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A Farewell to Granz

In January of this year, Fantasy Records announced the acquisition of Pablo Records. Pablo thus became part of a complex of labels that already included Contemporary, Debut, Fantasy itself, Galaxy, Good Time Jazz, Milestone, Riverside, and Prestige. Fantasy is collectively the biggest jazz record company in the world, unique in that its jazz albums are not the sideline of a pop label owned in turn by an international conglomerate but the very foundation and lifeblood of the organization. And do not underestimate the size of Fantasy. It is also a major maker of movies, including such films of distinction as *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Amadeus*.

The material Fantasy now controls — by Thelonious Monk, early and late Bill Evans, early Dave Brubeck, Cal Tjader, John Coltrane, Red Garland and Miles Davis in the Prestige period, and much much more — is a remarkably full library of the last fifty years of jazz history.

The tapes, masters and all other appurtenances of Pablo were shipped from the Beverly Hills office up to the Fantasy headquarters in Berkeley, California, and the company moved quickly to get the first albums from this vast quantity of material into the market, issuing immediately more than a score of Pablo albums by Count Basie, Benny Carter, John Coltrane, Sweets Edison, Freddie Hubbard, The Modern Jazz Quartet, Oscar Peterson, Zoot Sims, Coleman Hawkins, Art Tatum, Sarah Vaughan, Lester Young and others in compact-disc format. This, together with the reissue programs going on at major labels with a suddenly reawakened interest in jazz — the Impulse albums produced by Bob Thiele on MCA, the MPS albums on Polydor, the Creed Taylor CTI recordings on CBS, the Blue Note on Capitol —provides jazz collectors with a wealth of historic material much of which was for too long off the market.

Of equal significance, the purchase of Pablo marks the second and probably final departure from the record industry of one of its most important, interesting, and provocative figures. Norman Granz, who invented the touring jazz company, then founded the Clef and Norgran labels which he in due course amalgamated into Verve Records, sold his recording interests to MGM in 1961 and moved to Geneva, Switzerland. From Geneva he continued to act as personal manager to Ella Fitzgerald and Oscar Peterson, and to book large-scale European jazz concerts with Ray Charles, Count Basie, Peterson, Fitzgerald, and others. He returned to the record industry in 1973 when he formed the Pablo label, named after Pablo Picasso, a friend many of whose paintings Granz owns. His stated reason for returning: disgust with an industry that was not bothering to record artists of such stature as Benny Carter, Count Basie, and Sarah Vaughan.

Granz, now sixty-nine, is a man about whom no one in the jazz world is neutral. Some people, Benny Carter and Oscar Peterson among them, revere him. Others loathe him. He is capable of considerable charm but also of a style of icy contempt that, once observed, is not quickly forgotten. Some people consider him an exploiter of jazz artists, others see him as a savior. Ailing in recent years, suffering from glaucoma for which he wears strong glasses, he still has the physical fitness that a lifetime taste for athletics has given him. He once was a fine basketball player, and he maintains his devotion to tennis, for which he has a considerable talent. Six feet tall, with thinning fair hair, he is a handsome man whose eyebrows curve upward in a manner repeatedly described as Mephistophilean. He speaks softly in a cultivated voice with the dentalized t's and d's one often encounters in natives of the New York area. Granz, however, was born not in New York but Los Angeles.

When the Pablo material arrived at Fantasy, it was accompanied by negligible documentation on the history of the company or Granz. But with his second departure from the record business, we would do well to take a closer look at this considerable figure, one of a very small group of men who, while not jazz musicians themselves, influenced the course of the music's history. We are not likely to see his like again. For that matter, we had never seen his like before.

In 1955, noting that jazz had achieved in a short time a notable degree of acceptance as an art form, with a jazz course instituted at North Texas State University, the appearance of Oscar Peterson at the Stratford Shakespearean Festival in Canada, performances by Dizzy Gillespie in Yugoslavia and by Louis Armstrong on the African Gold Coast, Leonard Feather wrote in *Esquire* magazine: "That jazz, which a decade ago was hardly ever heard in a concert hall, far less recognized by the U.S. government, could have reached this summit of prestige and propaganda value was astonishing to some, incomprehensible to others. To many observers, however, it may have seemed like nothing more or less than a logical outgrowth of the efforts on the part of one man to launch jazz as an international commodity. The man in question is Norman Granz, an irascible, slangy, expensively-casually-dressed, impulsive, epicurean, much-hated and much-loved man who, at thirty-eight, is not only the world's foremost jazz impresario, but also can claim to have made more money exclusively from jazz than anyone else in its relatively short and turbulent history.

