

Errata

It seems that in the conversion to computer, a few names got left out of the list of subscribers. These include Jim and Mary Brown, Norman Lederer, Charlie Lourie, Dudley Moore, Ted Nash, and Jerome Patterson. We have quite a few new people, too — Charles Baker, Tony Barra, Neil A. Bartley Jr., Ellen Birenbaum MD, John Catterson, Thomas A. Chapman, David Chase, Jerry Coleman, Bill Davis, Wild Bill Davison, Ron Day, Hermie Dressel, David Fischer, Mike Formanek, Med Flory, Ernie Garside, Dick Gehr, Rob Gibson, Gary Gilfellan, Bob Godfrey, Lawrence Grauman Jr., Merv Griffin, John Hammond, John Handy, James Hay, John Heard, Delores Hicks, Sharlene Hirsch, T.E. Ikhifja, Willard Jenkins, Ralph Jungheim, Artie Kane, Eddie Karam, Jack Keeling, Irwin Kove, Fran Landesman, Kathleen and Leslie Langs, Julie and Bill Lester, Lou Levy, Vic Lewis, Mike Longo, Charles Marohnic, Red Mitchell, Lincoln Pain, Jack Parnell, William Parriott, Cedric Phillips, Charles Portney MD, Alan Press, George Rappaport, Dean E. Reilly, Ricky Schultz, George Simon, Mike Spiro, Alan Steger, Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Stein, William Stumpf, Berrigan M. Taylor, Roy Tempest, Pete Terry, G.B. Thompson, Charles Wall, Harrieth Wasser, Charles Whaley, Jane Wheatley, Pinky Winters, and Saul Zaentz.

In the issue titled *The Road to Gadgets*, the reference to RCA's book-publishing interests is in error. RCA sold off its holdings in book publishing. There is an error too in *How to Talk Dirty and Write Lyrics*. The word "alligator" derives from a Latin, not an Arabic, root.

The Strange Case of Charles Ives or, Why Is Jazz Not Gay Music?

by Grover Sales

I don't even know a jazz musician who's a homosexual — not a real jazz musician.

— Dizzy Gillespie

I

In the 1950s, before the ascendancy of rock turned historic jazz clubs into parking lots and topless joints, San Francisco's Black Hawk, Jazz Workshop and Sugar Hill were nightly camping grounds for a black homosexual prostitute and would-be entertainer immortalized in Shirley Clarke's documentary film *Portrait of Jason*. Born Aaron Paine, this fluttery engaging poseur called himself Jason Holiday but the jazz crowd called him Jason the Faggot.

This sobriquet was at that time far less a term of contempt than a simple tag of identity among jazz people who found the regular presence in their midst of an overt gay as peculiar as

John Wayne at a Black Panther rally. Long unrivalled for its blithe indifference to extremes of human comportment, the jazz community might have coined the expression "different strokes for different folks."

The chasm that separates the gay world from the jazz world is fascinating, yet little explored. Singer Betty Bennett, who worked with the bands of Claude Thornhill, Woody Herman, Benny Goodman, and Charlie Barnet, the former wife of Andre Previn and the wife of guitarist Mundell Lowe, wrote in her as-yet unpublished memoirs, "The percentage of jazz musicians who are gay must be near zero. When I asked Shelly Manne if he was aware of this phenomenon, he thought for a couple of minutes, shuddered and said, 'What would the cats in the band say?'"

I first became aware of this split thirty years ago when I began a twelve-year career as theatrical publicist for everyone in show business from Moms Mabley to the Bolshoi Ballet. One of my obvious functions was to case audiences to advise clients where to spend their advertising money: you don't buy ads in the underground or black press for the Kingston Trio, Stan Kenton or the Tijuana Brass, or radio spots on an easy-listening station for Miles Davis or Lenny Bruce. Years of intensive audience-watching made clear that certain stars and attractions such as Judy Garland, Carol Channing, Barbra Streisand, Ethel Merman, opera, ballet, and later, Bette Midler, drew vast audiences of homosexual men. I also learned that authentic jazz, particularly of the non-vocal variety, did not.

Increasingly curious about this little-discussed phenomenon, I started to ask jazz musicians — those I knew well enough to expect candid answers — if they knew any homosexual jazzmen. Whether they had come of age in the 1920s or the 1950s, their answers were much the same: "No, not a one. Well, maybe so-and-so was, but he's an arranger. I heard Tony Jackson was (died 1921), and that piano player with Erskine Hawkins, but that's about all. Plenty of chick singers are bi, but gay men usually go for Broadway show tunes, not jazz. In this business I'd say they're about as rare as one-armed ball players."

It became evident to me that the incidence of homosexuality in jazz was not only below that in other kinds of music and all the other arts, it was far below population norms cited in studies such as the Kinsey Report. While firm recent figures are lacking, the Gay and Lesbian Archives in Los Angeles says the best estimate of the national average of male homosexuality is ten percent.

Francis Newton's observation that "the jazzman is a keen follower of the women" (and vice versa) is shared by anyone with a close knowledge of this music. The most exotic and uninhibited women could always be found where jazzmen played. Prime figures like Duke Ellington and Charlie Parker were celebrated for their legendary prowess. Roy Eldridge once confided to me (around 1940): "Man, if you're playing a dance, and point your horn at a certain chick, and play at her all night, when the gig is over, you'll *make* that chick!" One night in the Roseland Ballroom in Boston, I watched Johnny Hodges prove this to be more than idle mysticism.

In his unbuttoned autobiography *The Night People*, trombonist Dickie Wells recounted bus talk of the Basie band on tour: "Next morning, the same conversation. Chicks. What else? That chick you had last Friday sure did have a broad understanding! She looked like a farmer chewing tobacco when she walked. She's the kind that'll make a rabbit hug a hound and a preacher lay his Bible down." When Wells went to Paris with the Teddy Hill band, he wrote, "It was a ball. Those girl-houses were wide open in Paris then, and it was a miracle we could hold the cats together long enough to record." Tenor man Buddy Tate of the Basie band said the entire band was trying to avoid the draft in World War II "because we were all making so much money and there were so many lonely ladies around." Lester Young at thirteen abandoned the drums for the saxophone because "it took me so long to pack up my traps after a dance that when I looked around all the women were gone."

