, and *Bourgeois Blues* (Electra), with Washington, D.C., as its reference, is a thunderous diatribe against class lines and segregation:

Me and my wife went all over town.

Everywhere we went the people would turn us down.

Lord, it's a bourgeois town,

Oh, it's a bourgeois town . . .

When it came to the blues, Leadbelly had two kinds. One, which he called the talking blues, utilized effects successful in his ballads where sung stanzas were interlaced with comments delivered in spoken rhythm (*Ella Speed*). Woodie Guthrie and Pete Seeger have expanded on this style. *Fo' Day Worry Blues* (Library of Congress) tells how, in a drunken rage, Leadbelly's woman smashed his 12-string guitar. *Red Cross Store* (Bluebird) blasts the abuse of black people applying for disaster relief. *Blind Lemon* (Library of Congress) is



dedicated to his companion of the Dallas barrelhouses.

The traditional blues form finds Leadbelly a bit less securely in his element. He is basically a folk singer, and his blues sound like it. *Dallas Blues* appears as *Fort Worth and Dallas Blues* (Folkways), as Leadbelly and Blind Lemon must have sung it at the Big Four decades ago. Leadbelly imbued the blues with his special style, power and rhythm, as one hears on *You Don't Know My Mind*, *Alberta Blues*, and *De Kalb Blues* (Electra).

Leadbelly claimed he knew "over 500 songs." In the Lomax book, 49 songs, complete with music and lyrics, are given. All were recorded for the Library of Congress, together with about 100 more. *Blues and Gospel Records 1902-1942*, by John Godrich and Robert M.W. Dixon, lists the lot, as well as Leadbelly's commercial recordings (an additional 94 items) up to 1942. *Blues Records 1943-1966*, by Mike Leadbetter and Neil Slaven, lists only the Capitol items and a few of the many titles Leadbelly recorded for Folkways. The latter authors considered him a folk singer and not a blues man, a questionable judgment but perhaps necessary to keep their discography within reasonable limits.

The purity of Leadbelly's material and the survival in it of a wide variety of Afro-American forms, the largest in any

known singer, is grimly accounted for by his two prison terms, from 1917 to 1925, and from 1929 to 1934, periods when he was out of circulation and cut off from the radio and the phonograph and, therefore, not subject to any of the influences of Tin Pan Alley, the popular song, the new urban blues, or other commercial styles. The survival is also due to his prodigious memory. When asked for old songs, unsung for years, Leadbelly would conjure them up, or at least reasonable facsimiles of them, after one of his Zen-like trances.

It was not difficult to see how he had landed in trouble so often. One night in 1946, several of us accompanied him on a round of pub crawling along Central Ave., in the black section of Los Angeles. Leadbelly had his 12-string guitar along—indeed he was never separated from it—and before the third round of drinks in a particular bar, Leadbelly had taken over the place. It was Fanning St. all over. Before long, the attention paid him by two young women, almost 40 years his juniors and escorted by manly contemporaries who resented Leadbelly's responses, were on their way to creating trouble. With some difficulty we managed to get him out of the bar and back to Hollywood.

At my record shop one afternoon he walked over to the piano and began picking at the keys. I was not aware that he played. After some lengthy trial-and-error experiment, as much by sight as by sound, Leadbelly found the few notes that he wanted, in the key of G, and began punching out an old rag called *Big Fat Mama with the Meat Shaking on Her Bones*, all the while standing, bobbing, and weaving and doing dance steps. It was a crude but unbelievably rhythmic performance. (cf, *Eagle Rock Rag*, Capital).

Leadbelly's main fault, one that would have been fatal in a jazz musician, was his chronic inability to maintain the selected meter. His performances invariably accelerated. Rhythm was the strongest element in his style, and the accelerandos did have the merit of heightening tension.

His views on music were simple and to the point.

The blues? "They are meant to be danced to," he said. For him everything was dance music—or work music. He was the most physical of performers and persons. One had the feeling that he believed—and always had believed—in his own strength and its power to conquer any obstacle, and one was reminded of Wes Ledbetter, the 16-hour days and nights burning brush and clearing trees, and the irony of the Caddo Lake farm being sold to pay a lawyer's fee. Huddie's blues were medium or fast. He never played in the slow, measured tempo of the delta blues men, but more in the Texas style.

It all had to do with rhythm. And "rhythm comes from work," he added, citing copious examples of how rhythmic elements of music could be discerned in the work of the chain gang, in cotton picking, weed hoeing, track lining, and other labor of the old southwest that was accompanied by song.

Leadbelly never learned to read music. "I could have learned but I didn't want to," he said. "I wanted to be different. I learned

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MEMPHIS SLIM'S PARISIAN LOVE AFFAIR

by Valerie Wilmer

ALTHOUGH THE UNIVERSAL APPEAL of jazz has never been in dispute, the vocal blues presents an obvious problem of communication. People have the blues the world over—from Watts to Johannesburg they've felt the jackboots of oppression and the heartache of lost love—but can they really share in the down-and-out feeling of rejection when it is recounted in a language both musically and literally alien?

That a middle-aged Memphis-born blues man has worked consistently in Europe since 1963 is incongruous enough when you consider the almost insurmountable language barriers, but the fact that he can also move the people to tears is little short of remarkable. Consider the facts:

Peter (Memphis Slim) Chatman was born in the South around 55 years ago. As a small boy in Memphis he heard the barrel-house piano in the house next door and decided that that was what he wanted to do, too. He started paying his dues daily while listening to pianists like Speckled Red and Theodore Cox, and catching up on the concept of his greatest influence and inspiration, Roosevelt Sykes. "I was very impatient then, but they showed me things," recalled the bluesman. "I'd go home and practice till I got to where I could figure it all out for myself."

And figure it out he did. Moving North to Chicago in 1939, Memphis Slim met Big Bill Broonzy, the man who was his greatest inspiration on the road toward originality. Broonzy told him to stop playing like Sykes and be himself, and in 1940, hired the pianist to replace Joshua Altheimer. "Now you sound like *Memphis Slim*," Broonzy is reported to have said. "Now you feel it like nobody else, now you're on your own." Slim and Broonzy were closely associated throughout the 1940s before the pianist went out on his own. Working mainly out of Chicago and recording frequently, his became a name to be reckoned with though the market for his majestic voice and down-home piano was strictly black. The idea of singing blues for a white audience was unthinkable in those days, and Europe was just a place on the map.

Slim had a hit with *Beer Drinkin' Woman*, had good times and hard times, made money and spent it—the typical blues singer's story. But the pianist was wiser than many. He was also endowed with a perspicacious nature and the ability to reach out to a wider audience. Towards the end of the 1950s, he penetrated the folknik circles along with Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, and through his Folkways recordings and a 1959 Newport appearance, became known to wider audiences. In company with his bassist Willie Dixon, he worked New York's Village Gate alongside Pete Seeger and as a result of this exposure, found himself Europe-bound the following year. There he played to audiences already won over by Broonzy, Terry and McGhee, and spent three months in Britain, Denmark and Belgium.

Returning in 1962, he worked for the first time in France and, as he put it tongue-in-cheek, "Fell in love with the weather." It took another year for this affair to be consummated but at the end of a 1963 tour of Israel he headed for Paris for good. He has been back to the States on a couple of occasions since but always,

he stressed, with a round-trip ticket. "Paris is home," said Slim. "Since I came to Europe I've actually learned how to live."

With his French wife, Christine, and daughter Natalie, the blues man lives well in a newly-acquired apartment in the smartest part of Paris, the 16th arrondissement. He runs a brand new Rolls Royce Silver Cloud and confines his appearances to theatres, opera houses and concert halls. For five years he appeared as regularly as he wished at Les Trois Maillets, a typical Left Bank 'cave', but now he can call his own tune. He recently did the music for an Afro-French film and appeared in a minor role in the Rod Steiger film, *The Sergeant*, and his solo appearances on television are frequent. "I think I've done more TV shows than anyone in Paris—including the Parisians! All these things have been very good for me."

A tall, heavily-built man with a generous nature and oblique sense of humor, Slim has dubbed himself "The self-styled Ambassador of the Blues" and with good reason. Working to the notoriously hard-to-please Gallic audiences, he not only makes them listen to his blues but he moves them, too. "I feel proud that I'm getting through to them because they don't know what I'm saying," he said. "It proves my point that the blues is so soulful because I've had the same reception in France that I've had in America. They shout, they cry, they get the message."

As the composer of such well-known blues as *Every Day* and *The Comeback*, both popularized by Joe Williams back in his Basie days, 95 percent of Slim's material is original. He has attempted to sing in French, but with a minimum of success. "It didn't come out too well," he admitted. "The blues you have to sing in English, there's only one original. Now there are a lot of French singers singing the blues in French, but you still can't translate it and get the same meaning—it doesn't say anything. If a blues singer would write a song in French, then that's a different story, but," he smiled, "my French is not that good."

Slim's linguistic ability is immaterial, however, for adaptability is the key to the singer's success in his adopted home. Although he willingly concedes that there is a world of difference between the American and the French mentality, Slim has a marvelous capacity for understanding people. Because of this, he said, "We get along." For example: "When you go into a restaurant and they're reading a paper, you wait until they've finished and then ask for some service. That's the way you gotta do it. It's not that they're anti-foreigners, it's just that they're for their own people. They don't run for *nobody* and I think I dig it."

"Yes, I still like America when I go there. It's normal because I'm American, but I prefer to stay in France where I've found peace of mind. And I have avoided the big rat race of hustling for the records and with the publishing companies and keeping up with the Joneses."

"When you first come here you'll hate it," he related cheerfully. "One of the biggest problems I had when I first arrived was to buy something and say 'please'. I couldn't get it through my skull why should I have to say 'please' when I'm going to

spend my money? Like, I'd say 'give me a whiskey!' and they say 's'il vous plait', and I'd say 's'il vous plait for what?' But it comes natural now and you've said it before you realize it."

The world of a blues man himself is as small as the audience his music reaches is large. Well-known to the record collector he may be, but few of the country bluesmen could have imagined their records on display on London's Oxford Street, Paris' Champs Elysees, or Berlin's Kurfürstendamm, let alone walking down those streets themselves. For a man from so relatively esoteric a background, Slim never ceases to surprise with his degree of intelligence, perception and foresight.

"I've always had determination," he said when recalling his early days in Chicago. "I've always been a big dreamer. I used to dream way ahead and most everything I dreamed has come true. I've never doubted myself in any respect, always thought I could do anything, and this has helped a lot."

Slim paid tribute to Big Bill Broonzy for pioneering the path that he has followed. He recalled that he himself received an offer to tour Europe in the early '50s when Broonzy was already there, winning Gallic hearts in particular with his unique mixture of true blues, magnificent full guitar and outrageous anecdotes. "At that time I was doing very good and I couldn't leave," he said. "I had my own band and records and although I was playing for a black audience, the money was good. The blues, you know, was very big in the States once before, before Big Bill came over. He was making money and then all of a sudden, for a Negro to become big, a white man had to endorse him. Until Elvis Presley started singing the blues and became big, people started to realize that we'd been doing the same thing all the time!"

"But," he added philosophically, "everything helps. I don't care how bad it looks to you at the time, it all has a purpose." He went on to point out that it was also through people like himself and Broonzy and later, such British rock groups as the Animals and the Rolling Stones, that America was at long last made aware of its blues heritage. "It made them realize what they had right there under their noses

/Continued on page 32



Haunted by the Blues

Of all the blues artists to have been turned up by the folk music revival of the last 15 years, Louisiana-born singer-guitarist Robert Pete Williams is one of the most important.

Discovered by folklorist Dr. Harry Oster in 1958 at Angola State Prison Farm, where he was serving a life sentence for a murder committed in a tavern brawl (instigated by the victim), Williams was paroled in December, 1959, largely through the efforts of Oster.

Since then, Williams has performed successfully both here and abroad and has recorded several albums that are among the finest in the folk-music movement. Among these recordings, his *Prisoner's Talking Blues* must stand as one of the most moving and memorable performances of the last two decades. Others are not far behind.

In the following remarks, transcribed from an interview in Chicago, Williams provides valuable insights into the nature of the blues and the power they exert upon the singer. His comments, in fact, might be viewed as offering a capsule psychology of the blues singer. He sees the blues as the strongest factor in his life, an almost physical force. He finds the world threatening, approaches every encounter guardedly, and hesitates to place his trust in anyone or anything.

As his description of an encounter with three strangers in the Chicago Greyhound terminal reveals, he is acutely conscious

like the blues have got me. I just feel good. It's just whenever I get to playing the blues, I just don't want to quit. I just want to keep on playing the blues; that's the way it is—just love to go right into it and play. When I was playing at these country suppers, I used to leave home on a Friday and didn't come back until that Monday. When I'd knock off on a Friday—you know, didn't have to work on a Saturday—I'd leave on a Friday evening, wouldn't come back until Monday, time to go to work. I didn't have no family then; I was living with my mother, and she used to tell me all the time, she used to say, "Now you take care of yourself, but you ought to stop staying out like this." I'd tell her "Yes, ma'am."

I'd start to playing at those suppers, go from this one to that. And that was those all-night suppers—have this home brew that you make—those all-night fish-fries. And when I would get through playing they'd go out there and start to gathering, and I'd lay my hand on my guitar to take it in my lap, or lay it on the porch, something like that, and I had the blues so bad 'til I couldn't sleep, could hear them in my sleep. Well, they will make you cry. You heard that one I made in prison [*Prisoner's Talking Blues*, Folk-Lyric LFS A-3]—that was a sad number; that was sad enough to make you cry. That just shows you what blues will do to you. That song, I don't know if I could ever do it again. That's the blues.

You see, I was a Christian. Christ gives

made it out of a cigar box. I was just that interested in playing music. I was quite young, right at about 17-18 years old. I made that guitar, and I started to hitting notes on that little guitar. Had copper strings on it, just copper wire, baling wire, put nails on it for the keys. Tighten these strings up and went on . . . started hitting on it, and it kinda sounded good to me.

And I met a fellow had a guitar—the neck of it was sprung all up there—one of them old cheap guitars, and I guess he needed that money. I didn't have but a dollar and an half. Everything was cheap in them days, and I asked him would he sell that guitar to me. And he said, "Yeah, I'll sell it to you." I said, "How much?" and he said, "A dollar and a half." And a dollar and a half was all I had, and I was glad to get that guitar.

I bought that guitar from him, and I started to playing on it. You could run your arm between the bow and the strings on that guitar, but I worked with it and worked with it 'til I learnt. Then after learning with it, well, this white lady she bought a guitar for her son to learn how to play music, take music lessons, but he never did take no interest in it. And so some folks had told me that she had a guitar to sell, and I went down there, and I asked her about it. She said, "Yeah, I'll sell it. And that guitar she sold me, it was worth around \$40 or \$50. She sold it to me for \$4! Late at night you could hear that guitar ringing for miles.

ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS by pete welding

of the presence of latent violence in any situation. This sense of being alone in the midst of a vast and dangerous world colors the best, and most terrifying, of his songs. His remarks also dramatize the strong dichotomy between the sacred and the profane in Negro folk culture, in which the blues are viewed as sinful, perhaps even diabolical. As strongly committed to the blues as he is, Williams too shares this belief, and the resultant conflict is one he has yet to resolve. If he observes the usual pattern, he eventually will give up the blues and turn to religion. For now, however, he continues to follow the blues, and we are the richer for it.

I LOVE THE BLUES. My wife she tells me sometimes, "You ought to pray, do something for your soul." I say, "Well, I am, but I want to test for myself. Everybody is not going to heaven." I say, "Do you believe it?" She says, "Well, I don't know—I'm trying to get there." I say, "Well, go ahead on and pray, but I just got to play the blues. I got the blues on my mind; I'm going to play them." So I don't know what may happen to me in time, in the future, but I just love the blues, and I'm going to play the blues. Unless'n I get some of these fingers cut off. If I get these cut off, well, I can't play—and then I'll just get a guitar and lay it 'cross my lap and play it that way.

