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Jazzletter

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A Journey to Cologne

Part I

When I was a twenty-one-year-old neophyte newspaper reporter still in shock from sudden immersion in a world of homicides, suicides, highway deaths, fires, and politicians, I was sent to interview a singer. She was only four years older than I but she had become famous when I was in high school. She was an original and powerful talent. She was also, which I did not realize then, extremely shy. In the solipsism of the young, I thought I alone suffered from this painful affliction. I had the further disadvantage of being in awe of her. And so we sat there in her room at the Brant Inn in a shared discomfort, paralyzed by reticence, groping our way through one of the classic stupid interviews.

If it had no other significance, the Brant Inn deserves a small footnote in history as the place where Don Redman showed Robert Farnon the first score Bob had ever seen. It stood on the shore of the western end of Lake Ontario, just at the start of the Niagara Peninsula. Its interior was decorated to look like an ocean liner, to suggest, I suppose, journeys to far-away places and romantic encounters under other skies. I first went there to hear the Lionel Hampton band, probably in 1944, when Farnon was in England, broadcasting on the BBC, and British and American and Canadian bombers were finishing off Cologne, among other cities. But particularly Cologne, because it was a great rail center.

During the early years of World War II, the roads in the Niagara Peninsula were lined with hitch-hiking young airmen in the blue uniform common to Britain and Canada and all the Commonwealth countries, as well as men who had slipped out of the occupied lands to fight in the RAF. That uniform was a unifier, so many men from so many countries wearing it, together in the common cause. Under what was called the Commonwealth Air Training Plan, they were all sent to Canada for instruction, out of the range of the German bombers. My mother and father were always giving them rides and bringing them home for dinner. Our house in St. Catharines became a sort of hostel for them. I gave them what I could: I let them play my records.

A number of the young men who came to our home were from Lancashire, where my father was born, and although he had lost his accent, he could tell by theirs where they came from, sometimes within five or ten miles, and they received unexpected welcome. So did the Americans. A flier's nation was identified by his shoulder patch — United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, France, Poland, Norway, Netherlands, Belgium. For the first two years of the war the United States remained legally neutral. Therefore the American volunteers in the Royal Canadian Air Force could not wear U.S. on their patches and so, in an odd little legal nicety, they were identified by home state. The patches read New York, California, New Mexico, Alabama, Montana. An inordinate number read Texas, and, needless to say, their wearers said they were in the Royal Texas Air Force. We loved them, because they had come to join us when we felt so alone and it seemed Britain might fall. Long after the war, when I was a foreign correspondent on military assignment in Europe, I met the RCAF base commander at Gros Tonquin in France. He had a thick Brooklyn accent. He was one of those boys.

One of the Englishmen who came to our home was named Tommy. He was a little older than the others, in his mid-thirties, as I recall. Because he was mature and stable, he had been assigned for training as a bomber pilot. After the war, when the burgeoning airlines were hiring former military fliers, they passed over fighter pilots, knowing they had been selected for recklessness. They wanted the bomber pilots, who had been chosen for steady nerves and sound judgment. Before the war, Tommy had been a golf pro in Hamburg. His wife had been killed in November 1940 in the bombing of Coventry. I never knew a man with more conflicting desires. All he wanted to do was to kill Germans to avenge her, and then, after the war, to go home to Hamburg and his friends there and play golf. I visited Hamburg after the war. It seemed you could stand on a pile of rubble and see the whole city. I wonder if Tommy was one of those who flattened it. And Cologne.

By 1944, of course, all those young fliers were gone: gone to England, gone to strafe fleeing Germans in France, gone to destroy those rail yards at Cologne.

Now the Brant Inn too is gone. Some faceless high-rise stands in its place. I do not remember what I wrote about the singer.

In Geneva, Switzerland, in January of 1984, in the small and Spartan apartment of the composer Francy Boland, I was telling him how much I admired his writing. He too is, if not shy, at least very reserved. I had recently been exposed to an enormous amount of his work in the thirty-six albums of the Clarke-Boland Big Band, only two of which were ever released in America. One of his compositions, *Sabbath Message*, a brooding and ominous work, truly threatening, is a remarkable jazz composition, not just a melody stated by the orchestra followed by some solos backed by section figures and culminating in an out-chorus reprise of the tune. It is writing in the tradition of Duke Ellington and Gil Evans. It is architecture in sound, not orchestrated song, making dazzling use of Roger Guerin, Benny Bailey, and Jimmy Deuchar in solos, and a sax section that speaks as one voice, made up of individualists Derek Humble, Carl Drevo, Ronnie Scott, Billy Mitchell, and Sahib Shihab, the whole magnificent machine driven by Kenny Clarke with that impossible alchemical combination of sensitivity and demonic fire that was Klook's alone. There was never a drummer like him, and Francy Boland is one of the great composers in jazz history. The band they led was one of the best of them all. Some of its alumni insist it was *the* best and Johnny Griffin, who took Billy Mitchell's chair in 1965, has been known to get tears in his eyes remembering it. I had been listening to it for nearly a month in Italy, eleven years after its demise, feeling as if I had discovered the lost treasures of the Incas.

