

seums don't occupy an important, perhaps vital, part in the cultural fabric. Undoubtedly, there is great adventure in discovering and rediscovering Rembrandts, Shakespeares, and Beethovens. . . ."

The sudden flickering of a strobe light at six flashes per second seemed to startle him for a minute, and I took the opportunity to interrupt. "Would you describe the various revivals of past eras—and the current efforts to revive the lesser known romantic composers, as well as your own less famous compositions—as part of this museum adventure?"

His smile turned indulgent. "My age, like all others, produced hundreds of composers who ranged from atrocious to mediocre. Most of them roundly deserve their oblivion. Ultimately, only an experienced, educated public can determine the fate of a composition."

By now I was feverishly taking notes on the back of an envelope, and—trying to return to what interested me most—I said, "You mentioned that pianists today are mostly interpreters of museum pieces, but you did not comment on the level of their performance. There is, God knows, no dearth of pianists—in fact, there are too many for the public to support—but they are often called inferior to pianists of former generations, particularly when they perform works of your era, and. . . ."

"There have always been too many pianists," he interrupted. "There are always too many artists vying for public attention in any field. The creation of a larger public, rather than merely awarding scholarships, fellowships, and prizes to the talented, is an economical prerequisite for the survival of the performing arts. Unless you channel the resources of the foundations and governments into a massive educational program, unless you make music an integral part of the cultural life of a sizable segment of the public, and unless music makes an indispensable claim on part of the population's ever growing leisure time, you will end up with a gaggle of grant-happy artists and no audience."

"As far as today's pianists are concerned, there has never been a better lot. They are just different. And those who hark back to the golden age of the past are more nostalgic than realistic. In my days they used to say, 'Ah yes, but do you remember Czerny?' If I have any blanket criticism of today's pianists—and, like all generalizations, this one, too, is full of holes—it is that they are too concerned with *composers' wishes* and *historical truths*. I suppose it is a natural affliction of curators, a consequence of performing *old* music. But I am sure they would rid themselves of many hang-ups if

they treated us with less reverence and more familiarity—as if we were their contemporaries—and if they unabashedly used our music for what it was intended—as a vehicle for their own personalities. Personality! That is what makes one pianist different from another! That is what moves and excites an audience! Personality is what a great performer *is*. It cannot be transformed in time. It is not expressed in *capturing* the past, but in translating the emotional contents of the great works into the language and the gestures of the present. Nothing strikes me as more ridiculous than those well-worn phrases of praise, 'When he played, it was as if Beethoven himself was sitting at the piano,' or 'This is the way Bach wanted his music played.' I assure you, when *I* played, nobody thought of anyone else but *me*. If anyone had, I would have considered it a gross insult."

But I sensed a slight fatigue in his voice, and I felt the interview was coming to its end. I had in mind numerous questions: which version of his Paganini études did he really prefer, why did he change the ending of the Second Ballade, and about some of these puzzling ossias that have always bothered me. But having become, despite myself, a typical interviewer, I could not help an oily digression.

"I hope you don't mind a personal question, sir," and—lest he protest—I hurried on, mustering all my courage, "You became a legendary figure not only as an outstanding musical personality, but for your great success with women, particularly ladies of the *nobility*. Do you agree with present-day psychologists that this proclivity betrays a compulsive need to act out an Oedipal drive expressed in. . . ."

His patience seemed exhausted, and making no effort to hide his condescension, he said, "My dear young man, what all your latter-day armchair psychologists seem to forget is that in my day associating with women of the upper classes was purely a matter of hygienic prudence. Need I remind you, to make my point, of the other great nineteenth-century virtuoso, Paganini—who was less choosy about the social stratum of his inamoratas and whose medical history was hair-raising?"

His voice trailed off; he seemed to be disappearing. But his eyes were still riveted to the quaking dance floor, as if trying to maintain contact. I followed the Liszt line of vision, and my eyes landed on a soft-featured, blond-tressed face of one of the few dancers on the floor who was unmistakably a girl. Her eyes were shut, her mouth open, and her head was swinging to the merciless beat with a look of primal, ageless abandon.

Jazz at the White House

Throughout most of this century, jazz has proved itself a resilient music. Its demise has often been prophesied, and it has gone through periods of spiritual dryness, but it has always come back strongly. After the Jazz Age of the Twenties, for example, it was not possible in the early Thirties to foresee the triumphs of the Swing Era. Nor, as the big bands founded in the Forties, was the future of crowded concert halls and mass audiences at outdoor festivals imaginable.