When I'm playing I just feel good. Look

you; He don't take it back from you. You walks away from Christ—ain't that right? You know, He don't take back nothing He give you. So I know I had just as good a religion as any man. I know I did. But still and all, I just turned around from the gift that I had and started back to playing the blues. I don't know why but the blues is something that followed me all the time, just followed me.

And why I joined the church—the run for violence left me and the folks got in behind me about coming to church and praying, do something for my soul. And I thought I'd take a listen to them, which I did—went to church and sat on the mourner's bench and started to praying, and I come through with religion. And when I came through with religion, they baptized me. And I guess I stayed in church about a year.

And peoples commenced to worry me about coming to play for them, you know, at these suppers . . . and I just make up my mind and went on back to start playing. I can hear a verse of blues, something like that. I could be walking or riding along, and I could hear something in the air. That's a blues following me. And I can pick up my guitar, and I can play that blues. It look like it just go on through. If I don't play that blues and get it off my mind, I won't be satisfied. So that's just the way it is with me.

It's a gift. Folks tell me it's a gift that God give me. Because, my first guitar, I

Everything just so quiet 'long about 12 o'clock at night, and playing that guitar and whooping and hollering and singing! After those parties was over, people would tell me, "I heard you playing last night." I say, "Where you was?" "Out sitting on my porch—I heard you playing." I know I was better than two miles from those people, but your voice go a long ways—and that was a good guitar that I had too.

Before that, when I was younger, I used to get tin buckets and beat on them, you know, and sing. I guess it give me the blues. Then if I be around anybody and I'd see them throw down those band-rubbers that be around papers, if they drop one on the floor anywhere, why, I'd pick it up, put it in my mouth and make it sound like a jew's harp. That's the way that rubber would sound. Oh, that'd make me happy; feel good, you know. So I was just interested in the blues, and that's just what I am. I likes the blues. I likes the music.

I didn't have anybody to show me anything. The thing about it is, just to hear other musicians to play guitar, I used to set around them and hear them play, wishing that they would let me play on the guitar. I was scared to ask them 'cause I knowed they wasn't going to do it, and so when they would take their guitar and maybe set it up side the wall, go get him a drink of water, then I'd go over there and get it. They'd look back, say, "Boy, don't fool with that guitar; don't mess with my guitar." I'd say, "No." You know, people

are kind of crazy about their guitars—anything like that.

When I made that cigar-box guitar, I was living in Zachary. That's my home, born and raised there—Zachary, La. Now, I'm between Zachary and Baton Rouge, but it ain't too much out of hollerin' distance of my home. So I likes it down there, and I'm doing fine.

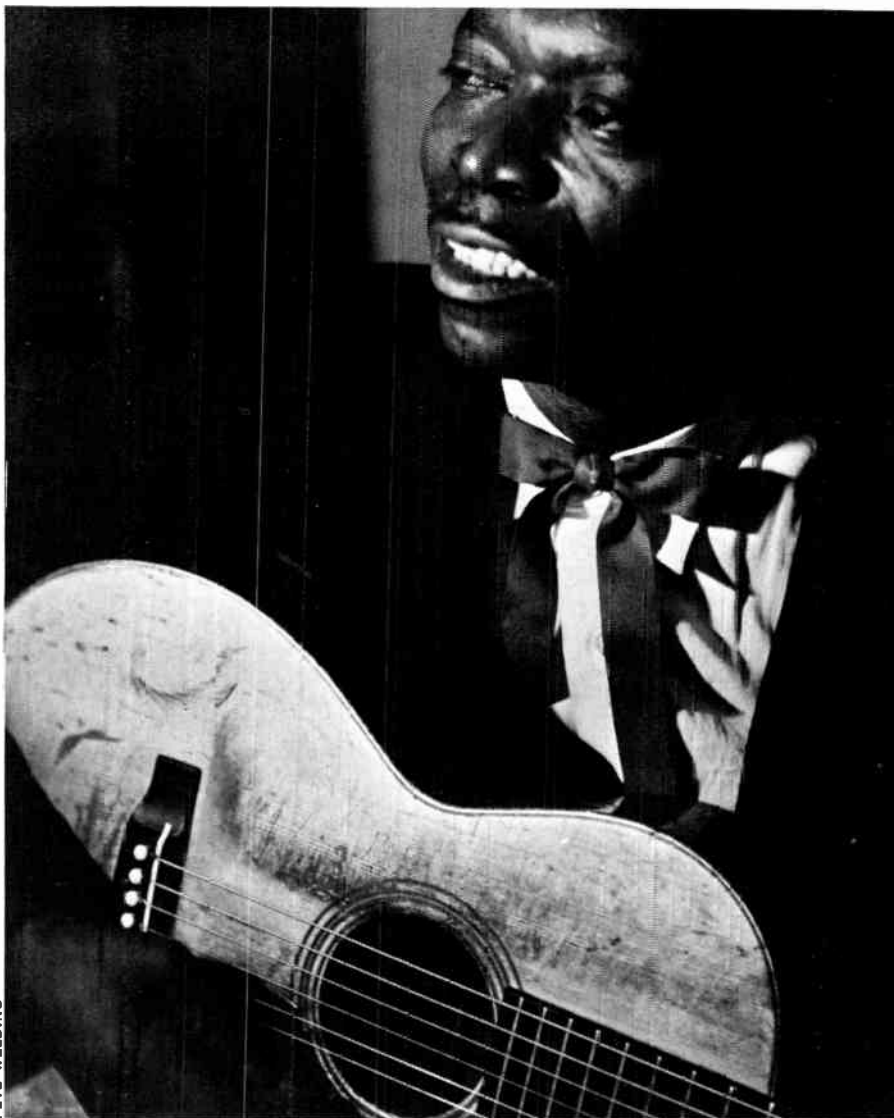
I'll tell you what the blues are. The blues is this—what I think, now—well, it's just whatever you make out of it. Some people say you take the blues if you're worried or you're broke. Well, I guess that is true, 'cause I have been broke plenty of times, and I have been mistreated a lot of times. Well, that gives me the blues, more so. Things that I want and I don't have the money, or something like that, and I get aworrying, and I just get it off my mind going up somewhere, and I sing the blues. See, that's the way I do. So, I guess that's just the way things is. Course if I was a rich man, I guess I wouldn't be worried with the blues. No, I guess I *still* would have the blues.

I've had sad feelings to come on me. Know what I mean by sad feelings? It's something like the whole world's kinda like against you or down on you. I walked along with a sad feeling and cried to myself. I have. I've had a sad feeling, just walking on, cry to myself, tears run out of my eyes. But I go ahead on and sing the blues 'til I kinda get eased. When I get eased, well, it look like things kinda lighten up off of me, you know? That's right.

I'll tell you one thing: the blues is kind of a heavy feeling. If you've got the blues and you got them bad, I will tell you this much—the blues is a heavy load, a heavy load. You can take the blues so bad until you almost want to commit suicide—that's right. Blues is something that forces you almost into trouble. That's what blues do. But you got to be careful with them blues; that's the way it is. It's just like me—you see what blues did? See why I worry? I had the blues so bad until I just went off, and when I found myself, then I was in trouble. That just shows you what blues will lead you to.

Now, I come back on this: when you're once in Christ, you're never without Him. But you walks with Christ. You can tie a horse out there with a long, long rope; he'll feed all around there, eating, in a circle. Soon he'll start to going, going, going. One day he'll get to the length of that rope. Have I got a witness on that? Well, now, just like me, I walked away from Christ, and He moved His hand and I stepped right into trouble. See what I'm talking about? Has I got a witness? He just moved His eyes off me just a little, you see, and then I was in trouble—just like that. And, you know, that's miserable. That's miserable.

It's just like the reverend setting here, telling you about his business. He knows he is a preacher. If he—as long as he's been preaching and at his age now—if he ever walks away from Christ now, he might not make it back. I mean that Man has got His eyes on him—not only him, on all of us—and He, He's got His eyes on me really strong because I made an oath to Christ when I was in this trouble.



PETE WELDING

I promised Him if I get out of this trouble . . . enable me to get out of this trouble that I was in, then I'd serve Him the rest of my days. But I'm not doing it. Look like I done forgot about Him. But He *still* is helping me. Have I got a witness? He must be helping me—I'm living, ain't I? Ain't that right? But He's just trying me to see how far I'm coming, see?

I walked up in the bus station here. I never been here before. This tall guy walked up to me. There's three of them that come walking up to me, and one of them had his hand in his pocket. I was standing there, upstairs, and he says, "Sell me that guitar!" I said, "No, I don't have no guitar to sell." He get his wallet, say, "Here, I'll give you \$50 for it." I said, "I don't want to sell my guitar, man, 'cause I didn't come up to sell no guitar." He kept on after me. I said, "Get on out of my way. Don't fool with me—go ahead on."

Well, now, that's trouble there. One fellow said, "I know you." I say, "No, you don't know me, man." He said, "Oh, yeah, I saw you here before." I said, "No, you have never saw me here." I didn't tell him this was my first time stopping here, which it was, but you just got to figure out peoples like that, you understand? And what makes trouble is what

a man carries.

Say I meet any one of you here and I walk up to you like I know you and tell you to sell me something, and you didn't come here to sell nothing. I'm looking like I'm picking at you. You don't know me, and I don't know you. So if I force you too hard—well, if you got something, you may do me something. Ain't I right? But if you ain't got nothing, you might just walk on away. Which brings my story back: if I hadn't had anything that night, I maybe wouldn't have got in trouble—if I hadn't been carrying that gun. Why was I carrying it? Well, it was the devil; I'm just showing you how it is with the devil. I was carrying a gun, and I guess it was about the biggest piece they make; it was a .45. I was carrying a .45, and if I hadn't of had that .45, I tell you, I could have been in the ground too. But after it was over with, I was sorry I had that .45—after it was over with. Just see what had happened. Now I don't even have a penknife. If I looked at a gun now, I'd close my eyes. I'd turn my head; I don't want to see that gun. That carries you a lot of places, make you do a lot of things.

That's whisky you got in that glass, ain't it? Well, whisky ain't going to do

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WILLIE DIXON: CHICAGO CATALYST

by Tam Fiofori

WILLIE DIXON IS A rare example of a creative and multi-talented blues musician who has been able, over the years, to let his talent grow and bloom in many areas of the music. In any definitive review of the postwar Chicago (and urban) blues, Willie Dixon's diverse contributions as composer, arranger, performer and organizer stand out as a major and energizing force that helped shape the blues of his era, and consequently laid the basic musical foundations for the popular music of this generation.

Willie Dixon in many ways personifies the blues. Not only is he a very original, gifted and prolific composer, he also possesses the quality of being able to work with, inspire, and organize other musicians. His first own album, *I Am the Blues*, (Columbia CS 9987) confirms his talent as a songwriter. While most of the early postwar city blues were based on traditional material, in Dixon we have a songwriter whose songs are among the first successful attempts to write complete blues. Although his songs can be categorized as blues songs they are better viewed as "blues with a feeling," as they represent and express the vast spectrum of moods, rhythms and feeling within the blues idiom. A stylist, he is equally at home in any setting and the allowances his tunes make for improvisation reveal his awareness of the subtle links and progressions from country blues to city blues, r&b and jazz.

His approach to songwriting is natural and direct:

"I've been in the business a long time and I've had the blues for a long time, but I wasn't producing until the early '40s, after I had come to Chicago. I used to write lots of songs before that. . . I wrote poems and songs in school. One of the first songs I wrote was called *The Signifying Monkey*, while still in the 5th grade in Vicksburg, Miss. Tunes like *Little Red Rooster* came many years later. . . I used to write a lot of love poems because at that time there were popular tunes going around and I used to try to make up popular tunes. Nobody would accept them as popular tunes. I wasn't even thinking about playing music at that time. I used to sing a lot with spiritual groups in the South and I wrote a lot of these songs then. . . I had bags of them and I just never thought anything of them," he says.

After moving to Chicago, Dixon worked in different jobs. For a while he became a boxer (he won the Golden Gloves in 1937) and later got into music professionally, singing bass with the Five Breezes. Eventually he learned to play bass.

"I write my songs around the experiences I've had in places I've lived. . . like at the time I was in the South, there were only two types of people. . . those that called themselves Christians and those that called themselves anything, and they both had the same identical feeling, only that one thought that his salvation would be after death and the other thought that his would be in some other place while he lived. I used to sit and hear my parents sing various songs in church, and I would

go out at night to where men were working and hear them sing songs. Even when I was young, I could compare these songs and see that everybody practically had the same feeling except that each one thought that their salvation would be in a different place. They built their songs on their hopes and each one's song was his salvation."

In Dixon's lyrics, there is noticeable a heightened sense of the classical blues lyrics. . . a poetry reflecting a way of seeing and a very unique use of language to portray streams of images invested with a therapeutic sense of humor.



COURTESY CHES RECORDS

Contrary to the popular belief that the blues deal solely with sadness, he points out that "the blues don't have to be sad. The blues can be happy. The blues can be gay. It all depends on your feeling. . . A lot of people think they've got the blues because they are sad. Someone can have the blues because he is thinking about something that he enjoys. Another because he sees something that he admires and would like to enjoy. . . like one of our songs, *Wee Wee Baby/you sure look good to me*. Now you know that wouldn't be no sad song. Also, there is *My Babe*—songs where you brag about something you love or care for. So it's the feeling that is involved and not just the words."

As a composer whose songs have been performed by such diverse artists as Nancy Wilson, Elvis Presley, Mose Allison, Dakota Staton, and many others not generally associated with Chicago blues, he is well aware of the intrinsic qualities of his songs.

"A lot of people don't know when they have the blues. Someone would say to you, man, this is a jazz song or this is a blues song or this is a ballad, but really what they are classifying them by is the way they are done. The songs that deal with everyday life can be put into practically any category that you want. One of the reasons I feel that many of my songs have been turned into standards is that all of them are actually a part of life. Like *My babe don't stand no cheating*, a man would like to say that anytime. So many songs are written about love, because everybody is gonna pass through a phase of love one way or the other. If one expresses this feel-

ing today, he is not only expressing it for his own purpose but also for the purpose of tomorrow, because people are going to feel the same way and are going to run into the same things ten years from today."

Dixon's activities within the music stem from his initial impact on shaping the style of what can now be identified as Chicago blues. In his combined roles as composer-studio musician-a&r man for Chess records, he was responsible for hit recordings by Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Sonny Boy Williamson, Little Walter, and Junior Wells and over the years has been a mentor to up-and-coming Chicago blues musicians like Otis Rush, Buddy Guy, Magic Sam, and Mighty Joe Young. His tailor-made hits for Waters, Wolf, Rush, Walter and Diddley have since not only been recorded by other Chicago blues musicians but also have been the foundations on which many of the now popular British and American bluesmen and groups (Rolling Stones, Savoy Brown, Led Zeppelin, Johnny Winter) based their books.


"The blues wasn't very popular when I started off in Chicago. I had written quite a few songs and I was always around trying to give the songs to different people to record and they wouldn't take them. Muddy Waters had just come from down South and he was interested in a song I had called *Hoochie Coochie Man*. I took it over to him one day on the west side and the first time he sang it on stage the people just went wild. So we decided to record it, and I wrote songs for Eddie Boyd, Willie Mabon, Otis Rush and many others and each one I would write for wanted me to write some more. So not only did I continue writing, I was playing bass and started playing on the recording sessions and figuring out some new angles on them and arranging the songs so they would sound better."