"Granz, who has often stated that his objectives are, in the order of their importance, to make money, to combat racial prejudice and to present good jazz, is an enigma whose many-sided character is known only to a few friends, mostly musicians who have worked for him over an extended period."

Granz has been described as a tight man with a dollar and bearer of grudges. His relations with the press have sometimes been abrasive. Ted Williams recalls that once in Chicago, angry for some reason at photographers, Granz imposed the ingenious punition of covering the spotlights with red gels, knowing that black and white film will not register red light. Thus the cameramen were effectively barred from photographing the concert. Many people, however, cite examples of Granz's generosity, particularly to musicians whose work he values. Max Jones of *The Melody Maker* has had a long and cordial relationship with Granz. The English writer Benny Green, virtually Granz's house liner-note writer, knows Granz well, according to Oscar Peterson.

Peterson once said, "Norman is shy. People mistake this for arrogance."

Leonard Feather, in his *Esquire* portrait, took note of Granz's expression of "aloof disdain" and of a succession of "pouting

blondes" in his life.

Granz was born in Los Angeles August 6, 1918. His family at the time lived near the Central Avenue area. They moved down the coast to Long Beach, where his father owned a department store, and later to the Boyle Heights district of central Los Angeles, a lower middle-class area where the family knew straitened circumstances after his father lost the store in the Depression.

Granz reminisced about Long Beach to Feather, saying it was "predominantly a Midwestern community in its thinking." He continued: "We were one of about half a dozen Jewish families in the whole city. I remember there used to be a gag about all the retired businessmen from Iowa settling in Long Beach. And I think I remember the Ku Klux Klan used to parade there in their nightshirts. But I don't recall that it had any influence on me at all at the time. I suppose that the reason I can mix so easily with minority members arose from my playing with the kids on Central Avenue, when it was a heterogeneous district with all minorities represented." Granz says of the later part of his youth, "Mickey Cohen and I came from the same area in Boyle Heights. Mickey Cohen became a gangster; I didn't. Nobody forced him to become what he became."

Granz was graduated from Roosevelt High in Boyle Heights in 1935. He went to work in a brokerage office to earn the money to study at UCLA. "There was never enough money for a car," he told Feather, "so I spent the better part of my life in buses and streetcars. During daylight-saving time, with a three-hour time difference (between Los Angeles and New York) and Wall Street opening at ten, I'd have to be at work at six a.m. to get the board clean for a seven a.m. opening. In those days the clerks worked with chalk and chamois; we had no automatic boards. And during that time I played basketball at UCLA and stayed up at nights studying." Granz undoubtedly sharpened his financial acumen during his days in that brokerage house.

Granz joined the United States Army Air Corps some months prior to Pearl Harbor. "The war was already on in Europe," he told me a few weeks after the sale of Pablo to Fantasy. "And I felt we would be drawn into it. They were putting out notices on the campus that if you enlisted, you could choose your branch of service. So I enlisted. It was obvious in the days after Pearl Harbor that I wasn't going to become a pilot. They gave you a choice. You could become a bombardier or get out of the Air Corps and wait for your draft call.

"So I took my discharge. I went to New York and discovered 52nd Street."

At the time, 52nd Street was a fermentation vat for jazz. It was possible for Granz to walk from one club to another to see one great jazz player after another — many of whom he would later produce on records.

"Then I came back to Los Angeles," he continued, "and began to book my jam sessions at the Trouville club. I got drafted about May, and I got Basie and Nat Cole to play for the draftees. Then I got shipped to Texas. I applied for officer's training. They did an I.Q. test on you and and another for mechanical aptitude. I proved to be not very mechanical, but I apparently got a good score on the I.Q. and it looked like I was going to go to officer's training. The army was very segregated in those days, and I had begun to mix with a lot of the black GIs. My reputation for that had already begun with the night clubs. And I found out I wasn't going to officer's training.

"As a company clerk, I had access to a lot of literature. I came across a regulation that said if you had applied for officer's training and been rejected, you could apply for a discharge on the grounds that if you weren't good enough to be an officer you weren't good enough for the army, which I thought was extremely strange reasoning. But I applied for it and got my discharge in 1943 and started my things in Los Angeles." Everything ever printed on Granz — everything, at least, in the extensive file on him at the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University —says he left the service on a medical discharge. So far as I know, this is the first time the present version of the story has been recounted publicly, and I have no idea why Granz told it to me. It puzzles me, in fact.

