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Jazzletter

P.O. Box 240
Ojai, Calif.
93023

December 1986

Vol. 5 No. 12

Letters

The Bill Crow articles are excellent, and some of his stories a real breakup. They put into focus so many things I've heard about Goodman from other musicians. Red Norvo knows a lot about the early '30s, and Bucky Pizzarelli has a different slant on Goodman's last couple of years.

An important resource for information from the Soviet perspective is Naum Kazhdam, who emigrated from Leningrad in the mid-1970s. He covered the Goodman band while they were in Leningrad and has many photos of them. Naum was president of the first jazz club in the Soviet Union in 1958. He is currently in the photo department of the New York *Times*.

I think it was most unfortunate not to have chosen the Ellington band for what represented a major thaw in Soviet-American relations at that time.

Bernard Brightman
New York City

Back in 1941, when I was a young bass player, my odd name was only somewhat troublesome. That changed when I was persuaded to audition for Arthur Bernstein's place in Benny's band. Much to my surprise, I landed the job.

Then a writer from *Down Beat* got to me. He wanted to know the what's, who's and where's of my career before hooking up with B.G. Obviously impressed by my background, he began to dwell on the derivation of my name. I told him I thought it was French.

I couldn't believe my eyes when the next issue hit the stands. There it was: FRENCH BASS PLAYER JOINS BENNY GOODMAN.

I savored the B.G. article. Woody's salient response to Benny's put-down said a lot.

Walter Iooss
Riverhead, New York

Walter is heard on a recent recording derived from some Goodman 1941 air checks, a fabulous album on the Honeysuckle Rose label, Box 156, Hicksville N.Y. 11802. Among the album's virtues are a lot of superb Mel Powell and the drumming of Sidney Catlett.

John Hammond, to whose sister Goodman was married, is quoted by Whitney Balliett in the latter's new book as saying, "When I heard that Sid nearly caused a riot with his solo during Benny's concert at Soldier Field in Chicago, I thought, Oh Jesus, Sidney's cooked." Catlett was fired after four months.

John Simmons, who joined the band on bass after Walter left it, described the incident: "Sid took a solo in Don't Be That Way. *Well, he started playing and then he threw a stick in the air —and dropped it. On purpose, of course. He got up and walked around in front of his drums and picked up his stick and sat down and started playing again. Then he threw the stick in the air and dropped it again — and so forth. They were rolling in the aisles, and when he finally stopped horsing around and got down to business, that place nearly blew up. I remember watching Benny's face. It wasn't a cheerful sight. Benny didn't like anyone taking away the spotlight.*

"When we got back to New York, we had a little layoff, and the night Sid reported back at the hotel where Benny was, he found another drummer sitting up on the bandstand in his place. Benny gave Sid two weeks' notice and told him to report every night at nine until his time was up."

The Honeysuckle Rose album shows the band, thanks in good measure to Catlett, at its hard-swinging best. The incident is noted in Balliett's American Musicians: 56 Portraits in Jazz, *of which more in the next issue. Also in the book is a portrait of Gene Bertoncini, who told Balliett, "I knew my time with Benny was drawing to an end when he started asking me questions like, 'Say, Gene, are you playing the right changes?'" Bud Freeman received even worse treatment than Catlett during his waning days with the band. Benny would whistle into a mike during Bud's solos.*

Please do not stop producing the *Jazzletter*. It is a source of information that I am convinced cannot be found anywhere else. It is also some of the best writing that exists in periodical form, or any other, for that matter. I particularly enjoyed the articles about Goodman.

David Bondelevitch
Los Angeles

David recently pulled off the astonishing trick of graduating simultaneously from M.I.T. and the Berklee College of Music.

I am not renewing *now* or *ever again* and I'll much prefer listening to Benny Goodman records than wasting time reading your letter. Please do not waste your time with a reply.

William Orenstein
Los Angeles

Hang in there. We need you!

Tom Owens
Torrance, California

I treasure each issue. I need you. I think we all need you. Your articles and those of your gifted contributors are full of wit and grace, are always informative, and are frequently quite provocative. My check for 1987 is enclosed, and a check for a gift subscription for Gerry Wiggins, my favorite piano player, but, more importantly, friend and one of the nicest men I know. The charm of the *Jazzletter* and the charm of The Wig should be a great match.

Roger Crane
Torrance, California

Please cancel my subscription.

Harry Crane
Beverly Hills, California

I hope you need eleven shoe boxes!

Mike Dutton
Morro Bay, California

I got to know Gene and Harry Goodman a bit as publishers in New York during my recording days and heard some stories about Benny from them. There can't be anything more interesting than the truth. The Alec Wilder letter is priceless.

Frank Hunter
Newtown, Pennsylvania

I enjoy the *Jazzletter* enormously and it has led me to re-explore a number of players and singers.

I am sending a gift subscription to Dowes Thompson. Of Goodman, Dowes said, "The good news is he's dead; the bad news is he didn't suffer."

George Wilson
Trenton, New Jersey

Variants on that remark went by telephone right through the music business. I had known for years that Goodman was widely disliked — indeed, only if you were making a concerted effort to leave headprints in the sands of time could one have remained unaware of it. But I had no idea of the intensity of the feeling about him. For many musicians, it was undiluted hatred.