Since those days, Dixon has been the M.D. for Victoria Spivey's Spivey Records, the talent scout responsible for choosing the musicians for the annual Folk Blues Festival tour of Europe, and last year served as one of the main forces behind Chicago's long overdue *Tribute to the Blues* festival. All this makes Willie Dixon a living directory of the Chicago blues.

He continues to perform, and is the leader of the Chicago Blues All Stars (Lafayette Leake, piano; Shakey Horton, harp; Clifton James, drums, and Lee Jackson, guitar). As a producer, he has recently been working with Albert King, Koko Taylor and the Branding Iron, well aware of the changes that have to occur within the music.

"The blues changes as the times and the people change, and as people change the music has to change, and as time changes the music has to change. I couldn't expect to write a song that has any merit to it today if I'm writing about a horse and buggy. I have to write about the things that the kids know."

Dixon is also working on a book on the blues, tentatively titled *The Ways of the Blues*.

Willie Dixon is the "Back Door Man," "The Seventh Son," "The Hoochie Coochie Man," the blues, and a lot more. 

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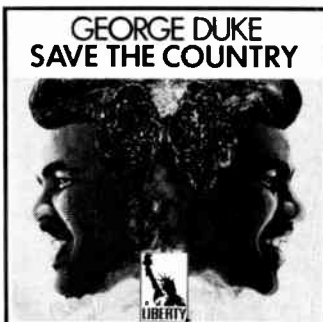
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Reviews are signed by the writers.

Ratings are: ★★★★★ excellent, ★★★★ very good, ★★★ good, ★★ fair, ★ poor.

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SPOTLIGHT REVIEW

ISAAC HAYES

THE ISAAC HAYES MOVEMENT—Enterprise ENS-1010: *I Stand Accused*; *One Big Unhappy Family*; *I Just Don't Know What to Do with Myself*; *Something*.

Personnel: Hayes, piano, vocals; unidentified orchestra and chorus; Hayes, Dale Warren, Pat Lewis, arrangers.

db/RC Rating: ★★★★★

I always dig relating how I knew about B.B. King long before the young white blues stars gave him his due credit and subsequent international fame. But then I must eventually admit that though my propinquity to the St. Louis ghetto allowed some contact with popular black music, I never really had the courage to make the clubs (which always seemed to be on mean Easton Street or environs) to witness B.B., Albert King, Bobby Bland, and all the other favorites of the black community, and thereby had to catch only what I could on the main soul radio stations. Nevertheless, the effect of black pop music, if not from in-person experience, did move me greatly (especially regarding my budding taste), as pre-Beatles rock merely seemed to me a pitiful dilution of the far more energetic jazz or rhythm and blues I could hear on KATZ or on my black friends' albums.

But later, as my aesthetics matured (if such a progression actually occurs), I began to recognize more clearly the diversity of forms and manners within these musics, essentially to the point where jazz became for me the strongest musical expression I could know, while r&b varieties soon seemed merely a dance music and thus, from one perspective, a lesser music. Yet once in graduate school, after my critical fascination with rock had happened (and maybe waned), not only did much of my jazz purism return, but otherwise my real appreciation for the musical excellence of many r&b performers began as in the work of cats like Wilson Pickett and Sam&Dave and the Impressions I recognized a passionate artistry far more creative than the simple urge to shake I had earlier assumed.

Isaac Hayes is by far the one most superb soul artist playing today, or perhaps ever; for his two Enterprise albums, *Hot Buttered Soul* and this new date, are classics of the genre, and, hoping his style won't become formulaized, the impact of both must ultimately be profound.

As producer/arranger for many Stax/Volt artists and himself, two provocative elements characterize the main Hayes attitude: an evocative sense (charts more complimentary to the musical focus than merely cliché instrumental landscaping) and a rhapsodic funk (more precise rhythmic accents than merely repetitive beat figures), both as necessary as they are excit-

ing in that Hayes tends toward potentially tedious extended song adventures. And the 12-minute *Something*, which is easily the best performance of that song to date, is perfect testament to such a style, with a sultry evolving prelude, darting solo violin swoops, backup vocalists chanting much like comping lines, the singer's own propulsive piano, and that husky/smooth voice of Hayes, all tart like good brandy and just as mellow. Yet surely the single virtue that separates Hayes from the r&b horde is that the four songs on this latest album offer far more than a simple urge to dance; hence the title: one can *move* to the sounds of Isaac Hayes, which is such a soulful gambol.

Hopefully, as I speculated earlier, a formula won't sterilize Hayes' music, and one is surely implied by the new date's similar nature to *Hot Buttered Soul*: four songs alike in romantic and tonal quality, one extended rap monologue (*I Stand Accused*), now and then moments when even tight instrumental accompaniment becomes labored.

Nevertheless, because Hayes' style is so unique, no matter how redundant certain spots can get (which is really the only demerit to the current record, and a minor fault, if that), Hayes' power will still be evident and, I expect, rather influential. And whether you shake to it or simply heartfully listen, *The Isaac Hayes Movement* is surely a masterpiece of black pop music.

—Bourne

CHARLIE BOECKMAN

3 A.M. JAZZ CLARINET—JazzTex 1005: *3 A.M. Jazz Clarinet Blues*; *At A Georgia Camp Meeting*; *That Old Gang Of Mine*; *Battle Hymn of the Republic/Dixie*; *Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives To Me*; *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen*; *At the Jazz Band Ball*; *Sugar Foot Stomp*; *From Russia With Love*; *Some Of These Days*; *You Gotta See Your Mama Ev'ry Night*; *Tin Roof Blues*.

Personnel: Frank Strub, Jr., trumpet, valve trombone; Dick Buntz, trombone; Boeckman, clarinet; Red Camp (tracks 1,5,6,8,9,12), Stan Kerr, piano; C. M. Britton, banjo, guitar; Tony Elliott, bass, tuba; Patti Boeckman, bass (track 4); Johnny Alejo, Bob Gardiner, drums; Peggy Brasfield, vocal (tracks 10, 11).

Rating: ★★½

Named for one of Jake Trussell's poems, this album displays author Boeckman's fun-on-weekends friends from Corpus Christi, and offers traditional piano nuts another in a series of infrequent looks at the work of Red Camp, considered by some to be legendary.

Not a hot-tooting band by any means, it manages to trot along decently enough most of the time, restrained somewhat, I imagine, by Boeckman's subdued manner and recordingstudioitis. Tempos are down (*Sugar Foot* at the tempo usually given *Tin Roof*), and there is a feeling of tenta-

tiveness that undoubtedly owes to many things. Some of the rough starts and stops might have been smoothed by another take or two, and those drum tags don't help any. Miss Brasfield, touted as the new "Last Of The Red Hot Mamas" (no one will argue the point, say the proud liner notes, but probably from apathy, not enthusiasm) does her stuff on her two poorly-programmed adjoining tracks, the latter with some uncomfortably inferior home-made lyrics.

No meat for the hard-core traditionalists, except those who attribute something special to Texas musicians. The rating is a compromise between the pianists, rhythm guitar and clarinet (★★★), and the lagging banjo and drummers (★★). Available from JazzTex Records, 322 Del Mar Blvd., Corpus Christi, Texas.

—Jones

AYNSLEY DUNBAR RETALIATION

RETALIATION—Blue Thumb BTS 16: *Don't Take the Power Away*; *Run You Off the Hill*; *Let it Ride*; *Journey's End*; *Down, Down, Down*; *Unheard*; *Sugar On the Line*; *Leaving Right Away*.

Personnel: Tommy Eyre, piano, organ; John Moorshead, lead guitar; Alex Dmochowski, bass guitar; Dunbar, drums; Victor Brox, vocals.

Rating: ★★★★★

Of the many ex-John Mayall sidemen-turned-leaders, Dunbar is certainly the least bombastic. Avoiding the electromusical thrust of too much current rock blues, the *Retaliation* instead focus on far cooler, more evocative ensembles. And as in the band of fellow ex-Mayall drummer Keef Hartley, the musical dynamics of Dunbar and cohorts seem consistently more jazz-directed.

The drag is that too often their very low-key excellence can sound somewhat dispassionate. Seldom does the tempo rise above a casual beat, nor do the pieces vary greatly in tone, despite the musical diversity so evident among the musicians. Perhaps the songs are simply too short (all fade out poorly and often at high intensity, and the album might have worked more successfully had the quintet stretched on a few numbers).

Leaving Right Away and *Run You Off* are virtually identical in both atmosphere and acceleration, yet this musical simplicity is nonetheless welcome in an era of endangered eardrums. *Retaliation* is thus a pleasant and now and then musically compelling album, despite its occasional laxity.

The individuals are especially worth hearing, as their inventions are forthright and their interplay reflects an expressive clarity seldom witnessed. Vocalist Brox particularly avoids the unintelligible volume and overt sexuality of Robert Plant or

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such for a more musical lyric definition, as witness in *Run You Off* a fine influence that evokes Muddy Waters. And similarly, guitarist Moorshead remembers the guitar in the electric guitar, as witness his tight duet with Eyre on *Journey's End* or his Albert King cookery on *Sugar*.

But Eyre and Dunbar remain the real force in the band. Eyre's keyboards fit all modes, and Dunbar contributes the most melodic drumming lately heard. Very much a la Brian Auger, Eyre adapts to each new perspective, from the bright bounce on *Let It Ride* to the introspection of *Unheard* and the clerical intro and later whine-responses on *Journey's*.

Dunbar does not merely keep time, but rhythmically directs the musical progress, with a mallet undercurrent on *Unheard* or a clicking cow bell lead on *Sugar* or simply creating with percussion a colorful context through which his sidemen can move. Such a cohesive musical dimension is uncommon among most rock bands and the Retaliation certainly deserves every rapt attention.

Despite its minor imperfections, the new Aynsley Dunbar date is surely one of the unique delights of this current pop eon. And should be dug. —Bourne

HERBIE HANCOCK

FAT ALBERT ROTUNDA—Warner Bros. 1834: *Wiggle-Waggle; Fat Mama; Tell Me a Bedtime Story; Oh! Oh! Here She Comes; Jessica; Fat Albert Rotunda; L'il Brother.*

Personnel: Johnny Coles, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Garnett Brown, trombone; Joe Henderson, alto flute, tenor saxophone; Hancock, piano, electric piano, arranger, composer, conductor; Buster Williams, bass, electric bass; Tootie Heath, drums; unidentified additional brass, reeds, and rhythm.

Rating: ★★

Esthetic regression, or . . . Hancock, the marvelous gent who enriched us with *Watermelon Man*, then went on to genuinely bigger and better things with Miles Davis, is back on the end of the fruit truck handing down more lugubrious objects d'fruit, very much in season, that, when inspected, seem considerably less solid down the middle than the best-selling item previously dispensed. But, his apron is still fairly clean, he has an honest face, the market seems receptive and there's no record of consumer backlash as yet.

Thus, the content of this album, save for the effective ballads *Tell Me* and *Jessica*, is in the soul-rock-r&b popcorn and onions vein. Improvisation is a secondary consideration: Henderson has a couple of spots but doesn't get off the ground until the LP's final track, *Brother*. Coles is pretty much under wraps (he gets off a bravura solo on *Wiggle*) but his pretty fluegelhorn enhances the ballads.

Hancock, who composed, arranged and conducted all selections, is heard to advantage only on the saving-grace ballads, where, in typical Hancock fashion, he often reworks nearly identical phrases to telling effect. But, having been an outspoken admirer of the pianist in his Miles days, I find his current position somewhat akin to a distinguished actor spurning a long-sought Shakespearean role in favor of a TV soap opera.

Fat Albert is the best of the soul tracks. Williams' electric bass is especially effective here and, ah, that all drummers would

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approach material of this genre with as much intelligence and taste as Heath. Hancock's writing generally is idiomatic but there are inspired moments, as on the ballads and the closing section of the puckish *Brother*.

The Fat Alberts around may thrive on such albums—but how about the Weird Harolds—the kooks who dig *music*. And *music* is what the Hancock group produced until this LP. Therefore, let us hope that this LP is just a minor derailment.

—Szantor

JOHNNY HODGES

THREE SHADES OF BLUE—Flying Dutchman FDS-120; *Empty Ballroom Blues*; *Duke's Place*; *Echoes Of Harlem*; *Disillusion Blues*; *Yearning*; *Welcome to New York*; *Black, Brown and Beautiful*; *Rockin' In Rhythm*; *Creole Love Call*; *It's Glory*.

Personnel: Ernie Royal, Snooky Young, Marvin Stamm, Randy Brecker, trumpets, flugelhorn; Al Grey, Quentin Jackson, Garnett Brown, Thomas Mitchell, trombones; Hodges, alto saxophone; Bob Ashton, Jerome Richardson, Frank Wess, Jerry Dodgion, Joe Farrell, Danny Bank, reeds; Hank Jones or Earl Hines, piano; David Spinozza, guitar; Ron Carter, bass; Grady Tate, drums; Oliver Nelson, arranger, conductor; Leon Thomas, vocals (tracks 2, 4, 5).

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Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★

This is Johnny Hodges' last album (not his last date; some Ellington band sessions were done after it), recorded less than two months before his death last May 11.

A fortunate event, then, bringing us a bonus of prime Hodges. Of all Ellington regulars, he made the most frequent studio sorties on his own, both before and after the interlude with his own group. Great as he was on many of these, the settings—

small or large, scored or impromptu—rarely set him off like those Ellington and Strayhorn devised for him.

This fact, which takes not one inch from Hodges' stature but is rather an aspect of the primacy of Ellington, is pointed up here by the inclusion of six pieces of Ellingtonia. Nelson (and of course, Hodges) do well by them, but the originals remain the measure.

The strongest evocation of the Ellington spirit, however, come on two Nelson originals, the pretty *Yearning* and the touching *Black, Brown and Beautiful* (the latter has a Strayhorn touch that suits Hodges to perfection). On both these pieces, Hodges shines. Both are intensely lyrical and have singable melodies.

Which only proves, perhaps, that a master's touch remains untouchable, but that music touched by his spirit can attain its own mastery.

Of the Ellington pieces, *Creole Love Call* comes off best. The clarinet ensembles (how rare a sound these days, and how pretty!) are a right touch, the Hodges stop-time solo is splendid, and Al Grey's plunger partakes of the Nanton message (though, with Quentin Jackson, who has come closer to Tricky Sam than anyone, in the band, one wonders why he didn't get the solo).

Rockin' is a sparkling arrangement and performance, but the hectic pace, while exciting, points up Duke's mastery of tempos, and some of the ensemble accents don't seem to fall in the right places. Yet it's a kick to hear Hodges navigate at such blaz-

ing speed—as perfectly poised as ever. *Echoes* fails to conjure up the mysterious mood of the composition, but Hodges' statement of the second strain is something else.

Empty Ballroom, like *Rockin'*, is just a mite too fast; one misses the relaxed bounce of the original Ellington-Hodges riff. Randy Brecker takes a nice solo here, sounding surprisingly like Lee Morgan. The 1931 *It's Glory* is fresh in its new clothes, and there is a brisk, inventive Earl Hines piano solo—his only spot (I'm almost sure it's his comping on *Love Call*). Hank Jones has his only outing on *Ballroom*, and Marvin Stamm takes a flugelhorn solo on *Yearning*; nice enough, but following Hodges it seems oddly void of content. Johnny always told a story.

The presence of singer Leon Thomas on three tracks makes sense from the standpoint of his being groomed for stardom by the record company. He's a good singer (and has been for quite some time), and shows his good time when doing the lyrics to *Duke's Place* (our old friend *C Jam Blues* with words). His new brand of scatting, which follows, seems less appealing to me than his earlier style in the idiom. In fact, it sounds quite a bit like gargling. On his own two blues, he tries too hard to get down home on *Disillusion*; the Hodges solo stands out in contrast by its utter relaxation and absence of any strain, pointed up by the curiously out-of-tune guitar fills. He does much better on *New York*. The ironic lyric hits the mark, and he is more at ease.