Granz was now twenty-four years old. He had been a big-band fan until he heard the famous Coleman Hawkins record of *Body and Soul* in 1939. It was his introduction to small-group jazz at its most creative. In one of the many articles about him he is quoted as saying it didn't mean much to him at first.

But his reason for becoming an impresario, he has repeatedly said, was less a love of music than a sense of social outrage. Though black jazz musicians were playing all over Los Angeles, they were doing so almost entirely before white audiences — very few places permitted blacks to enter as customers. This condition existed in Chicago, Kansas City, and most American cities and, for that matter, extended into Canada. In Los Angeles, the discrimination was as fully institutionalized as it was in the American south: it was the firm and simple policy of nightclubs not to admit Negro patrons.

Granz had been presenting occasional jam sessions at the Trouville club, in the Beverly-Fairfax area of Los Angeles. He was particularly disturbed by the tears of Billie Holiday after its management refused to let some of her black friends come in to hear her.

So Granz went to Billy Berg, the well-known nightclub operator, with a proposal. Granz was aware that a new union ruling required that regularly employed musicians be given one night a week off. "Give me Sunday nights when the club is dark and the house band is off," he told Berg, "and I'll give you a jam session and a crowd of paying customers." Berg expressed interest. Granz attached three conditions to the deal:

First, rather than use drop-in musicians playing only for their own pleasure, he wanted the players to be employed and paid, which would allow him to advertise them in advance; second, tables were to be placed on the dance floor, which would make it impossible for customers to do anything but listen; third, the club would be opened to black as well as white patrons, and not only on Sunday night but all week. Berg agreed.

"I think the cats got six dollars each," Granz recalled to Leonard Feather. "And those were good days for getting musicians in Los Angeles. Duke Ellington's band was around town; Jimmie Lunceford's men were available; Nat Cole, who had the trio at the 331 Club, was my house pianist; Lester Young and his brother Lee were regulars."

Drummer Lee Young described Granz at that time as "a real Joe College type, with the brown-and-white shoes, the open collar, the sweater and the general Sloppy Joe style; he was just a guy that was always around, and at first we wondered what he did for a living. He was a lone wolf. We'd drink malteds together —neither of us ever drank liquor — and before long I'd be going over to his side of town and he'd be visiting mine, and we'd be playing tennis."

The late Nat Cole knew Granz as far back as 1941. "He'd bring

Notice

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a whole bunch of records over and we'd listen to them together and have dinner," Cole told Leonard Feather. "He had that sloppy Harvard look, and even in those days he wouldn't knuckle down to anybody. A lot of people disliked him, but I understood his attitude; he just knew what he wanted and exactly how he was going to get it. I remember when the booking agents used to call him a capitalistic radical, which of course wasn't right."

Sunday became Billy Berg's most lucrative night of the week, a success that was not unnoticed by other club owners. Other clubs had different dark nights, and Granz set up a circuit of them for his musicians, putting himself in an advantageous situation with owners, for whom he made money, and with musicians, whom he was able to offer four or five nights of work a week.

In early 1944, Granz initiated a series of jazz concerts at a place called Music Town in South Los Angeles. Along with his regulars, he presented musicians from bands visiting the area, including tenor saxophonist Illinois Jacquet, known for his work with Lionel Hampton and Cab Calloway.

At this time, twenty-one young Chicanos had been arrested after what the press called the Zoot Suit Riots, charged with murder, convicted, and imprisoned in San Quentin. The case became a *cause celebre* in Southern California, and a defense fund was established.

Granz told Feather: "There were so many kids accused that it smacked of a prejudice case. Orson Welles and Rita Hayworth and a lot of other Hollywood people were involved in the thing, which was called the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee. I didn't even remember where Sleepy Lagoon was, and I didn't know what the hell was going on with the case, but it did seem to be a prejudice case, and this was a chance to try out one of my ideas, which was to put on a jazz concert at the Philharmonic."

The concert was held at Philharmonic Auditorium on a Sunday afternoon in July. The cast of musicians included Nat Cole, himself on the verge of an enormous commercial success; Les Paul, then known as a jazz guitarist, who would later sell his highly commercial overdubbed guitar-and-vocal records in the millions; pianist Meade Luxe Lewis, one of the boogie-woogie masters, and saxophonist Jacquet, whose high notes, according to *Down Beat*, sent the audience of young people wild. The concert raised five hundred dollars for the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Fund.

For the rest of that year Granz presented *Jazz at the Philharmonic* as a monthly event. The following year, as World War II approached its end, he took his company of players on a tour of the West Coast. They got as far as Victoria, British Columbia. "But it broke me," Granz said. "I had to hock everything I owned to get the musicians back." It should be remarked that other impresarios in like circumstances have been known to leave their artists stranded. It is also notable that Granz by now had something to hock.