I am starting to feel a restrospective pity for Goodman. He would hire some of the finest sidemen in the world and then resent public response to them. How strikingly in contrast to Goodman's is the attitude of Woody Herman, who glows and wallows in the applause accorded to "my young men," as he so lovingly calls them. Goodman's behavior, in hiring such players and then tormenting and firing them, seems to go well beyond bad manners and gratuitous cruelty. I am beginning to wonder if the man had a loose wheel or two. If that was the case, we should all feel sorry for him.

I believe Bill Crow has done jazz history a major service in writing the series, and to the extent that I was able to offer him a vehicle in which to do it, I'm proud of it.

Finally, as to the Jazzletter's *future — I have already decided to continue it, and perhaps expand it during the next year. Nothing gets to you like being told you are needed!*

I would like to see it grow to the point where people like Bill Crow and Bobby Scott and the other contributors actually got paid for their work. It's been a labor of love for all of us.

There have been a number of contributions of subscriptions for school bands, college libraries, and university radio stations. More would be welcome, by both the recipients and by me.

In the immortal words of Erroll Garner, which I got from Tony Bennett, "Stumble — straight ahead."

Addison's Image

In February of 1963, Addison Farmer, the bassist, suffered a cerebral aneurism. Quincy Jones, who survived one, later asked his doctors if there was anything he might have done to prevent it. Yes, he was told. You could have chosen other parents. The insult results from a congenital weakness in an artery wall that is undetectable unless a physician is specifically looking for it. A few months after Quincy's emergency operation, the surgeon who saved his life himself died of this condition, which occurs when the artery balloons out until it finally blows. People rarely survive cerebral aneurisms.

Addison and Arthur Farmer shared even closer genetic traits than most brothers. They came into this world together in Council Bluffs, Iowa, on August 21, 1928. Art was the elder by one hour. They were fraternal, not identical, twins, but nonetheless they so closely resembled each other that their friends, Benny Golson among them, on first knowing them had trouble telling them apart. I met them in the summer of 1960. Addison was a little taller, and in time you observed that his hairline was a bit different from Art's, his cheekbones were a little more pronounced. But at first you did not note these distinctions. That summer I asked Art, "How do you tell *yourselves* apart?" Without so much as a trace of a smile, he replied, "When I get up in the morning, I pick up the bass, and if I can't play it, I must be Art." His wit is always like that, quick and clever and very dry.

They were both very good-looking, tall, clean-cut, with full mustaches, erect posture and good shoulders. There was a slight oriental cast to their features, and I sometimes wondered if they had some Indian background. I never got around to asking about it until the late summer of 1986, a good twenty-six years after I met them. There is a look in many Americans, both "black" and "white", that you begin to notice after a certain number of years, particularly if you live in the west. The actor Burt Reynolds, who is part Cherokee, has it: it's around the eyes. Stanley Dance thinks the Indian presence and influence in jazz is a great untold part of the music's history. Duke Ellington, he points out, was part Indian on his mother's side, and Johnny Hodges, he noted, looked like a Mexican Indian. It is, alas, Stanley says, a factor in the music's development that is probably lost forever, since it is too late to interview the people who knew about it and no one was much concerned fifty years ago with compiling genealogies of black men and red men in America.

Art looked startled when I asked him about this possible ancestry. "Yeah," he replied, his eyebrows a little raised, as if no one had ever posed this question. "Blackfoot, on my mother's side."

"John Lewis is from New Mexico," I said, "and he has that kind of handsome Indian look about him. Bobby Scott is part Seminole. Jo Williams says he's part Seminole. Dave Brubeck probably has Indian background. His father said the family was part Indian, but his mother denied it. I suppose it was uncool in her day. Dave looks as if he could be. I tell him he looks more and more like a Buffalo nickel as he gets older. Frank Trumbauer was part Indian."

"It's been left out of the books," Art said. "Not to diminish the black contribution, but the Indian part of it has been overlooked. There was a great mixture of the Indian and black in America. So many guys."

"Mingus certainly looked Indian. Helen Humes, Harry Edison, Gene Ramey."

"Jay McShann, Aaron Bell," Art said.

"Carl Fischer, the pianist, who wrote *We'll Be Together Again* with Frankie Laine, he was pure Indian. He wrote that gorgeous suite, *Reflections of an Indian Boy*, that Victor Young orchestrated after Fischer died."

"There was another pure Indian, Big Chief Russell Moore," Art said. "Trombonist. He was from Pima County, Arizona. He used to play with Louis Armstrong. He used to play on the side of his mouth."

"I've seen people do that and I could never understand how they did it."

"It's a habit they develop. It's a bad method. Jack Teagarden was Indian, I think."

"No," I said. "Not Jack, surprisingly enough, although it's widely thought so. Jack wasn't Indian. I checked that with his brother Charlie and then, more recently, with his sister, Norma,

Notice

The *Jazzletter* is published 12 times a year at Ojai, California, 93023, and distributed by first class mail to the United States and Canada and by air mail to other countries. Subscriptions are $40 a year in U.S. currency for the United States and Canada, $45 to other countries. Subscribers can purchase gift subscriptions for $30 U.S. for the U.S. and Canada, $45 to other countries. Past issues can be purchased for $30 U.S. per year, or $2.50 per issue.

who's still playing piano in San Francisco. Charlie said that the family was German and Irish, going 'way back. But Jack sure had a sort of Indian look."