"Swinger" in its linked sexual-musical sense, and its antithesis "square", were common parlance in the jazz subculture decades before *Playboy* discovered them. Women and the joys of heterosexual congress have long been celebrated in the titles and lyrics of jazz tunes and classic blues: *Juicy Lucy*, *Poon Tang*, *Four or Five Times*, *Warm Valley*, *Hootchie-Kootchie Man*, *Jelly Jelly* and Ray Charles' gospel-orgasmic hit *Whud I Say?* with its screaming climax "Oh baby! It feels so good!"

The names of early women blues singers smacked of the sporting life — Chippie Hill, and Trixie Smith, whose 1924 prophesy declared *The World's Jazz Crazy*, *Lawdy So Am I: Jazzin', everybody's jazzin' now*.

*My pretty papa, he sure knows how.
All night long the band kep' us awake,
so we could jazz away until daybreak.
I like the motion that my daddy has,
'cause everyone likes a real good jazz.*

Not "real good jazz" but "a real good jazz", as different as "woman with a child" and "woman with child". Besides *He Likes it Slow* and *He May Be Your Man, but He Comes to See Me Sometimes*, Trixie Smith is remembered for her blues *My Daddy Rocks Me with One Steady Roll*, which should remove all doubt, if ever there was one, about the wellsprings of youth's contemporary music of ecstasy and protest. As the lyrics of *The World's Jazz Crazy* make clear, jazz, at least until the advent of "cool" in the 1950s and "free jazz" in the 1960s, was linked to dancing whose openly sexual nature escaped no one. In 1899, the staid American *Musical Courier* fumed:

"A wave of vulgar, filthy and suggestive music has inundated the land. Nothing but ragtime prevails . . . and one reads with amazement and disgust of historical and aristocratic names joining in this sex dance, for the cakewalk is nothing but the African *danse du ventre* (i.e. belly dance), a milder edition of African orgies."

Growing up in the South and indoctrinated with the middle-class notion of jazz as low-class trash, I didn't need the *Dictionary of American Slang* to define the word: "jazz: 1. taboo; copulation: orig. southern Negro use, prob. since long before 1900."

Jelly Roll Morton, whose nickname hardly came out of the pastry shop, called early New Orleans street bands "spasm bands" because these primitives were seized by epileptic shakes in the heat of performance. It takes no university etymologist to divine the linkage of jazz, spasm, orgasm and jism, the immemorial American vulgate for semen. Jelly Roll named his band the Red Hot Peppers; an unemployed clarinetist during the Depression took an at-liberty ad in *Variety* to proclaim his diversity: "Read, fake, plenty hot." Since the time of Sappho,

and perhaps before, "hot" connoted sexual arousal in any language.

The division between such an overwhelmingly heterosexual milieu and the gay culture is documented by an LP that adorns record-shop windows in San Francisco's gay thoroughfares of Polk Gulch and Castro Street. Titled *AC/DC Blues: Jazz Reissues*, this collection is on the Stash label, among whose earlier releases were *Copulation Blues* and *Reefer Songs*, reissues of old jazz and blues celebrating the act of procreation and pot smoking, two pastimes associated with this music since its birth. But in assembling *AC/DC Blues*, Stash apparently found the pickings lean. Of the fourteen tracks, three are different versions of *Sissy Man Blues* from the 1930s, included for the lines:

*I woke up this mornin' with my business in my hand.
If you can't find a woman, find me a sissy man.*

Two tracks are by George Hannah, an Ethel Waters impersonator and utter obscurity whose 1930 *Freakish Man Blues* and *The Boy in the Boat*, a venerable black reference to the clitoris and vagina, were prized by "hot collectors" solely for the accompaniment of Meade Lux Lewis. Some of the *AC/DC Blues* tracks deal with incest, not homosexuality, while others get no closer to gay themes than the title of Harlem Hamfats' *Stick Out Your Can, Here Comes the Garbage Man*. In *Foolish Man Blues*, Bessie Smith protests (perhaps too much, according to annotator Chris Albertson):

*There's two things I can't understand:
A mannish-actin' woman and a skippin' twistin' woman-actin' man.*

Collectors of gay memorabilia must be as disappointed by this album as a hard-core collector who buys a porno-covered edition of *Madame Bovary*.

The prevalence of bisexuals among women singers from Bessie Smith to Janis Joplin is not surprising in a macho domain where survival might depend on the ability to assume male roles. Sociologists Charles Keil and Gershon Legman agree that the "black mother-centered family probably produces more deviancy among daughters than sons," though Keil cautions that "this issue needs further study before suspicions give way to reasonable interpretations." (*Urban Blues*.) A perennial cliché among jazzmen is that "chick singers are crazy," suicidal victims of alcohol, dope, paranoia, horrendous marriages, sordid affairs, and assorted swindles, suggesting that the rugged demands of a jazz career make it, in the patois of yesterday, no life for a lady. In a recent interview, Margie Hyams, vibraphonist with the George Shearing Quintet and the Woody Herman band, confessed she was forced out of the music business in the 1950s by the pressures attendant to being a woman in a macho world — a theme that recurs with variations throughout Sally Placksin's pioneering book *American Women in Jazz*.

Besides an absence of male homosexuality that is utterly singular in the performing arts, the jazz world is marked by another unique and related phenomenon: jazzmen kiss and embrace on meeting, not the perfunctory pecks of powdered churchwomen, or the locker-room fanny-patting of huddled linebackers, but wild gleeful bearhugs, wet smacks, and cries of

Notice

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"Baby!" Presented in mid-concert with a statue of himself, Dizzy Gillespie kissed the sculptor — a man — and burst into tears. "I know if a man cries," Dizzy told the audience, "a lot of people are going to think he's a faggot, but that don't bother me. Hell, baby, I know what I am."

The decades-long use of "baby" as a black intra-male greeting is explained by Harlem novelist Claude Brown (*Manchild in the Promised Land*): "'Baby' was like saying, 'Man, look at me. I've got masculinity to spare . . . I'm one of the hippest cats on the scene. I can say 'baby' to another cat, and he can say 'baby' to me, and we can say it with strength in our voices.' This meant that you really had to be sure of yourself, sure of your masculinity."

Jazz musicians have long had a saying, "If it's cool in your mind, it's cool." "Cool" does not mean indifference, but that much longed-for state of being in control.