His reverses were temporary. He was about to become a significant factor in the record industry.

Granz had tried to sell various companies on releasing material recorded in his *Jazz at the Philharmonic* concerts. Experienced record men thought the idea was ridiculous — you didn't put out "live" recordings of concerts complete with applause and other audience noises.

Granz went to New York carrying a stack of his JATP recordings. In those days before tape, the music was on bulky twelve-inch acetate discs. He opened the yellow pages of the telephone directory at record companies, the first one of which, in the alphabetical sequence, happened to be Asch Records, owned by the late Moses Asch. Granz telephoned him and made an appointment. He was trying to sell records from another session he had supervised, this one by the singer Ella Logan. Asch had no interest in this material, but as Granz was about to leave his office, asked about the other batch of records he was carrying under his arm. Granz unwrapped and played *How High the Moon* from one of his JATP concerts. "Asch flipped," Granz recalled to Feather. "He put the records out as Volume One of *Jazz at the Philharmonic*, and it was incredibly popular. I imagine it sold about 150,000 albums, but I never got an accounting, because Asch eventually not only lost the rights, he lost his whole company."

The record, which featured a long solo by Illinois Jacquet and the drumming of Gene Krupa — billed as "Chicago Flash" because he was under contract to another label, though most young jazz fans knew who it was — had an enormous impact. This was the first jazz-concert recording ever issued. (The recording of the Benny Goodman 1938 concert at Carnegie Hall was not released until 1950.) And *How High The Moon* became a sort of national anthem of jazz, partly because of modulating changes that seemed pretty hip at the time.

The period was the sundown of the big bands and of rising interest in small-group jazz played by veterans of those bands. Granz was the right man at the right place at the right time to take advantage of the situation. One of the main causes of the decline of the big bands was the spreading business failure of the ballrooms and dance pavilions that operated on the outskirts of cities all over North America, which in turn was caused by the conspiracy of automotive, tire, and road-building interests to buy up and dismantle the superb interurban trolley systems that, among other things, carried young audiences to those locations. Jazz had to take to the nightclubs in small-group formats: there was nowhere else for it to go, excepting concert halls. And it was Granz who opened their stage doors for jazz musicians. He was the first producer to present small-group jazz with the emphasis on improvisation, as opposed to the orchestrated big-band form of it, in a touring company. After the success of *How High the Moon*, his company of players began criss-crossing the continent.

In 1947, when he was twenty-nine, Granz met a tall blonde girl named Loretta Snyder Sullivan, who was passing out leaflets at a JATP concert in Saginaw, Michigan. Granz proposed to her the next night. They were married almost a year later, and in 1949, in Detroit, she gave him a daughter. They were divorced in 1952. She later complained that he never took his mind off his business.

"Moreover," she told Leonard Feather, "I was ill-advised enough to tell him I disliked some of his records."

From the very beginning, Granz was criticized for appealing to the lowest level of jazz-audience taste, with emphasis on the high note tenor of Illinois Jacquet and, later, drum battles between Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich.

"The critics used to review the audience as harshly as the musicians," Granz told writer John McDonough in an interview published in *Down Beat* in 1979. "They criticized them for cheering too loud, whistling too much and so on. And they accused the musicians and myself of soliciting this kind of behavior from the crowds. I used to answer reviews like that, because they ignored so many other aspects of the presentation. They said Illinois Jacquet and Flip Phillips played differently in the jam sessions than they did with Hampton or Woody Herman. That was nonsense. Critics would ignore a set by Lennie Tristano, hardly a panderer to public tastes; a set by Ella Fitzgerald, who did mostly ballads; or a set by Oscar Peterson or the Modern Jazz Quartet."

Granz would sometimes stride angrily onstage and tell an audience the concert would not continue until they became quiet. The jazz fans of Paris are notoriously unruly, and Granz had one of his most memorable confrontations with a crowd there, at the Theatre des Champs Elysees.

Clarinetist Buddy de Franco was performing with the Oscar

Peterson trio. "The French felt that no white man could play jazz anyway," Granz said. "Buddy got into a solo on *Just One of those Things* — "Granz always remembers what tune was being played at the time of any given incident — "and just couldn't get out of it. That happens to people sometimes. It was a very fast tempo, and Buddy just kept going. The trio started to exchange glances. The audience began to get restless, then they started whistling and throwing coins. I don't know how he stopped it, I think Oscar just went *clunk* on the piano and ended it. Buddy came off stage just shaking, he was very hurt. And I got mad.

