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To Russia without Love Part III

by Bill Crow

When we left Tblisi, we said goodbye to George Avakian. Carl Schindler continued recording the concerts, but George flew back to New York with the first batch of tape, taking Stan Wayman's exposed film to drop off at the Time-Life office.

Our flight from Tblisi took us much farther east. We could see a huge desert below us, an ocean of gray sand stretching for hundreds of miles. Then the gray suddenly turned to green and we landed in Tashkent, the main city in Uzbekistan, two thousand miles east of Moscow, a Turkic Moslem nation that was annexed by the Soviet Union. The Soviets brought sanitation and literacy to the Uzbeks, but they still prefer their own language, costumes and architecture. The older men wore the robes and long beards of biblical patriarchs, the younger men mostly black cotton trousers, white collarless shirts, black leather boots and Uzbek skull caps — black cloth beanies embroidered in traditional designs. Some of the women still wore veils.

In the older part of the city, Tashkent's houses do not have windows facing the street. The conventional Moslem design is a blank wall on the street, with an enclosed courtyard on the inside. Most of the streets looked identical: featureless white stucco walls topped with red tiles on both sides of a tree-lined road. Our hotel, next to the hall where we were to play, was on the edge of the old city.

We had an afternoon rehearsal on the first day, so I got up early to have plenty of time for exploring. Wandering around a strange city, I usually pick out landmarks easily spotted from a distance, so I can find my way back. In Tashkent I needed a different system. As soon as I had walked a block, the walled streets obscured my view of the hotel, and there were no tall landmarks and no high ground from which to reconnoiter. So I kept careful track of the turns I made in order to retrace my steps.

After I had looked at a few old mosques and churches, I came to a street with a large gateway halfway up the block. Inside the open gate I found a huge walled courtyard filled with people sitting beside goods spread on blankets for sale, and crowds of shoppers milling among them. An oriental marketplace, just like the ones in the Ali Baba movies! Making mental note of my directions as I entered the marketplace, I spent a wonderful hour wandering around, looking at everything and everyone. I bought an Uzbek beanie and put it on, and picked up a few souvenirs to take home. Then I headed for the entrance, planning to return to the hotel. To my dismay, I discovered four identical entrances, one in each wall! My orientation was scrambled. The sun was overhead and the hotel could have been in any direction.

And I couldn't remember the hotel's name. I reached in my pocket for my room key, then remembered it was one of those with a six pound ball attached, to make sure you leave it at the desk when you go out. I was carrying nothing with the hotel's name on it. I stood and laughed at my predicament: I was lost in a country where even the Russian phrases in my Berlitz book were a foreign language to the people on the street. I decided to pick a direction and walk a while, and see what turned up. I still had a couple of hours before the rehearsal, so I wasn't too worried. But I certainly felt stupid.

I came to a wide street that had a few cars going by. You don't see a lot of traffic anywhere in the Soviet Union, especially not in Tashkent. I tried to flag a taxi but it went right by. I figured I could tell a taxi driver "Konzertzall" or "Teatrah," and he might know enough Russian to get the idea. After a few more cabs passed me by, a cabdriver wearing a beanie just like mine stopped, even though he had a fare. I got in beside him and explained in pidgin-Russian that I was a musikant Amerikanski. He laughed and pointed at my beanie, then at his. He had thought he was giving a lift to a landsman.

He seemed to understand where I wanted to go, and I settled back with relief. He drove for quite a distance, and I began to be concerned. I didn't think I had walked this far. Then he stopped, motioned for me to get out, and pointed down at the street. After a moment I realized he was pointing to the streetcar track embedded in the pavement. He nodded with delight, pointed in the direction I was to take the trolley, and drove off, refusing to accept any money for the ride.

In a minute or two a street car that looked old enough to be one of those I had ridden as a kid in Seattle came creaking along the track. I climbed aboard. It circled around along a different street, then trundled off in a new direction. After riding for ten minutes, I began to wonder if the taxi driver had misunderstood my destination. Then we turned a corner, and there were the hotel and the concert hall.