Somewhat later, I was talking to Benny Golson. For all the years of their friendship and professional association, Benny did not know of Art's Indian background. "And do you know who else has Indian in them?" Benny said. "Me. You can see it in family photos. My mother's people had that straight black Indian hair. But I never mention it, because I got so sick of black guys going around talking about their Indian heritage. When Oscar Pettiford would get drunk, he'd start saying, 'I'm an Indian!'"

When Benny described Art as "always kind of stoic," I said, "Sure, that's the Indian in him."

"You know," Benny said, "I think you're right. People misunderstand Art initially. One of two things happens. They walk away. Or, when they stay, they become very close to him. He's not a surface person. If you ask him a straight question, you're going to get a straight answer, no flattery. There is a great d[illegible]tness in his playing — not that he is recondite in others ways. He listens, and he remembers. He remembers names and faces. And he keeps his friendships."

"I've noticed," I said, "that in conversation, he listens intently to what someone else is saying, without interruption. And then when he says something, he expresses it in full paragraphs. And he never loses track of his point. He plays his horn that way, too."

"Art is a thinker," Benny said. "He just doesn't do things for the sake of doing them. He always has a reason in his playing."

In 1845 Alexandre Dumas published his novel *The Corsican Brothers*, a tale about twins attached at birth and surgically parted. The movie version of the story with Douglas Fairbanks Jr. was tricked out with all sorts of plot complications, Hollywood derring-do, and a love interest quite absent from the book. What Dumas dramatized was the old wives' belief that there is some sort of profound and mystical emotional attachment between twins. Research in recent years on twins separated at birth and brought up apart strongly suggests that there is more than superstition to this notion. Such twins have often proved to have similar interests and hobbies and careers, have been stricken by the same ailments. In one case, separated twin brothers took up careers in law enforcement, married women with the same name, and vacationed at the same beach in Florida, without ever crossing trails.

There have been many examples of brothers in the jazz and dance-band worlds — Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Hank, Elvin and Thad Jones, Tootie, Jimmy and Percy Heath, Les and Larry Elgart, Guy, Carmen and Liebert Lombardo, Ray and Zoot Sims, Oscar and Chuck Peterson, Bart and Erik Van Lier among them. The only instance I know of twins, and certainly at the higher level of the profession, is that of Addison and Arthur Stewart Farmer.

Art and Addison grew up in Phoenix, Arizona, where their mother had moved with her parents after her divorce from the twins' father, James Arthur Farmer. He subsequently died in an Omaha steel mill explosion, and the boys never really knew him. The family, which included Art's sister Mauvolene, made the move to Arizona to alleviate his grandmother's asthma. Phoenix at that time was comparatively free of pollens, a condition that has changed with residential buildup and the attendant installation of gardens. His grandfather was a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and the family lived in its parsonage. Among Art's various relatives there were many doctors and lawyers, a good number of whom were amateur musicians. His mother played piano and sang in the church. Arthur very early started playing piano and violin, and in high school played sousaphone in a marching band for a year, then took up the cornet.

Arizona was highly segregated and Arthur was unable to find a proper teacher of the instrument "on our side of the tracks", as he put it. He taught himself to play his horn, as Bix Beiderbecke had done before him, and, like Bix, he played wrong. This would within a few years play hell with his chops.

There was nothing of interest for the boys in Phoenix, and they began to do some California dreaming. They had persuaded their mother to let them go there for vacation when, in the summer of 1944, the Zoot Suit Riots, as they became known to journalism and then history, occurred in Los Angeles. She withdrew permission for the trip and they did not go until the summer of 1945, when World War II was coming to a close. The boys were four years old when the family moved to Phoenix, sixteen when they left.

"There was so much going on in L.A. we just couldn't go back to Phoenix," Art recalled. "We stayed there. Our mother said, 'Okay, long as you graduate from high school.' That first summer, Addison and I and another kid from Phoenix had a short-lived job in a cold-storage warehouse, stacking up cartons of fruits and vegetables. We got fired for having fights with the spuds, throwing them at each other. That fall Addison and I just enrolled in high school, as if we were living there with our parents. The school never found out. We were in a very good position. We were able to duck school and write our own excuses. We'd say, 'Please excuse my son, because he had to do such-and-such.' We were hanging out every night until two and three and four o'clock. And then we had to be in school at 8:30 the next day. The hardest thing, I remember, was that my first class was gym, and I didn't feel like that.

"Addison and I got some gigs. He made more gigs than I did. I worked with Horace Henderson and Floyd Ray. A lot of guys were still in the service. We lived in rented rooms. At one point we lived in a hotel on Central Avenue, but rented rooms were cheaper. There were a lot of them then. When we couldn't pay, we'd move on. Charlie Parker spent some nights with us. We had a room with twin beds and a couch. That's when we got to know him.

