

August 1983

Vol. 3 No. 1

Letters

I never even knew Frank Rosolino that well — no more, certainly, than casual acquaintances. Yet here I sit with your July *Jazzletter* in my hand, and I can't stop crying.

The service you do, clearly, extends beyond commentary and criticism and the puncturing of illusions. Perhaps it is ultimately to remind all of us in the music world of our own humanity. And mortality. At times like this, it's a humbling experience.

Thanks — if that's the word — for the piece on Frank. However scrutable his motivations, however incomprehensible the act, you've reminded me, at least, that we're all sharers of his fate. To put it in the most banal, yet most accurate, of ways, we are all in this together, and as a consequence must not squander precious time and energies in driving ourselves apart from one another.

Richard Sudhalter
New York, New York

I'm not in the habit of writing fan letters to fellow writers, but I can't resist the urge to tell you how touched I was by your piece about Jason. This is an exceptionally beautiful piece of writing even by your own high standards.

Leonard Feather
Sherman Oaks, California

A note of warm love and appreciation for the recent *Why?* on Frank. I immediately ran off twenty copies and mailed them to various friends of his here. It was a wonderful piece of writing on a difficult subject. People don't like to talk about it, let alone write it down. You did, and I thank you.

Rob McConnell
Toronto, Ontario

The piece about Frank was like a spiritual message to me. I saw Frank many times in Shelly's and other clubs in Los Angeles from 1963 on, and even hired him for a concert series I promoted at the Improvisation on Melrose Avenue. Would you believe he was gracious enough to bring in a fine band for thirty dollars a man?

But he was a startling enigma. I saw him a few times in Donte's when he was really struggling to make anything happen on the horn. This was around 1975 or '76. I never saw him lushed or drugged, but in the mid-1970s, he started to seem nervous about himself. I think he was starting to question *himself*, asking, *Who am I?* and, *What does all this that I do really mean, if anything?* And I think for a while there he wasn't getting any supportive answers from within. That's tough on a guy who was so supremely confident of himself. But I never hung out with him, so my view is from afar — or, say, about as far as from where I was sitting to the bandstand.

Then, in 1977, when I had that concert series, and other times I heard him, he really seemed fine — up to his standard of excellent music making. But, when he did this incredibly bizarre act of death seeking, my feeling that Frank was from another place and in another place all this time, was horribly confirmed.

I'll never forget Frank and Jack Sheldon and Joe Maini on the

bandstand at Shelly's Manne Hole at the same time. Richie Kamuca was nominally in charge — Shelly had taken the weekend off for a horse show — and the combination of these personalities got completely out of hand. One set they took the stand and no music was ever played. For about forty minutes, some of the most sensationally mad and zany jazz humor took place, *en espontano*, and the people in the club were falling apart. Frank loved to show off. He used to put his horn bell down over a microphone and stomp and clap. It would get this terribly electronic bell sound, like some outer-space effect, and he would laugh like a fiend.

I think that Frank was going through these cycles of self-doubt that became too much to deal with.

At any rate, I am going to contribute to Jason's welfare and I am going to talk about it on my weekly radio show. The experience of reading your writing on this has helped me come to grips with my own need to keep myself sane. I mean, it's so easy to be good, and it's so self-indulgent to throw your crap all over everybody. So I'm going to be cool, every time it gets too deep, and I start to sink. I'll rise above it, maybe get back up into that ozone layer some day. There's still some fine floating to be done.

Jeff Barr
Washington, D.C.

Thank you for the July issue. While I didn't "enjoy" the terrible story of Frank Rosolino, I always wondered what happened.

Steve Allen's feeling about bass solos is probably shared by more of the audience than musicians are aware.

A trio that worked at the Hickory House in New York for a long time was playing one night when I had dinner there with Duke Ellington. Every number had a bass solo — not just the bridge but usually a whole chorus. After a while, Duke said wearily, "These bass solos keep coming up like commercials on TV."

Stanley Dance
Vista, California

The key is found in what Shelly Manne says, "unless the guy really has something to say..." However, that should be the criterion for playing any recording. To program for the worst possible circumstances, i.e. little speakers, car radios, is something that should concern people programming innocuous music, not jazz. I assume my listeners are listening and under ideal conditions. Any other assumption on my part would be to penalize those who are.

Oscar Treadwell
WGUC Cincinnati

About Jason

First of all, Rose and Don Menza — and I — want to thank those of you who have sent contributions for Jason. They're still coming.

The concert, at the Hollywood Palladium — a hangar-like relic of a vanished era — raised more than \$15,000, a quarter of which will be used to help people in hardship, a quarter to help Jim Liska

with the expenses of his infant daughter's surgery, and half to Jason.

All sorts of people turned up to perform during that seven hours, the big bands of Bill Berry and Don Menza, Supersax, Steve Allen, Jack Lemmon, Ruth Price, Ernie Andrews, Jack Sheldon, the *Tonight* show band, and many more.

First of all, about Jim Liska. His daughter had to have surgery for defective heart valves. And the operation had to be done before she was eight months old; otherwise the damage to her lungs would be irreversible.

For those of you in other places who don't know him, Jim writes about jazz for the *Daily News* in Los Angeles. And until recently he was the L.A. correspondent of *Down Beat*. In the

Mozart was no leader of a new department or founder of a school. He came at the end of a development, not at the beginning of one... But in art, the highest success is to be the last of your race, not the first. Anybody, almost, can make a beginning; the difficulty is to make an end — to do what cannot be bettered.

— George Bernard Shaw

midst of Jim's troubles, *Down Beat*, with its customary style and humanity, fired him. "Congratulations," I told him. "You are now a member of a very distinguished fraternity." Anybody can quit *Down Beat*, as Don Gold (now the managing editor of *Playboy*), Don DeMicheal, Dan Morgenstern, and I all disgustingly did. But it takes real class to get fired from that magazine, and Jim pulled it off, as did Jack Tynan, a previous west coast editor, before him.

