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Changes

Apologies for the delay on these two issues. We've been through the horrendous experience of moving to a new house, which disrupted everything for a month. A case of the 'flu and a trip to Toronto for a final meeting with Oscar Peterson before I finish his biography—due out next fall—didn't help either.

And on top of that, we're making the first experiment with laser typesetting. We'll see how it works out.

Anyway, we're moved back in closer to Ojai, and there is a referral on the old telephone lines to the new numbers. In any event they're listed with Information. Also, just to make things more confusing, the new postal box is the old postal box: in other words, we've gone back to PO Box 240, Ojai, CA 93023. The Oak View address is still valid, but the Ojai address is better.

The Big Sellout

A few years ago, the great worry in Canada was that American interests would end up owning the whole country. While the grandstander Canadian nationalists were making ringing speeches about being bought up by the Americans, the Arabs quietly bought downtown Toronto—and Canadians bought downtown Manhattan. Surely I jest. Surely I do. But not much. The American insurance industry, if you haven't noticed, is extensively Canadian owned, and is busy gouging California motorists at rates they couldn't get away with in Saskatchewan. The Japanese buy up forests in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia, haul the stuff out beyond the coastal limits, process it on floating factories, and sell it back to us at exorbitant prices. That's how much hipper they've become since they bought all that American scrap iron and airmailed it back at Pearl Harbor; they figured out how to make us pay them for screwing us.

For the past seven years, a concerted and by no means mindless campaign to break the American worker has been under way. First his children have been deprived of education, then his unions have been broken; the airlines were deregulated at the same time the air controllers union was destroyed, to lethal synergistic effect; he has been browbeaten by the threat of exporting his job to other countries, the automobile industry keeps faltering, thousands of farm families have been driven off their land so that the agribiz could take it over, building starts are down more than 16 percent and new home purchases by five percent, the value of the dollar keeps falling, scandals keep rocking Wall Street, last October the stock market did a breath-taking swan dive into a damp rag, twenty thousand of the homeless people who wandered the streets of New York this past winter were children, one quarter of adult American women are functionally illiterate, the satellite towns of Pittsburgh are bleak deserted ruins because the steel industry was murdered, the Japanese hold at least 200 billion dollars worth of American debt even while astronomical quantities of depositors' dollars were lent to dubious foreign countries who are now getting ready to default on their debts, which will produce, as one economist put it, a "cascade" of bank failures in the United States, and control of American economic life is

passing from American hands. Otherwise everything's just swell.

It was once America's pride that its workers were the best-paid in the world. Now the American worker is threatened that if he doesn't lower his standard of living, take pay cuts, reduce his health insurance, and send his wife out to get a job to make up his losses, his bosses will give his job to a Japanese, or a Taiwanese, or a mainland Chinese. Since when was the American worker expected to be ashamed of wanting more money than a Chinese coolie?

The next thing you know, if he won't take a further reduction in his living, the corporate world will be offering his job to a Russian. You think that's funny? Wait a year or two. General Motors has just announced a contract to have some of its engines built in the country we stopped calling Red China when Henry Kissinger said they were now our friends. Chase Manhattan set up shop in Moscow some time ago, in case you haven't noticed.

Notice how many of the new classical recordings are being made in the lands of those formerly dirty stinking rat Commie bastards. For example, CBS has just issued in CD a gorgeous performance of Giordano's opera *Andrea Chenier* featuring the Hungarian State Orchestra, the chorus of the Hungarian State Radio and Television, and members of the Children's Choir of the Hungarian State Opera. Remember when we were told how backward and technologically primitive those dirty stinking rat Commie bastards were? Well, it seems they've learned a thing or two about recording. The sound is stunning. The album, by the way, is "a co-production of CBS Masterworks and Hungaraton/Hungarian Record Company". In other words, a big American capitalist company is doing co-production work with those dirty stinking rat Commie bastards, right? Wrong.

CBS Records is no longer a big American capitalist company. It's a big Japanese capitalist company. But one thing's sure: local 802 members in the Metropolitan Opera orchestra didn't get U.S. recording scale on this gig. Those dirty stinking rat Commie bastards in the Hungarian State Radio and Television combo got the bread—and very little bread indeed, you can be sure.

The term "multinational corporation" is now obsolete: we must learn to think in terms of transnational corporations, who owe allegiance to no country and certainly none to the human race. Three thousand citizens of India were killed by the Union Carbide Company, which promptly tried to cop out of paying compensation by playing games in the courts of two countries. A few years ago, Volkswagen stopped making the bug, except in one plant in Mexico. American fans of this vehicle—an inexplicable breed, to be sure—started buying these Mexican Volkswagens, but before they could be brought into the United States, they had to be upgraded to meet U.S. safety standards. Think about that. Where the German owners could get away with shoddy workmanship and reduced safety standards—namely in Mexico—they did. Same company, remember. But we are told that it is the American worker who has caused our problems, by demanding too much.

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If one were to look for a turning point at which American popular music began its descent into the abyss—the snarling guitars and nasal synthesizers and sandpaper voices screaming banalities—I would suggest it was when one of the best American record companies, Capitol, was sold to a foreign company, namely EMI of England. EMI promptly used it as a needle through which to inject English musical crap into the American cultural bloodstream.

