Gene Lees
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Oak View, Calif.
93022

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Name That Label

It is firm policy at some jazz stations not to mention record labels — in short, not to ease the way for the listener to buy the record he has just heard. KKGO in Los Angeles is one of the worst offenders, and in addition too often fails to identify personnel on records.

The failure to name personnel is annoying. But the failure to identify record labels is more serious: it works against the companies who provide the stations with their music, and works in the long run to the station's own detriment, not to mention jazz itself. And it is at variance, incidentally, with the custom on classical-music stations.

Compare the failure to name labels with practice of *Down Beat, High Fidelity, Stereo Review, JazzTimes*, and other magazines, and newspapers. All of them identify labels in their reviews. And book reviews name publishers, sometimes even prices.

The print media do this as an act of service not only to their readers but to the industries that give them their reason for being.

Stations that deliberately do not mention labels are trying —although they don't think of it this way — to get advertising from record labels by coercion. There is no other way to describe it. Their managers or owners say, and this is a direct quote from one of them, "If the record companies want to sell records, let them buy time on the station."

Yet the responsibility to identify labels lies even more heavily on radio than on the print media reviewing books or records. For the record itself is not part of the editorial material of *Stereo Review* or *JazzTimes*. But the records it plays actually are the editorial material a station is using to attract the listeners who justify the fees it charges its advertisers. And in many cases, perhaps most, the radio station gets its records free from labels seeking the exposure of its product.

Radio station owners will reply that they do indeed pay for music. They pay ASCAP and BMI for it.

Let's sort that out. Through ASCAP and BMI, stations pay *only* the publishers and composers of the tune. They do *not* pay the performer, and they do not pay the record company that invested the money to make the record that is providing the real editorial content of the station. Incidentally, what they pay ASCAP and BMI is disgracefully low — and the broadcasting industry is working relentlessly to reduce it further, with a savage bill to reduce composers' royalties now pending before congress. (The subject will be treated in a later issue.)

The relationship of the record industry to the broadcasting industry is a symbiotic one. Ever since Judge Learned Hand made one of the most deplorable and ignorant rulings in the history of American jurisprudence, namely that playing a record on the radio does not constitute infringement of copyright, the radio industry has been in the peculiar position of living off another industry, the record industry. In effect radio stations not only refuse to pay the performers of the music, they expect the record industry to give them the actual records, "promo copies," and in the pop-rock field they expect and have their hands out for payola as well.

I don't think there is a payola problem in the jazz field, however, simply because it isn't big enough. And there is an element of idealism in the very existence of a jazz station, *particularly* a commercial jazz station, because there are far easier formats to generate money than playing jazz. KLEF, the Houston, Texas, classical station, went off the air last year, and the license has been converted to a pop commercial operation. And it was making good money; its owners merely wanted to make more.

It would seem only reasonable that radio station owners would be interested in the healthy survival of the companies, mostly small, who provide them *free* with the bulk of what they play on the air. They should provide label identification as a matter of service to listeners and manufacturers alike, and of simple ethical practice. Thus they might help some smaller labels to grow to the point where they actually could afford to advertise on radio, rather than being ground out of existence by the majors who control the industry and the distribution system that is interested only in mass sales and short shelf life.

Look what's happened to the so-called beautiful music stations over the past decade. They fell into a custom of playing the records back-to-back, without identification even of the artist or for that matter the name of the song. Thus albums by such people as Percy Faith, Henry Mancini, Robert Farnon, and other excellent writers in a field that unfortunately was dubbed mood music, became less and less profitable. How could the listener buy a record when he didn't even know the name of the tune or the artist, much less the name of the label?

The result is that the production of the very records that such stations needed to stay on the air fell off and they found it necessary to buy music from programming services, including some dreary stuff recorded in England and characterized by the pedestrian voice-leading that is that country's orchestrational hallmark. The quality of the music on such stations has declined to the point that I can no longer listen to them. (You can often spot English orchestral recordings by their oboes: they have a green sound.)

The health of the independent labels who produce jazz records

is of vital concern to the jazz radio stations. Indeed, not only is the health of the independents at stake. All the major labels have now launched jazz programs, some of them for reissue purposes. This is all to the good. But they're not going to keep it up if the stuff doesn't sell.

And it will sell less if people have to go to considerable lengths of inconvenience to find out how to get it after hearing it on a jazz station.