Welcome to the club, Jim.

Now.

Jason was there, accompanied by his adoptive mother, Claudia Eien, her husband Gary, and the young psychologist who has been working with him. At first I left them severely alone. A lot of people did, and finally my wife said, "We can't all ignore him."

And I thought, What is it? Am I afraid of a twelve-year-old boy? Or am I afraid of seeming to manifest a melancholy curiosity? Or are you, I said to myself, afraid that *you* can't handle what *he* has been through.

"Go and talk to him," my wife said.

"You go and talk to him," I answered. But in the end I did. Very timidly. I introduced myself to the Eien family — and soon found myself caught up in conversation. My wife, chicken, then joined us.

"I used to know you a long time ago, Jason," I said.

"Before I was seven?" he said. And we know what *that* means. And how do you handle *that*?

"Yes," I said, "before you were seven."

Jason is a very handsome boy, tall, dark, and strongly muscled. Yes, there is a scar on his temple, but really not too conspicuous, and his eyes are in deep shadows now. The bullet cut the optic nerve, but it did not touch the centers of intelligence. The psychologist says that he has a genius I.Q. And, you could see as you watched him listening to the music, he has elephant ears. And why not? He's Frank's kid.

An uncanny thing happened then — two uncanny things. He touched my wife's hair. Not her face, just her hair. And he said, "I know what you look like."

"And what do I look like?" she said.

He gave a wolf whistle, then said, "You have blond hair and a full mouth." All of it accurate.

I was not too rattled by that. Dave MacKay, the pianist, is also blind. I've walked into a social affair with Dave and had him tell me what color sweater someone was wearing on the far side of the room. And Dave is almost unnerving in his ability to evaluate the character and personality of a person whose voice he has never even heard.

"How do you know that?" I asked Jason.

"From her voice," he said.

But the next one was even stranger. My wife mentioned the name of a friend in Santa Barbara who grows flowers and Jason said that he knew how he too looked. He said the man was tall and fair-headed. And how many tall sandy-haired Japanese have you met?

Don Menza's band was performing. "Who's playing the trumpet solo?" Jason asked me.

"Chuck Findley," I said, and then thought, why misinform him? "Actually," I said, "it's not a trumpet, it's a fluegelhorn."

"What's the difference?" he said.

"It's a somewhat bigger instrument, it plays in a slightly lower register, and it has a darker sound."

"What do you mean by *darker*?"

That stopped me. One of those moments when you realize that music cannot be described. And in the attempt we usually resort to visual analogies. "It's fatter, it's thicker somehow," I said.

Then Billy Berry played a solo. "That's a trumpet in a harmon mute," I said, and explained the use of mutes. "It sounds a little like a saxophone," Jason said. And how many of us have ever noticed *that* before?

Shelly Manne was playing with Don's band. Two weeks earlier Shelly had been hurt in an encounter with a horse, and one leg was immobilized by a cast. Which meant he was working without a high hat. I explained that to Jason. "What's a high hat?" he said.

"Give me your hands," I said, and put them palm to palm. "Two cymbals facing each other, like that. You work them with a foot pedal."

"Oh yes, I know," Jason said. "I used to play drums."

In subsequent days, Rose Menza and I talked. We think a piano should be rented for Jason and some of us should begin teaching him music. I promised to make him some tapes — which means I'm going to rip off some of your albums. Actually, I would enormously appreciate it if those of you who have albums would send them to me for Jason. Autographed. Even though he won't be able to see the autographs, he'll know they're there.

"I think a lot of people are going to try to help you, Jason," I told him that night. "A lot of people in this room love you."

"Why?" he said.

"Just because. Take my word for it," I said.

"Do you know who really loves me?" he said.

"Who?"

"God loves me," he said.

Background

Recently there appeared in *Southern Africa* magazine a full page display piece saying, "Act in Solidarity with Black South Africans: The following entertainers have performed in South Africa. We must not let them perform in our communities... Boycott Entertainers Who Visit South Africa."

George Benson, Ray Charles, Billy Cobham, Pete and Conte Candoli, Chick Corea, Carl Fontana, Buddy de Franco, Terry Gibbs, Isaac Hayes, Joe Henderson, Jack Jones, Eartha Kitt, the Main Ingredient, Curtis Mayfield, James Moody, the Platters, Della Reese, Shirley Scott, George Shearing, Frank Sinatra, Brian Torff, Tina Turner, Stanley Turrentine, Lovelace Watkins, Jimmy Witherspoon, and many more.

Trombonist Michael Zwerin just toured Africa, including South Africa, with his quartet. He expressed trepidation about the trip before leaving, then told me — in a letter from Johannesburg — that nothing, absolutely nothing, in his life had made him feel as useful as the contact he and his colleagues had with the black South African musicians.

Mike wanted to write a full and lengthy report on the trip, but no magazine in Europe or America was even interested. Here it is.

Now You See It Now You Don't in the So-called Republic of Sad Afrika by Michael Zwerin

PARIS

Now boarding, a South African Airways 747 at Orly Sud, destination Joburg. Plenty of legroom on SAA, a plentiful airline. Divided into padded cozy sections, the entire airplane looks like first class. Wide seats, unlimited free booze, cloth slippers, a sleeping mask, bountiful food. And even the earphones are free.

If you are white, and don't think too much, and are not afraid of contagion, you will never be more comfortable in the air. This is a leper airplane. They've got to cover up the sores if they want customers. They wear nice-people masks. South Africa is a leper state. But it also happens to have gold, diamonds and uranium, so even people who disagree with its official policy of *apartheid*, a systemized racial segregation and exploitation, do business there. International attempts at boycotts won't work as long as they have the cash. But many airlines fly to Joburg, and boycotting SAA is one easy decision. Appease your conscience and get there anyway.