"He had a bad reputation about money, but not with us. If he said to Addison, 'Lend me ten dollars, I'll pay you back tomorrow,' he'd always pay it back. Freddie Redd will tell you the same thing. Freddie said Bird would slip him some money and say, 'Don't tell anybody where you got it.' You talk to Dizzy or to Red Rodney, they'll tell you good things about Charlie Parker.

"He and I used to go to movies along Central Avenue when they were half over. We'd ask the people to let us in, because we had no money.

"Then I got a job with the Johnny Otis band. They were going back east, leaving a month before the school year finished. It was my last year, and I wanted to get that diploma. So I went to the principal and I explained to him what my situation was. I said, 'This is my chance to get started. But I'd still like to get my diploma.' So he said, 'All right. Your work has been good and you have it coming.' I said, 'Will you put that in writing, please, and leave it in the safe?' And he did. I went back there maybe ten years later and he wasn't there any longer, but that letter was, and I got it."

"You went to Jefferson High School, right? And you were in that band led by Samuel Browne?" Thomas Jefferson High was a school with a good reputation, and the band led by Browne has taken on some proportions of legend, because of the distinguished musicians it turned out.

"Yeah. It was what is now called a stage band, but at that time it was just a dance band. We used to go around and play at other high schools. It was a very good experience. There were people in the band writing, and we played a lot of stocks. *A Train, Bijou*, things like that."

"Dexter Gordon came out of that high school," I said. "Ed Thigpen, Frank Morgan."

"Cecil McNeeley — now known as Big Jay McNeeley. At that time he was called Bebop McNeeley, because everything he played he was doubling up. Thigpen was there at the same time I was. He was a couple of grades under me."

"Was that a mixed school at that time?"

"It was mostly black by then, but there were some Orientals and Mexicans and Caucasians."

"Vi Redd lived near there, and she said it was a pretty nice neighborhood."

"It was."

"So you went out with Johnny Otis."

"Yeah, I went east with Otis. We went to Chicago and worked at Earl Hines' place called the El Grotto. We worked there about ten weeks. That was my introduction to the east. Chicago isn't east, but it was east to me. Working ten weeks in a place like that was a great experience.

"After El Grotto in Chicago, we went to New York and played the Apollo Theater, and I was given my notice. This was the end of the war, and all the experienced musicians were coming home. Johnny said, 'Well, no hard feelings, man, but when I hired you, I hired you to do a job. And you can't do it.' Because I'd really messed my lip up, playing with pressure, I had a big hole in it. I finished my time with the band in Detroit, and went back to New York and hung around for a few days, and somebody introduced me to Freddy Webster. I explained to him what my problem was. He said, 'Well you should go down town and see a guy named Maurice Grupp, a trumpet teacher.' So I went down and talked to him, and had a lesson. He asked me what I intended to do, and I said, 'Well, I have no money and no job, and I either go back to L.A. or back to Phoenix.' He said, 'Well I think you shouldn't go any place like that until you get yourself in better shape. Why don't you stay here and take some lessons? You don't have to play music to survive, you can do some other kind of work.'

"Which is what I did. I started working as a janitor at the Alhambra Theater on 125th Street at Seventh Avenue, then at Radio City Music Hall, for about twenty bucks a week. They would close about eleven, and I would be there about twelve cleaning up, and I did that for over a year. And during that time, I might have made two gigs. I would go downtown and go to 52nd Street first, one time I even sat in with Dizzy's band. And then I would go around the corner and do my gig. But sometimes I would get too involved with what was going on on the street, and I got late to the gig. I went there one time and the boss met me at the door and said, 'You're fired,' and I said, 'Okay,' and I just went right across the street to the RCA building, and went to work that same night. There was a lot of turnover in that kind of work, because the pay was low. I'm very glad I did it, that I was there, and that I studied like that. I had a good teacher and I heard a lot of good music. I was better off there than being back in L.A. or a lot of other places. Man, when I look back over the years that I've been playing, and what I went through right then, and think of so many guys who are no longer playing at all, that were at that time in much better shape than I was, who had the gigs and were able to play the horn.

"My brother was working with Jay McShann. He stayed west when I went east with Johnny Otis. McShann was on the road. Benny Bailey was with McShann. Then Benny got a job with Dizzy's big band, so that left a chair open with McShann's band, and my brother told him about me, and the next thing they sent me a telegram, saying I should join them. I was going to join them in some town down south, but I got there a day late, so I sent a telegram to my teacher in New York, and he sent me some money. He was a very nice guy. And I finally joined up with McShann and we worked our way back to Los Angeles. And that was about the end of the band. I made my first record with McShann.

"I was in Kansas City recently, I played a concert there, and I met the three original trumpet players of the original McShann band when Charlie Parker was in the band. One guy, Buddy Anderson, was the guy who introduced Bird and Dizzy. There's a hotel there now called the Plaza International, on Twelfth Street. It's very jazz oriented. The ballroom is called the Count Basie Ballroom, they have a Yardbird Suite, and the Mary Lou Williams Room, the Jay McShann Room, and on the sidewalk outside they have stars, like on Sunset Boulevard. I remember playing there with McShann. The way things have changed. We played on Twelfth Street, we played in some jazz club, opposite Joe Venuti. We played a set, and when Joe played a set we had to go down in the cellar. The management didn't want us up there with white people."