Fifty years of deliberate audience-watching in every performing art from ballet to burlesque have convinced me there is almost no gay audience for jazz. Jason Holiday aside, gays rarely frequent jazz clubs, concerts, or festivals. The gay record collection, like the gay-bar jukebox, bulges with show tunes, Original Cast material, Noel Coward, Mabel Mercer, Ethel Merman, Carol Channing, Marlene Dietrich, Bobby Short, and always Judy Garland. Gay taste in *non-vocal* jazz may embrace peripheral figures such as Michel Legrand and Andre Previn, but rarely Clifford Brown, John Coltrane, or Charlie Parker. Billie Holiday, Dinah Washington and Carmen McRae attract smatterings of gays, not as jazz artists but as talismanic mother figures or disaster-prone objects. A recent San Francisco nightclub double bill of Carmen McRae and Dizzy Gillespie drew a large gay contingent that paid fifteen dollars a head, gave McRae a standing ovation, and left the minute Dizzy took the stand.

Gays gravitate toward matriarchal stalwarts like McRae, though more often Ethel Merman or Eileen Farrell. Hard-luck women who have suffered, paid their dues, are lavished with gay adoration, like Billie Holiday. But the undisputed queen in this domain is Judy Garland. The hit Broadway play *The Boys in the Band* underscores Garland's uncanny knack for luring gays — to which Gerold Frank's biography *Judy* makes glancing mention. Other gay icons include flagrant parodies of women: Sophie Tucker, Mae West, Carol Channing and, for young gays, Bette Midler, whose "alliance with the gay subculture," writes the trendy journal *New Times*, "was a carefully researched part of her act." Jason Holiday appropriated Billie's name and once affixed himself to Carmen McRae as her houseboy.

Of all the arts in America, performing or otherwise, jazz alone holds small allure for the male homosexual, either as participant or audience. The predominance of gays among both the cast and the audience of *Swan Lake* prompted Oscar Levant's quip, "Ballet is the faggot's baseball." Formidable divas like Elizabeth Schwartzkopf and Renata Tebaldi command considerable gay entourages. For nearly half a century, the Broadway musical theater has been controlled by gay performers, producers, playwrights, composers and lyricists who venerate a pantheon of brassy larger-than-life den mothers, Ethel Merman, Liza Minnelli, Barbra Streisand, Carol Channing, Elaine Stritch. The gay Berkeley psychologist Jesse Miller ponders the appeal of such women: "Camp represents to gay men what Soul is to blacks — a way of looking at a hostile world, a defense against the mainstream's hostility."

In pronouncing Camp "larger than life", Miller encapsulates the Merman-Channing-Garland-Streisand vocal style. Just as gay decorators are sometimes prone to cram every inch of floor and wall space with eclectic bric-a-brac, these singers are

goaded by worshipful but often malicious gay fans into vocal overkill. Treble notes throb with extravagant vibrato, the singing quivers with gasps, moans, and sobs, topped by the inevitable bravura climax with outflung arms. This engorged Broadway style found its fullest expression in Liza Minnelli's camp reincarnation of her mother in Martin Scorsese's *New York, New York*. In a memorably vicious review of a Minnelli TV special, the Australian critic-poet-jazz enthusiast Clive James observed that "Minnelli, like her mother, doesn't know how to do anything small."

An unwitting display of the split between camp and soul appeared in the 1977 sleeper movie *Outrageous!*, a one-man show by the gifted female impersonator Craig Russell. After treating the audience to accurate lampoons of the entire gay matriarchy — Bankhead, Streisand, Mae West, Bette Davis, Dietrich, Channing and, of course, Garland — Russell faltered with a nearly unrecognizable takeoff on Ella Fitzgerald, who is neither a camp icon, "larger than life," nor a gay parody of womankind, but a jazz musician whose singing, unlike the hyper-vocales of Channing and Streisand, does not lend itself to Russell's brand of affectionate ridicule. In attempting to mimic a jazz artist, Craig Russell cast himself adrift on alien water.

I first heard the term "camp" in Greenwich Village in the early 1940s among male homosexuals, who used it in a self-mocking way to describe gay flirtatious come-ons. By the 1960s the media had taken up Camp as a catch-all for old B movies, beaded bags and kitschy pulps. In her much-discussed *Notes on Camp*, Susan Sontag expanded Camp to include "straight" artistic sensibilities and trendy delights in the unintentional humor of a naive past: Busby Berkeley dance extravaganzas, Flash Gordon, King Kong. While Sontag recognized that "homosexuals constitute the vanguard — the most artistic audience of Camp taste," she displayed the American, though not the European, intellectual's serene unawareness of the entire jazz culture in pronouncing "Jews and homosexuals . . . the outstanding creative minorities in contemporary urban culture," and this as late as 1964. Nowhere in her much-quoted essay, with its extensive listings of what Camp is and is not, does Sontag acknowledge that jazz is as non-Camp as you can get.

There are no easy explanations for this gulf between Soul and Camp. The usual response, "Jazz is masculine music," does little but recognize the image of the music and its creators. The ready reply of alto saxophonist Jackie McLean, "Jazz is screwing music," doesn't apply to the "free jazz" movement, yet does have the ring of truth. Jazz's offshoots — rhythm and blues and rock — formed the throbbing pulse of a sexual-social revolt among white youths who found music a more useful and immediate language of upheaval. Ben Sidran's remarkable book *Black Talk* is subtitled "How the music of black America created a radical alternative to the values of Western literary tradition," another way of saying that the jazz beat had supplanted Tom Paine, Marx and Freud as instrument of social change.

From Tokyo to Liverpool, jazz taps powerful emotions, moving its listeners to feel elated, sad, sexually aroused, moving their minds, and their bodies, in special ways. Why has this body-based music that has touched millions made so little impact on the gay community? What does this split have to tell us about the nature of both jazz and homosexuality? Will Gay Lib, acting in concert with the sexual freedom of the rock generation, dispel guilts and inhibitions that may have prevented covert gays from enjoying their bodies, and their bodies' most potent musical stimulant?

Like the division between hip and square, the split between Camp and Soul runs deeper than surface matters of "taste".

Jesse Miller sees Camp and Soul as radically different ways for two oppressed minorities to regard the straight/square world and to deal with its pressures and hostilities. There is some spillover in both directions between Camp and Soul; black homosexuals often lean toward the Broadway Camp preferences of their white counterparts. Some black gays have evolved into the polar opposite of the hipster, Mailer's "white Negro", as a defensive and perhaps rebellious adaptation of white sophisticated chic.