I didn't say all that of course. Or maybe I did. Apparently I said enough to make Francy Boland uncomfortable. The thought going on inside his forehead was in French but the slight scowl on its outside said in any language, "Who is this

clown and what does he know about it?"

Francy is small by American averages. He has the firm neat build of the steady tennis player. If Disney were to make a film about jazz, I would want to see Francy played by a chipmunk: motionlessly alert, then moving suddenly, then stopping again to watch and listen, frozen in mid-step. He is like that, with a keen, mustached, bespectacled face. He moved. He drew a record from a shelf and played it. "This is some writing," he said in French. "Do you know what it is?"

Strings running in several rapid streams, straining but not breaking tonality, harshly pretty. "Prokofiev," I said. It was a reasoned guess. He took the record off. Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. He sat down and the conversation resumed. Compliment accepted. I have wondered since how things would have gone had I been wrong. Certainly in that moment I had no idea what friends and comfortable collaborators we would be in the months ahead, and how attuned my sense of the absurd and his would become. When, later, we were rehearsing in Germany, we became frustrated with a rattle-trap gap-toothed hotel piano we were sentenced to use for sins committed in a previous life. At some point Gigi Campi, the producer, asked if the piano was all right. "That piano?" Francy said venomously in his Belgian accent, dismissing the instrument with a contemptuous Gallic flick of the wrist. "*Burn it!*"

"Why?" I said. "That won't help it."

One day a few weeks before that, while we were working on the charts for the album and having lunch at La Cave Valaisanne in Geneva, which is the world's most uninteresting famous city, and one of the prettiest, we were talking of that curious dead-fish morality of the Swiss, who sold weapons to both sides during the war and would not hesitate to do so again, and also of the notable dearth of good-looking women among them — Francy says that if you see an attractive whore in Geneva, she's almost certainly French. Finally I said of the Swiss, "At least they make good cheese."

"And chocolate," Francy said.

"Watches."

"Cuckoo clocks."

"Bomb shelters."

"Banks."

"Telepherics."

"And one great conductor, Ernest Ansermet," Francy said.

Francy Boland loves American music, American mystery novels, and American movies, especially horror movies. He is odd man out in liking military music, and he adores that of John Phillip Sousa. He even arranged *High School Cadets* for the Clarke-Boland Big Band, usually referred to as the CBBB. He hates the kind of music that has grown up in the long shadow of Arnold Schoenberg and the cabal that imposes it on Europe and America, and above all Germany. He loves the work of Arthur Honneger, which he says is little performed now because of that influence. He played me a taped performance by a Belgian orchestra of a concerto he wrote for clarinet, one of the several instruments he plays. "It's pure serial technique," he said.

"And pure bullshit," I said in English.

"And pure bullshit," he said, also in English, then in French: "I wrote it because they said I didn't know how."

He was born November 6, 1929, and received the Prix de Solfege et d'Harmonie from the Royal Conservatory of Music at Liege in 1950. He heard his first jazz concert in 1942, noting that there were German officers in the audience, although jazz was officially proscribed by Hitler as decadent Negro-Jewish music. He began to play semi-professionally in 1945. After the war he went to Paris. In 1951, he began writing arrangements for singers at Barclay Records. His very first chart, for some singer he has forgotten, was for a song with these lyrics:

La lune est grise, mon coeur aussi, which is, *The moon is gray, my heart as well.*

"Do you know what that is?" he said. "*How High the Moon* in French."

"But that's horrible," I said. "It's even worse than the lyric in English."

For a while Francy was the hot young arranger in Paris. (One of his friends was Nat Peck, the trombonist from Brooklyn who had joined the Glenn Miller Army Air Corps band in 1944 and stayed in Europe when the war was over.) Then Francy took sick. The disease was diagnosed as tuberculosis. He went home to Belgium to recover. When he returned to Paris, Michel Legrand's career had crested and Francy was relegated to a second tier.