The rehearsal had been called to read through a Phil Lang arrangement of Gershwin's *Rhapsody In Blue* that Benny told us we'd be playing in Leningrad with Byron Janis. Benny was trying to make up for his cancelled classical performance in Moscow. Janis had just completed a successful tour of Russia, making a great hit when he played three piano concertos on the same concert (Rachmaninoff's First, the Schumann, and Prokofiev's Third) with the Moscow Philharmonic. He was ready to leave the country but was prevailed upon by the American embassy to stay a few days and play the *Rhapsody* with us. Phil Lang's voicings were pretty bland, written like Gershwin for a grade school orchestra, but we hoped the arrangement would sound better when we played it with Byron.

Newsweek's Whitney Basso set up a jam session for us one

night at a Tashkent restaurant. The local musicians were pretty good. The manager tried to close the place at 11 p.m. but the audience wouldn't leave and we played for an hour after closing time.

The Tashkent concerts weren't great successes. The hall was hot, the audiences cool. They were courteous, but we received no ovations. Benny cut the last concert short. He was tired, and went into the closing theme when we had played little more than an hour.

The second concert was the one the band enjoyed. We had two that day, and when I went backstage in the afternoon, I found half the band listening delightedly as Willie Dennis told of his adventure. Disregarding all the State Department warnings, Willie had gone home with the local drummer after the jam session. He had asked about the possibility of locating something to smoke, and the drummer had driven him to a village out on the edge of the desert where he bought a block of hash for the equivalent of thirteen dollars.

Willie passed the pipe around before the afternoon show, and there was a lot of laughing and carrying on.

We were so bugged with Benny that a good laugh was positively medicinal. I remember picking up John Frosk's trumpet. Recalling an embouchure I hadn't used since I was in grade school, I played a vile rendition of a Salvation Army hymn that broke everybody up. It wouldn't have been half that funny if we hadn't been high.

Phil Woods came over to the hall just in time for the concert, missing out on the whole thing. When he looked around the bandstand, he did a double take. Half the band was stoned.

The tempos that afternoon were all very relaxed, no matter where Benny tapped them off.

Terry Catherman asked Mel Lewis if there was any danger of weird behavior from the guys who were getting high. He knew Willie had the hash but he knew nothing about how it affected people. Mel told him to relax, nobody would notice a thing. Benny may have wondered why there was so much laughing backstage, but he never said anything.

We had a birthday party for Turk in Tashkent. Jay got the hotel cooks to bake him a cake, and we all broke out the wine we'd been given as farewell presents in Tblisi. Felix, the interpreter, was amazed when he saw Turk's bottle. "Where did you get this?" he asked. Turk said an Armenian shirtmaker he'd met in Tblisi had given it to him. Felix was impressed. "This is the best Georgian wine," he said. "They only drink this in the Kremlin."

We were disappointed to be so near Samarkand and not be able to visit it. Benny chartered a plane to fly him and his family there on a day off, but the rest of us didn't even know they were going.

The flight from Tashkent to Leningrad was so long that the plane had to land halfway to refuel. We think we have long distances in the United States! Tashkent wasn't even halfway across Russia. The food on the flight was worse than usual, cold, greasy, undercooked chicken, and the plane was underpressurized. We were road-weary when we reached Leningrad but the city was so attractive it cheered us up.

For me, Leningrad was the best part of the trip. We arrived there on June 18, during the season of the "white nights". The city, which is around the same latitude as Stockholm, Oslo, and Anchorage, Alaska, enjoys long hours of summer daylight. Designed by Peter the Great to emulate Paris and Vienna, it has broad avenues and classic European architecture. We were charmed by the rivers and bays in the section of the city built on islands and connected by bridges. A surprising contrast to Moscow's bleakness.