"You know, Jesus," I said, "these things still shock me to death. It stupefies me."

"The thing about it," Art said, "was that we were glad to have the job. We'd just go down there and play tonk or hearts or some simple card game, and when the time came, we'd go back up and play. Charlie Parker came to town and he wanted to come in there, and they wouldn't even let him in."

Back in Los Angles, out of the McShann band, Art played gigs with Teddy Edwards, Hampton Hawes, Gerald Wilson, Dexter Gordon, and Wardell Gray —whenever, that is, they could use him. "But it wasn't," he said, "really enough to take care of the rent, so I was working at Los Angeles County General Hospital as an x-ray clerk. There were sessions going on. Frank Morgan and I used to go to them, and run into guys like Mulligan, Getz, Chet Baker, whoever was in town. One Sunday afternoon I went to a session, Lionel Hampton's band was in town, and I run into Quincy Jones and Buster Cooper and a couple of other guys from the band. A couple of days later I got a call from Quincy or somebody to say that there might be an open chair in the band soon, and would I be interested. So I went around for, I guess you could call it, an audition. But all it was was Hamp saying," and Art went into a perfect imitation of Hampton's voice, "'Come on, Gates, let's play some *All God's Children Got Rhythm*.' If you could play that, you got the gig. When I joined, Benny Bailey was in the band, and we had six trumpets. Benny left a couple of weeks later. I took over his solos. That situation existed for about ten months until Brownie came in. Clifford took the place of a trumpet player named Eddie Mullins, we called him Moon Mullins, a very good ballad arranger who left to go with Duke. Clifford was just in the band a few weeks before we went to Europe.

"In Los Angeles Wardell recorded one of my tunes for Prestige. It was untitled. The master went back to New York. Ira Gitler heard it and called it *Farmer's Market*, and he decided to call me Art Farmer. Until then no one had ever called me anything but Arthur. When I went east with Lionel, I went over to the Prestige office and introduced myself to Bob Weinstock. He said, 'Glad to meet you. Maybe you'd want to make some recordings for us.' The summer we went to Europe, I made the first recording for Prestige. Quincy was playing the piano. Gigi Gryce, James Cleveland and Monk Montgomery were in the

group. The drummer was Sonny Johnson from Indianapolis.

"Weinstock knew we were going to Sweden. He made arrangements through Claus Dahlgren to record in Sweden with Lars Gullin, Bengt Hallberg and all those guys. We knew Lionel would raise hell, so we didn't tell him anything, we sneaked out the back door of the hotel, and made the recording. We went directly to the concert hall the next night, and one of the flunkies said, 'Hey, Lionel wants to see you guys right away.' So we went to his dressing room, and he said, 'What happened to you guys last night?' So I told him, 'Gates, you shoulda been with us, we ran into some of the baddest chicks, man, we partied, we had a nice time.' He said, 'Oh yeah?' We went on to Paris. George Wallington had come into the band, and he didn't know what a character Lionel was. He told Hampton we had recorded, and Lionel called a meeting, and he was going to fire the whole band, but he couldn't because the band was so successful. We did the whole tour over, without going back to the States. The album came out as Art Farmer and Clifford Brown, or maybe the other [illegible]y around, and the Swedish All Stars, a ten-inch LP. After the tour, we all left the band, Quincy and Gigi Gryce and Cleve. I would never say anything against Hamp, though. He gave me a gig. And if he hadn't, I don't know how I'd ever have gotten out of Los Angeles.

"After the tour I stayed in New York and started to freelance. Gigi and I had a quintet. We recorded three or four records for Prestige. I worked with whoever called me. I worked about a year with Horace Silver. Lester Young had a contract to work so many weeks a year at Birdland. I would make all those. That was a great experience. He walked sideways, sort of shuffled over sideways, like in the army. He walks over to me, he says, 'Hey, Prez, there's a little bitch sitting over there shootin' me down. She don't know that all I want to do when I get through with this gig is go home and get my sandwich and go to bed.' He was okay the two years I worked with him. When he died, in '58, I was with Mulligan.

"I'd been working with Horace. On some session, I ran into Dave Bailey, who was playing drums with Gerry. Bob Brookmeyer had left and Chet Baker came back to the group, but that didn't work out, and Mulligan was looking for a trumpet [illegible]yer. So I left Horace and went with Mulligan. Henry Grimes was the bass player, but shortly afterwards Bill Crow took his place. We really had some nice times. We made one record on Columbia called *What Is There to Say*. It was a good record, but it didn't really show what that group could get into. I really learned a lot with Gerry. But it was strange, at first, to work with no piano after working with Horace, who was such a dominant pianist.

"I'd been studying with George Russell, and one night when I got through with my solo, Gerry came over and said, 'Those things you're playing on that solo, they're interfering with my background." Art laughed.

"Oh! That's wonderful," I said. "Oh! But you gotta know Gerry to appreciate it!"

"Gerry is a great guy," Art said. "We used to get into arguments, and it wouldn't mean a thing the next day."

"That's one of his wonderful qualities," I said. "You know, I've never seen anyone who grew as much as Gerry has."