"I got out a chair and went out onstage and sat down. First of all, I told them I wasn't going to speak French to them. And then I said, 'Okay, and I'll tell you something else. You paid me a certain amount of money for two hours of music. I already have your money in my pocket, and I am not going to give it back. This concert ends at five o'clock. Whether you want to listen to this yelling or to music is up to you.' And gradually they began to shush each other up, which is the way it had to be done, and the concert went on.

"I had a number of friends at that concert. One of them was the screenplay writer Harry Kurnitz. He said to me afterwards, 'I've never seen anything like it. That's the first time anybody ever got the best of a French audience.'"

In 1955 Granz said, "I don't like to talk about exciting an audience, because it always implies *in*citing. Jazz has always been, to me, fundamentally the blues and all the happy and sad emotions it arouses. I dig the blues as a basic human emotion, and my concerts are primarily emotional music. I've never yet put on a concert that didn't have to please *me*, musically, first of all. I could put on as cerebral a concert as you like, but I'd rather go the emotional route. And do you know, the public's taste reflects mine — the biggest flop I've ever had in my life was the tour I put on with some of the cerebral musicians like Dave Brubeck and Gerry Mulligan."

That statement takes on a certain irony when read today: not long thereafter the Dave Brubeck Quartet became so hugely successful that it made the cover of *Time* and itself fell under criticism for "being commercial." And Gerry Mulligan would become comparably popular; Granz would himself record Mulligan.

Up until this time, white players rarely if ever appeared onstage with black players, except in after-hours clubs where they could go to jam. The did in JATP concerts. But Granz perceived that integrating the performers was not enough: audiences had to be integrated as well. And he used the economic power that JATP gave him to do it. Promoters seeking to book his concerts were presented with contracts forbidding discrimination at the door. JATP played the first concert for an integrated audience in the history of Charleston, South Carolina. Granz cancelled a New Orleans concert when he learned that while blacks were being sold tickets, they would be segregated from the white audience. He put his artists up at the best hotels, often hotels that had previously been barred to blacks, and moved them from one engagement to another by airline, rather than the long dreary busrides that are among the many ordeals of the jazz life, and on at least one known occasion he chartered a plane to get his company out of a Southern city after a concert rather than let it spend a night under Jim Crow conditions.

In 1947, Granz set up the Clef label, distributed by Mercury Records of Chicago. He commissioned the brilliant graphic artist David Stone Martin to design the album covers of the new label. Martin turned in a memorable series of pen-and-brush drawings in his distinctive spidery line style, which had a curiously improvisatory quality that suited it well to the subject matter, and made him as famous among jazz fans as the musicians he portrayed. Martin's vivid drawing of a trumpet player in the throes of creation, seen from a low angle, became the logo of Clef Records. And Granz became as famous as any of his artists.

If Granz' opposition to racism had cost him a commission during his army days in Texas, it seemed during a JATP visit to Texas that it might cost him his life.

Segregation in Houston was rigidly enforced, but it was an apartheid of custom, not law. Granz knew this. He rented a hall that was owned not by a corporation or an individual but by the city, and hired his own personnel for two concerts, the first at seven p.m., the second at ten. He gave this instruction to his ticket sellers: "You will tell people that these concerts are not segregated. If anyone doesn't like it, you will return their money, and you will not assign them other seats." To assure the peace of the evening, he hired a number of off-duty policemen as security guards.

Just before the first concert began, he noticed three strangers backstage, men in business suits. He told them that only people on the concert staff were allowed backstage during performances, and asked them to leave. They said they were off-duty police detectives who just wanted to listen to the music, and showed him their credentials. For once Granz relaxed his rule. He told them they could stay.

During the intermission of the first concert, Oscar Peterson, Gene Krupa, Illinois Jacquet, and Dizzy Gillespie gathered in Ella Fitzgerald's dressing room, laughing and telling tall tales. Someone pulled out a pair of dice, and a dollar game of craps promptly sprang up. The three detectives entered the room and told them they were all under arrest for gambling. Hearing the tumult this proclamation inspired, Granz came running. The cops told him that he too was under arrest — for running a gambling game.

One of the detectives entered Ella Fitzgerald's bathroom. Granz, well aware of the police tactic of planting narcotics on jazz musicians, followed him.

"What are you doing?" the detective said.

"Watching you," Granz said.

The cop drew a gun and pointed it at Granz. "I ought to kill you," he said.