The inimitable Hodges sound is superbly

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HOBOKEN SATURDAY NIGHT—Atco 33-313: *Be A Hobo; Hoboken Saturday Night; The Eyes of a New York Woman; Ragtime Millionaire; Somedays; Our Sister the Sun; Reciprocity; Trip On Me; Now Then Sweet Man; Mr. Garfield; Reincarnations; Glade Song; Ducks.*

Personnel: Warren Gardner, William Folwell, trumpets; Trevor Koehler, piccolo, flute, soprano and baritone saxophones, sewer drum; Robert Palmer, clarinet, alto saxophone, recorder; Luke Faust, violin, banjo, electric guitar, harmonica; Bill Barth, lead guitar, steel guitar; Ralph Casale, Charlie Macey or Hugh McCracken, rhythm guitar; William Folwell, Joseph Macho, Bob Bushnell or Charlie Macey, electric bass; Elvin Jones, Donald MacDonald, Bernard Purdie or Buddy Nealy, drums; Nancy Jeffries, vocals.

Rating: ★★

Insect Trust's first album was consummately wretched. This one doesn't quite get there either, but there are some fine individual performances on it, and so attention should be paid. (A clear and present problem: the group proper consists only of Koehler, Faust, Barth, Palmer and Miss Jeffries; the guest rhythm players are all quite good, but it sounds like a blowing session, and the band's material is too demanding for such a setup.)

Miss Jeffries, sadly, can be dismissed. Roughly out of Tracy Nelson's bag, decent range, some power, not much finesse, but mainly she just doesn't get it on. The instrumental soloists, however, are something else.

The tunes are a motley assortment: some hard rock, some modern jazz, some country, some experimental atonality-cum-Dada, some ragtime. An impressive range, although Insect Trust isn't equally convincing in all these media. In fact, there are only two fully realized cuts, *Millionaire* and *Somedays*. The former begins as a countryish vocal by Miss Jeffries. Barth takes a one-chorus solo on guitar, densely chorded and interesting, which he ends by playing a line parallel to the melody but dissonant on the last four bars. Nice. Another vocal chorus, followed by a Dixieland trio (trumpet, clarinet and baritone, the latter taking the tailgate role) jamming a while and carrying the odd juxtaposition off with skill, aplomb and good humor.

Somedays is a Bo Diddley riff, led by Koehler on baritone playing raunchy r&b things over the other horns, which—oddly and effectively—are occasionally voiced Latino. Good chart and pleasing solo.

Some other high points: Palmer's inventive recorder solo on *Eyes*; Elvin Jones' booting backing and Koehler's accomplished soprano work on *Sister*; the concept of *Reciprocity*, which resembles a football Homecoming Weekend march played and sung by the inmates at Bellevue (Barth damages this cut with a ragged guitar solo, however); and *Ducks*, which has good Palmer on alto, more funky baritone from Koehler, and a relentless, straight-ahead drum solo from somebody—probably Purdie.

Insect Trust is still somewhere between larva and pupa, at this point, but to judge from *Hoboken Saturday Night*, the adult bug might be something else. —Heineman

GAP MANGIONE

DIANA IN THE AUTUMN WIND—GRC 9001: *Boys With Toys; Diana in the Autumn Wind; Long Hair Soulful; Yesterday; The Xlth Commandment; St. Thomas; You're Nobody Until Somebody Loves You; Pond With Swans; You Are My Sunshine; Free Again; Dream On Little Dreamer; Graduate Medley; Scarborough Fair; The Sounds of Silence; Mrs. Robinson.*

Personnel: All Tracks: Gap Mangione, piano, organ; Tony Levin, bass, electric bass; Steve Gadd, drums. Track 6: Joe LaBarbera, drums; Dhui Mandingo, conga. Tracks 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11: Snooky Young, Marv Stamm, Clark Terry, trumpet, flugelhorn; Wayne Andre, Tony Studd, trombone; Paul Faulise, bass trombone; James Buffington, Earl Chapin, French horn; Ray Beckenstein, flute, piccolo; Jerome Richardson, soprano, alto, baritone saxophone, flute; Joe Farrell, Frank Wess, tenor sax, flute; Ned Gorman, baritone saxophone, bass clarinet; Mike Mainieri, vibraphone; Sam Brown, guitar. Chuck Mangione, conductor.

Rating: ★★

Gap Mangione, the longest-lost of the Jazz Brothers of the early 1960s (in terms of the general audience) makes his return to the recording scene as featured soloist in this mixed bag of standards, pop and rock tunes.

His highly talented brother, trumpeter Chuck, is also aboard—splitting the arranging chores with his pianist sibling and conducting the impressive studio band that appears on eight of the album's 12 tracks.

Though the fare is commercially-oriented, Gap's keyboard work is still very much in the jazz mainstream and his work here is uniformly excellent. His work on acoustic piano comes off best here though on several tracks (most notably on *Sunrise*) his electric piano improvising rivals it.

The big band tracks are tastefully and expertly arranged, though at times the brass-piccolo climaxes were a bit shrill to my ears. In general, I prefer the combo tracks—the pianist and his excellent rhythm section seem more at ease and more prone to cooking, especially on *St. Thomas* and *Sunshine*.

Aside from the leader, the only other improvisation comes from Terry, who slices in for a few bars on *Soulful*, and Richardson, whose melancholy soprano sax graces *Diana*. The big band is especially groovy on *Nobody*, with a funky intro, Basieish background figures by the saxes, and excellent fills by Gadd, who is a delight throughout. As always, the lead trumpet of Young is outstanding.

Though commercial in its aim, it's still nice to hear from the keyboard Mangione who, hopefully, will begin to get some recognition outside of his native Rochester area. (Trumpeter Chuck, through his work with Art Blakey and an excellent Jazzland album several years back with tenorist Joe Romano, has had a bit more recognition, but still not enough). Perhaps the two brothers could next record with their non-familial brother of yore, the brilliant Sal Nistico, in a straight-ahead Jazz Brothers quasi-reunion.

This recording is available only through GRC, Inc., 901 Times Square Bldg., Rochester, N.Y. 14614. —Szantor

MIKE WESTBROOK CONCERT BAND

MARCHING SONG—Deram MWB S-1: *Hooray!; Landscape; Waltz (for Joanna); Landscape (II); Other World; Marching Song; Transition; Home; Rosie; Prelude; Tension; Introduction; Ballad; Conflict; Requiem; Tarnished; Memorial.* Collective Personnel: Dave Holdsworth, Kenny

Wheeler, trumpet, flugelhorn; Greg Bowen, Tony Fisher, Henry Lowther, Ronnie Hughes, trumpet; Malcolm Griffiths, Paul Rutherford, Mike Gibbs, Eddie Harvey, trombone; Tom Bennelick, French horn; Martin Fry, George Smith, tuba; Mike Osborne, Bernie Living, Alan Skidmore, Nisar Ahmed Khan, John Warren, Brian Smith, reeds; John Surman, reeds; Mike Westbrook, piano, arranger/composer; Harry Miller, Barre Phillips, bass; Alan Jackson, John Marshall, drums.

Rating: ★★½

I suspect, and not merely by the Concert Band title, that Mike Westbrook's "anti-war symphony" is better witnessed live, because the theatrical nature of the music demands a far more immediate context than a record can offer, especially in that one may be easily led to closely follow the program liner reflections rather than to simply experience the drama of the piece as it plays.

Musically, much of the writing is conventional and often overwrought, even when well-using special effects or collective improvisations (very much a la Coltrane's *Ascension*), yet the charts nonetheless evoke Westbrook's imagery, particularly moments expressing the torments and real danger of the battlefield and a final vision of bitter triumph in *Memorial* (cross-cutting chaos against *God Save the Queen*, i.e. *America*, to create the portrait of "a brass band to hide the screams of the dead").

Otherwise, few individual movements of the symphony stand apart from the whole, except perhaps the generally fine solo work (notably by trombonists Griffiths and Rutherford, reedmen Surman and Osborne, and Smith's tuba on *Conflict*), and the program itself is now and then labored, yet Westbrook's intent is certainly laud-

able; so that, despite any imperfections, *Marching Song* still maintains an engaging creative texture . . . and an exceptional sentiment. —Bourne

CLARENCE WHEELER & THE ENFORCERS

DOIN' WHAT WE WANNA—Atlantic SD 1551: *Hey Jude*; *Sham Time*; *Theme from Electric Surfboard*; *Right On*; *Dream Bossa Nova*; *Doin' What I Wanna*; *C.W.*

Personnel: Sonny Covington, trumpet, cowbell, tambourine; Wheeler, tenor saxophone; Sonny Burke, organ; George Hughes, drums.

Rating: ★★½

The Enforcers are a fine, tight little Chicago band who play a caloric blend of jazz, r&b and soul music and make it all come out righteous. A versatile group (they did a fine job, for instance, of backing Sonny Criss during his Chicago visit last year), they can make the people in a club feel good.

On their first album, they are perhaps not quite as relaxed as in person, which is not an uncommon thing with first albums, but the program is varied enough to make a good showcase. They come off sounding more convincing than many major jazz players trying to get into this kind of groove. After all, it's their thing.

Excepting *Hey Jude*, which seems rather aimless until Wheeler comes in near the end of the nearly eight-minute track, the Enforcers will keep you moving to their music here. I liked best Wheeler's two originals which conclude the album, though the boppish ensembles on *C.W.* are a bit messy, and the gentle *Bossa Nova* (by or-

ganist Eddie Buster). Probably it's my jazz bias—it's on these tracks that the hornmen take their best solos. Wheeler is tasty on the bossa nova; I'd like to hear him play ballads. (He also did the nice arrangements.)

Covington has a crisp sound and plays with spirit. Even the time problems on *C.W.* don't matter much. Burke tends to throw many effects into his solos here, including a *Flight of the Bumblebee* quote and some Jimmy Smith tricks, but he's a good player with a solid beat and does yeoman footwork. Drummer Hughes keeps the time where it should be at throughout.

This is a sincere effort, and if you dig this kind of goodtime music, you'll like the Enforcers. So will your dancing friends.

—Morgenstern

BLUES 'N' FOLK

BY HARVEY PEKAR

Magic Sam, *Black Magic* (Delmark DS-620)

Rating: ★★★★★

Jimmy "Fast Fingers" Dawkins (Delmark DS-623)

Rating: ★★★★★

Carey Bell's *Blues Harp* (Delmark DS-622)

Rating: ★★★★★

Muddy Waters, *Fathers and Sons* (Chess LPS 127)

db/RC

Rating: ★★★★★½

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The blues have reached a crucial point in their history; there is some question as to the direction the music will take and who will perform it in the future.

Whether or not one considers the blues a form of folk music today, there is no doubt that they began as a folk form—a form of Afro-American folk music, to be specific. Obviously, the best blues performers are Afro-Americans, just as the best performers of Chinese folk music, as far as I know, are Chinese.

The blues have not evolved as rapidly as jazz. The melodic, harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary of jazz is much larger than that of blues, and more forms of jazz than blues have developed. Still, the blues have evolved noticeably over the years; B.B. King obviously has a different style than Charlie Patton.

The blues, then, have not been stagnant. But where will they go from here? This question comes to mind for several major reasons. One is that most young black people don't seem very interested in blues anymore. They'd rather listen to modern r&b, sometimes termed soul music, which draws more on gospel music than it does on blues. (Of course, gospel music and blues have much in common, but they are different forms.) So we have a situation where black Americans—the people best equipped to sing the blues by virtue of their cultural heritage—seem to be turning away from them. Conversely, young, middle-class, urban whites have picked up on the blues. However, many of them aren't blessed with the talent, sensitivity and musical background necessary to perform the blues in anything approaching an authentic or convincing manner, and some of their blues work is ludicrous. These whites may love the blues, but let's hope they don't love them to death.

The question of what type of material bluesmen will perform in the future should also be considered. The time is ripe for bluesmen to start employing more compositions that have a blues feeling and are in the blues tradition but are not in the strict 12-bar form. Compositions of this type have the potential to stimulate bluesmen to broaden their musical horizons and engage in exciting experimentation.

If only more young black musicians were interested in performing blues, the future of the art would probably be very promising. The situation being what it is, however, the survival of blues as an independent, living, evolving musical form is in question. By 1980, the blues could conceivably be pretty much in the hands of white musicians.

Magic Sam, who died recently at the age of 32, was—with several others, including Buddy Guy and Otis Rush—one of the greatest bluesmen to come to the fore since B.B. King. He had a great deal of natural talent. He was a powerful singer with very good range. He sometimes used vibrato quite effectively to lend a sensuous quality to his vocals.

Sam was also an outstanding guitarist whose style, though influenced by King, was original. He had good technique and often played in a relatively loose, relaxed manner. His swinging, sometimes fairly complex playing suggests to me that he was

influenced by jazz.

Sam's playing and the work of his groups were also influenced by boogie woogie, although this isn't nearly as noticeable on this LP as it was on his first, *West Side Soul*.

Black Magic, his second LP, is quite good, although the quality of the tracks varies considerably. *I Just Want a Little Bit* is one of the less interesting selections. It's not a particularly good piece; it has such coy lyrics that Sam can't do much with them. *San Jose* is a dull, repetitive instrumental selection.

Most of the other tracks, however, are interesting. Sam demonstrates that he is a versatile vocalist. He turns in some happy, buoyant singing on *Keep Loving Me Baby*, but his vocal work on *What Have I Done Wrong* and *Stop! You're Hurting Me* is full of anguish. The unforced power of his singing on *Easy Baby* is impressive.

Sam's guitar work is generally fine. Particularly good are his forceful soloing on *Stop!* and his jumping, infectious playing on *Keep Loving Me Baby*.

Jimmy Dawkins' singing and guitar playing are featured on his LP. Technically, he is a limited singer; he certainly doesn't have the range and power of Magic Sam. But he makes the most of what he has, singing straightforwardly and thoughtfully with a tough, sincere quality. He sounds as if he really means what he sings.

Dawkins, nicknamed "Fast Fingers", is a technically very good guitarist who often plays multi-note phrases. He has developed an original style. One of the distinguishing characteristics of his playing is his use of exciting tremolo effects. His tone is strong and tough. He plays forcefully and inventively and constructs his solos well. On *You Got to Keep on Trying* his playing has a markedly vocal quality and is very moving.

Dawkins' sidemen do a fine job. The rhythm section work of Lafayette Leake, who plays piano and organ, is especially praiseworthy.

Carey Bell is a good, honest, shouting vocalist. His singing isn't particularly subtle but powerful and generally not affected.

He is primarily known as a harmonica player, however. He studied with Little Walter some years ago and takes a good, vigorous Walter-influenced solo on *I'm Ready*.

But he has developed a style of his own and is one of the most original of the younger blues harmonica players. One of the interesting aspects of his playing is the variety of colors and textures he employs. There are some rather unusual, sometimes quite delicate upper-register effects here, but also some gutty lower-register work. Bell's playing is melodically and harmonically fresh, and more interesting than that of the many blues harmonica players who are satisfied just to play inflectiously.

Unfortunately, Bell's playing on this LP is inconsistent. At times, it does not have good continuity and/or drive. On some tracks, (*Come on Over Here*, *I Cry So Much*, *Blue Monday at Kansas City Red's*) it has an indecisive quality. Perhaps the unevenness of his playing has to do with his willingness to experiment. He takes chances,

and not everything he tries comes off well. Still, he deserves credit for not playing it safe. His unique upper-register playing may prove to be quite influential.