A clue to the elusive origins of this sexual-musical split between Camp and Soul may lie in the worlds-apart roles of the artist in the divergent cultures that gifted us with such peculiarly American geniuses as Charles Ives and Duke Ellington. A closer look at the profound differences between their worlds may tell something about this almost complete absence of male homosexuality among jazz musicians — European as well as American — and its extreme rarity in their audience.

II

In 1975 Frank R. Rossiter published his invaluable and exhaustive *Charles Ives and His America*, a chilling account of America's endless war against her resident artists. With grim clarity, Rossiter shows how the prejudices of New England's commercial aristocracy at the turn of the century shaped such a paradox as Ives, "who accepted the prevailing American attitudes so completely as to become a virtual prisoner of his culture."

Danbury, Connecticut, was typical of Nineteenth Century American small towns bursting with proud commercial expansion and led by an elite of First Families like the Ives, who financed the railroad from Danbury to Long Island, founded the banks and the Gas and Light Company, built a thriving hat business, guided the Bar Association, and ran the local charities. The family's embarrassing renegade was Charles Ives' father, George, who, resisting family pressures whose intensity we can hardly imagine today, chose a declassé career as town bandmaster and choir conductor. He fired up his adoring son with a delight in musical adventures, directing two marching bands to play different tunes in clashing keys and tuning string instruments in quarter tones. The adolescent Charles began to blend European classical music with these experiments in sound and with his native folk music of the barn dance, church choir, theater, marching band, and ragtime. From twelve to nineteen, Charles Ives wrote an imposing number of pieces that, unlike his mature works — many of which were never heard in his lifetime — were performed as workaday music for Danbury's town band, church, and concert hall.

In a revealing chapter on Yale as "an 1890s adaptation of the British Public School system to the competitive American industrial world," Rossiter documents how Yale joined Danbury's first families in pressuring Ives away from the musical career of his wayward father. When Ives entered Yale in 1894, the music department was only four years old, testament to the peripheral part that "serious" music played on campus. The then-famous department head, Horatio Parker, recoiled from Ives' dissonant adventurings, and warned him never to bring such stuff into the classroom again.

Ives could not see living out his life like Parker, teaching, writing stodgy high Episcopal church music, truckling to the rich matrons who ran symphony boards, opera guilds and music clubs throughout America. Yale's round of senior societies and athletics were more pressing than top grades as a means to social acceptance and entrance into the cushy old-boy network in the business world that graduates were conditioned to enter. Yale enjoyed music-making at a good-time level of

banjo-plunking and barbershop quartet singing but never considered "serious" music as a lifetime pursuit worthy of a man among men. With disarming candor, the *Yale Daily News* of Ives' sophomore year proclaimed: "Yale stands for everything that is practical, for everything that has a distinctive American flavor, and we should deeply regret if the student here should lose any vigor of manliness for the sake of developing his appreciation of the fine arts. This, we regret to say, has elsewhere been the case (i.e. at Harvard)." Yale rarely lost a chance to smear the Harvard man as effete.

Accepting his father's view that "a man could keep his music interest stronger, bigger, freer, if he didn't try to make a living at it," Ives took his place in Manhattan's business community on graduating Yale in 1898. Driven to compose in a radical style that burst the confines of German academia and a concert-world dominated by "nice old ladies", Ives refused to compromise his art for the sake of public performance, recognition, or money. He was too committed a revolutionary to follow the Ivy path of Horatio Parker, too conditioned a product of Danbury's upper class and Yale to play his father's lowly role of town musician, and too unsuited by temperament to class prejudice and prudery — with a special horror of "deviant" sexual behavior — to adopt the dropout bohemian life of Greenwich Village artists, writers, homosexuals, and "free souls" in the years before World War I.

From his successful entry into the insurance world of 1898 until the crippling stroke in 1918 that ended his covert career as a composer, Ives spent his evenings, weekends, and holidays composing the thorny works that, half a century later, were to firm up his reputation as the father of American avant-garde music. His obituary in 1954 stunned his closest business associates, who had no idea that this generous, ground-breaking executive enjoyed some minor fame as a composer.

The obituary of Ives' father in turn showed how deep was the contempt for artists in an America in the throes of overnight commercial expansion. Despite brief and dispirited attempts to augment his meager bandmaster's income by working as bookkeeper and teller in his family's bank, George Ives for twenty-five years was known to his family and townspeople as a musician and was never taken for anything else. Yet on his death in 1894, the *Danbury Evening News* eulogized him as a businessman with a casual interest in music, while the *History of Danbury* mentions "his positions of Cashier and Director in the Danbury Savings Bank of which his father was one of the founders," ignoring *completely* his ceaseless musical activities in that town, as though chagrined that the scion of such an illustrious and industrious line should have fallen so low in a world where the idea of the effete indigent artist was as deeply ingrained as the notion of the actress-as-whore.

In his brief excellent study *Music in the United States*, E. Wiley Hitchcock noted that American males, "only one step removed from pioneering, viewed any time spent on non-productive, inutile art as wasteful and effete. Land and money needed cultivation, not their sensibilities. Music, the most intangible and 'useless' of the arts, had their special disdain and hostility. Leave music to the women or to the immigrant 'professors'. So crystallized the American view of fine-art music as essentially the province of females, foreigners or effeminate."

It takes no militant feminist to see that Ives' society allowed its women to control "serious" music because it regarded that work as useless at best, and therefore feminized. This perennial joke daily penetrated every household for decades in the comic strip *Bringing Up Father*, commonly called Maggie and Jiggs. Maggie, the daughter of Irish pig farmers, puts on *nouveau riche* airs by filling her salon with long-haired, pansified

"furrin" piano and voice teachers and dragging her peasant husband Jiggs to the opera where he asserts his manhood by snoring through *Parsifal*. The world of Charles Ives embraced this view of the serious musician as a questionable creature who could never cut the mustard at Dinty Moore's saloon, incapacitated by some flaw of character for the manly pursuits of the counting house and workplace, in contrast to Jiggs, who is always walking fearlessly across swinging girders in skyscraper construction projects to hang out with his old buddies.