Until now, at least, the National Public Radio stations have had no such policy of omitting mention of labels. This is because they are not in the business of selling advertising. And this very difference in the practices of commercial and non-commercial radio stations heightens the impression that the policy against doing so at the former is the consequence of extortionist practice, whether conscious or not. But only recently, I saw a memo delivered to the staff of an NPR station from a new manager who apparently is anxious to bring the station into the style of commercial stations. He specifically ordered a jazz broadcaster to stop naming personnel and identifying labels.

To commercial and non-commercial broadcasters, in any field of music, a plea:

Make it as easy as you can for the listener to find and buy the records you play. This helps keep the companies that provide you with your music in business. Such a policy is in the long run in your own interest. It's good for the labels, good for you, and good for the music. Name that label.

This is a request. It may not accomplish anything.

Therefore I want to propose something. I want to ask all the readers of the Jazzletter, and we now have the numbers to do this, to start monitoring jazz broadcasting, both individual programs and stations as a whole. Please do it over a period of the next couple of months or so and then write me a letter about it.

And then we'll make a decision. In cases of stations' failing to name personnel and labels, we'll organize the independent labels and have them stop sending free albums to the stations. And the musicians in the readership should refuse to do interviews at such stations. If these stations are not going to help us survive as artists and producers and companies, I don't see why we should help them survive. Let them buy the records; we'll get at least that out of it.

And if they continue to do so abuse the artists and the record companies, then I think we should consider going to a second phase: the selective boycotting of products advertised on the commercial stations, and refusal to contribute our help to pledge drives on NPR stations. We will organize this through the various jazz societies, and through other publications in the jazz field who I think will go along us. We'll set up letter-writing campaigns of complaint to newspapers, and advise advertisers that they are under boycott.

We'll see what happens. But I repeat to broadcasting personnel: treat the artist fairly — name the players and name the label.

Jazz: A Musical Discussion

by Carl Engel

The following essay by Carl Engel appeared in The Atlantic *in 1922. It is a further example of what was being written and published about jazz in America during that period instead of what British and French jazz critics say was being written about it. James Lincoln Collier has lately uncovered literally hundreds of serious essays and articles about jazz published in the 1920s by both large and small periodicals, including the New York* Times.

That some Americans were disturbed by jazz is obvious from Engel's first paragraph — just as some of the French were disturbed by Stravinsky's Le Sacre du printemps *nine years earlier. But musicians and informed commentators in quite large numbers were defending jazz and advancing its cause.*

As Collier's research has demonstrated the extent to which jazz was being championed in the intellectual establishment, die-hard defenders of the Europeans-dug-it-first dogma have taken to questioning whether these various writers in America knew what jazz was. (The Europeans, of course, knew, right?) Didn't they think jazz was Fred Waring, Vincent Lopez, and Paul Whiteman? The emphasis of Engel's essay on improvisation and non-written music makes it clear that he assuredly was not talking about Vincent Lopez. He seemed to know very well indeed what jazz was. He even perceives the problem of the piano in jazz, and jazz on the piano.

No doubt somebody in France will be quick to leap up, waggle a forefinger, cry "Tiens!" and point out that Engel was born in France. But Engel, a composer and musicographer by training, considered himself an American, as his essay makes clear, and in any event the essay is indicative of what was being printed *in America in that period. He emigrated to the United States in 1905, at the age of twenty-two, and proceeded to make a place for himself in American intellectual and musical circles. He became head of the music division of the Library of Congress in 1922, the same year this essay was written. Seven years later, in 1929, he became editor of* Musical Quarterly, *a post in which he served for many years. So in this essay we learn what was the actual attitude the editor of that estimable pillar of the musical establishment.*

The Europeans continue doggedly to insist that jazz was being both ignored and deplored in America in that period, a somewhat contradictory claim. This credo was taken up by American jazz chroniclers of the political left because of the support it accorded their bias. The music was hardly being ignored when its popularity was the cause of the bother; and Engel's essay —along with masses of material uncovered by Collier — helps lay to rest the idea that it was universally deplored. Indeed, as I have said before, the startling thing was that a new music should have so quickly inspired encomiums in the higher intellectual echelons.

A couple of other points. Engel accurately perceived the importance of Jerome Kern's contribution to the harmonic vocabulary of American popular music, which alone would make this essay interesting. And he makes us aware of how long ago the flute was being used as a jazz instrument.

Herewith the Engel essay.