Granz is said to have faced the gun with icy calm. "It was not with icy calm," he said with a slight smile as he recounted the incident to me. "I just didn't say anything. I did realize there were witnesses, but there were also two other cops. I suppose if he had shot me they'd have come up with some story."

The detectives said that they were taking everyone down to the court house. Granz said, "All right, but before we go I am going to walk out on that stage and tell three thousand people that they are not going to see the second half of the concert, and you are then going to have a riot. And they will be leaving and they'll walk right into the other three thousand who are waiting to get into the second concert."

The detectives agreed then to wait until the two shows were over. Then Granz and five of his people, including Ella Fitzgerald, were taken to a court house and charged with gambling. "Curiously enough," Granz said, "there were newspaper photographers present. That's when I knew they'd set us up to smear us."

The judge ordered that bail of ten dollars be posted for each of the five persons arrested. Granz put up the fifty dollars and the JATP group left. "Ella was fit to be tied," Granz said.

As with traffic offenses, the system assumes that no one will waste the time and money necessary to fight a minor charge, and the forfeited bail becomes in effect the fine. But when the JATP group arose the following morning, they found their pictures in the newspapers with the story of their purported backstage debauchery. It was in part Ella Fitzgerald's humiliation at this

exposure that determined Granz's course of action.

"I decided to do what no one in his right mind would do," he said. "I decided to fight them." He called his lawyer in New York and told him he wanted the best lawyer in Texas. His lawyer urged him to forfeit the bail and forget it. So did the Texas attorney he engaged.

When the case in due course came to court, the presiding judge threw out the charges. With legal and other expenses, it had cost Granz more than two thousand dollars to get the fifty dollars back. His satisfaction came in the newspaper accounts, one story in particular: a reporter wrote that in view of their behavior in this unseemly incident, the Houston police should have as a crest a chicken rampant on a field of yellow.

By 1953 *Jazz at the Philharmonic*, JATP had grown to enormous proportions. In a 1954 *Saturday Review* article titled *Pandemonium Pays Off*, Whitney Balliett wrote that Granz was the "first person who has ever been able to successfully mass produce jazz." Granz, he noted, "owns and operates a record company that has mushroomed so violently in its first year it has had to be split into two companies to accommodate overworked distribution facilities."

The worth of the Granz enterprises at that point was an estimated five million dollars. Those are 1954 dollars, it should be remembered, and in the jazz world, the figure was astonishing. There were eleven musicians, including the Oscar Peterson Trio and Ella Fitzgerald, in the JATP company. The group that year played seventy-five concerts in fifty American and Canadian cities, twenty-four concerts in Japan, and fifty concerts in twenty-five European cities. The collective audience was 400,000 persons who paid from $2 to $4.80 for seats. The two Granz record labels, Clef and Norgran, had released more than two hundred albums, and in one month alone of that year, twenty-five of their albums were shipped to record stores. Indeed, fifty percent of all the jazz records being released at that time came from the Granz companies.

In addition to running his record companies and booking JATP, Granz was the master of ceremonies at all the JATP concerts. "I go crazy at concerts," he told Balliett. "I lose my temper every five minutes. I yell at everybody. I'm rude to people who pester me. Every concert has to go perfectly. If somebody goofs he pays for it."

Balliett left a vivid image of JATP in his *Saturday Review* piece:

"This concentration on jazz as a solo art has brought off some weird musical achievements. One is a regularly featured trumpet battle — Roy Eldridge and his old pupil Dizzy Gillespie will be the participants this year — in which two trumpeters squeal at each other like a brace of stuck pigs. Another is a blinding, deafening drum battle, that invariably jellies the stoutest audience. If this be pandemonium, Granz makes the most of it. Most of the musical materials are banal, being restricted to the blues at a variety of tempos, and to such weary evergreens as *How High the Moon*, and a handful of Gershwin tunes.

"From close observation Granz feels that the average age level of his audience has increased in the past nine years, and that it is now somewhere between twenty-one and twenty-eight, which is probably a rather casual statistic, judging by the oceans of heated teenage faces one can find at any Granz concert. One might at first describe these audiences as the spiritual offspring of the sprites who jitterbugged in the aisles and on the stage of the Paramount Theater in New York in the late '30s when Benny Goodman first came to town. But at second glance these present-day audiences are of a different and more warlike tribe. They rarely move from their seats, yet they manage to give off through a series of screams — the word 'go' repeated like the successive slams of the cars on a fast freight — blood-stopping whistles, and stamping feet a mass intensity that would have soothed Hitler, and frightened the pants off Benny Goodman.