We were taken to see the ballet and the Hermitage museum. I went back to the Hermitage several times by myself. On our last morning in Leningrad I finally arrived at a time when the floor containing the French Impressionist collection was open. The museum evidently stopped acquiring French paintings after the revolution but owns some wonderful early canvases that have rarely been out of the country. There were some especially interesting early Miros and Renoirs. Of course, the rest of the museum is crammed with wonderful things that were collected by the tsars — Rembrandts and Velasquezes, ikons, ancient jewelled swords and armor, huge ornate tables made of single slabs of polished jasper, and jewelled playthings fashioned by Cellini for Russian princesses.

And in Leningrad Muriel Zuckerman presented Jimmy Maxwell with a bill for subsistence for his son David, at the rate of $32 a day. Jimmy stared in disbelief. He confronted Benny and reminded him of the deal they'd made. Benny denied ever having said that David was to be the band boy. "And I never said anything about feeding him, Pops."

Jimmy reminded Benny that he had shown David how to set up the band at a rehearsal in New York. Benny denied having done that either.

Jimmy said he was surprised that Benny would go back on his word. "Benny was always hard on you, and irrational, but he was always honest about the money," he told me. "He would chisel you down, but he would never cheat on the deal he finally made. This was the first time I ever knew him to deny what he had agreed to."

When he realized that Benny wasn't going to back down, Jimmy told him, "Have the Russians give me a bill. I'll pay them, not you." When Jimmy got the bill from Intourist, the Soviet travel agency, it was for $10 a day, including transportation, not $32.

The audiences in Leningrad were crazy about us. We played at the Winter Stadium, which seated six thousand. At the first concert, several girls came up to the stage with huge bouquets of lilac blooms, and the audience screamed for encores. The concert lasted two and a half hours. Even after we'd cleared the stage, they kept yelling for more. Benny finally walked onstage in his hat and overcoat, rubbing his stomach to pantomime hunger, and they let us go.

On the last concert, we played so many encores the trumpet section was losing its chops. They brought us individual bouquets of flowers and kept applauding long after we had packed up and left the stage. Benny went back on, dressed in a lounge sweater and smoking a cigar, and played a chorus of *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen*. Mel was the only one still on stage, strapping up his bass drum case. He accompanied Benny for a few bars by playing his case like a conga drum.

Terry Catherman told Benny that Mr. Mosiyev of the famous ballet company wanted to come backstage to pay his respects. Benny wanted Terry to get the photographers but Terry couldn't find them. So Benny told him to forget the whole thing.

For souvenir giveaways, Selmer had provided us with 15,000

buttons bearing a drawing of two hands playing a clarinet, and lettering, in Russian, that said "Benny Goodman, USA 1962," and in smaller type, "Selmer Clarinet." We thought it a little corny of Selmer to advertise so obviously, especially since they had no Russian market. Maybe they were hoping to establish one. They also sent a number of Selmer student model musical instruments for Benny to distribute as gifts.

But the buttons were in great demand wherever we went, especially in Leningrad. Crowds of fans would press up to the bus windows as we left concerts, scrambling to get them. In calmer circumstances, we exchanged buttons for Russian pins. Every Russian club, school, or group of any kind has its own pin, and there are commemorative pins for sports events, anniversaries, etc. Most of us came home with a collection of them.

Leningrad seemed to be the best place in Russia for a jazz player to develop. It's a hipper city in general, the university is a musical center, and some of the musicians we heard had developed styles of their own.

We were especially impressed by Konstantin Nosov, a trumpeter, and Gennadi Golstein, an alto player. Konstantin was a husky, square-jawed guy with wavy blond hair and a forthright cheerful nature. Gennadi, slender and dark haired, wore a black moustache with a slight downturn at the corners of his mouth that gave him a mournful look.