There are three instrumental selections on Bell's LP. Two of them *Blue Monday at Kansas City Red's* and *Rocking with a Chromatic*, are dull and musically confused. The third, *Sad Dreams*, has some feelingful work by Dawkins (who appears on four of this LP's 10 tracks) and Bell.

Fathers and Sons, the Muddy Waters two-LP set (one of the records was cut in a studio, the other in concert) brings two of the most important early modern bluesmen, Muddy and Otis Spann, together with Paul Butterfield and Mike Bloomfield, two white musicians who have played a significant role in turning young whites on to the blues.

Butterfield's and Bloomfield's going to hear early modern Chicago blues bands sort of parallels the members of the Austin High Gang going to hear King Oliver's band in Chicago decades earlier.

Muddy's performance here is fine. Although not quite as sensitive as it was in his 1947-52 period, his singing is tasteful, powerful and earthy. He sings with great confidence; he's a tough old lion of a bluesman.

Muddy's very vocal-like guitar work is another highlight. He doesn't have great instrumental technique, but he gets the job done.

I've got my reservations about Butterfield's singing and his conception as a group leader. Here, however, he is restricted to playing harmonica, which is what he does best.

As a matter of fact, he is one of the best blues harmonica players around, black or white. His playing has been influenced by jazz as well as Little Walter and often has a hornlike quality.

Butterfield is outstanding here. His work is biting and intense. He seems inspired and plays inventively. And he performs with great intelligence; just about everything he does makes so much sense!

Bloomfield's musical interests seem to have broadened quite a bit since 1965, when he gained national attention as a member of Butterfield's band. Though still primarily interested in the blues, his sensitive, graceful solo work on the rock selection *Another Country* (on the first Electric Flag LP) and his jazz-influenced playing on *His Holy Modal Majesty* (on the Columbia *Super Session* LP) indicate that he has become increasingly interested in other forms of music. Even when he was in Butterfield's band, his work was influenced by jazz.

Bloomfield's solo work here is more complex, far more modern harmonically and rhythmically, and less vocal in quality than Muddy's playing.

He doesn't get much solo room, which is unfortunate because he is in good form. He plays vigorously and inventively, and happily doesn't overuse one particular pet lick as he sometimes has done in the past. He does a fine job of building and releasing tension on *Can't Lose What You Ain't Ever Had*. On *Walkin' thru the Park* his work is infectious; he gets in a groove and stays in it, driving hard. He builds a power-

ful head of steam during his *I'm Ready* solo which unfortunately is faded out at the end of the track.

Spann does a good job throughout. He takes a fine, full-bodied solo on *Twenty Four Hours* and his exuberant work as an



accompanist and soloist on *Sugar Sweet* is one of the highlights of the two-LP set. His recent death is a great loss to the blues.

There certainly are possibilities open to young men who would like to push the boundaries of the blues forward.

Blues instrumental styles have been evolving and could continue to evolve. Guitarists like Bloomfield, Dawkins and Buddy Guy, influenced by B.B. King, have gone on to develop styles of their own. Bell's experimentation in the harmonica's upper register has opened up possibilities for other blues harmonica players to explore.

The blues don't have to stop growing if serious, creative musicians, as opposed to jive pop performers, won't let them stagnate.

CB

BOOK REVIEWS

Somebody's Angel Child: The Story of Bessie Smith, by Carman Moore. Illustrated with photographs. Thomas Y. Crowell Co.; 122 pp., \$4.50.

Paul Oliver's biography of Bessie Smith, published in 1959, had woven into it just about all previously published quotes and bits of information regarding Miss Smith. I was disappointed in Oliver's failure to make clear that many of his assertions were pure conjecture, and was bothered by his tendency to pontificate. I felt that his book, though valuable, was not the definitive biography.

Now, ten years later, we have another effort, this time by a black American composer-critic, who has been able to take advantage of Oliver's research and, most important, has gained access to the recollections of Jack Gee, Miss Smith's husband.

In spite of this, Carman Moore has written the most insensitive, inaccurate account of Bessie Smith's life yet published.

The obviously fictionalized dialogue, which appears throughout the book, makes

suspect the few bits of hitherto unpublished information contained in it, and renders it almost invalid as a source for future researchers. Moore's own research seems to have been limited to reading Oliver's book, listening to the four available Bessie Smith reissue albums, and talking to Gee.

Contemporary accounts and the recollections of those close to Miss Smith during the last decade of her life indicate that Gees' involvement—particularly after he took over as her manager—was detrimental to his wife's career. Moore's book would have us believe otherwise. I suppose he was reluctant to offend Gee—having gained his confidence where others failed—but he need not have made him the hero.

That Moore has read Oliver's book is very clear; that he has not read it as carefully as he should have is borne out by the following:

On page 18 (of the original Cassell edition) Oliver marvels at the way Miss Smith—on her recording of *Beale Street Mama*—phrases a lead-in with "How come you do me like you do."

Moore has apparently neither heard the recording in question nor consulted any of the readily available discographies. He writes, on page 71: "Hardly had their honeymoon begun when Bessie received a call from Frank (Walker) to come over to Columbia to record *Beale Street Mama* and *How Come You Do Me Like You Do*."

Had he bothered to check, Moore would have found that Miss Smith never recorded the latter tune and that Gene Austin and Roy Bergere didn't write it until the following year.

One could go on pointing out such inaccuracies, but it would serve no purpose—the book has been published, the damage is done.

Damage, because Miss Smith's importance to her art demands better treatment, and because the publication of this book might discourage other efforts for some time.

Hopefully, it will have the reverse effect. There are still a few responsible jazz writers around, including a handful whose heritage has given them a natural-born understanding, so to speak, of Miss Smith's circumstances. Moore's apathetic treatment has increased the need for a good Bessie Smith biography.

I wish I could write such a book, but it will take more than knowledge of her activities and recordings, writing skill, and even the greatest enthusiasm for Bessie Smith's art. Many of Miss Smith's problems were intrinsically the problems of the black artist in America. It is all very well to point out that she was a tough woman who drank a lot of gin, but one should not do so without delving into the milieu that fostered such characteristics and habits.

It has been argued that Moore's book is for young people. Neither he nor his publisher make this clear, and even though it does have a sort of Mother Goose air about it, youngsters—if indeed it is meant for them—ought not to be offered such gross distortion of facts. Young readers have, after all, come a long way since Little Jack Horner sat in a corner.

—Chris Albertson

BLINDFOLD TEST

GENE AMMONS by Leonard Feather

Gene Ammons is one of the most distinguished among the growing ranks of second-generation jazzmen. His father, Albert Ammons, was a pioneer Chicago boogie woogie pianist. A couple of years before his death in 1949, he and his young son joined forces for a Mercury record session. Gene at that time was nearing the end of his 3½ years as a member of the Billy Eckstine band.

After working with Woody Herman for several months in 1949, Jug started his combo career. He soon formed a quintet with Sonny Stitt; their tenor battles set a pattern that was followed by dozens of similar groups. Later he fronted a variety of small units and began a long association with Prestige Records.

Since his well-publicized return to activity last fall, Jug has been in peak form, a latter-day representative of virile, post-hard-bop style tenor with a commanding sound and dynamic control of the beat.

This being his first Blindfold Test, I selected items featuring a wide range of tenor styles, along with a couple of examples of strictly contemporary trends. He was given no information about the records played.

1. WAYNE SHORTER. *Adam's Apple* (from *Adam's Apple*, Blue Note). Shorter, composer, tenor saxophone; Herbie Hancock, piano; Reginald Workman, bass; Joe Chambers, drums.

I noticed from the beginning that he had a minor blues feeling—actually an extended minor blues feeling, where they stretch it out for 24 bars instead of 12, and there were some chord changes in the middle that were a little different than ordinary minor blues, which I liked very well, because it gave a different feeling. Then it had a rocking feeling to it too, with the beat that the drummer was playing, and at first I thought it was something Horace Silver might do, but I'm not too familiar with all the new tenor players on the scene today. I'll take a guess and say Joe Henderson; I've liked him from the beginning.

I liked the format of that and the feeling of today's thing, so I'll give it four stars.

2. EDDIE HARRIS. *Theme in Search of a Movie* (from *The Best of Eddie Harris*, Atlantic). Harris, tenor saxophone with Maestro amplifier; Charles Stepney, composer.

Of course that was my man Eddie Harris. I think Sonny Stitt was the first to use the Varitone, but if I had to choose from the cats that are using it today, I'd say that Eddie gets more effects than anyone. I saw Eddie recently and he has this extended console which gives you so many effects—the oboe, flute, bassoon—and I honestly believe that he uses them very well.

Eddie has always been a wonderful musician, and on this tune I liked the Latin feeling and the nice easy relaxed feeling they got from it. And about the strings . . . I've got a thing about strings, because I've wanted to use strings for quite a while, and still plan to do so. Anytime I hear a beautiful cat doing a beautiful background with strings I always dig it.

So, adding all that together and knowing Eddie like I do, his ability and everything, I'd give that four stars.

3. CHARLES LLOYD. *Song of Her* (from *Forest Flower*, Atlantic). Lloyd, tenor saxophone; Cecil McBee, composer.

The first thing I thought was that this was my dear friend John Coltrane, but

after listening for a while I think it's probably Charles Lloyd. Charles has tremendous ability, but when I hear him and guys like Joe Farrell and a few of the others, the only thing I can feel is the influence John gave them . . . the same as Pres gave myself and so many other earlier tenor players.

The tune had a very moody feeling, and being a pretty moody guy I like all those kind of things. It sounds like it might be a Charles Lloyd original. So four stars for that.

4. WOODY HERMAN. *Keep on Keepin' On* (from *Light My Fire*, Cadet). Richard Evans, composer, arranger; Sal Nistico, tenor saxophone.

I'm pretty sure that was my man Woody Herman. Being an alumnus of Woody's band, I'm pretty partial to the band as a whole. I came up in the middle of the big band era; consequently big bands are really my first love. I've always liked the sound of all the brass and the feeling that five reeds can get in a band of the type that Woody has—and always has had down through the years.

The tune sounds pretty original, and it was really swinging as only Woody can do. The tenor player sounded like Sal Nistico, who's a very dear friend of mine.

So there's nothing bad I can say about Woody and the band and Sal and everybody . . . so I'll have to give it five stars.

5. RUFUS HARLEY. *Windy* (from *Kings/Queens*, Atlantic). Harley, bagpipes; Ruthann Friedman, composer.

You really crossed me up there, Leonard. This isn't really my cup of tea at all. But I suppose it conforms with the trend of the day. In fact I'm sure that young people today would pay big money to hear this type of thing on records and through personal appearances.

I have no idea who this is, but I think I heard a bagpipe doing the ensemble. And the melody also sounds familiar. I'm not going to be one of those that condemns any type of music, because I think all types have their points—good and bad—so I'm not going to comment on whether this

is good or bad. I'll just say that it's not really the type of thing I dig. For what they were doing and for those that do dig it, I'll give it two stars.

The bagpipe thing sort of distorted the overall feeling, because it sounded pretty out of tune to me.

6. DEXTER GORDON. *Who Can I Turn To* (from *Gettin' Around*, Blue Note). Gordon, tenor saxophone; Bobby Hutcherson, vibes.

What can I say about Vice? That's short for vice-president. We all called him that back when we were in B's band together. My long time friend, Dex. You know, I've always loved playing pretty ballads, but my true feeling is that a tenor player just doesn't do justice to a ballad. But Dex is one of the ones that definitely does.

Also, *Who Can I Turn To* is one of my favorite tunes. I'll take a guess and say Bobby Hutcherson on vibes. He's one of the new breed that I definitely like.

There's nothing more I can say about Dex; he's such a beautiful cat . . . five stars.

7. ALBERT AYLER. *Love Cry* (from *Love Cry*, Impulse). Ayler, tenor saxophone, composer.

I'm sort of caught in the middle here between Archie Shepp and Pharoah Sanders. I've never met either one of them personally, but what they're doing . . . I don't know, it just sort of loses me. I imagine it has its merits, and I'm not one to condemn a cat for doing his thing, but as far as my personal feeling is concerned, I just can't get with what they're doing.

Before John died, he had gone into a very advanced thing, and had quite a few cats like Pharoah and Archie in the middle of this thing, and leaving the scene as suddenly as he did—he sort of left their minds in a turmoil, to the effect that they weren't quite sure in what direction they wanted to go. All I'll say is that it had one of those drone-type feelings, the tune they were playing. And the voices—I don't have any idea who or what that was, but I imagine it added to the dimension of what they were trying to do. Since it I don't have too much feeling for what they were doing, I can only give it two stars.



Dizzy Gillespie/Ray Charles

Fillmore East, New York City

Personnel: Gillespie, trumpet, tambourine, vocal; George Davis, guitar; Mike Longo, piano; Johnny Williams, bass; David Lee, drums. Ray Charles Band: Blue Mitchell, Bill King, Herbie Anderson, Marshall Hunt, trumpets; Joe Randazzo, Henry Coker, Glenn Childers, Fred Morell, trombones; Andy Ennis, Dave Newman, Jay Miller, Curtis Peagler, Leroy Cooper, reeds; Charles, piano, organ, vocal; Kenny Lupper, piano, organ; Ben Martin, guitar; Edgar Willis, bass; Ernie Ely, drums. The Raelets: Mabel John, Suzay Green, Estella Yarborough, Venita Moss, vocals.

It seemed like a strange place to be going to hear Dizzy Gillespie blow, and it was.

It feels like always, but I guess it's actually been only for about two and a half years: the Fillmore East Theater. Once a lower East Side Loew's movie palace, back when movies were movies and the lower East Side was the lower East Side—right next door to Ratner's, the legendary dairy restaurant of the Jewish elite—today, as for two years past, the Fillmore East is the unofficial East Coast headquarters and unamplified tailpipe of the world of rock, guaranteed to blow what's left of your mind in 1970 A.D. (After the Decibels). Every night, or anyway every time I pass by, they're lined up and shuffling in, the costumed nonconformists in their virtually identical costumes, and from Ratner's windows I often see the old Jewish elite gazing out with scarcely believing eyes upon the Flower Children and Afro hairdos a yard in diameter, jamming the old Avenue from the corner of East 6th to St. Marks Place. All the hippest of the hippies, each one strenuously Doing His Thing, which oddly enough turns out to be the same thing. But the thing they *all* seem to do, fortunately for owner Bill Graham, is pay out that good bread into the box office of the Fillmore East to assist at the nightly or weekly rites.

The Fillmore East is the only theater in town I know of, not excepting Radio City, that needs police barriers as permanent fixtures of its entrance.

Graham has shrewdly staffed his operation from boxoffice to ushers with a small army of the young, whose garb, beards, and hairdos project the right image (every army needs a uniform). All in all, I said to myself, a strange place to be going to hear Diz, this Saturday night in spring.

Watching the crowd filing in for the 8 p.m. show, I speculated on why each one of *them* was there. They fell into three categories. Most of them looked like the Fillmore East's usual customers, the beads-beards-and-blankets set; then, perhaps half as numerous, fairly young black non-hippies, including many teenagers (clearly there for Ray Charles); and finally, in the proportion of about 1 in 10, casually but conventionally dressed people, black and white, mostly—should we confess?—over 30. The total of all three categories didn't add up to a capacity house; the first show was about 70% filled, the 11:30 one reached about 85%, which I thought was pretty good, considering the size of the place.

Diz and his Quintet were on first, and from the very first note it was apparent that it wasn't going to matter what any of the audience were there for—whether they had come to hear Dizzy, or Ray Charles, or just because they were in the habit of



Ray Charles & Co., with Blue Mitchell (far left in trumpet section) and the Raelets

going to the Fillmore East—because right from the start, John Birks Gillespie had them eating right out of his hand, and kept them that way throughout the set, which lasted a good hour. He blew that upswept horn of his, he talked, made jokes, danced, banged a tambourine with high skill, sang, and played the horn some more, and you couldn't have said where the showman-entertainer ended and the master musician took over. The audience gulped it all down and begged for more.