"He really has. Gerry is a *nice* guy."

"What happened after Gerry?"

"We toured in Europe, and after we got back he wanted to start his concert band. I didn't want to play in a big band again. During the time I was with Gerry, Benny Golson and I and Bill Evans had won the *Down Beat* critics poll, and Monte Kay, who was in charge of jazz at UA, had the idea of recording an album by the poll winners. Bill and I had a very nice relationship. We recorded the album, with Addison on bass and on the drums Dave Bailey. Once the record was made, Monte decided to put it out in my name under the title *Modern Art*.

"I got the idea to call Benny to work with me. He had been working with Art Blakey. And Benny called me to come to work with him. So we decided to become partners. Benny said that rather than just have another quintet, it would be nice to have another horn. Benny had worked on an extended gig with Curtis Fuller for eight months one time. So that's how it started. The name for the group came from Curtis, who really has a talent with words. He came up with the idea of calling it the Jazztet."

Benny Golson was born five months after Arthur and Addison Farmer, on January 25, 1929, in Philadelphia. James Lincoln Collier's point that jazz was not a black music performed for black audiences but a black music performed to a large extent for white audiences turns out on close scrutiny to have much validity. Blacks were barred from many and maybe most of the nightclubs where the music was heard, as Art notes in his recollection of Kansas City. Many black parents despised jazz and forbade their children to listen to it, those of Billie Holiday and Fats Waller among them. Nor did the black intellectual establishment champion jazz. In their anxiety to emulate, and enable their students to rise in, a white world, black universities all too often ignored black cultural history, jazz particularly. Benny majored in clarinet at Howard University. Such was the official contempt for jazz that he hardly dared admit that he owned a saxophone, and he practiced the instrument in the laundry room so that no one would hear him.

"I guess," I said to Art, "it was when you and Benny brought the Jazztet to Chicago that I first knew you guys, and I did that cover story on you for *Down Beat*. It was such a promising group. Gigi Gryce and Benny wrote such lovely things for it, it was such an intelligent integration of writing and blowing, and of course you had Curtis. What happened to that group?"

"The Jazztet started about the same time Ornette Coleman and Don Cherry came to New York," Art said. "In fact we opened at the Five Spot opposite each other. We were kind of shoved aside. We didn't get the attention that we would have liked. And we were struggling and scuffling, and we got gigs, but we never really got a solid start. McCoy Tyner left to go with 'Trane, and Curtis Fuller left, and we started having personnel problems, getting this guy and that guy. The idea of the group at the beginning was to have these two guys, McCoy and Curtis. We were able to get good piano players, but to find someone to play like Curtis was impossible. We got to the point where we were rehearsing *Killer Joe* all the time. At that time, when you had a group, you had a group, and the ambition was to work every week. It wasn't like now, when you play a few weeks and then go about your business. We just got to the place where it was a rut. I wanted to play more. Benny was getting much into the writing, jingles and all kinds of stuff. I'd heard Jim Hall with Sonny Rollins. I made a record with a big band for Mercury, and Jim was on the record. I asked him would he be interested in doing some gigs with me. We had that quartet for a year."

"That must have been about the time I moved to New York," I said. "You told me to meet you at Jim and Andy's. You introduced me to to the place. Just recently I talked to somebody who said they'd run into you at the airport in New York, and you were looking very bleak and forlorn, and he thought you were on the way to a gig or something, and you said you were taking Addison home."

"To Phoenix," Art said.

"That was such a shock to me. I can't conceive of what it must have been to you."

"Yeah. He'd been by my apartment that afternoon. I had been working at the Half Note. He went home. I took a nap. His wife was on the phone, said he was very sick. I jumped in the car and drove up there. He lived on 95th Street. I lived down on 20th Street. You were by that place. And he said, 'I have a terrible headache. I a couple of weeks earlier. He borrowed my car and he hit his head on the windshield, but he seemed all right. He'd told me at one time recently, 'Sometimes, you know, I get so wrapped up in what I'm doing, practicing this or going to this gig, I forget to eat, and I get a terrible headache. And then I eat and it's okay.' I didn't pay it no mind. So he said he had this headache, and I said, 'Okay, we should get you to the hospital.' We called the ambulance and I went to work. And I called up from the gig to Knickerbocker Hospital in upper Manhattan, and the woman said they had packed him in ice to bring down his fever. I rushed up there, and I asked Lois, his wife, 'How is he?' Lois said, 'He just died.'

"I spoke to the doctor, a lady, and she said his heart had stopped about three times, and they had always been able to get it going, but this time it didn't happen."

Whatever John F. Kennedy was or was not, he embodied an optimism that had always been a strong characteristic of America and Americans. He was not only the youngest president in American history, he was the handsomest, and with his attractive wife and beautiful children, he seemed like a man with a stake in the future. He got the Russians to remove their missiles from Cuba and opened a dialogue with Nikita Kruschev that boded well for humanity's survival.