Belgium has tended to produce better jazz musicians than France. Francy thinks the reason is its long association with the English language. Gigi Campi, who is an astute historical and social observer, says, "In my opinion, it's also because Belgium is a political compromise and hasn't any corny folk music tradition to overcome." Whatever the reason, the Belgian jazz players include Sadi (whose full name is Sadi Lallemand, which he refuses to use because Lallemand means "The German"), Toots Thielemans, and the late Bobby Jaspar and Jack Sels. As a pianist, Francy doesn't have that nervous, flaky, rushy French time. His playing is dark, pensive, and unfettered, and rhythmically it goes right down into the ground. Aside from his stature as a composer — in the older and larger sense in which it meant a man who made the orchestra his instrument, rather than a songwriter — Boland is one of the finest jazz players Europe has produced.

In 1958 he moved with his wife to New York, where his daughter Miriam was born. He worked in a Chet Baker quartet, found himself on a band bus traveling with a Birdland All-Stars group, seated behind Lester Young and Sarah Vaughan, an experience he recalls with a kind of awe. He did some writing for Count Basie. Mary Lou Williams took up his cause and recommended him to Benny Goodman, who also wanted Francy to write for him. But the American experience was not pleasant. Francy had fallen in with one of the jailhouse labels, as they are quaintly known in the trade, one of the companies owned by gangsters, the old-fashioned kind with guns, rather than their successors with Phi Beta Kappa keys and computers and p.r. men, and he was robbed a lot. And his marriage was under strain. He took his wife home to Europe. There is a picture of her on the wall in Francy's hall, taken in some happy moment of youth. Her name was Marie-Therese. She too was Belgian. She was very pretty. She's dead.

"You're writing *what?*"

That's the question I heard most often in the early days of the project. Artie Shaw, for one, asked it. And later on I heard, "Did you meet The Man?" Lyricist Hal Shaper wrote me from England, "Some of us can claim to have written songs with Harry Warren. But writing songs with the Pope? That's a real conversation stopper."

"Where did this thing start?" That was another of the questions.

Any given event is the consequence of countless previous

Notice

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events. You might say that this album began when a Wehrmacht truck nearly killed a young aspirant actor in Poland during the German occupation. Or you could say it traces back to October 20, 1914, when the congress of the Italian Socialist Party in Milan expelled from membership a former school-teacher and anti-clerical tin-pot novelist named Benito (after Juarez) Mussolini. When he was rising to power in the early 1920s, financed by rich industrialists and landowners, his *squadre d'azione*, action squads, were striding the land in their black shirts. They took a particular interest in a certain Paolo Campi, a man of honor who had been one of those who expelled *Il duce*, the leader. He had been twice a member of the Italian parliament and was now the vice-mayor of Milan as well as mayor of the little town of Gallarate. Gallarate is a gem-like village, sleeping on a hill in the Italian lake country, from which on a clear day you can see the Alps shining with snow. The blackshirts invaded Mayor Campi's office. He told them to get out, saying he had been elected to his position and they had not. They smashed a typewriter into his face, then began to flog him. They poured castor oil down his throat, a favorite device. Then they dragged him naked into the pretty cobbled street, tied him to a cart, and wheeled him through the village for everyone to see, his body wracked by spasms and fouled with diarrhea. A member of the Carabinieri who had both guts and a gun put a stop to it. He wrapped the mayor in his cape and took him home. The mayor's wife, Gennarina, a woman of great strength — you can see it in her photos — took him across the border into Switzerland and nursed him back to life. Physicians repaired nineteen separate wounds in his face. Then she took him to the Weimar Republic of Germany, first Berlin and then Cologne, where she founded a chain of ice-cream parlors that was to be very successful. In Cologne, on December 15, 1928, eleven months before the birth of Francy Boland, she had her third child, a boy she named Pierluigi, the common contraction of which is Gigi. Pierluigi Campi means Peter Louis Fields.

Gennarina Campi left Cologne in 1943 in the midst of one of the two hundred and sixty-two Allied bombing raids that left twenty thousand casualties, sent most of the rest of the population fleeing into the surrounding countryside, smashed the railway yards, and demolished ninety percent of the city, including ninety-one of its hundred and fifty churches. When the raids were over, the great cathedral, the largest example of High Gothic architecture in northern Europe, stood alone in the rubble, its twin spires black against the sky.