We had a session with them on our first day in town, in the dining room of the Astoria Hotel, and another in a dressing room backstage at the Winter Stadium, where we were playing. Golstein was delighted to the point of tears when Jerry Dodgion gave him a mouthpiece, and bandleader Mardig Hovananessian was completely bowled over when Turk presented him with thirty Count Basie stocks. The Russian musicians talked about their hope of eventually making a statement in jazz that would be uniquely Russian. Meanwhile, we had fun playing with them.

We had trouble finding an address at the university where we were supposed to meet one night for a jam session. The driver couldn't locate it. After we had circled the block several times, a policeman noticed us and came over. The Russians in the car told us, "Don't say anything. Let us do the talking. We're not doing anything illegal, but the police mentality is: 'If I don't understand what's happening, I'd better take everybody down to the station and let my superiors sort it out.' If he hears American voices, he'll decide to take us all downtown, and by the time we get back here, the session will be over."

The driver explained our problem to the cop. He called over another cop, who called the station, and finally they located the building for us, on an inside courtyard. While the session was in progress, Jerry Dodgion and Sophia Duckworth were poking around in the back of the room and discovered a stack of pictures of Stalin that had been piled there, face to the wall. Some of the students seemed surprised that we knew who Stalin was. We weren't able to play as long as we would have liked, because we had to get back across a drawbridge which was always left in the open position after midnight.

A gray-haired bandleader, Oreste Kandat, came backstage one afternoon with his bass player, Mike Korgenowitz, in tow. Mike, a healthy looking young man with a steelworker's physique, spoke only Russian. He stood there beaming at me while Oreste, who spoke excellent English, asked many intelligent questions about my instrument and about building a bass line. I told them everything I knew in about half an hour, with Oreste translating quickly for Mike's benefit, and they invited me to come to hear their band play the next afternoon in a park across the Neva.

Russian parks get a lot of action. They are large, well kept and well funded, and the people cherish them as communal property. Free concerts, plays and dance programs are provided in great quantities, and are well attended. Not many Russians own cars. The hundreds of people we saw in the parks had walked there.

I told Oreste that I would come to hear his band if I could. We had an afternoon concert that day, and we never knew when we would be finished. It wasn't unusual to do five or six encores, and there was always a crowd of fans waiting to greet us afterwards. I thought I had been vague enough in my answer to be able to show up or not, depending on how much time I had.

I was glad I decided to go.

I walked across the Neva bridge to the park and the bandstand Oreste had described, thinking I would probably get there halfway through the concert. I found the band and an audience of a couple hundred people patiently waiting for my arrival. I was greeted warmly and installed in the place of honor, and then the concert began, forty minutes late. It would have been terrible if I hadn't come.

The band was interesting. Their phrasing was a little stiff, but they played with enthusiasm, and they had their moments. There was one sax player who especially impressed me. Oreste said, "I won't be able to keep him. Mine is sort of a school band. I develop the young players, and as soon as they get good enough, they move to more prestigious bands."

Oreste played alto, sounding a little like Johnny Hodges. He told me that when he was a child, during the revolution, many Leningrad parents had sent their children to safety in farm country to the east. When it became impossible for the children to return by the same route they had gone, they were sent all the way across the Soviet Union by train to Vladivostok, then by boat to San Francisco, New York, and back to Leningrad. Oreste was one of the children who had made that trek around the world.

He never forgot the reception given them when they reached the United States. Russian immigrants by the hundreds came to meet them at the docks, emptying their pockets of whatever they had to give them money for food. He heard his first jazz band in San Francisco and fell in love with the music. On his return to Leningrad he had begun a career in jazz which he was still pursuing.

When we checked into the Astoria Hotel in Leningrad, we found that Shirley Mac Laine was staying there. She was traveling in Russia with a female companion. They came to one of our jam sessions and decided to hang out with us for an extra day. When Shirley told the hotel they would be staying over, the

Notice

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manager told her it was impossible, and a short while later they found all their luggage piled on a trolley in the lobby. Someone had packed all their things and cleared them out of their room.