But have you looked lately? Not just CBS. All the great American record companies have been sold to foreign interests—as, incidentally, have a number of book companies. And an Australian scandalmonger turned the New York *Post* into the trashiest newspaper in America. RCA Records is now German-owned. And CBS Records was sold to Sony. Foreign record companies—Polygram, for example—control much of the rest of the market. The transnationals have taken over American esthetics, and are applying to the culture the same lofty standards of morality that led Volkswagen to turn out those bad Mexican bugs. It is no longer a matter of brave—stupidly brave, indeed, but God if any bless them—little independent record companies fighting the big American conglomerates in the cause of real music; they are fighting transnational conglomerates whose owners care as desperately about such things as the death of the American culture as they do about the demise of one of their camels. And just when one begins to work up a good wholesome hate of those dirty stinking rat non-Commie Arab bastards, we are forced to ponder what it feels like to get one's hands broken in Gaza by champions of democracy. Oh, the world is too complicated, too complicated!

It's rather pointless to say that an era has ended. Yet it has. It is poignant to remember when record companies were innovative little businesses, dominated by creative minds rather than those of accountants and lawyers, a time when esthetics rather than economics constituted the ethos of the budding industry.

A few months ago, Hal Davis began telling me about the founding days of Columbia Records and expressing a concern that a part of this piece of American cultural history would be lost with the Sony takeover of CBS Records. I found his memories fascinating.

Hal has a distinguished background. The son of a well-known society bandleader, Eddie Davis, Hal had his own band at fourteen, and joined the CBS radio network as a page boy in 1935. In due course he handled virtually all musical show publicity for CBS. His history in later years included a vice presidency of the Kenyon and Eckhardt advertising agency, then a vice presidency of Grey Advertising and the presidency

of a subsidiary, Grey and Davis. He managed the 1956-57 Benny Goodman State Department tour of the far east, and later went with Goodman on the Russian tour.

Hal retired to Sarasota, Florida, in 1979, and helped found the Sarasota County Arts Council and the American Federation of Jazz Societies. He started the Jazz Club of Sarasota in 1981. It now has 1,400 members, and presents jazz concerts regularly. If you want to get in touch with him, you can reach him at the Jazz Club of Sarasota, 61 N. Pineapple Ave, Sarasota FL 34231.

Hal has written his recollections of those early days of Columbia Records for us. It is an almost wistful reminiscence of a time before the transnationals when a bumptious little record company, an almost accidental offshoot of a great radio network, would contribute immeasurably to the musical culture of America and for that matter the world.

Birth of a Label

by Hal Davis

"Davis!"

Lou Ruppel, my boss in the CBS publicity department, bellowed my name from the far corner of his office. It echoed around the 17th floor and stirred me to frantic action, rushing to see what dire fate was in store for the most junior, and youngest, member of the CBS press corps.

Ruppel motioned me to a seat, while he busied himself with the phone. I had time to reflect on the fact that this was the same chair in which six department staffers had been fired in the first week after Lou Ruppel blew in from Chicago. He had replaced mild Luther Reid and seemed determined to bring an era of Chicago-style *Front Page* operation into the Columbia Broadcasting System.

Then he turned to me. "Davis!" He was still bellowing. "I don't know why, but CBS just bought a record company. You're the only one around here who knows the music business. As of right now, you are going to be the publicity and promotion director of Columbia Records. You'll work under Pat Dolan in Bridgeport and keep a desk here." Pat Dolan was vice president and advertising director. "How much are you making?"

I swallowed. "Twenty-five a week, sir."

"Well, we'll double it. And you'll have an expense account for traveling. Get moving."

I staggered out of the office and collapsed at my desk. My friends gathered around, ready to sympathize with me at my fate. How could I tell them that I would gladly have paid for the job? In 1939, heaven for me meant the job I had just been given, the princely sum of \$50 a week, and an expense account—I would be paid to drown in music!

And I was 23 years old. The world was mine. Mine!

The next morning I was on the first train to Bridgeport from Grand Central Station. The brand new Columbia Records company consisted of an old pressing plant on Barnum Avenue. My new boss, Pat Dolan, who had come from Chicago as part of Lou Ruppel's gang, took me around. Among others, I met a young art director named Alex Steinweiss. I was assigned a secretary, to be shared with someone in the advertising department.

Quality control consisted of simply dropping a record 200 times in a standard juke-box. If the record played after that, it

NOTICE

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was judged good enough to ship.

Pat Dolan filled me in on my assignment. "You are in charge of publicity for popular records marked Columbia. They sell for 75 cents. You'll also handle classical records, at \$2, R&B releases on our 35-cent label, Okeh. You'll handle all record reviewers, and a monthly mailing to our distributors telling them about every record in our weekly release. On top of that, let's have the kind of creative promotion and publicity that will knock RCA out of where it is. We may be small, but we're going to beat the hell out of RCA."

And that was our college slogan and incentive. Just like a football team, we aimed at bringing the mighty RCA colossus to its knees. None of us knew what it was to keep regular hours. We were fired up with the absolute knowledge that we were better than RCA.

And it began happening.

Of course our operations were small, compared to RCA's. But the first thing I did was to beef up the record reviewer list. Management bought the idea that giving out free records for editorial space was the cheapest and best way to call attention to the product. So I suppose I expanded and accelerated the business of supplying review copies of records. My recollection is that we serviced some 800 reviewers across the country. They included writers for college publications, record columnists in mass and specialized media, editors of the top metropolitan newspapers, and all the general columnists—including the top gossip columnists—we could find.

The first step was to take care of the weekly distributors' release. One Monday a month I had a CBS studio at 485 Madison Avenue as my own. Twenty-one acetates—42 sides—went on the turntable. Out of this I derived 11 pages of single-spaced copy extolling the virtues of each side. We never put out a bad, or even a merely good, record. They were all best-sellers.