Jazz is upon us, everywhere. To deny the fact is to assume the classic ostrich pose, head buried in the sand, tail-feathers to the sun. To shout alarm hysterically from the housetops is to exhibit over-confidence in clamorous indignation as a purifier of morals, if it be not wholly to ignore historic precedent.

The situation we are facing is not new. It offers many problems which are grave, yet seemingly not more perplexing than those which have arisen under similar conjectures, in the past. True it is that the dance to which jazz music has been coupled is not precisely setting an example of modesty and grace. True, also,

that certain modern dance-perversions have called up music that is as noxious as the breath of Belial. Only by a bold stretch of fancy can this delirious caterwauling be brought under the head of music proper — or improper; as noise, its significance at times becomes eloquent to the point of leaving little or nothing to the imagination.

However, let us remember that the worst of our present dances are not beginning to approach in barefaced wickedness the almost unbelievable performances of our forefathers, for which we need not seek much further back than the time of the French Revolution, when the 1800 dance-halls of Paris were not enough to hold the whirling pairs, but dancing went on gaily in churches and in cemeteries. And let us admit that the *best* of jazz tunes is something infinitely more original — perhaps even musically better — than the so-called "popular" music that America produced in he "good old days," that golden age which lives on in the mythology of disappointed sinners.

To a great many minds, the word "jazz" implies frivolous or obscene deportment. Let me ask what the word "sarabande" suggest to you. When you hear mention of a "sarabande," you think of Bach's, of Handel's slow and stately airs; you think of noble and dignified strains in partitas, sonatas, and operas of the eighteenth century. Yet the sarabande, when it was first danced in Spain, about 1588, was probably far more shocking to behold than is the most shocking jazz today. The sarabande seems to have been of Moorish origin. Then, as now, the oriental, the exotic touch, gave dancing an added fillip. When Lady Mary Montagu, writing from Adrianople in 1717, described the dance that she saw in the seraglio of a rich Mussulman, she made allusions which leave no uncertainty as to the exact nature of these proceedings. Something of that character must have belonged to the earliest sarabandes. They were the proud Hidalgo's hoolah-hoolah. Father Mariana, in his book *De Spectaculis*, published in 1609, devoted a whole chapter to an attack on the sarabande, accusing it of having done more harm than the bubonic plague which devastated Europe in the Middle Ages.

Again, we hear it alleged that the moral corruption worked by jazz is vastly more calamitous than was the material havoc wrought by the World War. And yet, as we know, this once objectionable sarabande finally became a matrix wherein the greatest musical composers have cast some of their loftiest and purest inspirations. Dances, popular and no doubt shocking in their day, have furnished the soil for the cyclic growth from which has sprung, by way of the concerto and sonata, the grandest form of absolute music, the orchestral symphony.

II

The term jazz, as applied to music, is rather elastic. It embraces not only the noisy-noisome sort, the jumble-jungle kind, but a type that refines upon and meliorates the racy stuff of wilder species with matter of a distinctly and engagingly musical nature. Good jazz is a composite, the happy union of seemingly incompatible elements. Good jazz is the latest phase of American popular music. It is the upshot of a transformation which started some twenty years ago, and culminated in something unique, unmatched in any other part of the world. Fifteen years ago we had progressed to the insipid *Waltz Me Around Again, Willie* to the Coon-song and Rag-time factories in the back parlors of the West Twentieth streets of New York. With the period of *Everybody's Doing It, Doing It Doing It*, we reached the short insistent motive which was to usurp the prerogatives of songfulness.

Then, one fine day, in 1915, we were treated to *The Magic Melody*. A young man, gifted with musical talent and unusual courage, had dared to introduce into his tune a modulation that was nothing extraordinary in itself, but which marked a change, a new regime in American popular music. It was just the thing that the popular composer in the making had been warned against by the wise ones as a thing too "high-brow" for the public to accept. They were foolish prophets. The public not only liked it: they went mad over it. And well they might; for it was a relief, a liberation.

Notice

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The Magic Melody, by Jerome Kern, was the opening chorus of an epoch. It is not a composition of genius, but it is very ingenious. While it is almost more tuneless than was *Everybody's Doing It* — if that be possible — and largely adheres to the short, insistent phrase, it stands on a much higher musical plane. Its principal claim to immortality is that it introduces a modulation which, at the time it was first heard by the masses, seized their ears with the power of magic. And the masses, for once, showed excellent judgment.