Look at their route map. The red lines from Europe swing out over the western edge of Africa and then down over water because no African state will admit to allowing SAA to overfly their territory. Even black African states find it necessary to do business with the richest country on their continent, however, and there are SAA routes (to Lusaka and Nairobi) which it is not deemed prudent to reveal on maps.

"The whole system is based on now you see it now you don't. They sure know how to tap dance. It's there it's not there."

— Hugh Masekela

When a stewardess, smiling, indifferent to the fact that I am sitting next to a black man who is obviously my friend, asks if I want black or white coffee, I answer, "Black," even though I would prefer cream in it. The in-flight magazine *Flying Springbok* lists a jazz audio track including *Capetown Fringe* by Dollar Brand, *Caution* by Hugh Masekela, and Abbey Lincoln's *Africa*. How bad can this country be if they present music by two of their exiles and one black-power militant on their national airplane? But when I switch on the so-called jazz channel, I find only the Carpenters. The jazz is listed but it isn't there. This is a good, if unintentional, example of what Afrikaners call "progress" and Africans call "cosmetic bullshit". It's there it's not there.

To express what they considered fascist tendencies in their country, 1960 flower children derogated the name "Amerika". The hard German "k" implied Nazism, blitzkriegs, and Ku Klux Klan. The name of the tribe of Dutch ancestry that presides over Southern Africa has the "k" organically. Called Afrikaners, these people speak Afrikaans, in which language their country is written *Suid Afrika*. Afrikaners descend from Boers, which sounds like boor, bore and of course boar, an ugly and vicious animal.

Another white tribe, of English descent, generally disapproves of the Afrikaner National Party in power and its extremist policy of apartheid, though they are powerless to stop it in a police state and they profit from it all the same. In the English South African broad accent the first word of their country's name is pronounced somewhere between "Suid" and "South," like "Sad." So we may reasonably call it Sad Afrika.

The Sad Afrikan system can be described by parodying Winston Churchill. *Never have so few with so much given so little to so many*. Based on fear, bigotry and greed, hypocritically justified on Biblical terms, Sad Africka has turned itself into an extraordinarily violent society with suicide, divorce, road accident and alcoholism rates among the highest in the world. Hugh Masekela, one of Sad Afrika's most famous musical exiles (*Grazing in the Grass*), can hardly be accused of hyperbole when he describes the place as a "slave pit".

"What's a nice girl like you doing in a place like this?" I asked Yolanda, a smart and beautiful black model in Joburg. She answered: "This place *needs* a nice girl."

*The best lack all conviction,
The worst are full of passionate
intensity*

— William Butler Yeats

When I was offered this tour by the United States Information Service, they asked if I would object to playing Sad Afrika. They guaranteed that all audiences and accommodations would be multi-racial. I called my rhythm section — Oliver Johnson, drums, Jack Gregg, bass, John Thomas, guitar — and asked them. (Oliver and John are black, Jack and I white. Sorry to segregate us by race, even parenthetically, but race is everything in Sad Afrika. Part of what makes it sad is that you are forced to think in racial terms, like it or not. Come to think of it, Yolanda could be a so-called Colored.) We agreed, masochistically and unanimously, to go and experience it first-hand.

Oliver had already been there briefly in 1976 on a similar tour with Hal Singer, but they played only diplomatic functions and never really got down-home. Besides, he said, "There's a lady I'd like to see again." Behind Oliver's quintessentially cool hipster exterior lies a lively intelligence and warm sensitivity: his answer should not be interpreted to imply shallowness. One thing I like about jazz musicians is their ability to cut through political and structural abstractions and take life on a truly humanistic level. After reading an article in the *Rand Daily Mail* about Sidney Poitier calling for a stricter cultural boycott, Oliver smiled: "Sidney's straight. He's got his big house. He can afford to turn down a gig."

A reporter from the Johannesburg *Star* asked Oliver about the boycott, and he answered (it was printed): "We are here to try and create something positive. Music has been used in Africa for many things, from circumcision onwards — there is music for everything. Albert Ayler once said 'Music is the healing force' and perhaps we can heal some negative things. I don't know, but we can have a shot. We've nothing to lose."

Nothing to lose. Our careers maybe. Serious people are behind the cultural boycott and there is no way anyone with the slightest moral scruple could argue with the boycott's aims. The means perhaps; I will argue with the means.

anyone with the slightest moral scruple could argue with the boycott's aims. The means, perhaps; I will argue with the means.

First ask who's being boycotted. A band I had once played a small Parisian festival. My drummer was on the same bill later that night with his own group. He had a disagreement with the promoter and, just before we went on, screamed: "If I don't get paid right now, I'm not playing." I said to him: "Wait a minute.

man, you're aiming at him but you're shooting *me* down."

The black township of Soweto lies some twelve miles away from Joburg, as Johannesburg is familiarly known (though to have a jaunty familiar name for such a center of exploitation seems inappropriate). We played two concerts in the Orlando YMCA, Soweto. Local musicians sat in at the end of the second one, including an extraordinary saxophone player named Winston "Mankuku" Ngozi, with a style somewhere between Joe Henderson and Albert Ayler. Later, one of the musicians said: "Send us the big shots. Send us Art Blakey and Elvin Jones. We know them. We have their records. We will pay them. We are paid slave wages by this shit government but we will find the money. We don't have cars, we don't even have bicycles. We don't have street lights. When we leave here tonight, everybody walks home in the dark. When I heard you guys the first night, I didn't dream we would play together. After these two nights with you we have some inspiration. We want to form a group. It's great to play with Americans, I don't think you should boycott us."