To help us with the trade press, I invited Bernie Woods of *Variety*, Paul Ackerman of *Billboard*, and other friends who might spread the word, to these Monday night listening sessions. One of my proudest moments came when Louis Sobol printed a blurb from my sheet and said, "I'd rather read this than listen to the records."

Those were days when new discoveries were being made weekly. Somehow I can't forget the time that Will Bradley's *Celery Stalks at Midnight* came through. And Art Satherly, the most knowledgeable man I've ever met about early blues and country, kept coming up with brilliant records of authentic artists in these fields doing what they did best.

The correspondence to and from record reviewers was active, to say the least. In those times, college kids reviewing records (and their editors) were able to sell 10-inch records for six cents and 12-inch records for 12 cents to local record retailers. It helped many a college kid eat steadily. For this reason the correspondence got heated when a supposed jazz record reviewer, let's say from Harvard, bitterly denounced me for leaving, say, a Kay Kyser record out of the review package. He was deprived of six cents. Out of dozens of records, some editors would review one or two a month, but the dogs of hell would descend upon this poor dispenser of review copies if they didn't get the entire output.

And in a short time, Columbia Records began turning up in

columns the country over. RCA Victor was more stringent, and paid the price.

Life was better than heavenly. I was my own boss. Things were going well with publicity and promotion.

The day might start in New York with a recording session at Leiderkrantz Hall, an old beer hall off Park Avenue that someone at Columbia had found. Andre Kostelanetz—a much under-rated musician—loved the hall. So did Benny Goodman and all the other bandleaders. For the first time the dry studio tone typical of recordings up to that time was replaced by an open, loose tone.

Kostelanetz had an incredible ear. At a Leiderkrantz session one Monday morning, he stopped the orchestra after eight bars. "What have you done with the acoustics?" asked Kosty of Goddard Lieberman, then Moe Smith's assistant on the classic records.

"Nothing," said Goddard.

"Something," said Kosty.

After a long delay, the problem was resolved. Kosty was right. During the weekend, CBS had sent in a team of cleaners to sandblast the ceilings and walls of the beer hall. It was the first time it had been cleaned in years—if ever. And Kosty's ear picked up the difference in the way the orchestra sounded. After that episode, Kosty became one of my favorite persons, as well as one of my favorite conductors.

Lunch might be with somebody like Dmitri Mitropoulos. CBS had to make do with American orchestras; RCA had the cream of the Europeans. So we had Indianapolis, Minneapolis, Cleveland, and—perhaps because the New York Philharmonic had a bad spell under Barbirolli—we had New York.

Sir Thomas Beecham was a major asset to the label, especially when he came into town from England and unleashed that salty wit on everyone in sight. Stokowski and his Youth Orchestra were also in our line-up.

It was Mitropoulos who told Goddard Lieberman that the Minneapolis orchestra would have to re-record a symphony after their first session with the label.

"Why?" Goddard demanded to know.

"Because," said the conductor, "your equipment can't take the 80-bar build forte we did. You peaked at the 40th bar." There was no tape to be spliced in those days, only direct recording to disc. Lieberman gulped and Columbia did the recording over, with Mitropoulos applying his new-found technical knowledge.

Afternoons were spent visiting editors at *Time* and other publications. And the evenings were full of openings of Columbia bands at various Manhattan hotels. What a life!

Did we have flops?

The president of the company, Ted Wallerstein, had found a Czech refugee who had invented a way for a musician at home to play string quartets with recordings, an early example of Music Minus One. The first samples were of a quartet with the first violinist absent. Columbia thought so much of this project that it hired the inventor for a tour. We set up the evenings and did the first (and, I believe, last) of them in the G. Fox Department Store in Hartford, Connecticut. The invited audience sat in the small auditorium while quartet music played behind the curtain. When the curtain went up, there was the lone violinist playing with an automatic record-changing

phonograph. Bravo!

Not quite. Because of the primitive drop mechanism, the turntable speed had slowed. So the violinist was out of tune with the record.

It was a great idea, but it had to wait for the development of the LP to be realized.

There was, among several geniuses on the staff, the aforementioned young art director Alex Steinweiss. Alex came up with the idea of putting art on phonograph record covers. It may not seem like a revolutionary idea now, but at that time it changed the industry.

We hit every known publication and some that were unknown with the news. And Ted Wallerstein chopped the price of classical recordings in half, to a buck each. That was another item of news that was good for plenty of space.

Strange things happened in the pop field. A rather minor dance band, led by Orrin Tucker, out of Chicago, came up with a tune called *Oh, Johnny*, with a vocal by Wee Bonnie Baker. It hit the top of the lists, and suddenly the band was hot enough to get booked into the Waldorf-Astoria in New York.

They flew in on a DC-3 one cold January morning. I had assembled a group of reporters, including Jack Kahn of *The New Yorker*, at LaGuardia Airport, to meet the plane, go on board, and have breakfast aloft with Orrin and Bonnie. We gathered at 6:45 a.m. I cranked up the hand-wound portable phonograph and started playing *Oh, Johnny*. I kept playing it until we got on the plane. Then I started it again. Jack Kahn immortalized the occasion with a funny article titled *No, Johnny, No*.

Orrin Tucker's follow-up record may still be in a Columbia warehouse somewhere. Although he remained popular for years, he never again reached the heights of his first hit.

I happened to be in the CBS studios when two historic small groups were formed.