Popular music both reflects and affects the emotional state of a nation. In the second year of Kennedy's presidency, popular music, led by Dizzy Gillespie, Bob Brookmeyer, Charlie Byrd, and a few others, imported from Brazil a musical style faddishly known as *bossa nova* and integrated it into jazz. It was gorgeous stuff, rhythmically subtle, harmonically sophisticated, melodically sensuous, and incomparably romantic. It swept the United States, and then the world. Jazz seemed to be in excellent condition, with all the major labels and a proliferating number of smaller ones dedicated to it. Stan Getz, Jimmy Smith, Erroll Garner, Herbie Mann, Cal Tjader, Dave Brubeck, and others had hit record albums.

Nine months after Addison Farmer died, Kennedy was assassinated. So, immediately after him, was his alleged assassin, and then his assassin's assassin died in jail of what some people think was an induced cancer, both deaths hermetically sealing the main actors from any further inquiry. In the next few years, his brother, Robert Kennedy, was assassinated, and so too were Malcolm X. and Martin Luther King. All of these deaths, official Washington tried to persuade the public, were unrelated to each other, the discontinuous acts of individual madmen. Whether they were or they weren't, what *seemed* to be so was that anyone who appeared able and likely to lead America and the world toward a better life would not be allowed to live. There *seemed* to be a "they" who would dash any hopes one allowed to arise.

Public mood profoundly affects the stock market. And it assuredly affects popular music. In the trauma that followed Kennedy's death — made the worse as Lyndon Johnson, a deeply vulgar man, boasted of the size of his male organs, created a false incident at the Gulf of Tonkin that shocked even naval intelligence, and built himself a nice little war as a sop to his sexual problems —guitars began to snarl with distortion, voices began to shriek and scream, psychedelic lighting in discotheques assaulted the nervous system, and rock-and-roll singers commenced an advertising campaign for drug use that created the atmosphere for the United States, which comprises five percent of the world's population, to consume sixty percent of the world's illegal psychotropic substances. There were ugly riots in Chicago during the Democratic convention of 1968 at which Johnson, through backstair machinations, took the nomination from Eugene McCarthy, who deserved it, and gave it to Hubert Humphrey, a party hack who didn't and who promptly lost the election to Richard Nixon. A young man who at fifteen promised to be a superb jazz flutist told me five years later that you couldn't expect his generation to wait for gratification in music or anything else when most of its members didn't expect to live to be thirty. It seemed, after the death of Jack Kennedy, that the popular will no longer had any political meaning.

It is small wonder that the hopes of black Americans started to flicker out after the death of Jack Kennedy. Riots began, and jazz fell on hard times as a popular music of unprecedented ugliness reflected and reinforced the mood of the young while the napalm splashed and splattered in Viet nam. Whether jazz was or was not a popular music — and some of its best practitioners have insisted that it is — it had no choice now but to be an art music; it certainly was no longer a part of the pop-music mainstream. Quite a number of American jazz musicians, most of them black but some of them white, left the land of their birth, and the music's, in the decade following Kennedy's, and incidentally Addison Farmer's, death. Ben Webster moved to Europe, and sent us all a card at Jim and Andy's saying, "I ain't had so much fun since I been cullid." Dexter Gordon left; Don Byas had been gone for some time. Sahib Shihab, Richard Boone, Ernie Wilkins, and Kenny Drew moved to Copenhagen, and in time Thad Jones and Ed Thigpen did too. Arthur Taylor, Phil Woods, and Michael Zwerin took residence in Paris, where Kenny Clarke was already living. Red Mitchell moved to Stockholm, Jiggs Whigham to London, Al Porcino to Munich, Benny Bailey and Idrees Suleiman to Germany, Jimmy Woode to Switzerland, Johnny Griffin to Holland.

"You remember how it was over here in the '60s," Art said. "I was in a real rut in New York, working in Slug's in New York and places like it in Philly, working in the ghetto. There were riots in the street, and the cities going up in flames.

"One night I went down to the Half Note, where Donald Bird was playing. After he got through, he drove me home to 20th Street. The riot was going on in Newark that night. We were sitting in front of the building, just sitting there talking, last words. And here comes a cop's car. The cops shine the lights in our eyes. You remember, down in that neighborhood, there were lots of factories."

"Yeah," I said, "I remember the look of streetlamps on those red-brick cobblestone streets."

"Well, the cop said, 'What are you all doing down here?'

"I said, 'I live here?'

"He said, 'What are you doing sitting in the car?'

"I said, 'We're just sitting here talking. Can't I do that?'

"Donald said, 'Cool it, man, cool it, cool it.'

"So shortly after that, why, I decided I might as well try it on the other side."

In 1965 he was invited to Vienna to act as a judge in a jazz contest sponsored by a bank. The contest lasted three weeks, during which he met local musicians who told him they were forming a radio jazz band — a common phenomenon in European countries — and invited him to join it. Since his services would be required for only ten days a month during nine months of the

year, the offer was very tempting and he accepted it. Twice married and twice divorced. Art was a single man at the time. He met Mechtilde Lawgger, who worked for the bank sponsoring the jazz contest, and married her.