Gigi Campi still remembers that train trip to Italy. In a small satchel on her lap his mother carried sterling, diamonds, and jewelry, and a little bag of dictionaries. It had a double bottom filled with gold coins. On top of the satchel's contents she had put pads of cloth smeared with ketchup and limburger cheese. A Gestapo officer approached her while Gigi, only a boy, sat rigid with fear. The man demanded to know what was in the bag and made to put in his hand. With an affectation of outrage, she slapped it away, demanding that he show a little respect and letting him see and smell just enough to turn his stomach. The man shrugged and left them and they crossed the border into Italy.

Warsaw was in ruins — the Stukas took care of that in 1939, as we can see in the motion pictures the Germans made with such pride. Without ammunition, food, water, or electricity, the city capitulated on September 7 of that year. The German occupiers harried the inhabitants for five years; they considered the Poles one of the inferior peoples. In Warsaw they imprisoned and tortured or shot in summary street executions some one hundred thousand of them. They carried nearly half a million Warsaw Jews off to extermination camps. In their campaign to wipe out the Polish culture, they destroyed monuments and closed theaters, libraries, and scientific institutions. And then one of their trucks partially crushed a young actor and playwright, nearly killing him, and unleashing events whose consequences we do not yet know. Recovering from his injuries, the young man began thinking in a new way about his life, and he turned from his dreams as a playwright and actor to become a priest. He continued, however, to write his poems: musings on the human spirit, observations on the condition of man. These poems were published in the post-war years in various Catholic journals under a pseudonym, presumably because they spoke for humanity and against war. By now Poland, which in its long history has enjoyed one short happy time — the years between the two world wars — had a new tormentor, or rather an old tormentor returned, the Russians. Outside a small circle there was little interest in the poems until their author, Karol Wojtyla, took a new name, John Paul II.

Signora Campi returned to Cologne, or what was left of it, after the war. Her husband died in Italy in 1948.

Growing up among the Germans, surrounded by their conformity, their ineradicable conviction of their superiority, their unquestioning dedication to *ordnung* — order — and their proclivity for spying on each other, her son Gigi was hurt, which at times he will even admit. Afraid of being called a dirty little Italian, he became addictively fastidious, the kind of person who cannot bear it if your spoon is not aligned on your saucer just so, and will not hesitate to tell you. He draws plans on paper, makes endless notes in a neat architect's hand, sets up diagrams, tries to impose *ordnung* on the arts, uneasy with the artist's ability to make order in the mind at a cost of circumferential chaos. He walks with a very straight back and issues metaphysical pronouncements such as "Jazz is dead!" That is all very German. The other side of the man is Italian. Or maybe it is another man entirely inside him — warm, funny, generous, loyal, solicitous, perceptive, appreciative, sensitive, and lonely. And in the wink of an eye he can turn back into the German: cold, superior, critical, and unceasingly seeking to get something on everyone, in order to establish control. It is the most puzzling phenomenon you have ever encountered. He says *I hate* more than any man I ever met. A partial list of his hatreds includes perfume of all kinds, underscores in movies,

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Who are the true rulers? The Negro poets, to be sure. Do they not set the fashion, and give laws to the public taste? Let one of them, in the swamps of Carolina, compose a new song, and it no sooner reaches the ear of a white amateur than it is written down, amended (that is, almost spoilt), printed, and then put upon a course of rapid dissemination, to cease only with the utmost bounds of Anglo-Saxondom, perhaps with the world. Meanwhile, the poor author digs away with his hoe, utterly ignorant of his greatness.

— *Knickerbocker Magazine*, 1845

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psychology both Freudian and otherwise, underfried potatoes, cats, the French, and what he quaintly calls West Coast jazz, being perhaps the last man alive to use the term as if it had any serious critical significance. He is an impressario whose word is as good as a contract, a music publisher with a reputation for not stealing, and an insomniac with limitless energy and an inflexible will to carry through what he begins. He is somewhat taller than Francy Boland, with a well-cut refined face and gray

hair to which he pays considerable attention and wears in a kind of bouffant cut. Gigi Campi conceived, founded, financed, managed, and recorded the Clarke-Boland Big Band. It happened this way:

For thirty-two years, from 1948 to 1980, he operated the Cafe Campi in the rebuilt downtown Cologne, only a few hundred yards from the cathedral. It became one of Germany's cultural centers, a gathering place for artists, designers, novelists, and musicians, including Karlheinz Stockhausen and Kurt Edelhagen. One evening in the cafe, Edelhagen talked of the difficulty of organizing and rehearsing a jazz band in Europe. He said it took a lot of time. Gigi, the Italian side of whose character includes a love of argument, said he could put together one of the finest bands in the world in Europe, and do it within a month. On a bet he set out to do so, planning the band around Francy Boland, who at the time was writing for Edelhagen, and Kenny Clarke.