The first was the Raymond Scott Quintet. The tenor man was Dave Harris, who is still living in the Los Angeles area, Pete Pumiglio played clarinet, Dave Wade was on trumpet, Johnny Williams (whose son would become a famous film composer and then conductor of the Boston Pops) on drums, Lou Schoobe on bass, and Raymond Scott (or Harry Warnow) on piano.

Raymond was a stern drill-master, a sort of Vinnie Lombardi of music. But the group's recordings, such as *The Toy Trumpet*, *Eighteenth Century Drawing Room*, *Powerhouse*, and *Dinner Music for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals*, can be listened to with satisfaction to this day. Raymond's ventures into a big band were less successful. He told me he had listened to hundreds of records, and could do better than any of them. His records with his band for Columbia included two fine sides, *The Peanut Vendor* and *Just a Gigolo*. But the band wilted in Raymond's strenuous rehearsals.

He opened at Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook in New Jersey in the fall of 1941. Chubby Jackson was on bass. They had a two-week run. They never really made it.

Do you remember Raymond's *Saturday Night Swing Session*, a CBS broadcast? It featured mixed bands, top jazz players, and lots of publicity. Playing piano with the house band was Walter Gross. Al Rinker, formerly of the Rhythm Boys, was the producer. Walter had broken into the business with my dad's band at the age of 17. We were good friends.

Every so often Walter would take me on a tour of the Manhattan jazz spots, starting at 52nd Street—this was in its glory days—and ending up in the Village. Walter particularly liked to go to Kelly's Stables to hear a young pianist named Nat Cole. No pianist in town could cut Nat, though Walter played jazz piano quite well. Walter loved him. And Nat was always so gracious, the perfect elegant gentleman. From there we'd maybe head down to Nick's in the village to listen to Mel Powell.

I said that I watched two historic groups get started in the Columbia studio. The second was the Alec Wilder Octet. Walter played piano and harpsichord in the group, and Mitch Miller—at that time with the CBS symphony orchestra led by Howard Barlow and later Bernard Hermann—was on oboe. The Wilder Octet was a musical triumph and a financial dud. Its music should be revived by someone. Alec was one of the most profound composers, and personalities, ever to make a dent in our music. Listening to the group as it recorded was nirvana.

Time discovered jazz as a social event in the mid-1930s. Eddie Condon was responsible. He was picked up by society and cafe society figures because of his sheer charisma. I remember a party held by *Time*'s music editor, with Eddie and Joe Sullivan as guests. All the intellectuals and trend-setters sat at Eddie's feet as he tried to drink everything on the table and play guitar at the same time. He succeeded in the former but never quite made the strings for the latter. It made no difference to his worshipers. They screamed and applauded. Joe Sullivan, a great musician, saved the day. But Condon did a lot for jazz.

All honeymoons have to end, and mine with Columbia turned into frustration. I found my boss's name being put on copy that I had written, and I resented it.

Columbia was about to sign Lily Pons, Kosty's wife, to the label. I was told that her public-relations firm wanted to be appointed the label's pr agency for classical music, and Columbia would have to accede to the demand. Since my own requests for addition staff had been turned down for reasons of budget, that tore it for me. At that very time, a friend, Jack Banner, whose pr office handled Paul Whiteman among others, told me he was going to become pr director of WNEW and offered me his company and his clients—without charge! And shortly after that, Les Lieber, Paul Whiteman's personal publicist, who had just been dropped from an assignment, walked in. I said, "Come on, Les, let's do this together. I'll split it down the middle with you." And we became partners. Les was, and is, a wonderfully witty writer, and an excellent semi-pro musician. His *Jazz at Noon* sessions in New York have been running now for 20 years to unflagging acclaim.

Shortly after Les and I opened our business, we got a call from John Hammond, offering us the Benny Goodman band as an account—provided, of course, we could pass an "audition" with Benny. We did, and adding Goodman to our client roster really helped our business, because it brought in many other accounts. At one point our client list included, besides Goodman, Jimmie Lunceford, Jimmy Dorsey, the International Sweethearts of Rhythm, Raymond Scott, Larry Adler, Jack Leonard, the Rustic Cabin, and many more—16 bands, in fact.

Benny paid us a smashing \$75 a week. He was the best client we had. As long as he kept breaking major stories in important

publications, he never told us what to do. He understood that Les and I just didn't want to sit around every night wherever he was playing. Then came an engagement at Madison Square Garden. For some reason, neither Les nor I ever got there.

The day before Benny was to leave town, we realized we had to talk to him about some new projects. We called him at home to make an appointment. "Fine," he said. "I'm going to be at Elitch Gardens in Cleveland. Come on out and have lunch." It was his way of reminding of us that we had neglected to go to Madison Square Garden.

Les and I had a heart-to-heart. Les got into his car and drove to Cleveland. He phoned Benny. "How about lunch?" Les said.

"Sure," said BG, "but where are you?"

"Right here," Les said happily. And we had no problem with Benny after that.

It was just fifty years ago that Lou Ruppel called me into his office and told me of the formation of Columbia Records. Half a century.

Alex Steinweiss and I parted in 1941. I did not see him again until I retired to Sarasota in 1979. By now the man who in effect invented the album cover had become an internationally known artist. We became friends once more. Pat Dolan was in Sarasota last year. We all had lunch. (Pat died in January.)

Not much had changed.

Only the record industry. Somehow it seemed more productive, more creative, in those early days. But then, you're hearing that from a 2,000-year-old man.