No one embraced these notions of effeminacy in the arts more fervidly than Ives himself. His obsessive attacks on musicians whose work he despised took the form of impugning their manhood. Rachmaninoff was "Rachnotmanenough", the pianist Josef Hoffman was "Josey" Hoffman. He railed in print against the "nice ladies" heading symphony guilds and music clubs, comfortable with sonic gentilities he lampooned in a simpering passage in his Second Quartet which he tempo-marked *Andante Emasculata*. The unstudied virility and rawboned emotion that Ives prized was found not in a concert world dominated by Wagner and Brahms but on the male turf of country fiddling, minstrel shows, small-town choirs, outdoor revival-hymn singing, ragtime barroom piano playing, and the marching bands and choral groups conducted by his father.

These lusty sounds, which thrived in total musical and social separation from the "serious" concert music of Ives' day, should not be confused with the period's "household songs" of high-flown kitsch with pretensions of gentility. E. Wiley Hitchcock paints a grim picture of Nineteenth Century America's living-room culture "dominated by the new breed of middle-class woman, gathered to hear a favorite daughter or bride sing *Woodman Spare that Tree!*, *The Old Arm Chair*, *The Lament of the Blind Orphan Girl*, and *Just Before the Battle, Mother*." Faced by such watersheds of cheap bathos on the one hand, and the effeminate pall that hung over serious music, vast numbers of American men were drawn to the male-dominated music of the barn-dance fiddlers, marching bands, and ragtime pianists. Ives found "cultivated" music in America womanized, bloodless, prissy, and aristocratic, and he sought in the music of rugged workingmen — the friends of Jiggs — the emotions he found stirring, democratic, and profound.

Since he composed in almost Proustian isolation, cut off from many popular trends as well as the European avant-garde, Ives could not see (nor could his biographer Rossiter) that his vision of a virile male-centered democratic American art music actually came to realization, quite unselfconsciously, in black America during his own lifetime. In Europe, Ernest Ansermet understood this as early as 1919. In America, Ives did not.

It is no accident that many Ives champions, including Gunther Schuller, Leonard Bernstein and Goddard Lieberson, were admirers of jazz or that, given the cultural climate of the 1960s, many young people would find themselves attracted to Ives' music. Ives' deliberate break with the genteel tradition, his irreverence for academic purities of tone and "acceptable" harmonies, his love for the rough vigor of sounds that welled up from common people, his blindness to arbitrary boundaries separating "popular" from "serious" music, all became part of the jazzman's musical and emotional gear.

An unbreachable chasm yawns between Ives and Duke Ellington, who evolved a complex art form in response to the workaday Cotton Club demands of black show business. Ives is a casebook study of an American malaise — the notion of the artist as misfit, the sissy in velveteen shorts, the four-eyed mama's boy hunched over piano or violin under the eye of some bespectacled spinster or walrus-mustached German while the reg'lar fellers are out playing ball.

Ives' excelling in baseball at Yale seems another willful assertion of manhood and a striving for social acceptance in a society that withheld both from the professional musician. Ives concealed his love of art music from his business associates just as, later, Harry Truman would create a myth that his keyboard prowess was limited to *Missouri Waltz*, which he loathed, sensing with a consummate American politician's perception of the electorate that if the folks got wind of his dedication to Mozart and Beethoven and admiration for the recordings of Glenn Gould, it might cost precious heartland votes in his 1948 photo-finish race with Thomas E. Dewey. In the presidential campaign four years later, *Time* magazine turned Adlai Stevenson's urbanity and wit into a weapon against him. Such Philistine hostility stands in sharp contrast to attitudes in other cultures that enjoy a centuries-old tradition of respect for the arts: Poland in 1919 named the celebrated pianist Paderewski its prime minister, and the British public appeared to take pleasure and perhaps even pride in Prime Minister Edward Heath's professional status as organist and symphony conductor. The American Republic had come a long way since Jefferson played the violin and penned the graceful prose of its Declaration of Independence.

In Charles Ives' America, such brazenly un-American arts as the ballet and modern dance attracted homosexuals who might have veered into what used to be called deviancy because their love of music and the dance put them beyond the pale of go-getting America. Taking the example of Montmartre, the misfits of Winesburg, Ohio, and Sauk Center, Minnesota, fled to our first bohemian colonies in Greenwich Village and Chicago, refuges for writers, poets, town atheists, "free souls", gays of both sexes, radicals, disciples of Freud, Marx, Veblen, Stravinsky, Picasso, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Isadora Duncan, Margaret Sanger, Havelock Ellis, Sherwood Anderson, D.H. Lawrence, and Bertrand Russell. These outcasts found joyous voice when H.L. Mencken and Sinclair Lewis opened fire in *The American Mercury* on the pinched, mean, money-grubbing and sexually-thwarted denizens of the hinterlands they had left behind forever.

After World War I unleashed a social-sexual revolution, Rossiter wrote, "a new generation of composers were not confronted by the same heavy demands for both masculinity and gentility that had confronted Ives. Perhaps this is why a number of composers in this and succeeding generations felt free to pursue homosexuality or bohemianism, or both."

If Ives' America could find little place for its artists and other "deviants", it made even less room for blacks. Cut off from the mainstream of white America, denied access to its schools, professions, and, most of all, its dreams, black America built a culture that, on every level — familial, economic aesthetic, sexual — was at variance with that of the white middle class.

One reason why jazz music took its unique shape, and burst with such variety and profusion of talent in an amazingly short time, is that for blacks who clung to their roots and resisted assimilation, the artist-entertainer was *not* a misfit but a leader; *not* an effeminate but a stud; *not* an outcast but a hero.

At the turn of the century, Jelly Roll Morton was rousted by the cracker sheriff of a small Arkansas town:

"I want all you card sharps and crooks to get out of town."
"I'm very sorry, officer, but I'm a musician."

"Musicians don't mean anything down here. We put more of them in jail than anyone else because they don't want to *work*."

This contempt for the musician-as-bum was shared by the first families of Ives' Danbury as well as Jelly Roll Morton's clan of light-skinned New Orleans creoles. Morton said: "My folks never had the idea they wanted a musician in the family. They always had it in their minds that a musician was a tramp

trying to duck work, with the exception of the French Opera House players, which they patronized. I, myself, was inspired to play piano by going to a recital there. There was a gentleman who rendered a selection at the piano, very marvelous music that made me want to play the piano very, very much. *The only trouble was that this gentleman had long bushy hair, and because the piano was known in our circle as an instrument for a lady, this confirmed me in my idea that if I played piano, I would be misunderstood.* (Italics mine.)