Soweto with its phalanxes of identical houses, row upon row like the crosses of Delville Wood, with bare patches of bleeding red earth in between, erosion ditches, water taps, the stench of bad sanitation... groups of teenagers in smart clothes or in rags, yelling at the passing women, occasionally grabbing one, children playing noisily with stones and wheels and broken dolls, children fighting, children pissing in the street. Cars parked... enormous black American monsters from ten years ago, old wrecks with wide-open doors like chickens nestling in the sun... Streetlamps protected by wire mesh; a white goat, women breast-feeding their babies in front of their houses, a child beaten barbarously with a leather thong; and far away, far but visible, a barbed wire fence to hedge it all in, to stop the march of those regiments of houses... The muddy mess of early morning, half-past four, five o'clock, six, when the people go to work in the rain; the sound of thousands of feet, the low hum of voices... children crying. Children crying at night... sudden outbursts of sounds, shouts, silence — the low ominous drone of police vans passing in the streets, patrols on prescribed hours, two o'clock and all's hell... Always the police were near; everywhere I was accompanied by the laugh of Harry Tsabalala. "What else can you expect? There's more than a million of us here, man, and we've got nothing to keep us busy; but we're not doing too badly, d'you think? We fuck and murder and dance and die; never a dull moment..."

— Looking on Darkness
by André Brink

*This English girl from North Somewhere
Stayed with me at my place
Drinkin' up all me beer, talkin' about
the poor niggers all the time.
'Real disgrace,' she said.
I told her, 'Darlin' don't talk about
something you don't know anything about.
If you don't like it, go back to your own
miserable country.'*

— Christmas in Capetown
by Randy Newman

Brink's description of Soweto could almost fit the South Bronx or Brixton. Except for the barbed wire fence. A critical exception.

Never before have I been to a place where, when someone asks you how you like their country, you are morally obliged to answer in the negative. Usually you can find something good to say about any place. When the Sad Afrikans defend themselves, "But it's beautiful, isn't it?" you are forced to answer, "No it isn't," because you cannot separate the glorious mountains, green valleys, temperate climate, long virgin beaches, and clean gleaming cities from what takes place there. Whites often agree with you, once you say it first. There are many whites, including Afrikaners, of good will in Sad Afrika, but the National Party in power acts as if they are on a wagon train drawn into a circle surrounded by screaming savages. The problem is tribal more than racial, really, as in Biafra and Nigeria, only here the tribe that has all the marbles, which are numerous and sparkle, is white. (It should be remembered that the two white tribes have been in Sad Afrika for some three hundred years and so have a right to be accounted natives.) They are outnumbered, paranoid; they believe the rest of the world does not understand them; they are prepared to live without the rest of the world if necessary; they believe that blacks are an inferior race. They feel like outlaws. They *are* outlaws — moral lepers — and their best friends are other "outlaw" states like Chile, Taiwan, and Israel.

The analogy with Israel will disturb some people. It is a dangerous analogy and valid in kind rather than dimension. (Afrikaners are not crazy about their own Jews, classified white.) But the two countries maintain close political and economic ties, SAA flies to Tel Aviv and El Al to Joburg, both run lands they feel Biblical title to, and both quote statistics to prove that "our" blacks/Arabs are better off than blacks/Arabs in black and Arab states... more lawyers, more hospitals per thousand, higher average wage and so on. But these peoples are occupied as surely as the Danes were occupied by the Nazi. People expect to feel *chez eux* in their own country, no matter how poor they may be.

The "so-called" qualification is essential to understanding Sad Afrika. Any republic that does not give the vote to eighty-five percent (seventy-five percent black, ten percent Colored and Indian) of its population and denies them most basic civil rights is certainly a "so-called" republic. While we were there, Prime Minister P.W. Botha was hard-selling his so-called pop referendum on the new constitution that would grant some so-called democratic representation to the so-called Colored and Indians. Everybody was discussing it, the papers were full of it. Only whites were to vote in the referendum. The vote after we left was "yes", and so-called Coloreds and Indians will for the first time have so-called democratic representation, with legislative bodies of their own. It's hardly one-man-one-vote, however. The dice are loaded. Whites will still effectively control everything. The black seventy-five percent of the population was not dealt with in the referendum because they have already been granted their so-called freedom in the form of so-called homelands — large tracts of badlands, comparable to American Indian reservations — of which they are now citizens and where there is just about no employment and not nearly enough water or fertile land to support the population. (No country but Sad Afrika has recognized the homelands as sovereign states.) They must obtain visas to go to Sad Afrika, *their own country*, and these are granted only to work, visit family perhaps or, with a lot of trouble, to study. But they cannot bring wives and children to live with them, and they must live in designated ghettos.

If the "so-called" qualification had been omitted from the above paragraph, it would have implied acceptance of the basic principles of apartheid. White people of good will, and just about all people of darker hues, drop about a "so-called" a minute. A so-called Colored man told me that one unpublicized aim of the

proposed new so-called democratic constitution is to subject previously exempt Coloreds and Indians to military service. It's there it's not there.

The Prime Minister assured Nationalists yesterday that schools and residential areas would stay segregated under the proposed new constitution. "Nobody is asking you to accept integration," he told delegates who expressed concern that change might come.

Rand Daily Mail

Oliver was amused when a USIS official explained that he would be treated as a so-called honorary white during our tour of Sad Afrika. Foreigners in international hotels and expensive restaurants are generally exempt from apartheid. "I've been a nigger from Oakland to New York to Paris all my life," Oliver laughed. "I have to come to Joburg to be white."

When we arrived at Jan Smuts airport, we found reporters and photographers scrambling to get to us. "That's *my* picture," a dark-skinned photographer shouted at a white competitor, who backed away. One of those photos appeared large and in full color on the front page of the *Rand Daily Mail* the following day. Two blacks and two whites smiling together. How bad can apartheid be if two blacks and two whites are allowed to travel around playing music together for multi-racial audiences, stay at the same hotels and eat in the same restaurants? Now you see it now you don't.