—Hal Davis

The Last Days of Junior's Part I

Throughout the 1960s, Gerry Mulligan and I were among the regulars at Jim And Andy's, that place of happy memory. But there were three more New York bars where jazz musicians habitually congregated—Joe Harbor's Spotlight, Charlie's, and Junior's, all on the West Side. Sometimes late at night Mulligan and I would end up on the East Side in Elaine's, which attracted writers and socialites, because that was Paul Desmond's lair and he'd lure us there. But generally Gerry and I did our drinking in those four musicians' bars, and mostly Jim and Andy's at that.

Jim and Andy's died when Jim Koulouvaris died; Joe Harbor's died when Joe Harbor died; Charlie's died when Charlie died. But Henry Solomon, who owned Junior's, outlived it. The place was effectually murdered by elements of the New York Police Department. Mulligan and I are among the few persons who know the story.

Joe Harbor's was on Broadway at 54th Street. It was, Gerry recalls, patronized largely by studio and network-radio players. If you walked south two blocks and headed west on 52nd Street, you passed Junior's on your right and, four or five doors along, Charlie's. Proceeding still farther you encountered the Roseland Ballroom, though it was the second Roseland, not the earlier one where Louis Armstrong and Fletcher Henderson and Bix Beiderbecke made history.

Jim and Andy's was farther south and east—on West 48th near Sixth Avenue. Charlie's, Mulligan remembered, was home to everybody, studio and club-date and Broadway pit-band musicians, jazz musicians, musicians from the Latin bands. Junior's, Charlie's, and Roseland were on the same side of the

block as the Alvin Hotel, that faded storied refuge of faded storied road musicians. Across the street was the Alvin Theater, and across from Junior's was Gallagher's restaurant, owned by Henry Solomon's brother Jack.

I knew about Charlie's and Junior's before I ever laid eyes on them. I was introduced to them, as it were, in 1959, when I was editor of *Down Beat* and living in Chicago, through Ed Sherman's *Out of My Head* column, written under the pseudonym George Crater, a play on the name of the long-vanished Judge Crater.

Eddie was a denizen of Junior's and Charlie's, and references to them were always turning up in his column. He would stage imaginary contests between the two places, with improbable prizes, the lists of which often ended with an eight-by-ten autographed glossy photo of Tony Graye. Eddie said he was a less than impressive tenor player who was constantly importuning the masters to let him sit in. Eddie said that Tony Graye was author of the line, "Bird said I was unbelievable." I accused Eddie of inventing Tony Graye, along with the other more obviously fictional musicians who peopled his column, such as Zoot Finster, Prez Glick, Zig Priff, and Miles Cosnat. Eddie insisted he really did exist, and one day sent me an autographed eight-by-ten glossy photo of Tony Graye.

"Oh he existed all right," Bill Crow says. "He was a regular in Junior's and Charlie's, handing out those autographed photos even to musicians. He was good looking, and had all the paraphernalia of a bandleader except the talent. I once worked a gig with him in the Bronx. It was unforgettable. I remember coming into Junior's one night and seeing Phil Woods sitting at the front table near the window, staring at one of those autographed photos of Tony Graye, shaking his head and saying, 'I guess I'll never make it, I don't have any eight-by-ten glossy photos.'"

"Do you remember Al Thompson, the bass player? He died recently. He was an old road rat. He was a regular at both Jim and Andy's and Junior's. He used to sit at the bar calling out the changes of the tunes on the juke box. He was also a baseball nut. One night Gene Quill came into Junior's, half loaded I guess. I seem to remember there were three steps down as you entered. Gene stumbled and came sliding into the place, and Al Thompson yelled, 'Safe!'"

Among Eddie Sherman's many ingenious felicities was his co-invention of the wind-up dolls. His conspirator, he said, was Bob Brookmeyer. One of the first was the Stan Kenton wind-up doll: you wound it up, put it on the table, and it raised its arms. Then there was the Gerry Mulligan wind-up doll (and it could only have been invented by Brookmeyer): you wound it up, put it on the table, and it called room service. The Miles Davis doll turned its back, the Thelonious Monk doll disappeared, and the Charlie Mingus doll punched you out.

The wind-up dolls were soon taken up by writers in other magazines and used in other contexts and applied to other professions, but they were invented one night by Eddie Sherman and Bob Brookmeyer, and they were invented in Junior's.

Mulligan figured in one of Eddie's earliest columns, that of September 17, 1959. He wrote: "Why doesn't Gerry Mulligan marry Judy Holliday and get it over with? And then record an album titled *The Bells Are Swinging*." That bit of humor was to have a strange and sad aftermath.

Eventually I encountered Eddie Sherman face to face. I called him before a trip to New York, and he met me—where else?—at Junior's. He was a delicate, fragile young man in his late twenties, a feather of a figure a wind could carry off. He wore a dark suit and white shirt and slim tie, in the Miles Davis mode of that period, and he was serious of mood and manner, as those who are professionally funny often are. It was obvious in Junior's that Eddie was as popular with the musicians as his column. By then Orrin Keepnews at Riverside was preparing to record him, an album with Eddie in the persona of George Crater. This and his *Down Beat* column launched him as a comedy writer. He became one of the writers on the TV show *That Was the Week That Was*. The show folded, but Eddie was on his way.