Black cleaning women who spent half their wages on hair straighteners and bleaching creams and their husbands who affected frock coats and spats to work as bank janitors outdid the white middle class in reviling jazz as the trashy music of no-count lazy, dice-rolling gin-swilling darkies. Billie Holiday had been "listening to Pops (Louis Armstrong) and Bessie Smith since I was nine. Of course my mother considered this type of music sinful. She'd whip me in a minute if she caught me listening to it." Blues pianist Cow Cow Davenport was expelled from a theological seminary for playing ragtime. Fats Waller's minister father forbade the playing of jazz in his home as "music from the devil's workshop." Conservatory-trained blacks like George Morrison went into music at the turn of the century because it remained one of the few lawful non-drudge roles open to blacks — and one the white man did not want. Morrison told Gunther Schuller (*Early Jazz*), "Parents didn't let their children play jazz. They wanted nothing but the black man to play for him. If a white child picked up an instrument, that was a disgrace to the family."

In the 1950s Amira Baraka, then Leroi Jones, shocked the music department at Howard University by requesting courses in jazz: "This scandalized the faculty as much as the time my roommate and I ate watermelon on the front steps of the Administration Building in full view of the main highway. When Howard finally did allow jazz courses, the emphasis was on Stan Kenton."

Unlike Jelly Roll Morton and Fats Waller, many blacks were blessed with parents who enjoyed jazz for its communal pleasures, and as an escape from drudgery. Black musicians still call any daytime non-musical job a "slave". Singer Babs Gonzales wrote, in *I Paid My Dues*, "At the age of seven, my mother stressed the importance of knowledge and a profession to keep from being the white man's lackey. So she insisted I take music lessons." Dizzy Gillespie's father, a brick mason in Cheraw, South Carolina, "spent all his money, aside from bringing up nine kids, on musical instruments. I was around music all my life." Lester Young started as a child drummer in a family band managed by his father, a Tuskegee graduate. By the age of five or six, each of the Young children could read music and play at least one instrument.

The jazzman as culture hero predates the 1920s, when white as well as black musicians aped Armstrong's sound, stance, and dress, and extends beyond the 1960s when black activist writer Julius Lester named his son Malcolm Coltrane. The ragtime craze, the first in a series of black shock waves to rock America and Europe, gave rise to a new American artist-hero. Damned by proper music schools, the press, the pulpit, and the American Federation of Musicians, which in 1901 forbade its members to play ragtime, this music developed its own itinerant folk academy with piano contests and ritual standards of performance, dress and "attitude" that could be viewed as both an envy for and parody of white upper-class airs. E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* caught the fierce pride and dignity of these sons of slaves in the fictive ragtime pianist Coalhouse Walker, Jr., the keystone of this rich and splendid novel whose success coincided with the revival of ragtime after fifty years of oblivion.

The ragtime king's hauteur, flawless dress, and princely carriage were inherited by their successors, the Harlem "ticklers" or stride pianists whose theatrical flair, clothing, stance and "attitude" were calculated to turn women on. James P. Johnson, the godfather of this colorful, combative tribe, said, "You had to have an attitude, a style of behaving that was your personal, professional trademark. When you came into a place, you had a three-way play. First, you laid your cane on the music rack. Then you took off your overcoat, folded it, and put it on the piano with the lining showing, then you took off your hat before the audience. Each tickler kept these attitudes designed to show a personality that the women could admire. With the music he played, the tickler's manners would put the question in the ladies' minds, 'Can he *do* it like he can *play* it?' Willie 'the Lion' Smith was a fine dresser, very careful about the cut of his clothes, and a fine dancer too. Louis Armstrong was considered the finest dancer among the musicians. It made for attitude and stance when you walked into a place and made you strong with the gals." (Tom Gavin, *The Jazz Review*.)

James P. Johnson and Willie the Lion were models for the young ticklers like Duke Ellington, never rivaled for ambassadorial elegance, charm, or his rapt fascination with — and for — several generations of women regardless of age, color, or station. Eubie Blake recalled piano contests of endurance and originality whose rewards included matador-like adulation: "We used to start playing at nine at night and play until we dropped in the morning. And of course, there were the gals — boy, I loved 'em!"

This use of "attitude" and dress and "sharp phraseology" to enhance the jazzman's sexual allure was linked to the jam sessions and cutting contests that stressed the super-macho nature of the music. Before the advent of the jazz press, *Jazz at the Philharmonic* concerts and *Playboy* jazz polls, these ruthless marathon shootouts in Harlem, Chicago and Kansas City tested the skills of newcomers and classified them as champions, challengers, or chumps. They introduced fresh musical ideas to the jazz fraternity and served as impromptu auditions for dozens of bandleaders on the lookout for new talent in an era when aspiring jazzmen were never mentioned in print. The language of the cutting contest was that of the knife fight or gang war. A jazzman's instrument was his "axe"; an "ambush" was a surprise raid on the bandstand by heavyweight players to gang up on weaker competition; to vanquish a player was to "cut" him. Bassist Gene Ramey, veteran of epic cutting contests in Kansas City, spoke of "difficult riffs set up behind the soloist to throw him off balance, and transpositions into difficult keys and unnervingly fast tempi to test newcomers, added to the pressures of waiting to go on, and the humiliation that followed personal disasters." (Ross Russell, *Bird Lives!*)

A companion ritual was the "battle of the bands", a popular ballroom draw that pre-dated the Big Band Era. Fletcher Henderson's cornetist Rex Stewart recalled a 1926 confrontation in the Roseland Ballroom with Jean Goldkette's band: "We were supposed to be the kings, the greatest thing in New York. Then suddenly up pops this band of Johnny-come-latelies out of the sticks — white boys on top of it — and they just creamed us. It was pretty humiliating, they were swinging like mad. And Bix, that *tone* he got. Knocked us all out."

Cutting contests and battles of bands provided outlets for male aggression that the white society contrived to deny to blacks as husbands and fathers. Gene Ramey described the cutting contests in such revealing terms as "tribal initiation rites, trials by fire and constant tests of manhood." Black men asserted their manhood through the only channels the whites left open to them: the interrelated subculture of his pulpit, his illegal hustle, his dance, his comedy, his studhood, and his

only way for black:
non-formal jazz → one point for black
music. The black sociologist Charles Keil wrote that jazz musicians, hustlers, and entertainers are much admired by lower-class blacks as "men who are clever and talented enough to be financially well-off without working." The jazz society turned white middle-class values on their head and developed its own notions of "maleness" sharply opposed, Keil says, to the white definition of a man as "head of a household who holds down a steady job and sends his kids to college."