Shirley checked the pile of suitcases and found that her handbag was missing. The porters claimed they had put it on top of the pile, but it was nowhere to be found. It contained her money, passport, and papers. There was a big fuss, but I don't think she ever got it back. She said she suspected she had been set up by someone who disapproved of an impromptu talk she had given the students at the university.

Stan Wayman, the photographer covering the tour for *Life* magazine, was the only press person we told about our Leningrad jam sessions, because he knew how to just be there. He was a sunny likeable man, interested in everything and easy to be with. He'd been all over the world on photo assignments and clearly knew his business. The other media people got in the way more often than not. Stan just watched quietly and shot what interested him as it happened.

Stan shot hundreds of rolls of film during the tour, and *Life* selected a few for a photo essay. They used pictures of Russian fans at a concert, of Benny conducting, and Joya singing, three different shots of Joe Newman with Russian musicians, one of Joya under a dryer at a beauty parlor flanked by two Russian women, and pictures of Benny, practicing with his daughter Rachel at the piano, looking at the score of *Rhapsody in Blue*, and posing with his clarinet in front of St. Basil's Cathedral in Moscow's Red Square.

There were also a couple of shots from the beach at Sochi. We had been surrounded there by curious Russians. They especially wanted to look at Joe Newman, Joe Wilder, and Joya. (Teddy didn't come swimming.) They hadn't seen many blacks before, and none from America. One woman said to Joe Newman, "Wait here while I get my little boy. I want him to see you." The photographers were taking pictures as we chatted with the Russians. Somebody got Joya to sit in a paddle boat with a young Russian man, and that was one of the shots Stan sent back to the States, where some insensitive copywriter at *Life* captioned it: "Joya and her new found Russian boyfriend ck up the waves."

When a copy of the magazine reached us, Joya hit the roof. "What's my husband going to say when he sees this?" she said. There was also a shot of Joe Newman in bathing trunks with two bikini-clad Russian girls that he had to explain to his wife when he got home. We teased Joe about having bribed the editors of *Life*. He was the only band member they ran any pictures of. There wasn't even a shot of the band playing.

The accompanying article said: "While the band played on, spreading friendship and harmony, its members hit plenty of sour notes among themselves. Tired and tuckered out, they complained that Benny cut short their solos, made them play old time arrangements when they would rather have gone modern . . . . But after the tantrums were gone, the melody and the triumphs lingered on."

We laughed at the line about sour notes among ourselves. We got along fine with each other. The only sour note was our relationship with Benny.

Joe Wilder didn't appreciate the truncation of a response he gave during an interview at the beach in Sochi. A Russian reporter asked him about the race problem in the United States, and Joe replied, "There's no denying we have a problem. But we're working on it." The *Life* article quoted only the first sentence, changing the character of the remark considerably.

Time magazine ran several articles on the tour, often written in a breezy pseudo-hip style designed more to entertain than to accurately inform. One article began: "All that jazz was getting on Nikita's nerves, so Soviet officials started bugging Benny Goodman and his touring boys. First they stopped an RCA recording crew and an NBC-TV team from taping a Black Sea blast in the resort of Sochi, then they banned the distribution of B.G. buttons, next they arrested a fan for fraternizing with foreigners ('We will be lucky if we see him again,' mused a bystander), and finally they tried to bar Benny's 19-year-old daughter Rachel from going backstage, thinking she was one of the local cats."

We never had any indication that "jazz was bugging Kruschev" or that he was doing anything to sabotage the tour. On the contrary, he made two personal appearances to give us his seal of approval. He stated candidly to Benny at a party that he was not a fan of jazz, but he was good-humored about it and courteous to us.