Two weeks later, the CBBB, a remarkable orchestra composed half of European musicians and half of American expatriates, was in the studio, recording its first album.

Artists born west of the Atlantic have been going "home" to Europe ever since the two American continents were colonized, a rite of passage Gershwin celebrated in *An American in Paris*. In the 1920s, there was a mass transplantation of American writers to Paris. For nearly three generations, it was virtually *de rigeur* for American composers to conclude their training in studies with Nadia Boulanger at Fontainebleau. Whether painters, writers, instrumentalists, composers, or even fashion designers, they have gone to find the headwaters of their work, with one exception: jazz. The jazz musician brought to Europe something new, a form that was not invented there.

The Europeans have always been especially susceptible to it, and partly for this reason, Sidney Bechet lived most of his adult life in France. Before World War II, Coleman Hawkins spent long periods of time there, becoming the father, according to Francy Boland, of a school of very good European tenor players. From June 4 to September 5, 1937, Benny Carter led an eleven-piece orchestra at the Kurhaus Hotel in Scheveningen, Holland, made up of white musicians from Britain and Holland and black musicians from the United States and the West Indies. "Benny never gets credit for that," Leonard Feather said recently. Leonard recorded the band, with Coleman Hawkins as guest soloist on some sides, at The Hague in August of that year. "It was the first racially mixed orchestra," he says.

Bill Coleman lived in Paris, where Bud Powell spent the last years of his life. Don Byas and Ben Webster ended their days in Holland. Johnny Griffin has lived in Europe, at first in Holland and later France, since the 1960s. In Denmark there is a tight little colony of American jazz musicians, including Edmund Thigpen, Richard Boone, Ernie Wilkins, Kenny Drew, and Sahib Shihab. Benny Bailey lives in Munich, bassist Jimmy Woode in Zurich, Art Farmer in Vienna. The late Kenny Clarke lived at Montreuil-sur-Bois, near Paris. Obviously a lack of racial pressure is one of the reasons many musicians have chosen to live in Europe. "But there are as many reasons for living over here as there are musicians doing it," Ed Thigpen said. "Race is only one of them." And to those Europeans who announce their liberalism to black American artists by decrying American bigotry, Thigpen has been known to say, "We wouldn't have any bigots if you hadn't sent them to us." Not all the American musicians living there are black. Al Porcino lives in Munich, Red Mitchell in Stockholm, Sal Nistico in Bonn.

The dispersion effect of jazz has been enormous, around the planet, and there are innumerable splendid jazz players of all nationalities, many of whom say their introduction to the music came through Willis Conover's *Voice of America* broadcasts. Jazz has become a world music. One of the best of these overseas players was the Swede Ake Persson whom Duke Ellington would, whenever possible, take along on his European tours. In the years after the war, only the Swedes, such as Stan Hasselgard, Bengt Hallberg and Lars Gullin, seemed at ease in the harmonic and rhythmic vocabulary of bebop. There was a reason. All of continental Europe, including Norway and Denmark, had been under German occupation and unable to get the new American records. Josef Skvorecky's haunting novels and short stories document the persecution of jazz in Czechoslovakia. But it was nowhere more bitter than in Germany itself. Those Germans who loved jazz — and there were a lot of them, as there was an extensive anti-Nazi German underground — had to keep their pre-war records hidden, and they could obtain no new ones. But the Swedish musicians, including Persson, who was born at Hassleholm February 25, 1932, were cognizant of musical developments in America. The English had an edge, too: they had Robert Farnon (moonlighting charts for the Ted Heath band) and Glenn Miller in their midst even as the war raged. One of the finest English musicians to come up during this time was the alto saxophonist Derek Humble.

Clarke, Boland, and Campi drew on this large pool of players, both the best of the Europeans and the best of the Americans living there, to build their band. They made Benny Bailey the lead trumpet player. "I didn't know I could play lead," Benny told me in Dusseldorf, when we recorded. "They thought I could. That band brought things out of me that I didn't know I had. Out of all of us. It was greater than the sum of its parts, and all of us played above our level." He shook his head ruefully. Too little known to Americans because of his long sojourn in Europe, Benny Bailey is one of the most magnificent of jazz trumpet soloists, and he proved to be one of the great lead players as well. He still is.

Humble and Persson played lead alto and lead trombone respectively. These three gave peculiar and highly personal edges to their sections, which is part of the explanation of the band's personality and power. Humble and Persson are both dead, Humble by an ironic mischance, Persson a particularly macabre suicide.

"What happened?" I asked Shihab, who loved him.