Black intellectuals like Keil find a rich source of unintentional hilarity among the writings of white sociologists who impose their ethnocentric, neo-Freudian views on a black culture they have never experienced first hand. Keil cites "the hustling career of Edward Dodge, chronicled with wonder and consternation" by white sociologists Rohrer and Edmondson, who mistake the hustler's hedonistic impulses for "hopeless manifestations of masculine insecurity. Despite his bravado and assertive masculinity, Edward has never been able to leave his mother. He has fears about his manliness that seem altogether unconscious." But as Edward's case history unfolds, it becomes plain to anyone steeped in black street culture, like Keil, that "Edward's mother, wife, mistress and assorted girlfriends feel he is a man, and a fairly impressive man at that. Edward thinks so too. He may be a pathological, amoral deviant with profound psychological problems, but as far as he, and his women, are concerned, he spends his money freely, dresses well and is great in bed . . . and they like him that way, despite the fact that he's obviously 'no good'."

Another white social scientist attracted to ghetto studies, Roger D. Abrahams (*Deep Down in the Jungle*), divines the rituals and role-playing among lower-class blacks as Freudian "products of overcompensation for masculine self-doubt. The love-hate ambivalence (toward mother and women generally) is undoubtedly responsible for many of the apparent effeminate traits of this otherwise masculine group: 'Don Juanism', the method of grooming reminiscent of the handkerchief tying of Southern mummies, the importance of falsetto singing, the whole 'dandy' feeling of dress and walk."

Keil finds all these "effeminate traits" to be figments of psychological imagination. Entertainers and hustlers seen as "Don Juans" are simply using their cash and charisma to attract a wide variety of women. Their elaborate hair-processing is "designed to heighten masculinity. Backstage at the Regal Theater in Chicago, 'process rags' are everywhere in evidence among male performers who put women into states that border on the ecstatic. Prettiness (wavy hair, manicured nails, frilly shirts, flashy jackets) plus strength, tender but tough, is a style that many Negro women find irresistible. Falsetto singing comes directly from Africa, where it is considered to be the very essence of masculine expression . . . sometimes indistinguishable from Ray Charles, B. B. King, or the lead voice in a gospel quartet. An 'Africanism' argument may be both relative and interesting, but it is not necessary to establish this point. If Negro women jump and shout when B. B. King cuts loose with a high falsetto, that is all we really need to know."

Ben Sidran in *Black Talk* carried Charles Keil's work a step further in exploring another sharp reversal of white values — the notion of work-as-play within the jazz culture. He says: "The very act of recognizing the musician as culture hero is to establish a unique definition of work and play within the American context. Not only does the black community not view the underworld denizen as bad, but also they reject the notion of a man's work as being separate from his life" — as in the bizarre case of Charles Ives.

Drummer Baby Dodds told writer Larry Gara, "It wasn't work for us in those days (1922) to play. Nobody took the job as work. We took it as play and we loved it. I used to hate it when it

was time to knock off." Sidran finds that, in contrast to and defiance of the the Puritan tradition, the work ethic and strong demands of Nineteenth Century capitalism, "the black culture was defining work as pleasure rather than service, duty or obligation. *Black musicians have pioneered in a contemporary masculinity.* (Italics mine.) If Western man has 'lost' his masculinity to the machines and corporate structure he lives to serve, the black musicians whose work is his play, and whose orientation is the polar opposite of technological, increases his importance as a social archetype" — for whites as well as blacks.

The jazz life with its reversal of white middle-class values, its elevation of the artist-as-hero, its concept of work-as-play, its use of music-as-language, its tribal rites of passage into manhood, its sexual freedom and tolerance of "deviant" behavior, its exotic sporting life, and most of all its seductive body-based music spawned by an outlaw culture whose universities were mob-owned speakeasies, proved irresistible to increasing numbers of whites in rebellion since the jazz age of the 1920s against the bleak asexual commercial demands of American respectability. Just as black musicians have traditionally been in the vanguard of black culture, the white dropout jazzman of the 1920s was the ancestor of the 1950s beatniks — white middle-class rebels who embraced the posture, pot, argot and music of the black ghetto. Comic

Rock journalism is people who can't write
interviewing people who can't talk for people
who can't read.

— Frank Zappa, 1978

George Carlin said, "If you mix an Irish neighborhood with a black neighborhood, it won't affect the blacks at all, but in six months the Irish kids will be finger-poppin, doin' a boogie and saying, 'Hey, baby, what's happenin' motha?'"

The anti-academic "beat" poets and writers of the '50s — Alan Ginsberg, Laurence Ferlinghetti, Robert Creeley, Gary Snyder, Philip Whalen, Jack Kerouac, Lew Welch, and their elder statesman Kenneth Rexroth who urged them to "take poetry out of the hands of the professors and the squares" — shared a passion for modern jazz that infiltrated their work. The label of Bird and Dizzy's *Groovin' High* adorns the paperback cover of Kerouac's *On the Road*. Lew Welch in *How I Work as a Poet* wrote: "Thelonious Monk is making jazz out of the same music that I'm making poetry out of. Phil Whalen sees his poetry this way too. We wanted to put a little more of bebop into our poetry. Bop didn't come from out of nowhere, it comes out of the mouths of all Americans. And you can sing bop right on top of bluegrass banjo picking and it fits perfectly. And bluegrass is very close to the way we talk."

Miles Davis loomed as a cult anti-hero when John Osborne's angry young men dominated British theater and James Dean and Marlon Brando loomed large in the fantasies of rebellious youths, those kid brothers of Kerouac injected with massive shots of black music — Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Little Richard, Sam Cooke, Ray Charles, and their white derivatives: Presley, Buddy Holly, Bill Haley, the Beatles and the Stones. The sound of black music surfaced, once again, as the language of revolution when an underground alliance of ghetto youths and middle-class whites exploded above ground with the civil rights, anti-war, black, Indian, women, Chicano and student uprisings of the 1960s. The Free Speech Movement on the tumultuous Berkeley campus made its headquarters in a record shop.

