

New Adventures of the Jazz Guitar

I was last saying in this space that although the jazz guitar has had many very good players since Charlie Christian, including some who have supplied a lyricism that he lacked, it has had none who was his equal.

It has also had a few public successes, and the latest is a Hungarian-born guitarist named Gabor Szabo. Szabo, whose style is a singular amalgam of Mississippi, Mersey, Madras, and Magyar, well marinated in Mediterranean chicken fat and garnished with marzipan, has declared that jazz as we know it is dead (as *who* knows it?), but he makes it at the festivals and with the record-buyers nevertheless.

Szabo has three virtually simultaneous current releases. *More Sorcery* (Impulse stereo, A-9167) contains Gabor originals, a Beatles ditty, a recent show tune, a bossa nova, etc., played by two quintets. It seems to be made up of the leftovers of previous LPs. *Bacchanal* (Skye stereo, SK-3) is more recent quintet stuff, with more Szabo originals, two Donovan tunes, a movie theme, a recent hit ("Love is Blue"), etc. *Dreams* (Skye stereo, SK-7) has Szabo with a medium-sized ensemble (a couple of strings, some French horns, and lots of clicking, scraping, rattling, popping percussion) and arrangements by Gary McFarland.

One of the most interesting aspects of this music, evident in the quintet LPs especially, is the very different sound and effect that Szabo and his second-stringer, Jim Stewart, get from their guitars. Otherwise, Szabo's stock-in-trade would seem to be a kind of genteel, world-weary version of the modal, around-the-drone, incantatory improvising that, in John Coltrane's music, had a quite different force and import.

Blues-rock guitarist and singer Johnny Winter has two current releases—not to mention a ream or two of current publicity—*The Progressive Blues Experiment* on Imperial stereo, LP-12431, and just plain *Johnny Winter* on Columbia stereo, CS 9862.

Winter seems ready to out-twang everybody with his guitar and eager to out-muddy everybody with his rather weak and somewhat misused voice. He seems to me an embarrassingly sincere, derivative performer who will probably have all the success that Columbia Records expects of him. His press releases make much of the fact

that he is an albino (otherwise I would make nothing of it).

Winter's work couldn't stand much comparison with that of literally hundreds of black blues guitarists. Take Albert Collins, out of Texas, on *Love Can Be Found Anywhere (Even in a Guitar)* (Imperial stereo, 12428). Collins, leading a little organ-tenor sax-brass blues band, carries his musical idiom as naturally as his personality and his gait; he is a pleasure to listen to and, I would imagine, a joy to dance to. He is a man, playing a man's music. Winter, by contrast, is a boy sheep in wolf's clothing—Howlin' Wolf's clothing.

A final note: Verve has reissued its three-volume *Charlie Parker Story* (V6-8000/8002), making it virtually the only recorded music by this major American musician now being widely distributed by a major company. The series offers a cross section of the various things Parker did for the label, which means there is some dross. But there is a superb "Lady Be Good"; there are several excellent quartet and quintet selections (including Parker's only studio recording of his best composition, "Confirmation"); and there are versions of "Just Friends" and "What Is This Thing Called Love" with string accompaniments on which Parker plays with a divine vengeance. The personnel listings on the back liners aren't always reliable but the electronic stereo, believe it or not, is excellent—actually an improvement over the original sound. In terms of the current catalogue, this is essential Parker and essential music. —MARTIN WILLIAMS.



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Letters to the Recordings Editor

From Jeb to Ellen

FOR FIVE YEARS I have been a Beatle (more specifically, a John Lennon) freak. Musically, publicly, and personally I have followed John and Company and have become, in a removed manner, a very close friend. (Some day I *shall* meet them.)

Anyway, John and Yoko are beautiful. I can see you realize this also. . . . Therefore, the purpose of this letter is (if a purpose must exist) to thank Ellen Sander sincerely for her article that says what needs to be said about John and Yoko ["John and Yoko Lennon: Give Peace a Chance," *SR*, June 28]. I consider myself a revolutionary, but a pacifist and a compromiser, also. Change is needed and change will come—but it must be through peaceful means.

This letter must be boring the hell out of Ellen, or whoever is reading it. Sorry.