Shihab took on a cold and brusque manner that he assumes to hide hurt and anger, flicking icy glances at me through his glasses. He is almost tall, a light-brown-skinned man with a splash of freckles on his long face and a small beard. There is something noble about him.

"Cat tried it three times. Third time he made it."

For eight or ten weeks each year for ten years after that evening in the Cafe Campi, the band would come together, as in the gathering of some clan, to record and travel, playing festivals all over Europe, tearing up London audiences that jammed Ronnie Scott's Club, while Scott played tenor in the sax section. It wrote a chapter in jazz history that went largely unnnoticed in the United States. Of its thirty-six albums — including one with Stan Getz as guest soloist, another with Carmen McRae — only two came out in the American market, one on Atlantic and one on Columbia. John S. Wilson accurately took the measure of the band, giving it a raven in *High Fidelity*. The recording engineer was always Wolfgang

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No degree of dullness can safeguard a work against the determination of critics to find it interesting.

— Harold Rosenberg,
Discovering the Present, 1973

Hirschmann, and two decades after the first albums were made, the sound is outstanding. There is no barrier, you can hear every detail in the voicings, as if peering through clear water to a pebbled bottom. The albums were released in Europe mostly on Hans-Georg Brunnerschwer's MPS label, which has never been able to get good distribution in the United States. And so most American jazz fans, including the most ardent devotees of big bands, know almost nothing of the CBBB.

Ever since the big-band era ended, musicians have been gathering voluntarily into this orchestral form for the sheer joy of making an exuberant roar. But the great mature players cannot afford to work for road-band money. The traditional compromise has been the "rehearsal band" made up of players who feed their families through more commercial work. And those who work in the studios — and, even more so, those who have turned their backs on it — complain that it takes the edge off their playing. The Clarke-Boland band was made up for the most part of men who played jazz full time for a living. The band had two drummers, Kenny Clarke and Kenny Clare, the English drummer with the look-alike name. They functioned in such rapport that you didn't seem to be hearing two drummers but one very large and very propulsive drummer. Kenny Clare died within two weeks of Kenny Clarke, as if their destinies were locked together.

Klook was the wonder. You listen to what he did with cymbals and slip into amazement when the colors change as in a light show, before your very ears. He plays yellow and then the sound turns to red or blue or some other color and you cannot tell exactly when it happens. And the center is always *there*.

The band had the fire of youth and the emotional depth of maturity, both in its solo and ensemble work. Above all it had *esprit*. And those who were part of it cannot forget the experience. It haunts them, as war haunts men afterwards. They talk about it, laughing at memories. They remember a jazz festival in Sicily when they had to follow the Ellington band late at night, when the audience was already sated. They claim they blew the Ellington band away, while the audience cheered and Duke's men, most of them friends of theirs, listened in wonder.

They remember a tour of England with other groups. The bus was inadequately heated. Blankets were issued. When they got on the bus after one concert, they found Philly Joe Jones, traveling with another group, already settled in a seat near the front, sunk low, wrapped in his blanket, his hat down over his face. Idrees Sulieman, a sensitive soul, was one of the last to come aboard. He couldn't find his blanket. He thought — wrongly, as it turned out; it was down somewhere in the darkness — that it had been stolen. He grabbed the ignition keys to the bus and said that it would not leave until his blanket was returned. He continued like this for a time, hurt as much as angry, saying finally, "We are supposed to be like brothers in this band! Cats! There is a coward on this bus!"

And from under the hat of Philly Joe Jones, a voice rumbled: "But a warm one."

But a warm one. They will smile and shake their heads after telling the story again.

What happened to that band?

Some of those who were involved say that Gigi withdrew his support after some of the French and German critics said the band was old hat. This is credible, in view of his constant statement that "Jazz is dead!" But he denies it. If it is so, it is a tragedy. Some of the world's most misguided jazz criticism comes from France. I remember once being in Paris with Bill Evans. In the intermission of his concert, a fledgling French jazz critic introduced himself to me and then said of Bill, "You know, *we* . . ." sometimes the English too will speak to you that way, and certainly the Germans; it is all in the way they say *we* ". . . *we* consider him passe." "It may come as a great shock to you," I said, "but *we* don't care what you think."

Gigi Campi denies that the critics had anything to do with the disbandment. He says the burden of the band became too great. And that is also credible. He had sunk huge sums of money into it which he had never fully recovered, he says. The tapes of the albums sit on shelves in the basement of his large home on the side of a lake no more than a ten-minute drive from the village where the blackshirts almost killed his father. The charts are there, too, along with photos of the musicians, clowning, laughing, working.