"Granz the jazz lover is predominantly visible through his studio recording sessions. In these he has been responsible for a polite amount of excellent jazz, as well as a great deal of musical mediocrity. Granz officiates at every recording date, and ominously announces this fact on every record label and record sleeve with, respectively, the words 'Recorded under . . . the Personal Supervision of Norman Granz' and 'Supervised by Norman Granz'. He also composes all the liner notes for his albums, which have become noted for barrages of adjectives and their lack of information. Although Granz. . . claims that he never dictates to his musicians, much of what emanates from his recording studios has come to have a distinct flavor. This flavor, as an observer recently pointed out, is reminiscent of good roast beef that has been left in the icebox too long. For, in spite of the fact that their personnels are often laundry lists of jazz royalty, many Granz records are, peculiarly, boring and cold. One reason for this may be that a good number of the musicians who appear on Granz recordings are also members of JATP, and, because of the nature of the music they must play seven months out of the year on the concert stage, have gone dead. And if the requirements of a touring job with Granz often make his musicians artistically laconic, these requirements have also seriously stunted the musical growth of such talented men as Flip Phillips, Oscar Peterson, Charlie Shavers, and Buddy Rich.

"When Granz inaugurated this year's JATP tour on September 17, in Hartford, he had on his payroll eleven of the best jazz musicians money can buy. He is paying them salaries that start at several hundred dollars a week, and range up to $6,000 a week for Ella Fitzgerald and $5,000 a week for Oscar Peterson. In addition to the European tour, which will take place in the spring, and the fall tour of the U.S. and Canada, JATP will take a brisk swing through Australia, as well as Japan and Honolulu. Granz has also promised that he will release a minimum of 120 LP albums in the next twelve months. To at least half a million potential customers around the world, Granz will be doing for jazz what another prestidigitator, P.T. Barnum, did for midgets."

Granz told a *Time* magazine reporter that one reason for his success was that "I give the people in Des Moines and El Passo the kind of jazz they could otherwise never hear." He also said he had learned as much as any man alive about "scaling a house", that is, deciding how much to charge for each seat. "I've got a sixth sense about it," he said.

Two years later, in early 1956, Granz formed Verve Records. His intention at that time was to make it a popular-music label, with his jazz product continuing to be issued on his Norgran and Clef labels. In addition, he set up a label called Down Home to issue traditional jazz. But all this proved too ponderous to administer and he amalgamated all his recordings activities under the label Verve.

After its 1957 season, Granz closed down North American tours of *Jazz at the Philharmonic*, though he continued to take JATP to Europe. He took residence in Geneva, Switzerland, and moved his substantial art collection to his home there. He concentrated his show business attention on managing the careers of Oscar Peterson and Ella Fitzgerald.

"My feeling," Granz told John Tynan, then west coast editor of *Down Beat*, "is that jazz concerts, as I've laid them out, will never be the way they were.

"As impresario and as fan, I feel at this point that all jazz concerts, by the very nature of the artistic demands made on the musicians, must inevitably begin to repeat themselves. Jazz just hasn't produced enough musicians to make such concerts

possible any more."

Granz again complained about his treatment by the press. "I felt the undue accent on my business acumen was somewhat out of line in most of the stories about me," he said, although an examination of news clippings over the years reveals that most of the stories on his business success had come out of his own office.

"One story on me I disliked *very* much appeared in the *Saturday Review*." He was of course referring to the Balliett piece.

"To me, the all-important aspect of my work is the obvious use of jazz in fighting sociological problems. This aspect hasn't been given nearly enough attention, so far as I'm concerned."

He also said to Tynan, "Some musicians may not like me, they may not want to work for me. But nobody, not even those who may feel like that, can say they don't respect me." Granz sold Pablo off to Fantasy without any valedictory comment. But if Granz remained silent about his career, Oscar Peterson had plenty to say. Peterson's entire career since his 1949 debut at JATP in Carnegie Hall has been guided by Granz, and Oscar even named one of his sons after Granz. He and Granz are, obviously, very close friends. And, equally obviously, no one knows Granz as well as Peterson.

"There are a couple of things Norman and I don't concur on, believe it or not," Oscar said with a little chuckle some weeks before announcement of the sale of Pablo. "One of them is the fact that there are certain interviews I think he should have done that he didn't do. And at this stage in his life, he's perfectly entitled to feel the way he feels, that it doesn't really matter — but I think it does. I hope that he's going to write his book, about what he saw out there and what he did about it.