Mr. Kern subsequently proved to be one of the most fertile, tasteful, and characteristic composers of light music. When he tries to be purely melodic, he is apt to fall back upon cheap sentimentalism, tinged with spurious folk-song color. But his little harmonic device had a hue all its own; and popular parlance decided that it was "blue". What the uninitiated tried to define by that homely appellation was, perhaps, an indistinct association of the minor mode and dyspeptic intonation with poor digestion; in reality, it is the advent in popular music of something which the textbooks call ambiguous chords, altered notes, extraneous modulation, and deceptive cadence.

Instead of the traditional sequence of dominant diminished-seventh and dominant-seventh harmonies — which formed the timeworn transition into the refrain and accompanied the chanted announcement: "When he to her did say," — there sprang up a diversity of the freshest, most unexpected modulations, which fell upon the ear like drops of evening rain upon a parched and sun-baked soil. The various shades, in which untutored harmonists indulged, ranged all the way from faint cerulean to deep indigo. The last could often be more fittingly compared to mud.

Between the earlier "rag" and the "blues," there was this distinction: the rag had been mainly a thing of rhythm, of syncopation; the blues were syncopation relished with spicier harmonies. In addition to these two elements of music, rhythm and harmony, the people — who in the beginning had known but one thing: melody, fastened upon a primitive and weak harmonic structure of "barbershop" chords — the people, I say, who had stepwise advanced from melody and rhythm to harmony, lastly discovered counterpoint. In other words, jazz is rag-time, *plus* "Blues," *plus* orchestral polyphony: it is the combination, in the popular music current, of melody, rhythm, harmony, and counterpoint.

III

Each of these four ingredients bears racial features which are unequivocally American. Yet this Americanism is not exclusively a tribal one. The contrapuntal complexity of jazz is something native, born out of the complex, strident present-day American life. Where did you hear, before jazz was invented, such multifarious stirring, heaving, wrestling of independent voices as there are in a jazz orchestra? The saxophone bleats a turgid song; the clarinets turn capers of their own; the violins come forward with an obligato; a saucy flute darts up and down the scale, never missing the right note on the right chord; the trombone lumberingly slides off on a tangent; the drum and xylophone put rhythmic high lights into these kaleidoscopic shiftings; the cornet is suddenly heard above the turmoil, with good-natured brazenness. Chaos in order — orchestral technic of master craftsmen — music that is recklessly fantastic, joyously grotesque — such is good jazz. A superb, incomparable creation, inescapable yet elusive; something it is almost impossible to put in score upon a page of paper.

For jazz finds its last and supreme glory in the skill for improvisation exhibited by the performers. The deliberately scored jazz tunes are generally clumsy, pedestrian. It is not for the plodding, routine orchestrator to foresee the unexpected, to plan the improbable.

Jazz is abandon, is whimsicality in music. A good jazz band should never play, and actually never does play, the same piece twice in the same manner. Each player must be a clever musician, an originator as well as an interpreter, a wheel that turns hither and thither on its own axis without disturbing the clockwork.

Strange to relate, this orchestral improvisation, which may seem to you virtually impossible or artistically undesirable, is not an invention of our age. To improvise counterpoint was a talent that the musicians in the orchestras of Peri and Monteverdi, three hundred years ago, were expected to possess, and did posses to such a high degree that the skeleton scores of those operas which have come down to us give but an imperfect idea of how this music sounded when performed.

A semblance of this lost, and rediscovered, art is contained in the music of the Russian and Hungarian gypsies. Just as that music is a riotous improvisation, throbbing with a communicative beat, ever restless in mood, so is jazz. Just as the gypsy players are held together by an identical, inexplicable rhythmic spell, following the leader's fiddle in its harmonic meanderings, each instrument walking in a bypath of its own, so is the ideal jazz band constituted — that is, the jazz band made up of serious jazz artists.

Franz Liszt could give a suggestion of gypsy music on the keyboard. He had a way of playing the piano orchestrally. There are few people who can play jazz on the piano. Jazz, as much as the gypsy dances, depends on the many and contrasting voices of a band, united in a single and spontaneous rhythmic, harmonic, and contrapuntal will.

Jazz, fortunately, can be preserved on phonographic records for our descendants. They will form their own estimate of our enormities. If we had such records of what Scarlatti, Couperin and Rameau did with their figured bases, we should need fewer realizations, restitutions, and renditions by arranger and deranger.