He has lived in Vienna every since, though he travels much of the time, about half of it in America. His career is cresting, both as a soloist and as part of the Jazztet, which has risen phoenix-like from its own ashes, twenty-six years after its birth. Benny Golson, who had worked so hard to get into film and television music, was now weary of it, looking around for other things to do. One of the shows he scored was *The Six Million Dollar Man*, which had been Oliver Nelson's gig until his death. Benny would sit writing all day in his workroom, feeling a slave to another medium. And anyway, things were going wrong for film composers, with the nasal squeal and whoof-whoof-whoof of synthesizers replacing real music in scores. Art said it took Benny two years to get his chops back on saxophone; Benny says, "More than that. It was like coming back from a stroke." And, wonder of wonders, Curtis Fuller, so important a part of the Jazztet at the start of it, was interested in re-forming the group.

I heard them in September, 1986, at the Monterey Festival. In the chill of the outdoor stage, faced by a noisy and unruly audience that George Shearing, farther down that evening, upbraided, they were not particularly impressive. But later, on an indoor stage, in the "nightclub", as they call it, that has become part of the festival, they played superbly. Curtis Fuller long ago taught me a simple clear musical principle: "You sacrifice tone for speed," he said. "That's right," Art said, when I quoted this to him. "You have to lighten up a little to get speed." "It's true," Benny Golson said, "although the exception to that rule seems to be Curtis himself. And Art." The group has changed. It's hotter, harder, more adventurous, and Golson himself — for all he protests that his playing still isn't up to what it was — is a much more exploratory and daring player than he used to be. Benny's playing always projected his cultivated and gentle nature, and it still does, but it is much gutsier now.

Art Farmer illustrates a principle that has been stated of literature but can apply equally to music: the greatest style is no style at all. There are no identifiable mannerisms in his playing. All that distinguishes it is its brilliance, and its lyrical warmth. He still remembers an incident that occurred during his youth in Los Angeles. He and Addison and friends were walking one night on Central Avenue from one jazz club to another, to catch the action. They were stopped and questioned twice by cops. The third time this happened, Art said, in that quiet sarcasm that is his nearest approach to overt rage, "Hey, which way are you guys walking? Do you mind if we walk with you, and then your other cops won't bother us?" The secret of Art's playing, I think, lies in his cultural heritage, the stoicism that probably is the legacy of his Blackfoot ancestry leashing the anger of the man told by Donald Bird that night to cool it, cool it.

The quiet and clear intelligence that controls his actions also controls the tones coming out of his horn — only fluegelhorn now, the instrument he finds much more congenial and natural to him than trumpet. And those tones rise from a well of emotion ranging from deep love to dark anger. It is as if Arthur Farmer is always trying to control his feelings and failing to do so, to the immense enrichment of this era's music.

The Jazztet appears to have attained, at last, the success it was long ago denied. It has a new Fantasy album on the market, another in the can, and plans for future recordings. Art has contracted to make four albums as a soloist for Fantasy.

"In my opinion," Benny Golson said, "Art Farmer is the foremost instrumental interpreter of the ballad. When he plays such, it's as though one is privy to a love triangle — a man, his horn, and the song at hand. Writing ballads is one of my favorite pastimes and somehow I intuitively write them with Art in mind. There is no greater fulfillment or reward than hearing him play them.

"But I must say that since he plays a ballad so superlatively well, one might tend to overlook him as a complete trumpet (and fluegelhorn) player. This is a rather bad mistake. At any tempo he's able to evince a certain pervasive melodism. And he can particularly fulfill the requirements of a swift tempo *without* sacrificing sound, fullness and tone, quality, for speed — no small thing. Were one to competitively jump onto the bandstand with him, that person would probably get skinned quite badly.

"Another thing about him. Art Farmer, like Art Blakey, is didactic without ever being aware of it.

"Finally, there's a side of Art's talent that has been overlooked, even by Art himself to some degree. He has great merit as a composer. All of his tunes are unique in that the structures, particularly nowadays, are completely unexpected. They challenge predictability. His choice of chords is odd, different, because they gallantly defy convention and conventional resolutions. They just might resolve anywhere, and yet, when linked with his melodies, they sound quite logical —and haunting, to say the least. At the moment, this source of creativity has not been fully tapped, which indicates we can expect more interesting and exciting things, as there are obviously more things yet to be extracted from his voluminous creative closet — things screaming to get out."

"I'll tell you something else," I said. "I think he's happier than I've ever seen him."

"You're right. Art has really come out in the last year. He cracks jokes on the mike, and it's all the funnier coming from him. Have you noticed that his voice on the telephone is a little higher now?"

Art treasures his time at home in Vienna with his wife, although, he says, if the election to the presidency of Kurt Waldheim had occurred when he first went there, he would never have settled in Austria — and he doesn't hesitate to tell Austrians that. He has a thirty-year-old son by his first wife, Renee, and a fifteen-year-old son in Austria who, he says, looks more like Addison than like himself, although that is a distinction he alone could make.

"Losing Addison," he said, "was like getting my hand chopped off suddenly.

"There was a deeper attachment that you don't even think about. We were so close that certain things we didn't have to say. There were a lot of disagreements, too. You can have the most disagreements with the person you're closest to because they know exactly what you're thinking. Basically, though, we agreed on things.

"The funny thing is that, subconsciously, Addison is still alive to me. I still have dreams about him. In the dreams we're doing this, doing that, talking, arguing, going some place, playing, practicing, rehearsing, traveling.

"The little things of life.

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