"I think Norman Granz is probably the most misunderstood human being I know. I really do. I think what may have started out as a kibbitz about he's strange and he'll tell you this and act like this suddenly became rooted in certain ways, in certain areas, with some people. But I think the predominant factor in his image has been his honesty. I think he decided a long time ago to say what he had to say and do what he had to do and be the kind of person he had to be, and he's managed to do it.

"Nobody that I know of, but nobody, with all due respect to George Wein and John Hammond, has done as much for jazz as Norman Granz. On a Grammy acceptance several years ago, I said — I remember what I said, because I intended to say it — 'I accept this not for myself but on behalf of Norman Granz, the man who continues to believe and believe and believe...'

"And I walked away. And I meant that. You know, as much as I've heard him bad-mouthed, I can name you fifteen people who wouldn't give you a bad word about Norman Granz. Fifteen without stumbling. So why has this annihilation program taken place? Why has Norman been overlooked with all the awards? When has he ever gotten a Grammy? Norman has never received a single award that I know of. How can you make that many recordings with that many important jazz names and never receive an award? Are you going to tell me Coleman Hawkins wasn't important? Ben Webster isn't important? Roy Eldridge? Bird? Billie Holiday? That monster package on Art Tatum? Dizzy? Ray Brown? Barney Kessel? Ellington? Basie? Zoot? How can you make all these records and not... It's past the point of being ludicrous.

"Norman Granz is probably the best manager that I know of, bar none. Forget about as a friend. Any level you want to argue on. You want to argue intelligence? I'll put him up against anyone you want to name. Name them, it doesn't have to be in jazz. There isn't anyone that I've seen, and I've met a quite a few of the impresarios in the classical world, that has the intuitive creative sense about what an artist should be doing to further his or her creative importance. I think that's the way you have to put it. Not just to sell records, not just to make more money. No no no no no. Norman has sat down and said to me, 'You know, there's an important area I think you have totally overlooked.'

"I know, as much as they may say what they say about him, I know what he did for Bird. I know what he did musically, creatively, and personally. I know what he did for Billie. I know what he he has done and still is doing for Ella Fitzgerald. I know what he did for Sarah Vaughan. I know what he did for Ellington, even through the period when he and Duke didn't talk. There was a period where he and Duke didn't talk. I know what he did for Basie, and he wasn't even, really, Basie's manager. I know the calls that went back and forth from Basie to him.

"He tried to get him first of all to see that he didn't have to sluff the band around. That he could go with the Kansas City Six, and if necessary play smaller halls and fewer halls and come out with better money. I can go on and on. I know what he did for Ben Webster while he was alive. Roy Eldridge. It's crazy. Roy was always one of Norman's favorites, and still is. Norman just admired him so much. Norman's totally crazy about Roy. He thinks he's maybe the all-time jazz great.

"And Norman is shy. Totally. You wouldn't know it. He would probably never come on that way to you. With a lot of other people he is. I'm one of the few people who know how to embarrass him.

"You should see the humility that he has in front of the artist he reveres. It doesn't just have to be in music. I mean, he's totally beholden to people he reveres. He looks at Roy and shakes his head. Same with Benny Carter."

A footnote. When I talked to Granz, some weeks after the announced sale of Pablo, I said, "Oscar Peterson has always argued that you are shy."

Granz looked a little startled. He said nothing.

"Well," I said, "are you?"

And very softly he said, "Yes."

Ralph Kaffel, the president of Fantasy, says that there are 350 albums involved in the deal and subject to re-release and transfer to the CD format, along with an unknown quantity of material on the tapes. Indeed, he said, some of the material goes back to Jazz at the Philharmonic, with tapes made as long ago as 1949. Eric Miller, who worked for Granz at both Verve and Pablo, is now on the Fantasy staff, going through the raw tapes to see what should and should not be issued, and determining what contractual arrangements have been or should be made with the performers.

"The main attraction of the Pablo label," Kaffel said, "was that it gave us an area of jazz we did not have. We had no Peterson, no Ella Fitzgerald, no Benny Carter, no Joe Pass, no Lockjaw Davis."

Neither Granz nor sources at Fantasy revealed the price paid for Pablo, but obviously it was much more than the 2.75 million dollars MGM paid in 1961 for Verve. Nor did Granz give any indication of his plans. He will presumably spend more of his time with his wife Grete at his home in Geneva, surrounded by his paintings and certainly by memories.

The jazz world has changed enormously since Norman Granz walked into Moe Asch's office with JATP's *How High the Moon* on an acetate under his arm. Granz is one of those who changed it.

A few months after he announced his withdrawal from the record business, John Hammond died. And a dusty cliche took on new meaning: in jazz, an era had ended.