— CE

New Frontiers In Jazz Criticism

Jazz tunes, including *Modern Leaves, Scrapple from the Apple*, and *The Girl with Emphysema*, stopped at 8:30 p.m. when the volunteer jazz trio packed up.

— Indianapolis *Star*, December 4, 1985

And not a moment too soon, either.

Every Swimmer

The following was written at the request of The Canadian Composer *and appeared in that magazine in slightly different form.*

Paul Desmond, who had originally intended to be a writer, once said to me, "I think jazz is like writing in that it can be learned but it can't be taught."

But that is true of all the arts and crafts. You can lecture on drawing all day, but only the constant use of the pencils or charcoal on the paper will turn a layman into a skilled artisan. Someone can tell you (or try to!) how to ride a bicycle, but only doing it yourself will give you the knack of it. The same is true of swimming. In a very real sense, every musician, like every swimmer, is self-taught.

Former jazz bassist and now composer Jack Smalley teaches at the Dick Grove School in Los Angeles. "Yes!" Jack says. "The *theory* of anything can be taught. And *should* be taught. This is a time-saving way to pass on the techniques — and restrictions —of any form. But only a few — the Charlie Parkers, the Einsteins, Koufaxes, Mozarts, Wrights, Salks, Van Goghs — know how to add to the theory."

Teaching, especially in fields that involve physical skills, consists largely in directing the student's own learning processes. The experienced musician knows the value of being able to execute skillfully and on command all the scales and arpeggios. Learning them is a drudgery, but the teacher who can inspire his pupils to endure it is giving them wings. In European concert music, he thereby makes it easier for them to assimilate the pieces in which composers have incorporated these devices and elements. But in jazz this mastery is even more important, because — since jazz is nothing more nor less than spontaneous composition — he is inculcating the very materials of musical creation.

There are six things a jazz musician should master, above and beyond a virtuosic skill on his instrument:

1. The major and minor scales. In practice, he or she will work mostly with seven of them, A-flat, B-flat, C, D-flat, E-flat, F, and

Play Accordion, Go to Jail

— California Bumper Sticker

G. This is due to the fact that horn players, whose instruments are tuned in B-flat or E-flat, prefer the flat keys, and since jazz is a music dominated by horn players, they have always had their way in this matter. In musical forms centered largely on the guitar, including country and western and Brazilian music, there is a preference for sharp keys. This is due to the character of the instrument. In such cultures, even the pianists will be found to have become acclimated to the sharp keys. (Fletcher Henderson's charts particularly challenged musicians because they were often in keys other than the conventional.)

2. All the chords, major, minor, diminished, and augmented, with all their extensions (flat ninths, ninths, raised ninths, elevenths, raised elevenths, thirteenths, and combinations thereof) and alterations, as in the half-diminished or minor-seven-flat-five chord and dominant chord with flat fifth. If the musician is a pianist, he must know them in a broad range of their possible voicings. Voicings are the way the chords are assembled. You can put the same chord together in a number of different ways, adding other tones to alter the color but not the basic character and function.

3. The appropriate scales that go with these chords.

4. The modes other than major and minor — Dorian, Lydian, and so forth. This is more important than it used to be.

5. A very large repertoire of standard tunes, including the best of the Broadway material composed by Kern, Gershwin, Porter, and the rest, as well as the "jazz standards" written by Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Dave Brubeck, Bill Evans, Tadd Dameron, and others. The jazz musician must know these tunes in at least all the keys commonly used in jazz, together with the harmonic sequences or chords (the "right changes") that go with them. He will also be expected to know a good deal about chord substitution — the replacement of certain of these chords with other chords, which are deemed "hipper" or better. The musicians with whom he will work will expect him to be at ease in a prodigious number of these tunes, and to be able to create new melodic materials out of "the changes" on the spot.

6. The blues. The blues is a simple twelve-bar structure that, in its most rudimentary form, uses only three chords. But precisely because it gives the improvising musician so little to go on, it is a severe challenge. The blues was described as a blank slate by Charlie Parker: the measure of the musician is what he writes on it. The blues has a characteristic scale, involving particularly the flat third, that is played against the chords of the major scale. The clash and contrast create the characteristic jazz inflection and coloration. (The minor blues is slightly different.)

The jazz musician is expected to apply the knowledge of the materials specified in the first four points in the creative use of standard (usually 32 bar, though the form is by no means immutable) songs and the blues as a basis of improvisation. But these things are only the beginning. Charlie Parker observed, "First you learn your instrument, then you learn the music, then you forget all that shit and just play." In other words the knowledge must be absorbed down into the level of unconscious reflex.