Step off the beaten track. Behind a gas station, black and white restrooms. A neighborhood Chinese restaurant refuses service... "I'm sorry, we would be fined." Theaters are now integrated, cinemas remain segregated. White desk clerks and managers are invariably polite and nonchalant when we check in — we are four whites, two honorary. The nationalists have learned to polish their floors and present a clean house so that the casual observer will not notice the maggots under the carpet and the bats on the ceiling.

I was surprised at first by the apparent freedom of the press. You read articles about black journalists getting beaten by the police, black squatters being violently removed from shanties in neighborhoods zoned white, anti-apartheid statements by local liberals and foreign officials. Just above our photo on the front page of the *Daily Mail* was an article headlined "Detainee in 'Suicide Bid.'" (The inside quotes are theirs.) The story read in part: "Security Police detainee Mr. Carl Niehaus was yesterday admitted to hospital... Mr. Niehaus, a 22-year-old student who has been in John Vorster Square (Security Police headquarters) for 33 days... is reportedly in satisfactory condition. Mr. Niehaus was detained on August 23rd under Section 22 of the Internal Security Act, which allows for indefinite detention. (Sic!) He is a B.A. student at the University of Witwatersrand, who, a few years ago, was suspended for a year from the Rand Afrikaans University for putting up anti-government posters without the necessary permission... Two weeks ago, a priest and acquaintance of his, Father Timothy Stanton, was jailed for six months for refusing to answer questions about Mr. Niehaus. No charges have been laid against Mr. Niehaus..."

From the names, we know that these people are white. People of good will. People who put their lives on the line. People who disapprove of the System. The papers print the stories. There are many stories involving violence. You get sick reading about murder, rapes, robberies and police brutality. You soon realize that freedom of the press in Sad Afrika can be defined as the freedom to write about it when the police beat up on somebody. Which doesn't stop the beating up. You soon get used to it, and it becomes meaningless. They know how to tap dance.

One and a half million people live in Soweto and the name is not even written on the maps. There are no supermarkets. People must carry food all the way from Joburg. But everybody is close to a liquor store.

— Hamilton of Soweto

Mindblowing. Heartbreaking.

— Jack Gregg

Hamilton sells insurance during the day. He has a collection of over two thousand jazz records. When he can get a gig, he plays the saxophone a la Sonny Rollins. Actually he does not sell insurance; he may not play the saxophone and might live someplace else. He asked me to disguise him because: "They'd blow me sky high for the things I'm telling you. They'd rough me up. They've roughed me up before."

He organizes music and art workshops and tries to hustle instruments and supplies to help keep black township youth off the streets. He had been talking about art, not politics, and when I asked him what was sensitive enough to make him afraid of being named, he answered: "If you're positive, you're dangerous. If you're effective on any level, you're dangerous. In other words, it's dangerous if you don't wear a mask. You leave the ghetto and go into the city and as you travel out of here and go into the white suburbs getting into the city, you should not be aware of the beauty that surrounds you, even though you helped create it."

White residential areas are luxuriant; square miles of rambling houses, manicured gardens, lush trees, swimming pools. You are reminded of Beverly Hills and Coral Gables. Only whites can live in the cities and their suburbs, though you see mostly blacks on the streets. Every white household has at least one black servant. Whites ride in cars (Mercedes galore), blacks ride buses or walk. If you are black, you live, say, twelve miles from the city; classified so-called Colored, you might get to live seven miles closer; if you're Indian, you might have paved streets. There are black slums in many countries, some worse than in Sad Afrika. But here it is institutionalized. It is the system. The system runs on cheap labor and is designed to keep it cheap. The darker your skin, the less you get paid for your labor. I saw no white slums.

Hamilton (which may not be his name) continued: "So you wear a mask until you get to work at eight a.m. and all of a sudden you're expected to be intelligent, observant, creative and positive — until you stop working and go back home, and then you have to put on the same mask again. You come back like nothing happened, as though you had not gone through the looking glass. You should smile all the time and say everything is just fine. That's it. As soon as you move in a direction where you try and improve the situation, you are dangerous."

"Look, we work in Joburg, we have to shop there. At least half of Joburg's retail business comes from blacks. Surely Soweto should get *some* of that tax money back. We want to move in the direction of creating a positive black mind, to say, 'Here I am in the swamp but I'm going to drain that swamp.' The people who run this country want it to remain a swamp. It keeps our minds in check. Goodness me, it's brain cancer, like Hitler's Germany, only this is a concentration camp of the mind. If you're too intelligent you get crazy. As soon as you start serious thinking you are in serious trouble. You really begin thinking that ignorance is bliss after a while. It's like Orwell, check out Orwell."

The parallel between the proles in Orwell's 1984 and black Sad Afrikans in 1983 is astounding. Check it out.

"You know how I stay sane here?" Hamilton finished. "Music. Without it, I'd sink into a bottomless bottom. Right. That's it. There are things that words cannot express. I stay sane by screaming into a saxophone."

Jack Gregg and I began keeping similar scrapbook diaries; clipping, pasting, taking notes. The first day we coincidentally pounced on the same item in the paper. An Afrikaner farmer, charged with murdering his wife with an ax, was also accused of having an affair with a black woman. The prosecution offered a bargain: plead guilty to the lesser charge and get a lighter sentence on the murder. But detective Warrant Officer Martin Van Niekirk "told the court he thought the farmer considered the allegation that he had a relationship with a black woman worse than the murder charge."

Skin lightening products are against the law. There was recently a long and expensive court case about whether to classify a foundling baby colored or white. Though the weather is generally magnificent and there are miles and miles of virgin beaches, you don't see many white people with deep suntans in Sad Afrika.