When in 1962 I arrived in New York to stay—for seven years, as it turned out, which was long enough to leave me forever after feeling myself a displaced New Yorker—I became one of the habitués of Jim and Andy's, and it was to Jim that I owed, as so many of us did, primary allegiance. But I raised my share of glasses in Junior's and Charlie's, and now and then a few at Joe Harbor's Spotlight. Taverns are fine and comforting places, neutral grounds on which we meet and overcome fears with a little chemical assistance, the only drug, really, to which civilization for all its ancient knowledge of psychotropics has extended even a conditional approval. In restrained and decent use alcohol produces a mood of reconciliation, which leads to laughter and philosophic musings. This was particularly true in Jim and Andy's, Junior's, and Charlie's. Joe Harbor's struck me as a more raucous place. I liked the others better.

Yet Charlie's at first made me uneasy. The owner was not the maker of the establishment's mood. I never even met Charlie. The bartender set its tone. And the bartender was Gene Williams, whom I had first heard of in high school when he was one of the two singers—the other was Fran Warren—with the Claude Thornhill band at a time when Mulligan, Lee Konitz, Mickey Folus, Barry Galbraith, and Billy Exener were among its players, and Gil Evans, whom Thornhill had met in the Skinnay Ennis band, was its chief arranger. Such people seemed like gods to me then, and to encounter Gene Williams behind the bar at Charlie's filled me with disquiet. I didn't know how to behave. Was it proper, when he served me a drink, to tip him? I soon got over this discomfiture, however, with Gene's help. One night he told me how he felt about things.

The big band era was over, he said, and that was that. He hadn't hit it big, like Frank Sinatra or Dick Haymes, hadn't had a hot record to launch him as a single, but those were the breaks. He had no intention of traveling the country to sing in dives and dumps and toilets for lousy money and nothing to show for it at the end of the year. To hell with it. He liked working here, he made good money, and he liked seeing all his friends from the band days, to hang out and talk and laugh with them. He was happily married and content with his life. Gene Williams struck me as one of the sanest men I'd ever met. He was tough and calm and realistic, and I came to admire him.

If you were a patron of Charlie's, you'll remember that the place was long and narrow. The bar, of dark wood, was on the east wall—to your right as you entered. It curved out from the wall, ran straight back for maybe twenty feet, then curved in again to meet the wall near the rear. I was sitting one night on

a stool near the curve at the back of the place when an altercation broke out.

The antagonists were two outsiders, shaggy street people loaded on who knows what. This was in the early days of acid, and there was a lot of it around, but maybe they were just juiced. One of them pulled a switch-blade knife.

I was talking with Gene Quill, who sat next to me, and Gene Williams, who was leaning on the bar between us, sharing in the shmooz. At that moment somebody yelled, "Hey, Gene!" And of course all three of us looked toward the voice. Gene Williams headed swiftly along the duck boards behind the bar. The shaggy made a lunge for his companion. One of the musicians swung at his arm, chopping it downward. The blade, which had a mother of pearl handle, fell from his hand and clattered along the floor, sliding to a stop almost at my feet. I grabbed it and flipped it up over the bar. Gene Williams saw it coming and, as it hit the floor, snatched it up and threw it into an ice bucket. It was weird, as if this co-ordination had been choreographed: Tinker to Evers to Chance. The bladesman didn't know what had happened.

Puzzled, and stoned, he looked at his empty hand and at the floor and said, pitifully, "What happened to m'blade?" He looked at Gene imploringly. "What happened to my blade?" he repeated. Quill and I started to laugh.

"I don't know what you're talking about," Gene Williams said, "but I want you to get outa here."

"Not till I find my blade," the shaggy said, looking around the floor. "My girlfriend gave me that knife."

"I didn't see any knife. Any of you guys see a knife?" Gene said as the other two Genes, Quill and I, kept laughing. "Now, get outa here, before I call the cops and have them help you hunt for your knife." Still the man wouldn't leave.

Gene saw a police cruiser in the crowded street. He hailed it. Two cops came in. The bladesman complained that his knife had disappeared. Even the cops started to laugh, and told him to clear out. The man left with his companion, their animus ended in the mystery of the vanished knife.

Gene Williams told us later that they came back about one in the morning, still looking for the blade. By then Gene had had a friend take the knife, wrapped in a napkin, out to the street and drop it down a sewer. Still lamenting his lost knife, the man said he was going to lodge a complaint with the police. You just do that, Gene said, you just go ahead and file a complaint.

That winter, 1962, the Brazilians arrived. I had met Antonio Carlos Jobim in Rio de Janeiro earlier that year, probably in June, which is winter there. I had first heard his songs in Chicago, introduced to them by Dizzy Gillespie and Lalo Schiffrin, then Dizzy's pianist. In the course of a State Department tour of all the South American countries with the Paul Winter Sextet, I made it a point to look him up in Rio. I went out to his house in Ipanema one rainy night. Joao Gilberto was sitting on his sofa with a guitar, singing *So Danco Samba*. Jobim and I went out to the kitchen. He spoke little English, and I spoke little Portuguese, though I could triangulate its meaning from French and Spanish. But his ancestors were French, and he spoke the language a little, and so at first we talked French. He poured me a Scotch as we stood by the refrigerator. "I'm crazy," he said, "but he," nodding toward Joao Gilberto, "is crazier."

I told him he reminded me of a friend of mine back home. Jobim was thirty-five then. "Who?" he said.

"Someone named Gerry Mulligan."

"Ah, but we *know* Gerry Mulligan," he said, and told me—as did Joao Gilberto later—how profoundly Mulligan had influenced the development of what became known as bossa nova. Gerry was the primary American influence in the development of that music, and I have that on the authority of most of its principals. Jobim said he liked very much the contained controlled sound of what American critics were calling the cool school, often inaccurately ascribed to a Miles Davis authorship.