But you're right, Ellen Sander—keeping John and Yoko out of the country is ridiculous.

So thank you very much, Ellen. I'm sure you reached a lot of people who were blind to the entire situation. You gave me a little more faith in people.

JEB BECK,
San Jose, Calif.

Beautiful

READ Miss Sander's article on John and Yoko. It was beautiful analysis.

BOB LEWIS,
WABC-FM,
New York, N.Y.

Not so Beautiful

RE: "John and Yoko Lennon: Give Peace

RECORD MART

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a Chance," did you read this foolishness before you printed it?

JAY M. SAWILOWSKY,
Augusta, Ga.

Editor's Note: Yes.

Rock and Its Bible

ELLEN SANDER'S ARTICLE is quite accurate in its analysis of rock as a religion and the place of Lennon in that religion.

God died for the youth of America in Dallas in 1963. Traditional religions have become "historical communities." A vacuum was created, and rock has filled that vacuum. Lennon is a key figure in the religion, perhaps the key figure. He was a co-author of the bible *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, and his obsession with peace has elevated him to the status of prophet in the eyes of many.

Ellen Sander has written an invaluable essay. Especially for those who aren't into "the way things are going."

ALAN BERG,
Hebrew Union College,
Cincinnati, O.

The Crosby-Nash-Stills Shot

ELLEN SANDER called the shot on Crosby-Nash-Stills ["Crosby, Stills, and Nash: Renaissance Fare," *SR*, May 31]. A good album. Thank her for telling me about it.

ALEX D.,
Baltimore, Md.

Hoagy Fan

THE MONMOUTH-EVERGREEN label is a complete mystery to the record dealers in this area.

Will you please tell me where, and at what price, I can obtain a stereo copy of Monmouth-Evergreen MES 6917, the collection of Hoagy Carmichael numbers described in Bud Freeman's and Irving Kolodin's "Hoagy" [*SR*, June 28].

Thank you for a most interesting article on a great composer.

J. M. LANE,
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Editor's Note: The information has been supplied.

Freeman Fan

BUD FREEMAN made me feel so stupid! Once he pointed it out, it is brilliantly clear that "Skylark" is indeed a transmutation of Bix-like phrases. What an illumination that entire article was on Carmichael's work. Thanks. Can Kolodin hold *more* conversations on jazz with the lucid, funny, and informative Bud Freeman, and other jazzmen?

PATRICIA SAMSON,
Cedar Falls, Ia.

Editor's Note: Will try. Read on.

Bix and Bud

BUD IS SO RIGHT about things. . . . Sorry I didn't know him sooner or that we couldn't have been together sooner. . . . Like he says about "Skylark" the absolute truth, and, of course, about "Stardust"—the Bix influence was there and the improvisations are already written . . . a great compliment to me. . . .

HOAGY,
Los Angeles, Calif.

Recordings and Texts

TWO THINGS PLAGUE me about record companies, one constant and the other occasional.

The latter is the London Records' odd notion of how to record a voice with orchestra, whether on a recital LP or a complete opera. From the balance obtained I would assume that the singer is about 100 feet behind the orchestra, with no microphone of his or her own. The last three London recordings I have heard were two recitals, arias by Gwyneth Jones and Scandinavian songs by Birgit Nilsson, and the complete recording of *Tristan und Isolde*, conducted by Solti. In the first two LPs the singers sounded so far away that words could seldom be distinguished, and even the timbre of the voice was largely left to the listener's imagination. In the *Tristan*, much of the long "Love Duet" in Act II was an orchestral passage with singers heard dimly in the background, and the unfortunate Herr Uhl often disappearing altogether. It is absurd, but true, that the individuality of a Caruso's or McCormack's voice can be better made out on a sixty-year-old Red Seal 78 than can that of the above-mentioned singers on these records made in the past decade.

The constant annoyance I referred to is the infuriating habit of almost all major record manufacturers of omitting texts and translations of vocal works. If Seraphim can provide them at \$2.49 a disc, Victor, Philips, London, etc., can do it at more than double the price. It's insulting to the composer, the poet, and the listener, and there is no possible excuse for it.

DAVID PIERCE,
Atlanta, Ga.