*When you walk on John Vorster Square,
beware of falling detainees.*

— Popular joke

The USIS had set up our tour so that we played black townships, including Mamelodi, near Pretoria, and universities where there were black students. We gave workshops for so-called Colored and black music students. Except in Soweto and Mamelodi, where few whites dare to go, our audiences were more genuinely multi-racial than in Paris. Though Hugh Masekela told me later in Lesotho, "You guys are exempt from the boycott. You're on a cultural exchange tour, your money comes from Washington," we all still harbored guilt. When I first heard that Darius Brubeck, Dave's son, was teaching at the University of Natal in Durban, my fast reaction was "What's he doing in Sad Afrika?" We were also asking ourselves what nice guys like us were doing in a place like this.

Well it was a gig. It is a rare privilege to be paid to play jazz for three-and-a-half weeks (two-and-a-half in Sad Afrika, one divided between Botswana and Lesotho). Ford, Apple and Holiday Inn, among a long list of other companies, do business in the country. The columns of Art Buchwald and Russell Baker are syndicated there. American banks operate there. Hertz and Avis rent cars there. An item in *Rolling Stone* magazine criticizing Linda Ronstadt for performing in Sad Afrika was separated by only a few pages from an ad for De Beers diamonds. Why should artists be the only ones to turn down Sad Afrikan gigs?

A true and total boycott on all levels — political, economic, sports, the arts — would certainly bring down the regime. There is no doubt that they should be treated like the lepers they are, but this is unlikely so long as they've got the cash, and in the meantime it seemed and still seems to me that the mere presence of two whites and two blacks on stage making music together for multi-racial audiences, eating together, hanging out together, even arguing with each other, is a positive political statement.

We played with Darius Brubeck in Durban. He teaches a multi-racial jazz course at the University. He is married to a Durban-born woman who had to return to take care of her ailing elderly mother. She said she emigrated to the United States in the 1960s after a lot of her friends were banned or arrested. She returned reluctantly, but Darius also needed breathing space and they both figured there was room and even need for people of good will to do good within the system. People have personal needs, they do what they can. They survive. When she asked what I thought of her native land — I think she expected the answer — I said: "It makes me sick."

Two weeks in Sad Afrika is like having a protracted disease. At

first you wish for good health, then you forget what good health is.

In Joburg John Thomas bought a bush jacket and a wide-brimmed khaki hat with a leopard-skin band. He wore one side snapped up against the crown. He wore it on stage. "A black man doesn't wear a bwana hat in this country," said an embarrassed USIS official. "Doesn't he realize the symbolism?" Oliver took to calling him "Jungle John." The USIS official asked me to ask John not to wear his bwana hat. When we played the University of Zululand, segregated black, a professor asked John, forcing a smile: "Going into the bush?" But no way was I going to talk to John about his hat. It was a hat, after all; kind of ugly, but only a hat. Why can't a black man wear a bwana hat if he feels like it? It could have been a political statement on his part, and if so, I agreed with it. Asking him not to wear it would be like leaving out the "so-called."

*There are more crooked businessmen per
square meter in Johannesburg than there are
anyplace else in the world.*

— Flying Springbok Magazine

The University of South Africa, UNISA, on a hill overlooking Pretoria, is multi-racial and billed as the largest correspondence school in the world. It has a sprawling modern plant and you might be impressed, until you realize that a multi-racial correspondence school, where students never or rarely get together, is a bit too convenient in a segregated society.

After a noonday concert there, we were taken upstairs for a copious lunch in the penthouse dining room. Then a student choir from Windhoek, Namibia (Southwest Africa), sang for us on the sun-drenched terrace. Namibia is still under a Sad Afrikan trusteeship dating from the League of Nations after World War I, despite heavy pressure from the UN to grant independence. The choir consisted of seventeen teenagers, all shades of brown and black plus one pale German girl who "can click away like a native," according to the white director. (Some African languages have clicks for "Q" and other letters.) The youngsters looked clean and happy and together. They sang in tune. They had good time and ears. The director, a prematurely bald young man with a bright face — no doubt a person of good will — said, "They represent ten ethnic groups and twenty languages." They sang ethnic songs with gusto. If such a racially mixed group of apparently happy children can tour Sad Afrika (sponsored by the Dutch Reform Church), how bad can it be?

Now let's go through the looking glass and get another perspective on Namibia. From the Zimbabwe *Chronicle* (not distributed in Sad Afrika; I found it later in Botswana): "South Africa has stationed more than 100,000 troops in this mineral-rich country... Blacks do not have access to hospitals and are dying largely of diseases against which they could be immunized... Windhoek medic Dr. Kenneth Abrahams, leader of the Namibian Independence Party, said he wouldn't be surprised if the social misery is part of a deliberate plan to demoralize blacks... A Roman Catholic priest, the Rev. Klein-Hitpas, said children aged between eleven and thirteen detained for stealing clothes told him policemen had administered electric shocks through their fingers and ears..." So much for good ears.

*All non-Bantu entering this area must have
permission, and may not spend the night.*

— sign near Soweto

Tour of Soweto, 18 Rand (\$16)

— sign in Joburg Holiday Inn

Bantu means "people" in Zulu. It has come to be a rather racist word for black African. We drove north three hours from Durban, along the Indian Ocean, to the University of Zululand. Zululand is not a so-called homeland because Chief Gatsha Buthelezi refused to accept leading a so-called country. He is the most influential black leader in Sad Afrika not in jail. Some people call him a moderate, some an Uncle Tom, others courageous. While we were there, he made a speech which was published. It read in part: "I have followed the politics of reason; I have advocated democratic and peaceful means of bringing about change; I have argued for compromise solutions; I have done a great deal to keep alive the people's faith that we can achieve real change without bloodshed; I have done more than others to keep black political aspirations realistic and to make them constructive; I have rejected Utopian politics which galvanized people into precipitous action to get the impossible tomorrow; I have prepared my people to accept that we get nothing for nothing and that our demands should be only equality of opportunity, so that we can prove our human worth... I have not hedged my bets and I have always been prepared to sink or swim in what we as blacks can do with whites and not against them. I have spoken to almost every conceivable white audience in this country; I have spoken in reasoned language... we have democratic rights which are dearer than life itself to us, even if the policy of the National Party government ignores our rights as citizens. Under the new constitution we shall have no sanctioned rights in eighty-seven percent of the country... In the past we had the hope of seeking compromise solutions through democracy..."