All these elements of jazz can be and, in our own time, must be, learned. Probably anyone with even a modicum of ability can learn them. I have seen a talented young man of seventeen, starting in July with no knowledge of any of this material, master it by Christmas. This didn't make him an artist, but it did give him the knowledge with which to begin the struggle to become one. What cannot be taught is creativity, although truly great teachers can enhance and develop even that. The musician may use the materials mechanically and redundantly, or he may use them with enormous invention and flair and in very rare cases with genius.

"Any art form has its restrictions," Jack Smalley observed. "The blues, as you point out, is twelve measures containing an accepted group of chords. What we do within these restrictions is jazz. Some of it is inspired, some mediocre, a lot boring. But if we didn't have the restrictions, none of us, performer or audience, would know that it was the blues. And if we didn't have the Desmonds, Parkers, Coltranes, Gillespies, et al, we'd have no comparisons to even decide whether it was boring, mediocre, or excellent."

Did the early jazz musicians *consciously* understand all this? Some did, many didn't. But even those who played largely by intuition and by ear felt the nature and character of this material.

What is certain is that musicians by and large picked it up from each other, though current research is uncovering evidence that formal teaching played a more important part in early jazz than the music's mythology has generally indicated. By the formal teaching of jazz in such institutions as the Berklee College of Music in Boston, North Texas State University in Denton, Humber College in Toronto, and the Dick Grove School, is a development of the past thirty years.

One of the most interesting experiments to date in the teaching of jazz was the Advanced School of Contemporary Music, established in Toronto in 1960 under the direction of Oscar Peterson, Edmund Thigpen, Ray Brown, trombonist Butch Watanabe, and composer Phil Nimmons. It survived until 1964. Although there was a certain amount of classroom instruction, the school's emphasis was on direct contact between the individual teacher and student. Evidence of its effectiveness is that its students included the now-established pianists Wray Downes and Mike Longo. We cannot of course judge whether they would have been successful jazz pianists had they never attended the school. But the school's experience offers one indisputable proof that jazz can indeed be taught: Carol Britto.

Carol Britto knew nothing of jazz until she was in her early twenties; she had been extensively trained as a "classical" pianist. Then she was encouraged to audition for Peterson. Impressed by her abilities, he took her as a student.

Today she is known entirely as a jazz pianist, and a first-class one. The vigor, power, and natural swing of her playing offer no clue to the unsuspecting that her original training was in music of quite another rhythmic character. She is not only proof that jazz can be taught — she is the effective refutation of an article of faith in the jazz world that it is not possible for a player to "go from" classical music to jazz.

In recent years some solid work has been done in organizing the academic materials of jazz. There are good books analyzing at a technical level the styles of various jazz musicians. Solos of its greatest players are transcribed to paper so that students may see exactly how they were constructed and can incorporate some or all of the principles involved into their own work. Mark C. Gridley's book *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis* (Prentice Hall) is a very useful work. So is *Jazz: America's Classical Music*, by Grover Sales, from the same publisher.

But there is a pitfall in the matter of teaching jazz. The moment you decide to teach something as a classroom subject, you must

standardize the instruction, which in jazz standardizes the approach to performance. When more jazz musicians were self-taught than is the case today, they worked out some highly idiosyncratic solutions to the problems of producing musical sounds. For example, Clark Terry, one of the greatest of all jazz trumpeters, first made music on a garden hose. In trying to produce coherent noises on that improbable instrument, he undoubtedly disciplined his muscles and his mind in certain unique ways that are manifest in the astonishing flexibility of his later and more studied playing.

When the saxophonist Eddie Harris asked the late Lester Young a question about embouchure, the latter said, "I can only tell you about my mouthpiece in my mouth. I can't tell you about your mouthpiece in your mouth." This implicit recognition of the individuality of each jazz player is an important element in the character of this highly personal art. And standardized teaching militates against it.

"I find the music of most university jazz programs to be bland and uninteresting. The improvisations are scalar-chordal displays of technical proficiency, and ensemble passages have very little jazz feeling as I understand the idiom." This cavil, contained in a letter to me, was not written by some die-hard old-school jazz fan, yearning for a happier yesterday. It was written by Dr. Gene Hall, who established the North Texas State University jazz program and is one of the founding fathers of the North American stage-band jazz movement. And Dr. Hall isn't the only one complaining. Phil Woods has voiced the demurrer as well, in company with a good many others within and without the jazz education movement.