"What finally finished the band is this," Gigi said. "In 1970 Willard Alexander wrote to me that a very well-known club in Las Vegas was excited to have the CBBB play there. Willard wanted to discuss a possibility of building around the Vegas engagement a college tour plus one appearance at Carnegie Hall.

"According to American law, engagement contracts have to be signed by the leader of a band, which had not happened to Francy and Klook in Europe, because I was signing the contracts for them.

"Francy and Klook and I had a meeting in Paris. They were afraid of the risks of a U.S. tour with their signatures on contracts holding them responsible for the whole financial operation, even though they knew they would have the backing of Hans-Georg Brunnerschwer and myself, guaranteeing to cover all hotel and transportation costs.

"I was so discouraged by their uncertainty that I gave up. That was the end of the Clarke-Boland Big Band."

Whatever the story, the band could not be reconstituted now. Klook is gone. Even in the last months before he died, he seemed tired when I talked to him. He was seventy-one and had never fully recovered his energy after an earlier heart attack. He is buried in France.

Derek Humble was a heroin addict. Gigi once asked Klook, "How much does he use?" Klook said, "He uses in one day what I used to use in a week." Humble was also epileptic. According to Gigi, he had a seizure in an English pub and collapsed. The medication that could have saved his life was in his pocket, but no one there knew what was wrong with him, and he died.

No one seems to know with certainty why Ake Persson did what he did, and Shihab doesn't even want to talk about it. The Clarke-Boland Big Band was dismantled in 1973. A few months later, on May 24, 1974, Duke Ellington died. Persson considered his experience with these two bands the peaks of his whole career, and now it would never be again. The suicide rate in Sweden is high. A certain amount of American propaganda has intimated that this is an insidious consequence of socialism, but the fact is that the Swedes have had a high suicide rate for centuries. Many Swedes believe it is due to the long cruel winter in the deepest part of which there is almost no daylight.

On February 3, 1975, Persson telephoned Gigi in Italy from Stockholm. He said, "Get me out of this country!" Gigi told him to get on a plane and come to Italy. On February 4, three weeks short of his forty-third birthday, Persson got out of his car in downtown Stockholm, set his trombone in its case against an iron rail fence, hung his briefcase on one of the spikes, got back into the car, put it into gear, gathered speed, and drove out onto the ice of the harbor. That is a salt-water harbor, and even in winter the ice cannot be all that strong. It gave way and the car started to sink. Ake Persson apparently realized at the last moment what he had done and changed his mind. A policeman who saw it all said he could hear him screaming as the car went beneath the dark winter waters.

Campi produced three more albums with the band, but without Clarke, who was ill at the time. Boland's writing is wonderful, as always, but the spirit is not the same. Persson's replacement in the band, ironically, was Frank Rosolino.

When Karol Wojtyla became the first non-Italian pope in four centuries, his writings, including a play and his poems, were given in perpetuity to the Libreria Editrice Vaticana, the Vatican publishing office. Now that their authorship was known, the poems were translated into ninety languages.

Mario DiNardo, a Roman film producer who has friends in the Libreria Editrice Vaticana, became aware of the poems and asked his friend Gigi Campi if he thought any of them could be set to music. After examining them in their Italian translations, Campi perceived the difficulty of doing so. But he promised to try to find a composer who might solve some of the inherent problems, the biggest being that the poems are in free verse.

The line between prose and poetry has grown faint in the Twentieth Century, with meter replaced by vague rhythms, if any at all. What modern poetry really is is an allusive euphonious prose cut into short lines according to impulses best known to the author. Any meandering jottings can now be referred to as "poetry" and some university teachers of "creative writing" actually forbid students from using regular meter or rhyme, destroying the discipline of the craft at the root. In the past poets wrote sonnets the way musicians practice scales — as a strict exercise through which to attain mastery.

Metrical poetry is comparatively easy to set to music because it has recurring structural patterns, although only a few people in history have done it really well, Mozart, Bizet, Puccini, and Richard Rodgers among them — and some will hasten to add Wagner and Verdi. I am one of those who favor writing the music first and then adding the lyrics, which is the only way Jerome Kern would work. But when the poetry is "modern" and free, the problems attendant to setting it to music become mountainous. Six composers to whom Campi showed the poems of Karol Wojtyla finably concluded they were insuperable.

Tito Fontana is an Italian composer, pianist, and businessman to whom Campi mentioned the matter. Fontana is a tall man of great bearing. He is married to Lea Piccoli, a strikingly beautiful woman who once represented Italy at Wimbledon and is now a television sportscaster and fashion commentator. Fontana has a love of poetry, having tried his hand at it himself. He asked Campi if he might try to solve the problem. Campi said he was welcome to.