Tom Newsom was the most patient guy on the band. He rarely groused about anything. His big, country smile and easy drawl helped to calm things down when tempers were short. Tom had been suffering with a sore tooth, which became a serious problem in Leningrad. Terry was afraid to send him to a Russian dentist. The diplomatic corps in Russia usually flies to Denmark for dental work. Something had to be done for Tom quickly or he wouldn't be able to play. Terry found the solution. An American Medical exhibit was visiting Leningrad, and inquiries there turned up a doctor who had trained as a dentist before he became an M.D. He examined Tom at the exhibition hall and discovered a gum infection behind a lower molar. He cleaned it out and gave Tom a toothbrush and some Listerine from the exhibit display.

The main event in Leningrad was to be our performance of the *Rhapsody in Blue* with Byron Janis. Two rehearsals were scheduled with Byron, one on the day before, one on the morning of the concert. At the first rehearsal we were introduced to Byron, a slender angular man with intense dark eyes, who seemed as high-strung as a thoroughbred stallion. We began reading the arrangement through with him. There was nothing difficult to play, but tempo changes became a major problem because Benny wouldn't conduct. He started the piece himself, with the clarinet trill and glissando that precedes the first chord the band plays, but when he reached the top of the gliss, he never gave us a nod to bring us in. Our entrance was pretty rough.

At each tempo change we would look at Benny but get no indication of the new tempo. Everybody knew approximately where it belonged, so we eventually would get together, but it was a pretty chaotic reading from start to finish. We told Benny that we needed him to give us the tempo changes, and Byron said, "Mr. Goodman, I can't see you! You're standing behind the piano lid. Can't we move the piano downstage a little and turn it so I have a better view of you?"

Ben..y said, "Don't worry, Pops, I'll stand over here," and he moved to where Byron could barely see him. He seemed to be avoiding having Byron closer to the audience than he was.

We ran through the piece again. Benny managed to bring us in with a nod after his opening gliss but he didn't conduct any of the other tempo changes, leaving us again to figure them out on

our own. Byron continued to insist that the piano needed to be moved. He got the stagehands to roll it a couple of feet downstage and turn it so he could see Benny better, and had them mark the position with tape. Then he began to address the problem of the tempo changes.

Benny smiled, and said, "We'll straighten it out tomorrow, Pops," and declared the rehearsal over.

Before the concert that night, Benny called a meeting of his lead players. John Frosk, Wayne Andre and Phil Woods headed for his dressing room, expecting him to raise hell about the section work at the rehearsal.

"You wanted to see us, Benny?" they asked.

"Oh, yes, boys. Um . . . When I raise my hands like this, play louder. When I hold them down like this, play softer." End of meeting.

When Benny came out on stage that night, he stumbled a little and Frosk heard a voice behind the bandstand cry, "Oh, no!" The soundman with the NBC-TV crew had set up back there, and Benny had just kicked his wire out.

The next day Jay got in touch with everyone and told us that Benny had cancelled the second rehearsal. I think he went fishing instead. Jay said that when he told Byron the rehearsal was off, he had tried to cancel the performance. The embassy people pleaded with him not to walk out. His appearance had been publicized and they feared his failure to perform might insult the Russians.

Byron reluctantly agreed to play, but he made two conditions. The piano must be placed where he had marked it, and he must go on early, so he could comfortably make a late flight to Milan. This was agreed upon, and the hour of the concert arrived. Backstage, Byron told us, "Please watch me!"

We played Benny's opening theme, then Bob Prince's *Meet The Band*, which introduced us all individually. We assumed that Benny would bring Byron on after this number. Instead, he continued through the first half of our regular program. In the wings, I could see Byron and the embassy people talking furiously, arms waving. Finally Benny announced the *Rhapsody in Blue*. As Byron was being introduced, he realized that the piano hadn't been moved. He stalked angrily onstage, sat down at the piano, and whispered fiercely, "Mr. *Good*man! I can't *see* you!" Benny peeked around the piano lid and gave Byron a playful wave of the fingertips. He disappeared again as he prepared to play the opening trill and glissando. The packed auditorium waited attentively.