These chaotic uprisings of the disaffiliated young threw up a

host of trendy heroes: Mario Savio, Eldridge Cleaver, Stokeley Carmichael, Rap Brown, Jerry Rubin, Timothy Leary, Rennie Davis, and Tom Hayden. But aside from Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, the heroes who endured past the '60s, dead or alive, were not student activists, politicians, Marxist theorists or pop gurus, but Bob Dylan, Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, the Beatles and the Stones. The artist had made a long trek from the underground cult figure of the 1920s to the culture hero of the '60s.

Jazz, the blues, and other types of American folk-derived music such as country and western, have their roots in male-dominated cultures whose sonic-emotional outpourings seem to be willful assertions of manhood. This is no less true of bisexual singers like Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith and Janis Joplin — to name only the dead — than it is of robust country fiddlers admired by Charles Ives. Making the puzzle only more complicated is that female jazz *instrumentalists* seem, like their male colleagues, to be resolutely heterosexual.

The jazzman's cutting sessions and battles of music underscore the observation of black psychiatrists Price M. Cobbs and William H. Grier that "the black male fights a never-ending battle for possession of his manhood" in a society where "he is powerless against the police or the white man who abuses, sexually, economically, socially, his daughter and wife. Male assertiveness becomes a forbidden fruit, and if it is attained it must be savored privately." (*Black Rage*.)

Aside from brief detours like West Coast "cool" in the early 1950s, jazz usually operates on the assumption that it is not an academic ordering of tones but a music of high emotional content that speaks directly to players and listeners somehow in touch with male assertiveness. An unusual reference to the phenomenon was made in 1958 by the British jazz critic and Marxist economist Francis Newton (E.J. Hobsbawm): "Of all the arts in mid-Twentieth Century Britain, jazz is so far the one with the overwhelmingly heterosexual tradition . . . in spite of the almost unlimited toleration of jazzmen for deviations and idiosyncracies in other people's lives. By tradition, the jazz musician (*and by imitation the jazz fan*) goes for women like the traditional Italian operatic tenor." (*The Jazz Scene*, italics mine.) True, although the italicized phrase, in the words of e e cummings, may be "putting the arse before the torse." The jazz fan goes for women not in imitation of his idols but in response to a heterosexual emotional structure that attracts both players (even the most romantic of them, such as Bill Evans) and listeners as an expression in sound of male assertion. It is pertinent that a *Jazz Times* demographic survey revealed that 91 percent of its readers were male.

The growing dominance of the American musical theater by gays was not merely coincidental to the exodus of jazz from Broadway. In the 1920s and 1930s, Eubie Blake, Fats Waller, and James P. Johnson wrote tune-packed reviews. Louis Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Red Nichols and Gene Krupa sparked the pit bands of Broadway shows, and leading songwriters like George Gershwin and Harold Arlen drew from the jazz and blues idiom.

Aside from occasional ventures into nostalgia like *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Sophisticated Ladies*, Broadway today behaves as though jazz doesn't exist. Gay Broadway composers draw from every musical experience and idiom *except* jazz. And while Henry Mancini, J.J. Johnson, Oliver Nelson, Herbie Hancock, Johnny Mandel, Billy Byers, Denny Zeitlin, Lalo Schiffrin, Roger Kellaway, and other composers with jazz backgrounds have all written for movies, none of them has penetrated Broadway, although several have tried.

This schism between Broadway and jazz has become by now a matter of mutual consent. A jazz fan at a *Hello Dolly* matinee

seems as unlikely as a crowd of Channing's followers at a McCoy Tyner concert. Though hipsters often have narrow and parochial tastes, many jazz enthusiasts enjoy Bartok, the Beatles, bluegrass and Bach. But after half a century of adhesive contact with jazz people, I have yet to encounter one who dug Judy Garland, or have I thumbed through a record collection so schizoid as to house both Ethel Merman and Charlie Parker. Camp and Soul do not co-exist.

The obvious and sudden decline of the Broadway musical theater since the days of *Guys and Dolls* and *My Fair Lady* has finally come to the attention of an alarmed Broadway community that refused to confer a Tony award for best musical of 1984. It is now fashionable for the Arts & Leisure pages of the New York Times and its counterparts coast-to-coast to run lengthy think pieces on *What Happened to the Broadway Musical* that never come close to addressing what is perhaps the major cause of the problem: the ten percent minority homosexual community that has long dominated the Broadway musical theater has imposed its tastes, perceptions, and sensibilities on the 90 percent straight world, and is now aghast to find the American majority is not buying the shows. In cutting itself off from its once-thriving jazz tradition, from Gershwin to Frank Loesser, the gay-controlled Broadway musical theater severed its roots into the most fertile and imaginative source of American music, and withered as a result. The revivals of Gershwin (*My One and Only*), Waller (*Ain't Misbehavin'*) and Ellington (*Sophisticated Ladies*) thrived because audiences warmed to what had been missing on Broadway for a full generation: great songs.

In researching the subject, Gene and I found that the incidence of homosexuality among country and western artists is as low as in jazz. On my behalf, Gene queried Ann Johns Ruckert, the New York studio singer and vocal contractor, who works extensively in the country music field. She said she has never met a homosexual country musician. Not one. Gene also queried Virginia Carlille, wife of the brilliant country guitarist Thumbs Carlille, who seems to have known everyone in the field of country music. She too says she has never known a homosexual country musician. Not one. While this hardly amounts to a scientific statistical study, the testimony of these two people is striking.

A certain amount of homosexuality seems to occur in all cultures, with varying degrees of tolerance by the surrounding heterosexual culture, throughout history, from the Greeks to the American Indians, and the rock-and-roll world is full of it. If the American incidence of homosexuality is about ten percent, then this commitment to "normalcy" in jazz and country-and-western music, both of which tolerate the wildest aberrations of human behavior, is, in the strict definition of the term, positively abnormal.

Gene and I are both very grateful to Jim Kepner, director of the Gay and Lesbian Archives in Los Angeles, who helped us with our research. Jim was well aware of the low incidence of homosexuality among jazz musicians — and he is a mine of fascinating information on the subject. The incidence of homosexuality in the classical music field, Jim told us, is very low among violinists but very high among pianists. And among harpists and organists, he said, "it is as total as in the world of high fashion and design". Why? Jim doesn't know, and neither do we.

If this arouses your curiosity as it does ours, we invite comment. Are there a lot of gay jazzmen afraid to come out of the closet because of what the cats in the band might say? Are there significant numbers of people whose record collections embrace Ethel Merman and Lester Young?

— GS