From the beginning, there were misguided attempts to make a "lady" out of jazz, or to put it into "white tie and tails." As the music grew in sophistication, so did the desire to forget or deny the circumstances of its birth and upbringing. The old entertainment values were no longer regarded as appropriate to the status attained in the concert hall. With international recognition as an art form, jazz became self-conscious, demanding respect from its audiences, even for its most outrageous experiments.

Encouraged by an intelligentsia that preferred novelty to quality, jazz musicians tended to play more and more for themselves. They ceased to announce the titles of the compositions performed; they turned their backs to their audiences; and they saw no need to acknowledge applause. For a time, the novelty of such boorish behavior, coupled with a comparable eccentricity in the music, attracted the curious, but eventually jazz ceased to be synonymous with a good time, and it ceased to appeal to the young. Audiences dwindled, and the poseurs and cultists moved on to the synthetic pastures and electronic extravagances of rock.

Those on whom jazz much relied for its existence—the record companies, club owners, impresarios, and booking agents—were not at all unaware of what was happening. As accountants and computers replaced artistic consciences, major record companies progressively turned off the taps of the promotional pipelines that had helped nourish jazz. There was more profit to be made from hillbilly music and rock, and the advertising money was redirected there.

Did everyone, then, suddenly cease to care for the Great American Art Form?

The audience, of course, had not dis-

Recordings Reports

Jazz LPs

Data

Report

Charlie Christian: *Charlie Christian*. Christian, guitar; Joe Guy, Dizzy Gillespie, or Lips Page, trumpets; Don Byas, tenor saxophone; Thelonious Monk or Kenny Kersey, piano; Nick Fenton, bass; Kenny Clarke, drums. Everest Archives of Folk and Jazz Music simulated stereo, FS-219, \$5.98.

Johnny Dodds: *Chicago Mess Around*. Dodds, clarinet, in duo, trio, quartet, and sextet. Milestone compatible mono, MLP-2011, \$4.98.

Urbie Green: *21 Trombones—Rock, Blues, Jazz*. Green, trombone, with twenty trombonists; Bernie Leighton or Dick Hyman, piano and Roxychord; Tony Mottola, Jay Berliner, guitar; Bob Haggart, bass; Grady Tate, drums; Phil Kraus, Jack Arnold, percussion. Project 3 stereo, 5024-SD, \$5.98.

Quincy Jones: *Walking in Space*. Jones, arranger and conductor, with big band and vocal quartet. A. & M. stereo, SP-3023, \$5.98. **Gary McFarland:** *Slaves*. McFarland, arranger and conductor; Grady Tate, vocal; with orchestra. Skye stereo, SK-11, \$5.98.

Johnny Otis: *Cold Shot*. Otis, drums, piano, vibes, and vocal; Shuggie Otis, guitar, harmonica and bass; Al Rivera or Broadway Thomas, bass; Hootie Galvan or Buddy Redd, drums; Sugarcane Harris, violin; Mighty Mouth Evans, vocal. Kent stereo, 534, \$4.79.

Maxine Sullivan and Bob Wilber: *Close as Pages in a Book*. Maxine Sullivan, vocal; Bob Wilber, soprano saxophone and clarinet; Bernie Leighton, piano; George Duvivier, bass; Gus Johnson, drums. Monmouth-Evergreen stereo, ME-6919, \$4.98.

Ralph Sutton: *Knocked-out Nocturne*. Sutton, piano; Yank Lawson, trumpet; Bob Wilber, soprano saxophone; Bob Haggart, bass; Gus Johnson, drums. Project 3 stereo, 5040-SD, \$5.98.

Joe Turner: *The Real Boss of the Blues*. Turner, vocal, with unidentified small group; Gene Page, arranger and conductor. BluesTime stereo, BTS-9002, \$4.98.