Brazilian music publishers and record companies had long been exploiting a tacky commercial version of the samba. Serious younger musicians like Jobim and Joao Gilberto and Sergio Mendes and others rebelled against this. "The authentic Negro samba is very primitive," Jobim told me somewhat later, when his English had improved. "They use maybe ten percussion instruments and the music is very hot and wonderful. But bossa nova is cool and contained. It tells the story, trying to be simple and serious and lyrical. Joao and I felt that Brazilian music until now had been too much a storm on the sea, and we wanted to calm it down for the recording studio. You could call bossa nova a clean, washed samba—" he pronounced it as two syllables, wah-shed—"without loss of the momentum. We don't want to lose important things. We have the problem of how to write and not lose the swing."

They wanted to achieve a controlled acoustical balance in recording, rather than have the engineer determine the mix. It was one of Mulligan's ideals, and these Brazilian musicians had heard it across all the thousands of miles and implemented its esthetics in their own music. But of course it had all come originally from Claude Thornhill and Gil Evans.

I told Jobim I had studied the lyrics to his songs in recent weeks and had had them explained to me. I said I'd like to try to translate them. "Do you think it can be done?" he said.

"Yes, I do."

I wrote the lyrics to *Desafinado*, an allegory about how the conventional samba musicians had deplored the bossa nova movement with its tinges of jazz and impressionist harmonies, in a taxi one day later that week. The second chord is a joke, a put-on of old-style commercial samba musicians. In F, which is the original key, the second chord is G 7 b5, and the melody falls on the D-flat. It was right out of bebop, and it sent conventional Brazilian musicians up the wall. It was critically important to retain the tongue-in-cheek quality of the lyric, and I think I did, staying very close to the original meaning. I gave the English version to Jobim just before we left Rio. *Corcovado* became *Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars* on a bus as Paul Winter and the group and I headed for Bello Horizonte. I mailed the lyrics back to Jobim.

Word of the new music was reaching North America, partly because of the film *Black Orpheus*, whose score contained music by both Luiz Bonfá and Jobim. Guitarist Charlie Byrd had toured Latin America some months before, bringing back the three albums Jobim had made with Joao Gilberto. From one of these he transcribed *Desafinado* (pronounced day-ZOF-ee-naw-doo), somehow getting one of the chords wrong. Byrd recorded a Verve album with Stan Getz called *Jazz*

Samba, and one of its tracks, *Desafinado*, became a hit, launching the bossa nova fad in North America and around the world. Bob Brookmeyer had also heard the new music and begun playing it. Bossa nova, then, came to North America through jazz. But the pop-music people jumped on what looked like a hot fad, bringing out such travesties as *Blame It on the Bossa Nova*.

Sidney Frey of Audio Fidelity Records had gained control of the publishing of a lot of the bossa nova material. At that very time, Huntington Hartford's stumbling *Show* magazine—mismanaged until it died—was devoting an issue to Latin America and looking for a promotion stunt. The magazine linked up with Frey. They hired Carnegie Hall for the evening of November 21, 1962, and began advertising what they called with bumptious press-agentry "The First Annual Bossa Nova Festival." It was also the last. The Brazilian government had a vested interest in this burst of attention to their country, and Varig, the Brazilian airline, got into the act. Many of the best Brazilian musicians were flown in for the concert, including Sergio Mendes, Jobim, and the guitarist Bola Sete, a nickname that means Seven Ball, as well as guitarist Baden Powell.

Backstage at Carnegie, I introduced Jobim to Mulligan. Then the concert got under way.

It was a disaster, a fiasco, a trashy flashy commercial exploitation job. Sidney Frey was recording everything, and there were microphones everywhere. But most of them led to recording equipment, not to the sound system, and the audience could hardly hear the music. Afterwards the press in Brazil crucified Jobim, Gilberto, and their colleagues for failing to make a better showing for the motherland. The *New Yorker* headlined a flippant review "Bossa Nova Go Home." It was cruelly unfair. The Brazilian musicians were the victims, not the villains.

And all these Brazilians were left to their own resources in New York, like beached dolphins. Mulligan and I took some of them in tow, particularly Jobim, whom we introduced to Junior's, Charlie's, Jim and Andy's, and maybe even Joe Harbor's. One of the television networks wanted to do a feature on Jobim. It was shot in Gerry's penthouse apartment, which was on the west side near Central Park, and a block or two south of the Dakota where Judy Holliday lived. Between takes, Jobim and I and Gerry would walk out on the terrace and look at the lowering dirty-white winter sky. I waved a hand to take in the skyline. "Sao Paulo," I said. For that's what it looked like. "Yes," Jobim said, "Sao Paulo."

White birds were soaring near us, emitting sharp anguished cries. "What do you call those?" Jobim asked.

"Sea gulls," I said.

"Sea gulls," he said, repeating it in a manner that would become familiar: he was assimilating the language. "Sea gulls. Yes, we have those at home." No one ever sounded more homesick. We went indoors and the interview continued.

Most of the Brazilians lived in a small hotel on West 43rd Street. Nearby was a Brazilian restaurant where they could get the dishes they liked and missed, although Jobim rapidly acquired a penchant for the food of Horn and Hardart's, which mystified me. "It's good honest food," he would say in defense of this peculiar taste.

Lalo Schiffrin gave a party for the Brazilians around

Christmas time in his apartment in Queens. The weather had turned bitter cold, and the Brazilians had no clothes to cope with it. Poor Baden Powell, how he suffered. He went to the party with his guitar wrapped in a hotel blanket, to keep it warm. He played duets that night with Jimmy Raney.