In the emphasis on jazz as "America's only original art form" (a description that has on occasion been applied as well to the Broadway musical by theater buffs ignorant of jazz), it is too often assumed that jazz is an unprecedented music. It isn't. There is no element in it that is new, not the rhythmic nature, which has highly sophisticated antecedents in Africa, nor the harmonic system, which Dizzy Gillespie points out is essentially European (with the added strictly American element of the blues), nor the fact of improvisation. Chopin, Liszt, Beethoven, Mozart, were master improvisers, and organists at the advanced level are expected to be such today. Flamenco guitarists improvise. Not even collective improvisation is new.

In the age of what we might call the Cult of the Composer, which became entrenched in the nineteenth century, mere players of instruments were relegated to roles of skilled interpretation —at best adoring presenters of the Great Man's music, at the least obedient automatons. The "creation" and performance of music became separate functions. Jazz brought western music back to its senses, although this reality has not even now penetrated all the recesses of academe. Nonetheless, the music departments of most major North American universities and conservatories today pay some service to jazz, and many of them have well-developed jazz courses, such as the one at Indiana University headed by David Baker. Jazz is no longer a step-child of formal music, ignored by academics.

No musical form can go on unmutated forever. If its does not change and grow, if its admirers and intellectuals try to freeze it in time, it becomes what all frozen things become: dead. Jazz today is not what it was years ago, when such geniuses as Louis Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson, Duke Ellington, Lester Young, and later, Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker, were exploring its possibilities and extending its bounds. Yet we encounter young players enthusiastically taking up styles of earlier decades, and a French group called the Anachronic Jazz Band a few years ago decided to make fun of the schism between bebop and traditional jazz by playing bebop tunes in a traditional style. The effect was quite funny, but the music made an important politico-musical point.

Because it is a music that puts its highest value on the creative player, not on the composer, jazz shows a remarkable capacity to renew itself from its own past, as successive generations of gifted newcomers — Branford Marsalis is an example — listen to older jazz and incorporate its inspiration into their own playing, even as the musicians coeval with such masters as Bechet and Armstrong did. The process of recording has abolished musical time, a fact whose implications have not yet percolated through academic circles.

The school systems today are turning out thousands of extremely skilled young players, of varying degrees of creative individuality. The very efficacy of these programs presents us with a new problem. If we accept as proven that jazz can be taught, and indeed taught on a mass scale, we face a new question: *should* it be taught to this extent?

One estimate holds that there are now 30,000 big bands on the campuses of colleges, universities, and high schools of the United States, plus those of Canada. Assuming there are fifteen young people playing in each of these bands, this means that in the United States and Canada there may be as many as a half million of them learning to play trumpets, trombones, saxophones, and the rhythm section instruments, to some degree of proficiency. The best of these will graduate from such schools as North Texas State — which has at least five top-drawer bands on campus at any given moment — as some of the most skillful instrumentalists in history.

And how many of them can become professional musicians in a society that is dominated by the limited instrumentation of rock music and, increasingly, by electronic keyboard instruments?

Is it possible that the jazz education movement of North America has been only too successful? Are we teaching hundreds of thousands of young people to make excellent buggy whips?

Until we have shifted our priorities, *educated the audience* through a new commitment to the humanities, which was once considered elementary to a decent education, taught people how to better use the leisure time and electronic communications that modern technology has given us, use this time and these artifacts in ways that expand rather than diminish the human spirit, we may be doing a disservice in turning loose so many gifted young jazz players to present their wares to an audience that remains bleakly and blankly indifferent to the higher esthetics.

These musicians may have nowhere to practice their art but the streets and subway stations of New York, Toronto, Chicago, Los Angeles. They're already there, and if we continue to teach jazz so well, their numbers can only grow.

Yet it may be that one of the values of the widespread jazz education movement lies precisely in its creation of a cultivated audience. How many of those who become skilled players will turn to other professions for a living — but with their lives infinitely enriched by the knowledge they have acquired of music?

"Art will survive," Jack Smalley observed. "The mistake we may be making is putting some kind of money value on these skills. It's too bad that a lot of well-trained musicians will not be able to make a living out of what they do. Only the best will be able to do that. And only the best will push the forms to new limits. And only the best are qualified to become examples for the next generation."