"Doodledoodle-SQUEAK!" Benny stopped. Reed trouble. At rehearsal he had played the trill and gliss perfectly every time. He chuckled a bit, adjusted his ligature and began again. "Doodledoodledoodle-SQUEAK!" No chuckle this time. "Doodledoodledoodledoodle-", and he finally made a perfect gliss to the top note. But didn't give us the slightest nod when he got there. Some of us came in when he hit the top note, the rest an instant later. A ragged start but at least we had begun.

Byron played furiously, pounding the keys as if he were attacking an enemy. He gave tempo changes with his left hand, omitting a few bass notes while doing so. He continued to play and conduct throughout the piece. At one point, where he was supposed to be playing a two-handed run in opposite directions, he realized that his left hand, after conducting a ritard, had returned to the keyboard going in the wrong direction. He snatched the hand away from the keys as if he had burned himself, still managing to carry on with his right hand.

He got through the abominable thing somehow, but it wasn't a performance to be proud of. The band sounded sad, too, with all its hesitant entrances and ragged transitions. We were all embarrassed, and sorry to have been a part of what must have been a humiliating experience for Byron.

Time magazine, in its June 29 issue, gave a report of the event that correctly identified Benny's failure to conduct as the cause of the fiasco. But the article cited as part of the problem "the difficult Phil Lang arrangement," a complete fabrication on someone's part — it was a very simple chart —and implied a clash of temperament between Janis and Goodman. After describing the success of the rest of the concert, the article concluded: "The only unhappy man in the hall was pianist Janis. Said he, still brooding over Goodman's insistence on remaining at stage center, 'Incredible vanity.'"

The letters column on June 29 brought a comment from Byron:

Sir:

I read with interest your perceptive article on Mr. Goodman's Leningrad performance of the *Rhapsody in Blue*, in which I was soloist. I would like to say that unfortunately I had no time to "brood" at the auditorium as I was Milan bound for my next engagement well before the second half of the program got under way.

I must take exception to the remark that I was "the only unhappy man in the hall." Members of the American embassy, press and band to whom I spoke shared my anger at Mr. Goodman's obvious lack of interest in making this performance of the *Rhapsody* a success. Indeed, after our rehearsal I would have canceled the performance outright had it not been for the very special circumstances . . . .

. . . Maybe Mr. Goodman does not feel, as I do, that vanity certainly has no place in the cultural exchange where one is playing for one's country as well as one's art . . . .

This evoked a letter from Hal Davis, Benny's P.R. man, which appeared in the following issue:

. . . It is hard to believe that Benny Goodman is anything but a perfectionist when it comes to music. It certainly will come as a surprise to anybody who knows Goodman that he strives for anything else but the best any time he plays, no matter who is with him on the stage."

Benny's public relations people were successful for many years at promoting that image of Benny. It may even have once been true.

At Benny's request, Turk had been carrying a banjo with him since the beginning of the tour because of the Paul Whiteman number in our *Anthology of Jazz*. Turk didn't like the banjo and hadn't been using it. Benny hadn't said anything and Turk had continued to play the number on guitar. In Leningrad, Benny told him to use the banjo on the *Rhapsody*, then asked for it on the Whiteman number and the Dixieland tunes as well. Mel growled at Turk for playing it, but Turk was just following Benny's orders. Somewhere in Kiev the banjo disappeared from the program, Benny having changed his mind again.

Leningrad was the end of the trip for Alice Goodman. Jim Maxwell saw her in the hotel lobby, checking out. "I'm leaving," she told him. "I'm sick."

"Stomach trouble?" asked Jim.

Alice answered, "Not exactly."

Benny came downstairs. "Hey, Alice," he said, "what are you doing?"

"I'm going home," she said.

"Oh. Well, have a nice trip." And Benny went in to breakfast. Alice went to the airport by herself. Rachel, Benjy and Sophia stayed with us until the end of the tour.

(To be continued)