Probably the first time I ever saw Gerry Mulligan was during the time he and Gene Williams were with the Thornhill band. It was in Hamilton, Ontario, in a roller rink near the T.H. & B. station and next door to a vinegar works. But the first time I remember seeing him was at the Newport Festival of 1960, when he unveiled his concert jazz band. It was pouring rain that night. I was back in the band tent when they went on. Voice of America was videotaping the show. I slipped into the control room, which was at the front of the stage. The stage was at chest height, and, under the roof of that improvised control booth, I had the perfect vantage point. I could see not only what was happening on stage but the TV monitors showing what the cameramen were picking up. The band began to play Bob Brookmeyer's chart on Django Reinhardt's *Manoir de mes rêves*, an exquisite thing. I watched a monitor as a camera panned across a sea of black umbrellas in the rain and then picked up a great puddle onstage in which was reflected the image of Gerry Mulligan, upside down, as he started his solo. The raindrops fell into this puddle, making the image tremble, like the music. The memory is indelible.

But I actually met Mulligan for the first time some weeks later when the band played the Sutherland Hotel in Chicago. No one in Chicago saw much of him, though. Judy Holliday was in hospital in New York. She had been doing out of town tryouts in *Laurette*, a play about Laurette Taylor, when she lost her voice. Her doctor ordered her into hospital. The late Dorothy Kilgallen, that most vicious of gossip columnists, wrote of her that it was amazing what some actresses would do and say to get out of a show. Judy had a mastectomy. Later I asked her why she hadn't replied to Kilgallen, even sued her. She said she wouldn't dream of trading on public sympathy.

Mulligan during that period was finishing his show at the Sutherland in the small hours of the morning, catching a red-eye to New York to sit by her bedside, and flying back to Chicago for the night's performance. The only reason I knew this is that Brookmeyer told me.

It was during that first winter in New York, with Jobim, that I began to know Gerry well. "Why aren't you writing more?" I chided him. He had begun writing for bands when he was fifteen. It was as a writer that I had first become aware of him: Gene Krupa's *Disc Jockey Jump* is Gerry's composition. After that he wrote for Elliott Lawrence, then for the Claude Thornhill band when Gil was its chief arranger. Gil and Gerry have always insisted that Thornhill has never been given his due as an influence in the development of jazz composition. Though Gil, and to a lesser extent Gerry, wrote for the band, they wrote what Thornhill wanted; and he knew what he wanted. The French horns he added to the instrumentation were part of the Thornhill sound, but he also sought a cool suspended feeling, perhaps rooted in the kind of floating chords that Debussy had explored to such effect.

In the late 1940s, there were gatherings of musicians in Gil's apartment in New York, and in 1949 he and Gerry had an idea

for an experimental band. "We kicked the ideas around all that winter," Gerry remembered during one of our conversations in that winter of 1962. "We were looking for the smallest ensemble to give the writers the maximum possibilities. We got it down to six men and the rhythm section. You couldn't write for the sections because there were no sections." Such like-minded friends as John Lewis and Johnny Carisi made very important contributions to the writing. Miles Davis proved to be the most effective member of the group at arranging jobs and recordings, so they named him leader. The band played the Royal Roost and recorded for Capitol, inaugurating what became known as the era of cool jazz. Mulligan then led a series of groups, including the Tentet with which he recorded for Capitol, a quartet with Chet Baker, a quartet with Bob Brookmeyer, Bill Crow, and Gus Johnson, a quartet with Art Farmer, then the concert band. It was this influence that so affected the Brazilians, but behind Mulligan stood the figure of Gil Evans, and behind Gil, Claude Thornhill. Miles Davis and Gil continued their association in a series of masterpiece albums for Columbia.

"I don't know why I'm not writing more," Gerry admitted. I can't tell now whether the conversation happened in Junior's or in Jim and Andy's. One or the other. "There are so many reasons that there's no one."

"My approach to the thing was always to simplify rather than complicate. I've concentrated on the small band lately, but I've used my arranging ability not in written orchestrations but in making spontaneous arrangements and un-writing things we worked out. The main point has been to be able to change our arrangements to suit our whim. This has been true of all the groups I've had."

"If I haven't written much for the big band, I've always tried to be clear about what I wanted the writing to be like. I made my taste the criterion in my approach to the band, and usually if I made myself explicit to the arrangers, they were happier, because they knew the restrictions within which they could work."

"But I wanted to keep freedom in it too—to permit the guys to improvise patterns, riffs, and the like, in ensemble behind the soloist. Bob Brookmeyer would wisecrack, 'We're having a rehearsal. Bring your erasers.'"

But I was not satisfied with Gerry's answer. I still wondered why one of the great writers in jazz history was not writing at all. And as much as I enjoyed his baritone playing, I was sorry that he wasn't spending time over the score paper. Generally, I have noticed a difference between the writers and the players in jazz. The writers are inherently more reclusive than the players, they are not the extraverts and in time they tend to put aside the horn or the piano and retire to a room somewhere and put it on paper rather than facing the audience. Duke Ellington was the great exception. Gerry struck me as a man with both temperaments, and for the nonce the player in him was predominant. It was always said that Gerry was the great sitter-inner of all time: any time, any place, any style. But still, I wondered: I wondered if psychoanalysis had halted his writing, wondered indeed at the moral implications of the entire field of psychology, with its unceasing interference in the human temperament.

(To be continued)