A white professor at the University of Zululand explained that the school is run by hack white racist so-called educators who get sent out to the sticks because they have run into political or career trouble in Pretoria, the capital. The real struggle at the U. of Zululand is to wrest power from the representatives of central government by the indigenous black population whose children are students here.

The low-slung modern buildings are separated from each other by large lawns, trees and paved walkways. Jack Gregg was sitting away from us on the edge of a hillside, admiring the mountains. After a student stopped to talk to him, Jack got up, walked over to me and said: "I just got baased to death. Yes, baas this, no baas that. I baased him right back. A baas for a baas." Liberation comes hard. One nice PR lady told me that for a long time she would not hire a maid because she did not want to relate to a black on those terms, but when she had a baby there was no choice. She tried to treat her maid as well as possible, but the first time she offered her a cup of coffee, the maid declined it and went to get her own cup and poured her coffee into that. "Would most whites object to drinking from the same cup as a black person?" I asked the PR lady. She looked surprised that I should have to ask.

In terms of the city's bylaws it is legal for members of any races to use the beaches but only members of the specific race group for which the beach is zoned may enter the water to swim.

— Durban daily paper

The Zulu audience was the most receptive of the tour, and the concert may have been our best. In a large indoor sports arena, about five hundred people were sitting and as many as five hundred more walked in and out through the doors far across from the stage. We were playing a repertoire of standards plus a few originals in a style that might be described as post-behop. We had been advised by the USIS not to get too far out. The people here want familiar toe-tapping music, they said. We played a loose *Eleanor Rigby*, a stretched version of *Well You Needn't*, *Chelsea*

Bridge, *Milestones* and so on. From time to time we sneaked in a free piece called *Meeting Point*, which was basically a series of cadenzas separated by free collective improvisation based on a short rhythmic theme. It could go any place from Albert Mangelsdorff to *When The Saints Go Marching In*. Just as John Thomas started his cadenza, a tall young man jumped on stage, reached for the mike and started to sing what sounded like a James Brown song in Zulu. The rhythm section went into a heavy rhythm-and-blues back beat with him. It lasted maybe three minutes. Just as he finished, I launched back into the short riff. The audience broke up. It was a high-point of artist-audience communication. Back in my hotel room that night I happened to notice for the first time that toilets do indeed flush in the opposite direction south of the equator, and I wrote in my diary, "The Sad Afrikaner system is a highly evolved, self-righteous, computerized, pitiless, dogmatic, tribal internal colonialism. It is structured to stifle the ingenuity and initiative of the majority and keep it subservient and cheap. Its defenders build walls around their houses and walk in fear. The system involved a great deal of cleverness to construct and requires constant attention and ingenuity to enforce. Each layer connects to the other with diabolical consistency. It is probably too elaborate to unglue. It has to explode. The fuse is lit. The fire is approaching the magazine. It's the Lusitania, the Hindenburg. Pardner, it's about time to get out of Dodge."

Afrikaners are big-boned strong people who feel a call to work the land. Again, they can be compared to Israelis. They worked hard and the land works, though they did not let any other race own the land. Sad Afrika is a net exporter of agricultural products. With the growth of mechanized farming, Afrikaner youth is migrating to urban areas and it is said that they are more liberal and open-minded than their parents. But any Afrikaner who takes a public stand against apartheid is still considered a traitor. On the other hand, Afrikaners are permitted more freedom by the censors; they are family, after all. André Brink went a bit too far.

Brink was the first Afrikaner writer to be banned. He has been taken down to John Vorster Square. A young black African journalist told me: "Brink is a courageous man. He put his life on the line." Brink spent some time in France and loves France but decided to live in Sad Afrika because a writer cannot be separated from his subject. His novel, *A Dry White Season*, perhaps his best, deals with the moral conflict involved with being an Afrikaner who thinks. In his collection of essays, *Mapmakers: Writing in a State of Siege*, he wrote:

"Apartheid, as I see it, denies what is best in the Afrikaner himself. It reveals only that side of him which is characterized by fear, suspicion, by uncertainty, hence by arrogance, meanness, narrow-mindedness, pig-headedness. What it denies is the Afrikaner's reverence for life, his romanticism, his sense of the mystical, his deep attachment to the earth, his generosity, his compassion.

"The eventual destruction of apartheid need not automatically imply the disappearance of the Afrikaner himself; only the eradication of his negative side. But if he does not put things right himself, if he continues to assert only his negative image, he will inevitably lose all. The dissident writer knows this, and appreciates the tragic possibilities inherent in the situation; consequently his struggle is not just *against* what is evil in the Afrikaner, but *for* what he perceives to be his potential for good. In other words, it is not just a struggle at the liberation of blacks from oppression by whites, but also a struggle for the liberation of the Afrikaner from the ideology in which he has come to negate his better half. The dissident struggles in the name of what the Afrikaner could and should have become in the light of his own history, had he not allowed adversity (both real and imaginary) to

narrow down his horizon to the small hard facts of mere physical survival."

We played Rhodes University in Grahamstown, where Brink teaches literature. I arranged to meet him. He was shy with me and I with him. He has been awarded the most important Sad Afrikan literary prize, the CNA award, twice (he also won the Médicis literary prize in France and the Martin Luther King Memorial Prize), I had seen him on TV, explaining Chekhov, introducing a BBC production of *The Three Sisters*, and had found all his books stocked in a Joburg bookstore. I asked him to explain all that: "I thought you were banned," I said.