The music Dizzy played this night, most of it, wasn't the kind I personally like best to hear from him. In other words, there wasn't much straight-ahead jazz or blues; most of it had a bossa nova or other exotic beat; and its musical thrust, like that of rock and Latin music in general, was toward hypnotic involvement by insistent repetition and "building" (like tribal rites), rather than toward the open melodic variation which for me is the essence of the jazz message.

But it was very obvious that I was practically alone in that reservation. For that particular audience, Diz couldn't have chosen a more appropriate style. Another happy feature, for the Fillmore East, was the presence of George Davis on guitar. Davis plays a ringing, stinging style with a tremendous bite, and the leader frequently put him, musically speaking, right up front. If you're familiar with Mike Longo's fantastic gifts as pianist, composer, and arranger, you will know that he, as usual, distinguished himself with particular brilliance, deftly supported by Johnny Williams and David Lee.

Lee presided at the drums like a tribal god, laying down the various beats over which Williams' singing bass lines rose and fell.

I counted six tunes in the set, which means they averaged 10 or 12 minutes in length: a bossa-nova blues that featured Dizzy in some of the most searing, soaring horn *anyone* ever blew; a reflective, but still subtly swinging tribute to Martin Luther King Jr., composed by Dizzy, which he calls the *The Brother K*; and an exciting Brazilian-type "tica-tica" rhythm tune that didn't get announced, in which Davis raced all over the fingerboard like a high-voltage spark; Davis' strongly gospel-based song *Closer*, in which Dizzy lifted up his voice to lead the faithful; one

of Diz' finest from the Golden Age of Bop, *Oop-Pop-A-Da*, originally recorded in '47 and taken by Dizzy here at such a sizzling tempo that his scat vocal must have toasted his larynx—his bop-singing was, as always, inimitable and superb—and, finally, Dizzy's own long and elaborate memorial to "a city that once existed on the banks of the Nile, three thousand years ago"—the oft requested 6/4 rhapsody entitled *Kush*.

That was the set; and though Dizzy played superbly throughout, the *material* he was working over mostly wasn't what I would have requested. As if to rub that point in, so far as listeners of my persuasion are concerned, after the last number (*Kush*) and the wild applause had died down, Dizzy stomped off a real, tough, swinging, let's-go-baby blues—exactly what I would have requested—and after the intro, with a dry grin, ended it right there—having played exactly one note of it. The audience laughed appreciatively at the musical joke, more than familiar to Gillespie fans.

Ray Charles and the Raelets were scheduled next, but instead, at about 9:30, somebody stepped to the microphone and said the theater would have to be evacuated for a little while because someone had telephoned in a bomb threat. "We get these phone calls regularly," he said, "and while we don't really expect it to *happen*, we can't afford to take a chance. So please hold your ticket stubs, and file out the exits quietly. As soon as the police have made a thorough search of the theater, you will be re-admitted. We're sorry, but . . ."

There was no panic. A little murmuring, and, I imagine, some mixed feelings about the whole thing; but the exodus was orderly enough, and soon the whole crowd was out on East 6th St. (where pipe-bomb "factories" are not entirely unknown), spilling out onto Second Avenue to meditate upon the delightful times we live in. Symbolically, perhaps, I ran into an old acquaintance who had, 10 years ago, produced a jazz-dance concert for which I had procured Dizzy Gillespie's band; he's out of the music game now and in the fire insurance game.

There was no bomb—this time.

Back we trooped, properly refreshed by a few breaths of carbon monoxide and



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assorted aldehydes, and ready for Ray Charles.

If anyone wants to know, in 1970, where "the big band sound" went, I can tell him. The contemporary rhythm-and-blues "soul" people like Ray Charles and James Brown are putting it together every night, and as good as ever. Before Ray himself appeared, his band swung one blues. Wow. When Blue Mitchell walked down front with his trumpet and started steaming, tough and relaxed, and Dave Newman took off on tenor, I felt like a new man. I felt, in fact, as I had for that final intro-plus-one-note Dizzy had been into for one beautiful instant before he decapitated my soul and walked off the stage. I just can't tell you how that band—17 glorious pieces—swung.

Then the four Raelets came marching out, and they made me pretty happy too for awhile. The shrieks of enthusiasm that greeted their advent—and nearly every initial line of every song they did—instantly transformed the scene into a teenage "soul" fiesta, and the great man himself hadn't even appeared as yet. When he did, the screaming doubled; the introductory notes of each tune were greeted with shouts of recognition; a few rows in front of us, four young black kids had increasing difficulty containing themselves, and were soon leaping in response to Ray's or the Raelets' every other line.

Charles himself was in fine form, and the Raelets punched out their message with verve, precision, and a fine flavoring of black-church gospel. But once again, most of the material chosen wasn't, for me personally, the best of Ray Charles; and again, judging by the glad cries all around me, I seemed to be a minority of one. A highlight of the session was Ray's showmanlike rendition of that longtime Charles favorite *I Got a Woman*—he really poured it on. But, generally speaking, I soon began to tire of the teen-age-soul effluvium; the best moments for me remained the swinging instrumental passages, ripped out by guys like Mitchell, Newman, and Leroy Cooper and Henry Coker; they were really magnificent, a happy combination of ancient roots and some very contemporary shoots. And, holding his own among these deepwater sharks, was this gifted young pianist, Kenny Lupper, who is—are you ready?—all of 16 years old. I didn't even really enjoy Ray's *Georgia on My Mind*, though it seemed to kill everyone around me. At that point I decided to wander backstage, make like a journalist, and pick up a few requisite facts.

Backstage, Diz was getting ready to go on again for the 11:30 show, and someone appeared at the stage door with what looked like 25 or 30 hot cartons of pizza. I talked to Diz awhile, meditating, as I have had occasion to do in the past, on the irony of life which arranged for this sharpwitted, canny, clear-thinking and tirelessly inventive man to carry the nickname "Dizzy". Diz, or let's call him John, gave me a copy of his latest record (*The Real Thing*—Perception PLP-2) which includes at least one of the tunes he played on this Fillmore gig.

The record proved to be a very good one indeed.

—Ralph Berton

B. B. King and His Friends

Carnegie Hall, New York City

Personnel: King, guitar, vocal; Joe Turner, vocal; T-Bone Walker, guitar, vocal; Eddie (Cleanhead) Vinson, alto saxophone, vocal; Big Mama Thornton, vocal; Leon Thomas, vocal; plus House Band: Russ Andrews, tenor saxophone; Wynton Kelly, piano; Lawrence Lucie, guitar; Al Hall, bass; Elvin Jones, drums, and other assisting musicians, including Sonny Freeman and the Unusals (accompanying King).

Bringing the blues to Carnegie Hall was not a new idea (John Hammond did it 38 years ago), but it was certainly a timely one.

The blues arrived many decades ago and have been with us—in pure and adulterated forms—ever since, enjoying a current upsurge in popularity among young people of the rock generation who are discovering this music for the first time.

This concert clearly reflected the absence of any musical generation gap. The audience, mostly young and white, showed an enthusiasm normally afforded chart-topping pop groups when Joe Turner was introduced, and broke into spontaneous applause when emcee Ed Williams mentioned Bessie Smith.

Several times during the evening, crowds of long-haired, dungaree-clad kids rushed to the foot of the stage with outstretched hands, hoping to touch 57-year-old T-Bone Walker or Big Mama Thornton. Even Nina Simone, a member of the audience, got out of her seat and sat on the floor of the hall, in front of the stage.

A great deal of this, of course, was romanticism, but the evening also offered some fine performances.

Turner, who kicked things off, was a disappointment, but this was mainly because his accompaniment was ill chosen and the sound system left much to be desired. Wynton Kelly's piano, Russ Andrews' tenor, and Lawrence Lucie's guitar were, as it turned out, playing directly into tape machines and the audience, which had paid from \$4.50 to \$7.50 to gain admission to what in effect was a live recording session will have to shell out more money for the albums if they want to hear what really went on.

Turner, thus handicapped, sang three numbers, seemingly accompanied by Elvin Jones' drums alone. The great Kansas City blues shouter deserved better treatment.

Next came Cleanhead Vinson, strolling casually to center stage while playing some magnificent, Parkerish blues figures on his alto sax. He then proceeded to sing three very humorous blues, including *Person to Person* and *Just Dream*, which he originally recorded in 1945. I had not heard Vinson since he came to New York in the early '60s to record with Cannonball Adderley for Riverside, but he has lost none of his skill and sounded, if anything, better than ever. I only wish he had played more alto and that his segment could have been longer.

Much as I like Leon Thomas, we could have done without him on this program. Sporting a kaleidoscopic outfit, he looked colorful on stage but his singing was not up to par. The band that accompanied him was that of Pharoah Sanders, but the leader himself did not appear, presumably because he is under contract to Impulse and the concert was being recorded by Flying Dutchman—once again recording

considerations took priority. (Sanders has appeared with Thomas on record—under the pseudonym “Little Rock”—but I guess an in-person appearance would have been too obvious, since emcee Williams repeatedly plugged Flying Dutchman and its subsidiary label, BluesTime, during the evening.)

T-Bone Walker was in fine form and his own *Stormy Monday Blues* had the audience in ecstasy. His guitar work was a bit repetitive but good, and his stage presence was professional. He knew how to please his youthful audience—walking back and forth with an impish grin and playing repeated figures with his left hand only—but he did it well and he was called back for the evening's first encore.

Williams, a WLIB disc jockey, did an excellent job as emcee, sticking to facts about the various performers rather than the usual jokes. As he was about to introduce Big Mama Thornton, the crowd clamored for more of T-Bone, but Williams calmed them down by noting that there were other artists waiting in the wings: “They’ve waited all this time; let’s not keep them waiting any longer.”

Miss Thornton put on a good show and obviously communicated with her audience, but her voice, disproportionately amplified, was but a raspy echo of her past efforts. She sang her own *Ball and Chain*—recently popularized by Janis Joplin—*Hound Dog*—which she recorded a year before Elvis Presley scored with it—and last year's chart maker, *Oh, Happy Day*. When an encore was demanded, she pointed backstage and said, “They’ve got a moon and a star back there—I’m but a cloud”, then bent down to shake Nina Simone's outstretched hands, said “Thank you, dear”, and danced into the wings.

After a brief intermission, it was time for the headliner, B. B. King, but first we heard about 20 minutes of instrumental blues by Sonny Freeman and the Unusuals, King's 6-piece back-up band. It was alright, and alto saxophonist Booker Walker got in some nice solos, but it was King who the crowd wanted to hear.

His entrance, 2 hours and 10 minutes after the concert had started, brought the house down. Exhibiting brilliant showmanship and outstanding musicianship, with infectious humor and energy, he made his current repertoire sound as if he were performing it for the first time. What a performer this man is, and what a shame that it took so long for him to win the wide recognition he so richly deserves!

As he ended his set, Thomas, Turner and Big Mama joined him on stage, but it was clearly King's moment. Sailing over the many outstretched young hands, a white carnation landed at his feet. Turner grabbed the microphone and began singing an impromptu blues, the band jammed, T-Bone shook a row of hands, Miss Thornton danced, the audience stood up and cheered, and B. B. King disappeared behind a tambourine-shaking Leon Thomas, his arms outstretched and his fingers forming the peace sign.

Though handicapped by a record company's peculiar sense of priorities, B. B. King and his friends gave their capacity audience an evening to remember.

—Chris Albertson

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32 □ DOWN BEAT

SLIM

(Continued from page 15)

and didn't appreciate," he said. "It's so funny because many times in Paris Americans come up to me and say, 'Oh, why aren't you in the States? We need singers like you, and they've got millions of singers like me! They talk about 'swinging England' and all that, but it's right there in their own backyard."

White audiences, maintained the singer, are easier to win over than their black counterparts "because you can't fool a colored audience! They're quite hard to please because all black Americans can sing the blues or play something and you've really got to be playing something hard or something different to move them."

He considers Europeans less fickle than Americans in their musical affiliations, and certainly less hypocritical in their attitude to the blues. He cited the people of his own generation who would keep their blues records hidden and always be first in line at a Sinatra concert in order to be fashionable. He said, "They were ashamed of the blues and some of them still are, but they're just coming around and beginning to be proud of it."

"It's funny how some of them used to make you ashamed yourself," he smiled. "You'd go to New York or Detroit or some place and you'd run into women who always seemed more liberal than men, more true to themselves. You'd meet women who liked the blues and they'd say, 'so you're Memphis Slim'. And some cat would come along and say, 'Hey, you sing them dirty old blues, don't you?', and he'd go and put a nickel in the jukebox and listen to Johnny Mathis." The singer laughed. "Then go home and play John Lee Hooker all night long!"

In Europe, the more ethnic and less overtly commercial a bluesman's bag, the more popular he tends to be, and consequently Slim varies his extensive repertoire to suit only himself. His natural gift for entertainment is by no means dampened in this way, but it's more of an added bonus for the listener. In contrast to the jazz musicians' adopting a policy of non-compromise which may lead to decreasing employment (especially in Europe where the jazz audience is very small), being himself pays off for Memphis Slim. He works more frequently than some expatriates with bigger names and has another advantage over the jazz musician in that he is not dependent on local rhythm teams for support.

"Music is not as wide open in France as people may think," he explained. "There are some good rhythm sections here but they're very hard to find. The musicians haven't been familiarized with the blues here as they have in England, say. Most of the European musicians can play the blues if they want to, because they listen to the records and to the American artists and memorize and copy the way it's done. But none of them, including the British, are original. Blues is black and always will be because we paid the dues."

One summer, Memphis Slim reached the highlight of his career when he took part in a two-week Mediterranean cruise which was graced by such notables as Prince Rainier and Princess Grace of Monaco and

Yugoslavia's President Tito. The blues man shared the bill with a long list of notabilities from the world of straight music including pianist Samson Francois, singer Elizabeth Schwartzkopf, guitarist Andres Segovia and cellist Janos Starker. "I played the classics of America—the blues."

Slim claims that he has made "as many albums as Frank Sinatra," yet he earns comparatively little from record sales. He rates albums primarily in terms of their publicity value. As a member of SACEM (Societe des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Musiciens), he derives a major part of his income from royalties for 200 published blues registered with that organization, the French equivalent of BMI or ASCAP. Slim considers it to be a better proposition than of SACEM's American counterparts. "They're bigger than the government here! If a club don't pay them, they don't operate. I'm happy to be associated with them."

The veteran blues man has little on his mind these days apart from relaxation. On the economics of being an expatriate, he commented: "The money is about the same as in America. If they want you, they'll pay you—that's the way it goes. If they call you, you'll get your money, but if you go to them, you know you won't get anything."

He feels that he is doing better now than if he had stayed in America. "Actually I don't think I'd have been around today if I'd stayed in that rat race. I was half-sick trying to come up with new ideas all the time. I was getting old by the day, but it's different here. You just wait and they call you."

Recently the blues man formed his own booking agency, UBAO (United Black Artists Organization) with which tenor saxophonist Johnny Griffin is also associated in a public relations capacity. "It is an agency that will help artists to come to Europe who were never approached in the past," he explained. "It isn't racist, there will be white artists as well as black, but the general idea is above all to be frank with the artists and show them the figures if they want to see them. That way we hope that we can make some money for the artists instead of paying the usual hundred intermediaries between the agency, artist and promoter."