Fontana collaborated in the task with another composer, Sante Palumbo. Tito wrote some of the melodies, Sante wrote others, and they worked jointly on still others. And they succeeded where everyone else had failed, making a quite elaborate demo with rhythm section and synthesizers and the Milan studio singer Paola Orlandi. The demo finally was released in Italy as an album under the title *Concerto pet la Pace*, concert or concerto for peace. It is quite lovely, and moving.

The impossible having been accomplished once, Campi decided to try for twice: he wanted to have the songs translated into English in an effort to reach a world market. He and I were introduced through Sahib Shihab, and on a visit to Los Angeles, Campi asked if I thought the Fontana-Palumbo-Wojtyla songs could be adapted into English. After he returned to Milan, I studied them and concluded the problems were insoluble. I found the music lovely — strange, wandering like a stream through a meadow as it followed the course of the words, difficult to sing, with tempo changes and constant modulation, drawing on all sorts of musical styles and sources, from bebop to European circus waltzes. It was hard to memorize and impossible to forget. But how could one possibly fit the English language to melodies determined by the Italian translations of poems written in Polish, without doing violence to the meanings of the originals? And I could not take liberties with them, as I would with a Jobim or Aznavour song, in view of their authorship and the political, not to mention religious, sensitivity of the material. I told Gigi Campi it couldn't be done. I did not foresee his persistence. In the weeks that followed, he would telephone from Italy, charming, humorous, and gracious. I studied the texts in Spanish, Portuguese, and English, as well as Italian, which I found I was learning, by osmosis, to see if other translators had introduced enough variant factors to suggest that I might take, at least, some liberties. And I did find some discrepancies. I told Gigi I would like to look at the Polish originals. He telephoned the Libreria Editrice Vaticana and the next day I had them.

But I couldn't read them. I called Lalo Schifrin, who shares my interest in languages. He too said, "You're writing *what*?" I explained the problem and said, "Who do we know who speaks Polish?"

"Bronislau Kaper," he said.

But of course. Kaper was Polish. I called him, and he said, "You're writing *what*?" And I explained the problem again. Bronnie said he would be glad to help. We set a time and I went to his elegant home in Beverly Hills. I was unaware that he had cancer; Lalo said later that he didn't want his friends to know.

Bronislau Kaper was one of finest of film composers. His scores include *San Francisco, Gaslight, The Swan, Butterfield 8, Mutiny on the Bounty*, and *Lord Jim*. One of the songs from one of his films that achieved an identity of its own is *All God's Chillun Got Rhythm*. *On Green Dolphin Street* and *Invitation*, from the scores of two of his films, became standards with jazz musicians, and one of them, *Hi Lili Hi Lo* was a favorite of Bill Evans. Kaper was born February 5, 1902, in Warsaw, and educated at the University of Warsaw and the Warsaw Conservatory. He came to the United States in the 1930s, when the storm troopers were beginning their work. He already had a reputation in Europe as a film composer.

He was a karate practitioner who at eighty-one looked sixty-five or less. Bronnie Kaper was a wonderfully dear man, slight, wiry, and good-looking, with an urbane wit unexcelled by anyone in the film industry except maybe Hugo Friedhofer. He always made you laugh. He made you feel glad you were alive. And he made you feel you were his equal.

And so I arrived at his house with the Polish texts. We sat down and he began to explain them to me. He would grope for a phrase, then express an idea the best way he could. I would reshape it into more idiomatic English. He said, "You do a very good job of translating my English into English."

That afternoon we made new verbatim translations of the poems that Tito Fontana and Sante Palumbo had set to music. I thanked him as I left. As he shook my hand he said, "You know, this has given me such a spiritual feeling that I may run for pope myself."

"Now now, Bronnie," I said laughing, "you know a Jew can't be pope."

"Don't count on it," he said. "I'm not dead yet."

Six weeks later he was.

Despite having verbatim translations I trusted, I still saw the difficulties as insurmountable, and wrote Gigi that I could not hope to complete the project unless two requirements were met: I must have Vatican permission to take subtle liberties with the texts; and I must have the permission of Tito Fontana and Sante Palumbo to take similar small but important liberties with their music. Finally, I suggested, it would be best if I wrote the lyrics in Italy, where I could consult with Fontana and Palumbo.

I anticipated that if the composers did not balk, the Vatican would. A few weeks later I was on a plane to Milan.

(To be continued)