He said the situation had changed in the last few years, that now he was always being invited to be on some TV show or other. An attractive, lucid, photogenic man, with a heavy mane of blond hair which falls boyishly over his forehead, he told me that he was afraid writing might by now be a copout, an excuse for not taking more direct action. He said that his new-found acceptance by the Afrikaner establishment posed him problems. "I refuse to go on TV, except for something innocuous like Chekhov. It's hard when your enemies let you say what you like about them and embrace you."

By embracing Brink, the government can show the world what a so-called free society they have, but perhaps here is something more than cosmetic change. It does not modify the basic repressive system, which in fact gets more repressive all the time. But ideas do change things in the long run and the government may not realize the repercussions of unbanning Brink. Brink believes in the sports boycott — "it hits them where it hurts" — but is not so sure about economic boycotts because even black leaders do not agree about that. Some think it better to let everyone in to do business and then hammer them hard. But Brink definitely believes in contact in the arts.

Plays should be poured into the country, they should be fought for on the front line, where they just might create change. And if you don't believe a play can create change, why are you bothering to write them?

— Brian Astbury, ex-director of the Space Theatre in Capetown, to members of the Theatre Writers Union of Britain.

We gave a workshop for some so-called Colored musicians in Capetown: the brothers Clifford (guitar) and Basil (bass) Moses, the guitarist Kenny Jafta, and others. Jafta, considered the father of the Capetown jazz scene, is a gentle man, badly overweight now, who walks with a cane and won't say why he doesn't play the guitar any more. They all have a beaten look about them, which disappears when they play music. We finally coaxed Jafta into playing with us, and his out-of-shape chubby fingers were not exactly flying over the fingerboard. After our concert in the Weizman Hall in Seapoint, Capetown, we went to a restaurant and jammed with the musicians again. Jafta played again, better already. A black journalist said to me: "You have no idea how much pleasure you have given these guys. Playing with you is a high point in their lives. They will talk about it for years. They feel so isolated here."

Back to the boycott. If you aim at the bank robber and hit the hostage, you are missing the point. Several people suggested a solution to the problem, and it goes like this. Let George Benson or Elton John play Sun City — which is in a so-called homeland. But they should not just take the money and run. They should leave something. Maybe their sound engineer could give workshops, or they could donate a percentage of their paychecks to buy musical instruments for black youths. (The Orlando YMCA in Soweto or the Mamelodi, [Pretoria], YMCA would be possible vehicles for this.)

The Reagan administration is quietly beefing up US trade promotion efforts in South Africa...

— newspaper headline

The Sad Afrikan-Botswana border. We were driving from Pretoria to Gaborone in two vehicles with our instruments and several USIS escorts. It was the Friday afternoon of a holiday weekend and the small border post was congested. On the Sad Afrikan side, black officials searched and processed black travelers and whites. This is down-home Sad Afrika, all makeup removed. No looking glass here, no appearance of tranquil normalcy. No wonderland for Alice. The record has no jacket, the book no cover. The party's over.

A platoon of soldiers in camouflage outfits got ready to move down the border at sunset, following an armored personnel carrier. They were young white boys, probably anxious to finish military service and go back to school. One of them was wearing plastic tong sandals, as for the beach. As he flapped past us, he stopped and exclaimed: "Hey, I forgot my rifle."

The soldier who searched us looked mean; like a dangerous retarded redneck. He searched Jack's shoulder bag and went right for the notebook. He seemed to be expecting it. "Someone saw that notebook before," said one of our embassy escorts.

"I have one just like it. Why didn't they go for mine?" I asked her.

"Don't give them too much credit," she said. "They are perfectly capable of mistaking Jack for you."

The soldier turned the pages slowly, reading carefully, and after he found a quote from Randy Newman's song *Christmas in Capetown* — "What are we gonna do? Blow up the whole damn country?" — he asked Jack to come into the office. He had also pulled out a Nadine Gordimer novel and *Totsi* by Athol Fugard from my valise. "I have to check if they're banned," he explained. "But I bought them in Joburg," I said.

I bought those books in a large, fancy, well-stocked bookstore — it could have been in London, a wonderful bookstore, the kind any book-person could not leave without buying something; a free-world bookstore. But we have gone through the looking glass to the flabby-lipped, rawboned, pimply Afrikaner redneck who only reads the banned-books list. He returned them to me.

He brought Jack inside, took his passport, then refused to allow the USIS people to telephone the embassy. Officers read the notebook even more carefully and said they were calling in a security man, but the rest of us could all go through. We said we'd stick with Jack. After two hours the security man still had not arrived. Then they suddenly returned Jack's diary and said everything was now in order, "Sir." The looking glass had been repaired.

While this was going on, an old bus belching diesel smoke and packed with black travelers parked about fifty meters from the customs shed. The passengers piled out and lined up in front of the one window that processed blacks. It took maybe half an hour for all of them. Then they walked back to the bus, climbed on. The bus drove the short distance to the gate, stopped, and all passengers were ordered to get out again with their luggage. It was searched carefully, spread on the ground around the bus. This took another half hour. Now you see it.

The Botswana border is hot. The Sad Afrikan government says Botswana, a stable black democracy, is harboring terrorists. They raid the country regularly. With typical irony, Oliver had named one of our embassy escorts, a reflective and good-humored woman, "Mad Dog." She asked a Sad Afrikan soldier to try to do something about a parked car blocking the gate and backing up traffic badly in both directions. He said, politely, "It's on the other side. I can't go in there. It's not our country."

When he was too far away to hear her, she screamed fiercely: "That never stopped you before." Sad Afrika can make a mad dog out of anybody.