In spite of his very real infatuation with Paris, the pianist is anxious to retain his ties with the U.S. for recording purposes. He has visited America twice in the past year, once to record in New York and again to spend a vacation with his parents in Memphis, Tenn. "But," he stipulated, "I do like Paris, the city itself, the beautiful old buildings and the 'don't care' attitude of the French. It's not like Chicago or New York where if you want to make it in this day and age you have to be up at 6 a.m. on Broadway with your attache case trying to get a song published or borrow some money. I don't have to do that any more: I just sit by my telephone and the gigs come through."

"Yes," he emphasized, "life is quite different but I like it. There are quite a few Americans here and I have all their phone numbers. If I get lonely I call them up and talk for an hour or go out for a drink and reminisce a bit. Then I get back to the Parisian way of living."



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LEADBELLY

(Continued from page 14)

by listening to other singers and once in a while off phonograph records. Before the first World War, I used to look at the sheet music and learn the words of a few of the popular songs like *Aggravatin' Papa*."

During the time Leadbelly was coming into the Tempo Music Shop I was also involved with Charlie Parker, and I noted that they had many points in common. Each had an unshakeable conviction in the rightness of his music, especially in the way that it should be phrased. For each, there was only one right way. Both were highly skilled actors and con men, abilities which had been painfully and laboriously acquired and arose out of their experience as black men in America. They both could instant-cast roles to suit the occasion and the attitudes of those present.

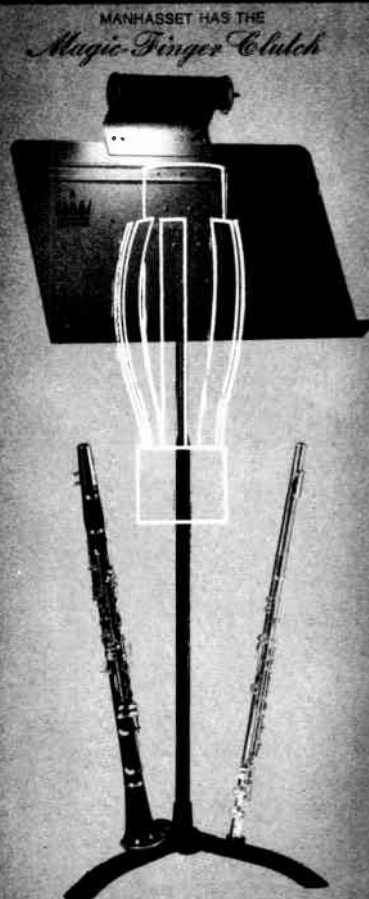
The Hollywood experience was good for Leadbelly, even if it began with a major disappointment. He had come west supposing that the role of the Lord in a production of *Green Pastures* was his, and the deal had fallen through. Once he had been taken up by the left-wing liberals among Hollywood's directors and writers, Leadbelly found himself among people knowledgeable in social issues and able to appreciate his music and its significance. Coming near the end of his life, the Hollywood experience gave perspective to his long and tortuous career. He began to see himself as a man who had moulded something meaningful out of life and become a voice of the nation's conscience and a prophet.

Models? Outside of Blind Lemon Jefferson, whom he revered but does not much resemble, he had none. The hundreds of singers he had heard were only grist for his mill. He stripped from them such material as interested him. The vocal and tonal elements of his style he seems to have absorbed early, from the singers in the Caddo Lake country on the Texas-Louisian border.

Leadbelly was a fascinating man and a great singer, powerful, versatile, and, like all of the big figures, whether in jazz or blues, able to shape any piece of material to suit his style and stamp it with an individuality beyond duplication.

The rich heritage of Leadbelly on record is due in no small part to the taste and industry of John and Alan Lomax, originally amateur musicologists from Austin, Tex. Before anyone else, they were aware of the riches of the Afro-American singing tradition and, by persuading the Library of Congress to document it before time had run out, began the process of getting this material in useful and listenable form. Moe Asch and Fred Ramsey, who recorded Leadbelly on numerous occasions in New York from 1940 onwards, are also responsible for part of the Leadbelly legacy. Dave Dexter did the Capitol sessions.

Recent and in-print Leadbelly records include: Library of Congress recordings (Electra 301-2), *Legend* (Traditional 2093), *Sings and Plays with Woody Guthrie, et al.* (Stinson S-91), *Take This Hammer* (Verve-Folkways 9001), *Midnight Special* (Victor LPV 505), *Best* (Capitol T-1821), *Legacy* (Folkways 2004-14-24-34).



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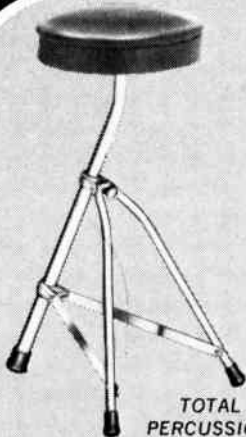
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WILLIAMS

(Continued from page 17)

you too bad, but wine *will* make you say, "Do it!" If you drink too much of that wine, you're gonna take that gun out and let him have it. You see, at that time I was fighting wine. I wasn't playing with it, I was *drinking* it. I drink so much of wine 'til . . . I'd be walking along the road at night, 'possum run under my leg, thought I was a grape tree or something. I just had to be careful—walking along, especially in the dark like that and as much game as there is down my way, 'possum, 'coon, and like that. And I *loved* that wine. I love it now, but it don't love me. I have high blood pressure, and I don't drink no wine, but I love it. I'd drink gallons of it if I could stand it; hah!

I had a parole. Here's the way it was. My folks sent me a guitar, and I started to playing that guitar, and the captain heard me, and they tell me, say, "Come in here." So I went into the office. They said, "Play that thing." I played for them. They said, "Gee, you're good. Like you play that thing, you don't have no business here." Then they dialed the telephone, said hush a minute, get their wives on the phone, and then they'd tell me start to playing. Then I'd start to playing, and they'd let their wives listen at it as long as they'd want to, on the telephone. And when they'd hang up, they'd say, "You know, my wife wants to know if we having a party down here. Those blues sound good."

They kept me in the field one week, and they moved me out of the field and put me in the milk dairy. See, I got a good record. The captain sent me to the milk dairy, and he told me, he said, "Robert, I'm going to send you to the milk dairy. Now, they got a mean man down there. He will hit you or kick you, but if he hit you or kick you, hold your hand up like this, let the guards know you're coming in and come on back to the camp. You think you can work there?" I said, "Oh, yes, I can work down there."

I went on down there to the milk dairy, and that man it looked like he could eat barbed wire—he looked just that mean. So he sent me to get a bucket. So I got one, sat up under that cow. There was a machine there and me here, and I'm telling you I milked that cow so fast I outmilked that machine!

That man got up—I thought he got mad—and he folded his arms, looked at me. He said, "Where did you come from?" I told him where I come. Well, he cussed, said, "I never saw nobody milk a cow that fast in my life. Anytime anybody outmilk a machine, they got to be wonderful." I said, "Yassuh." He said, "Who you used to milk for?" I said, "Well, I used to milk for Mr. White." He said, "How long did you milk for him?" I said, "Fifteen years." He said, "Well, you sure know how to milk a cow. I'm going to give you a suit to milk in." I thought he was talking about a dress suit, you know, but it was one of them uniforms.

He didn't tell me before the other boys; he took me off to the side and said,

"Listen, if you act right and do good, I'll help you. I got a farm out there at Tangipahoa." Well, I had heard about that place, Tangipahoa Parish; that's a dangerous country out there. They call it Tangipahoa, but it's Bloody Tangipahoa. Why, the people kill the people, you be walking in blood!

He said, "Well, I'm going to try to get you on my farm." I said, "Yassuh," but I'm saying in here, "Lord, I hope he don't get me out." I didn't want to go out there, you know, because if he had got me out, well, I'd have had to go.

He didn't get me out, but there was a man did get me out. I was carried there April 6, 1956—I had natural life—and I didn't stay up there but 3½ years. I came out. They brought it from a probation to a parole. Now I don't have none at all. My parole man just moved it all off—told me, "You go ahead on; you're just a free man now. You don't have no more time on you."

So I don't have no more time on me. See, I made a record for Gov. Long; that helped me, and Dr. Oster gave it to him, and they carried it down to the board. And so I rode right into the court with the governor. This man come and got me out of the penitentiary with Gov. Long. And that was it. **[CB]**

Discography

Of four long-play recordings by Robert Pete Williams, only one is currently available, *Louisiana Blues* (Takoma 1011), which offers 10 extended performances of his music. Despite the occasional lack of fire that resulted from its producers' insistence on performances unflawed by the fretting mistakes that sometimes occur in a wholly improvisatory approach such as Williams'—and this extemporization is one of his greatest strengths as a blues man—this set is a generally admirable introduction to his fluid, unique, largely modal music and has the added virtue of Alan Wilson's analysis of Williams' art in an accompanying brochure.

By far the best single recording by Williams is *Free Again* (Prestige/Bluesville 1026), unfortunately deleted from the catalog but well worth searching for. Among its 10 selections are several of the most compelling performances he has recorded, perhaps the best of which is the powerful *I've Grown So Ugly*. In all, it's the essential Robert Pete Williams set.

Two earlier recordings on the Folk-Lyric label operated by Harry Oster are out of print, but may soon be reissued by Arhoolie. Five Williams' performances, including the haunting *Prisoner's Talking Blues*, are contained in *Angola Prisoners' Blues* (LFS A-3), along with two songs apiece by Matthew (Hogman) Maxey and Robert (Guitar) Welch. *Those Prison Blues* (FL 109) offers 11 fine Williams selections, several with accompaniment by Maxey.

Additionally, three representative Williams performances are included in *The Blues at Newport, 1964, Part 1* (Vanguard 79180), recorded at the Newport Folk Festival, which offers selections by Fred McDowell, Sleepy John Estes, and Doc Reese, making for a generally satisfying collection all around. —P.W.

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squawked a-bout my sup-per, then he put me out-doors.

Had the nerve to lay a match-box on my clothes.

I did-n't have so man-y

But I had a long, long way to go.

"Billie's Blues (I Love My Man)" by Billie Holiday © 1956, 1970 by Edward B. Marks Corporation. Used by permission. Excerpt from the publication *B.B. KING/BLUES GUITAR*, published by Edward B. Marks Music Corporation.

JAZZ ON CAMPUS

Campus Ad Lib: The John F. Kennedy Center For The Performing Arts has commissioned Fred Hamilton of Northern Colorado University (Greeley) to compose a major jazz work to be performed at the National College Jazz Festival in May, 1971 . . . Small ensemble writing was the primary area of concentration in the jazz workshop at Hampton Institute (Va.) June 15-July 3. Also included in the program was instruction in basic harmony and improvisation, with Tidewater (Va.) pianist Joe Jones assisting in the latter department. Three hours of academic credit was given to musicians completing the course . . . The Chicago Art Quartet plus one gave a May concert at the University of Chicago campus. The group included Howard Bell, soprano, tenor sax; Rodney Crosby, piano; Rudolph Penson, bass; Dennis Daniels, drums and

Kenny Gueno, conga . . . A *Competition in Guitar* category will be included this year for the first time in the Utah State Fair Music Competition, with auditions to be held Sept. 18-20 at the Univ. of Utah Music Hall. Entrants in the three divisions (classical, flamenco and folk, and amplified jazz or rock) will be judged by Dr. William L. Fowler, professor of music and coordinator of the Univ. of Utah Jazz Studies program . . . An electronic music workshop was held July 15-17 at the East Texas State Univ. (Commerce). The program was conducted by Vladimir Ussachevsky, director of the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, and Thomas Wirtel, coordinator for advanced theory and composition at East Texas . . . In May, Ed Shaughnessy was guest soloist and clinician at the Tri-State Festival in Enid, Oklahoma. At Kansas State Univ., Shaughnessy received a *National Association of Jazz Educators* award for "helping further the goals of youth and 20th century music" . . . Correspondent

Donnie Lang relates that the first semester of a two-course jazz program at the Wisconsin College Conservatory of Music (Milwaukee) was extremely successful. Instructor for the program was Tony King, assisted by student-teacher Don Langlois. The WCCM Jazz Workshop (Tom Baker, trumpet; Langlois, alto sax, drums; Dale Stelzer, baritone sax; Scott Heyer, piano; Rick Gusrafson, guitar; Carl Weinberger, bass; Michael Gregory, drums) capped the successful semester with a May 26 concert.

AD LIB

(Continued from page 11)

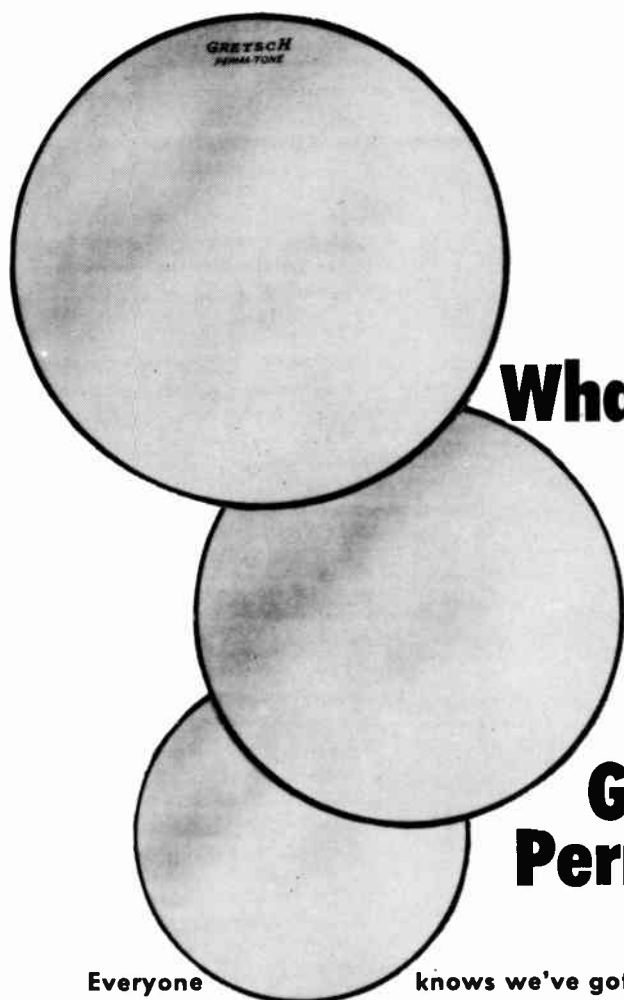
28 . . . B.B. King's stint at the Americana's Royal Box was a big success. It was the first booking of a blues artist at the posh spot . . . Patty Wicks and John-John Robinson continue Sunday nights at the Limelight.