This set was formerly available on Esoteric, and it is notable for Christian's solos throughout the first side and on the last two titles of the second. The recordings were made in 1941 at Minton's in Harlem, and they afford an incomparable example of the great guitarist improvising at length under informal

The fourteen titles in this collection were recorded between 1926 and 1929 for Paramount, and they complement an earlier Milestone set (MLP-2002). Among the more interesting performances are a couple of duets with pianist Tiny Parham, and four by Lovie Austin's

With Green out front as soloist, twenty trombones—sixteen tenors, four basses—make a rich and gorgeous sound. There is more emphasis on jazz in this set than in its successful predecessor (5014-SD), and Green's versatility and astonishing virtuosity are better demonstrated. Rock does not raise its unkempt head so dis-

Quincy Jones, on a brief vacation from the film studios, has put together an absorbing album with plenty of room for soloists, among whom Ray Brown (bass), Eric Gale (guitar), Jimmy Cleveland (trombone), Hubert Laws (flute), and Freddy Hubbard (trumpet) are outstanding. Four female voices are strikingly used on the twelve-minute "Walking in Space," and the writing for the top-notch brass team is consistently full and assured. The Skye liner neglects to

A veteran of jazz and rhythm-and-blues, Otis has here produced the most refreshing blues album of the year. His teenage son, Shuggie, plays masterly guitar with complete idiomatic assurance, carefully controlled tone, and an improvisational ability that puts him ahead of most of the competition. Evans is the chief singer, and his blend of fervor and wry humor is extremely satisfying. On the un-

Maxine Sullivan is one of those increasingly rare singers whose voice and personality are always at the service of the song, rather than vice versa. Most of the material in this collection is very good indeed, and her interpretations concede that songwriters—as well as performers—sometimes have something interesting to say. The concession in no way detracts from her unaffected artistry, which has merely mellowed with the years, and the fact that reasonably in-

This album perhaps explains why Sutton has been so little featured on those on the same label by the World's Greatest Jazz Band, of which he is such an important part. With four of its members in sympathetic attendance, he brings his two-handed authority to a dozen numbers made famous by Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, The Lion, Bix Beiderbecke, and Bob Zurke. The bril-

From a jazz viewpoint, Turner is the real boss of the blues. The drive and confident masculinity of his approach always made him—in a later and different area of the blues—a male counterpart of Besie Smith, but for more than two decades he has been typecast as a rock 'n' roller, and his records have been aimed at the juke box. Such thinking is evi-

conditions. Another album of interest in the same series, *WNEW Saturday Night Swing Session* (FS-231), consists of performances recorded in 1947 with such musicians as Roy Eldridge, Fats Navarro, Bill Harris, and Flip Phillips.

Blues Serenaders, who at that time included the formidable Tommy Ladnier. The notes are in the form of reminiscences about his father by Major John Dodds II (U.S.A.F., retired), and their first-hand portrayal of the clarinetist's character adds a great deal to the album.

turbingly as the album title might seem to suggest, but the soloist is never disconcerted by its occasional rhythmic presence. On "Just Dropped In," he replies to its provocation with a violent, plunger-muted solo that reveals a seldom-heard aspect of his musical personality. The recording quality is superb.

provide a personnel, but Gale is again the impressive guitar soloist. The soulful violin on "Slaves" is by Ray Nance, the flawless open trumpet on "Nightwind" by Snooky Young, and the muted trumpet on "Pickin' Cotton" by Jimmy Nottingham. Four of the six numbers are given separate treatment as both instrumentals and vocal vehicles for Grady Tate, an innovation that could prove very enjoyable with superior material.

censored "Signifyin' Monkey," the humor is enhanced by the casual authenticity with which otherwise offensive epithets are used. More, it is to be hoped, will be heard of violinist Harris, who plays only on the final number, but to great effect. The overall integrity of the music, the group rapport, and the excellent tempos must all surely owe much to the guiding hand—and experience—of Otis, Sr.

telligent lyrics are intelligibly delivered seems a positive gain. The banks of "Loch Lomond" are understandably less bonny than they used to be, but her versions of "Gone with the Wind," "Restless," and "Too Many Tears" are quite moving. She also swings easily on "Ev'ry Time" and "You're Driving Me Crazy," and duets charmingly and "instrumentally" with the admirable Wilber on Ellington's "Rockin' in Rhythm."

liant recording emphasizes his relationship—in terms of power and *joie de vivre*—with Waller, but on the two impressionistic pieces by Beiderbecke, and to a lesser extent on The Lion's "Echoes of Spring," his playing has a gently reflective appeal. The performance of "Love Lies" suggests the desirability of a further collection in which the numbers are not associated with other pianists.

dent on the first side of this record, where he nevertheless dominates accompaniments tailored to contemporary teen tastes. The second side is made up of just two long performances, and here the feeling is looser and better. There is some shameful, cackling tenor saxophone, but the harmonica and guitar players contribute appropriate solos.

—S.D.