Los Angeles: Harry James was at the Hollywood Palladium for a one-nighter. The in-again, out-again Sonny Payne was on drums . . . The final concert of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra season found the name Oliver Nelson sandwiched among Stravinsky, Haydn and Tchaikovsky. The work played by Zubin Mehta was an excerpt from the seven-movement *Complex City '67*—commissioned in that year by BMI. Joining the Philharmonic players were the composer on amplified alto sax; Larry Nash, electric piano; Roland Haynes (subbing for Ray Brown) bass, and Shelly Manne, drums. The afternoon was so successful that some 200 people stayed on after the concert and the Nelson combo treated them to an impromptu jam session . . . Bobby Troup has shifted his combo and his following from the China Trader in Burbank to the Valley Vegas Room in Encino. His group consists of John Collins, guitar; Bob Badgley, bass, and John Dentz, drums. And of course, Troup, singing at the keyboard. Trombonist Bob Enevoldsen sat in for Bobby's opening . . . Gene Estes has his band at the Brass Ring in Sherman Oaks on Mondays . . . There's an unusual combo in rehearsal now, going under the name of Good Vibes. Name stems from the front line of four vibes—leader Emil Richards, Bob Zimmitti, Curry Tjader (Cal's brother), and Tommy Vig. The rhythm section consists of Dave Mackay, piano; Ray Neapolitan, bass, and Joe Porcaro, drums . . . Pianist Gene Russell, still at Ernie's in Hollywood, has added Tony Williams on congas. Larry Gales is on bass; Steve Clover on drums, and Fran Carol is still vocalizing . . . Don Rader will be in the pit band for the musical *Promises, Promises*, at the Music Center until September 5, but he's not bored. He's got some fellow swingers with him in the orchestra: Randy Alderof, trombone; Dick Spencer, tenor sax, and Willie Mays, piano . . . Barney Bigard was the featured soloist at the June session of the New Orleans Jazz Club of Southern California. Sharing the Santa Ana Elks Club with Barney were the King Zulu Paraders, who in turn had their own head-

liner: trumpeter Carlton Macbeth. Meanwhile at Larchmont Hall in Los Angeles, the Southern California Hot Jazz Society pulled off a huge homecoming party and jam session for its president, Alton Purnell. The New Orleans pianist had been out of town briefly and was taken aback by the surprise, with cake and nearly 300 well-wishers . . . The Golden West Jet-setters presented their first jazz, blues and rock festival at the Elks Club in south Los Angeles. The bulk of the talent for the two-day bash was local. Heading the list of professional talent: Eddie Cleanhead Vinson . . . The Bobby Hutcherson/Harold Land Quintet embarked on a three-week European tour, with TV, radio and club dates in Copenhagen, Amsterdam, Brussels,

Hamburg, Barcelona, Paris—climaxed by the Yugoslav Jazz Festival in Ljubljana. In the rhythm section of the quintet: Hal Galper, piano; Herbie Lewis, bass, and Joe Chambers, drums . . . Willie Ruff is now teaching at UCLA. The course is *Afro-American Musical Heritage*, and there are 203 students in his class, which meets three times weekly. Ruff has encouraged some of his students to produce films instead of writing term papers. His alter ego, Dwiki Mitchell comes in from the east often enough so that the Mitchell-Ruff Duo still plays 100 concerts a year. Their most recent gig was at the University of Hawaii . . . The University of California at Berkley staged a Black Odyssey Festival, sponsored by the Center for Urban

Black Studies. Donald Byrd, who holds a professorship at Howard University, was one of the invited guests for the day-long festival . . . Bob Lan, ex-Kenton reed man, is now teaching woodwinds and jazz improvisation at the Sherman Music School in Hollywood. Lan recently completed a jazz symphony and an *Elegy for String Orchestra* . . . NARAS, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, recently held elections and added the following to its Board of Governors: Mike Barone, Artie Butler, Paul Humphrey, Mike Post and Pat Williams. Among those re-elected: Harry Betts and Leonard Feather . . . Ray Charles flew down to Nashville to tape a guest appearance on *Hee Haw!* . . . Charles Wright, the leader of the Watts 103rd St. Rhythm Band, has formed his own waxery, Wright-Sound Records.



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Chicago: The June 21 farewell for pianist Eddie Higgins, who is moving to Florida, packed the London House for four solid hours of music on a sunny afternoon. Higgins' original trio (Richard Evans, bass; Marshall Thompson, drums) was reunited, and playing guests included trumpeters Art Hoyle, Oscar Brashear, and Bobby Lewis; bass trumpeter Cy Touff; saxophonists Lenny Druss, Kenny Soderblom, Eddie Lockjaw Davis, and Rich Fudoli (the latter scoring with a humorous flute solo); guitarist Bob Roberts; bassist Jim Atlas, and drummer Dick Borden. Musicians who fell by but didn't get to play included Georg Brunis, Richard Abrams, Jim Beebe, Steve McCall, Norm Murphy, Bill Reinhardt, Wayne Jones, Bob Cousins, King Fleming, Jerry Glick, and Bob Ojeda . . . Trumpeter Nappy Trottier heads a trio weekends at the Edge Lounge, with Bob Wright, piano, and Wayne Jones, drums. The group has a wide repertoire, and there are visiting firemen (among them Georg Brunis—taking a turn at the drums) . . . Don Shelton has joined Warren Kime's Brass Impact, still holding forth at the Wise Fools on Mondays, as the sole reedman among the dozen brass. Shelton, a former member of the Hi-Lo's, makes his living as a singer but has plenty of chops on alto and tenor saxophone, clarinet, and flutes . . . Duke Ellington's band appeared in a free Grant Park concert June 24 . . . The Sounds of Swing taped a show for WTTW's Bob Kaiser, scheduled for inclusion in a fall jazz series on NET . . . Tenorist Von Freeman led a quintet on June 22-23 at the Apartment (504 E. 74th St.) in what is hoped will become regular Monday and Tuesday night jazz sessions . . . George Shearing's Quintet moved into the London House for a two-weeker following local favorite Ramsey Lewis, who appeared with his quartet on the Marty Faye TV show the night before closing. With Shearing were vibist Charlie Shoemaker, guitarist Dave Koonz, bassist Andy Simpkins, and drummer Ray Price . . . Ten Years After, the British rock group featuring Alvin Lee, Leo Lyons, Rick Lee, and Chick Churchill headlined the Aragon's bill on a recent Friday . . . Recent attractions at the Auditorium Theatre were Aretha Franklin, Brook Benton and Isaac Hayes . . . The Super

Blues Thang, sponsored by Operation Off The Streets, featured bluesmen Junior Wells, Muddy Waters, Johnny Young, Big Walter Horton, and Sunnyland Slim at the Herzl elementary school . . . Franz Jackson and his Jazz Entertainers, with vocalist Jeanne Carroll, recently returned from an extended USO tour of South Pacific military bases, did a recent weekend at the Showboat Sari-S . . . The trio of singer-guitarist Johnny Johns holds forth Tuesday through Saturday at Punchinello's East, with the Judy Roberts Trio handling Sundays and Mondays, as well as the house band role at the London House during George Shearing's stay.

Boston: Boston's summer music season began when The Band opened the Hub's Summerthing program at an appearance sponsored by the Schaefer Brewing Company in Harvard Stadium . . . Stan Kenton's week-long stint inaugurated the Colonial Ten Acres in suburban Wayland . . . Lennie Sogoloff, the man for all seasons in Boston jazz, offered in recent weeks at his Lennie's-on-the-Turnpike Cannonball Adderley, Carmen McRae, the Paul Butterfield Blues Band, Joe Williams, Nina Simone, and Muddy Waters. Lennie's also served in the development of new big band talent in recently hosting the Boston-based Jimmy Mosher-Paul Fontaine 13-member aggregation whose graduates have gone on to Buddy Rich and Woody Herman. Current Mosher-Fontaine standouts include trombonist Jack Stock, reedman Mike Hughes, and tenor saxophonist Jackie Stevens, a vintage 1964 Herdsman . . . Vocalist Mattie Mangrum staged a blues and jazz concert in the unique setting of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. The Museum's Lecture Hall also was home to an outstanding jazz concert presented by the Music Department of Boston's National Centre of Afro-American Artists . . . Count Basie brought his band to the Hub on a Boston Garden card headed by Tom Jones. Also at Boston Garden recently were Crosby, Stills and Nash and Jimi Hendrix Experience . . . The New England Conservatory of Music contributed to May's national student peace action by mounting a marathon music program at Jordan Hall. Joining student and faculty performers, who played around the clock, were Buell Neidlinger's Luny Toons Band, the Boston cast of *Hair*, and the New York Rock and Roll Ensemble. The Ensemble also appeared with the Boston Pops at Symphony Hall before going on to a week-long stay at the Jazz Workshop . . . Other Jazz Workshops guests recently have been Ahmad Jamal, Young-Holt Unlimited, the James Cotton Blues Band, Charlie Byrd and Mongo Santamaria . . . Next door, at Paul's Mall, featured acts included Bobby Vinton, Arthur Prysock, Gary Puckett and the Union Gap, Jackie Cain & Roy Kral, Ramsey Lewis and The Happenings.

New Jersey: Organist Trudy Pitts, with guitarist Bob Devos and drummer Mr. C., did a week at the Cadillac Club in mid June. A recent Tuesday night at the Cadillac featured the Jack Onque Quartet (Richie Cretice, trombone; Onque, tenor sax; Corky Caldwell, organ; Langston

Booth, melodica, drums.) The group works weekends at Earl's Suburban Nook in Newark . . . Scheduled for summer bookings at the Cadillac are the groups of Art Blakely, Freddie Hubbard, Horace Silver and Michael Shepherd . . . Tenorist Houston Person did a week at the Key Club in June with organist Jimmy Watson and drummer Frankie Jones. Jimmy McGriff followed at the Key with Raymond Greenwood, trumpet; Leo Johnson, tenor sax, flute; Curtis Lee, guitar, and Jesse Kilpatrick, drums. McGriff and Perry and the Harmonics also appeared recently at Pitts in Newark. With the Harmonics: Perry, tenor sax; Ralph Byrd, guitar; Richard McCare, organ, and O'Donnell

Williams, drums . . . The Chico Mendoza group (Herb Morgan, tenor sax; Mendoza, vibes; Tom Adams, piano; Keesvan Baaren, bass, and Charlie Jones, Butch Johnson, and Donald Havard, percussion) is also working at Pitts . . . The grand opening at the new Cliche club featured saxist Curtis Thomas, organist Seleno Clark and drummer Paula Roberts . . . Tenorist Jessie Morrison is still appearing weekends at Newark's Tropicana Lounge with organist Tommy Johnson and drummer Enice Bradley . . . Tenorist Joe Thomas, with Billy Phillips, baritone sax, flute, Jimmy Ponder, guitar; Jiggy Chase, organ, vocals, and Kenny Pollard, drums, did a week at the Ster-



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ington House in Montclair in mid June . . . The Meditations (James Love, trumpet; Charles Jackson, trombone; Renalds Goodlove, alto sax; William Sinclair, guitar; James Jackson, bass; Ray Benoit, drums) appeared at Brothers III in Newark in May and June . . . A concert in Newark's Symphony Hall featured bassist Hakim Jami's Ensemble (Dizzy Williams, trumpet; Ameen Naul Deen, vibes; Michael Shepherd, drums), Gary Bartz, and Sun Ra.

St. Louis: Radio station WEW and Russ David Productions presented a *Salute to Glenn Miller* dance and concert featuring Tex Beneke's Orchestra, Ray Eberle, and the Modernaires with Paula Kelly at the Arena . . . The Peggy Chappel Revue replaced the Joe Bozzi Quartet for three weeks at the Playboy Club Penthouse. Trumpeter Bozzi, pianist Jimmy Williams, bassist Vic Cipponeri and drummer Tommy Widdicombe got an opportunity to stretch out at the club's Living Room . . . Gene Harris' Three Sounds gassed everyone at the Kansas City Jazz Festival and at a two-weeker at the Gourmet Rendezvous . . . The recent benefit for clarinetist Norman Mason on the Goldenrod Showboat was a success. Participating members of Locals 2 and 197 included: the George Hudson Orchestra; Muggsy Sprechers' Dixielanders; the George Johnson Orchestra, Herb Drury's Trio, Singleton Palmer's Band, the Pete Johnstone Trio, and Lige Shaw. Jeff Leopold, president of the St. Louis Jazz Club, emceed . . . The Temptations sold out the Kiel Auditorium, but bookings of Crosby, Stills, Nash&Young and Jimi Hendrix resulted in cancellations . . . Jerome Harris replaced Ken Rice on drums with the Peanuts Whalum group. Guitarist Richard Martin and bassist John Mixon continue with the group . . . The St. Louis Jazz Club had a boat excursion on the Huck Finn in June. The featured group included Don Havens, cornet; Norm Menne, trombone; Sam Gardner, clarinet; Jeanne Kittrell, piano; Wally Eckhardt, bass, and Chuck Kreigh, drums . . . A new avant-garde group, the Musical Liberation Front, features trumpeter Greg (son of Miles) Davis, organist-pianist Clovis Bardordeaux, and drummer Kenneth Reed, drums . . . Two former St. Louis musicians, saxist Dave Sanborn and drummer Philip Wilson, appeared at an all-day rock show at Washington University with the Paul Butterfield Blues Band. Also featured were the Jethro Tull group and Alvin Pivil . . . The Latin Nova (Vince Charles, vibes, steel drum; Rick Bolden, piano; Manny Quintero, drums; Don Valadez, congas) opened recently at the Playboy Club's Living Room for an indefinite stay.

Dallas: Four standing ovations rewarded the performance of Doc Severinsen at the Dallas Independent School District's *Orbit III* concert earlier this year. The trumpet virtuoso was presented in two compositions, commissioned especially for the performance: *Rhapsody for Trumpet and Orchestra*, by Don Gillis, Fine Arts Chairman, Dallas Baptist College, with DISD instrumental co-ordinator Russell E. Ben-

zamin conducting the Dal-Hi Symphony; and *Learn How to Sing*, composed and conducted by Lloyd Pfautsch for the ensemble plus 2500 voice festival chorus. Concerts are held to provide scholarships for graduating high school seniors, to offer a showcase for the annually-commissioned works and to bring guest artists to Dallas . . . Pianist Dick Durham, whose jazz trio worked the Adolphus Century Room in May, is playing this summer at the Diamond Beach Hotel, Wildwood, N.J. . . Dick Shreve, whose trio headlined at the old Fink Mink in the early '60s, returned to Dallas briefly as pianist conductor for Sue Rainey's Fairmont Hotel engagement. . . Buddy Rich and the Four Freshmen varied the Loser's club's normal hard-rock format earlier this summer. . . A new jazz format was being tried during June at the previously all-rock pretty Kitty Kat Klub. Drummer Juvey Gomez and his quartet were the attraction. . . Pianist Richie Salicco joined the Paul Guerrero group (Al Wesser, bass; Jeannie Maxwell, drums, vocals) for an engagement at the Marriott Hotel's Sirlain&Saddle Club. . . The Who had a June date at Memorial Auditorium, while Spirit, Liquid Smoke and Gentle Reign shared a booking at Fort Worth's Will Rogers Coliseum. . . Harper's Corner, atop Dallas's Hilton Inn, has returned to a seven-day policy with the Xavier Chavez trio nightly (Chavez piano; Fred Casares, bass; Steve Allen, drums) plus vocalist Abby Hamilton and, on weekends, Ted Brasselton, congas. . . Eloise Laws, the Houston-born vocalist who returned home this summer, did an eight-day engagement at Dallas' Hyatt House.

Finland: The Eero Koivistoinen Quartet opened the summer season at the Uudenmaa Student Club, which has had a strictly jazz policy since last fall. Current plans call for at least two concerts a week . . . The Helsinki Festival provided numerous blowing opportunities for local musicians. The event, which lasted two weeks, included special concerts by Karin Krog, Arild Andersson, the Mike Westbrook Sextet, an English rock group, the Tremolos, and pianist Friedrich Gulda. Gulda presented his *Pop Symphony* with the Heikki Sarmantos Quintet. The highlight of the festival was the appearance of tenorist Joe Henderson with bassist Ron Carter and drummer Sonny Brown. The group was augmented for the concert by pianist Sarmantos. The concerts were broadcast by Finnish radio throughout Finland, into Estonia and the USSR. The U.S. Information Service, which has been presenting frequent jazz programs, honored Henderson at a reception . . . Finnish musicians heading for the U.S. for summer appearances are Otto Donner, Crisse Schwindt, Reino Laine, Junnu Aaltonen and, for the third time, after a year at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Mass., Heikki Sarmantos . . . The annual Pori Jazz Festival, Finland's national festival of jazz, will feature the 360 Degree Music Experience, Jean-Luc Ponty, blues singer Eddy Boyd, altoist Charlie Mariano with the Heikki Sarmantos Trio, the Danish Papa Bue Viking Jazz Band, and many other Scandinavian groups.



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