

Birks

John Birks Gillespie was an unpretentious man. He said shyly, when I commented that Art Farmer and many others considered him one of the great teachers, that he didn't think he knew much but what little he did know he was willing to share.

It is almost universally felt that while Charlie Parker's rhythmic and harmonic extensions of the jazz vocabulary defined the music's second half century, Dizzy was the great disseminator and teacher. This has relegated him to a second rank.

But it is obvious why Parker has been accorded the higher tier. The myth-makers love tragedy and blighted lives. Pity frees them to indulge in unenvying and immoderate admiration. When they were both alive, I wrote that if Ernie Kovacs, who lived a rational and successful life (or at least gave that impression), were to die, he would be forgotten, but Lenny Bruce would be mythologized. Why? Lenny was a junky. Bill Evans is being mythologized for the wrong reasons. Billie Holiday has undergone this morbid canonization. Bix Beiderbecke is remembered more as a figure of tragedy than as the musician he was. It happened to Bird. Dizzy called him Yard, by the way. And Dizzy's friends all called him Birks.

In such cases it is possible to praise from a great height, the height being pity. This is puritanism at its most virulent. The praise of Bird often involves a covert element of condescension. The underestimation of Dizzy Gillespie is its inversion.

Because Dizzy's life was not tragic, he is perceived inaccurately as the lesser musician, Bird's amanuensis and musical Boswell, as it were. Phil Woods, Art Farmer, and others have pointed out that Dizzy's musical vision embraced the Cuban, the Brazilian, the African, and indeed anything he heard. Dizzy was once seen 'sitting in' with a snake charmer in India.

"Dizzy brought the rhythm into it," Phil Woods said, referring to the vast reservoir of Latin propulsion that Dizzy tapped, infusing jazz with its influence. As Birks pointed out to me, almost all his compositions have a Latin cast to them. Consider *Lorraine*, *Tin Tin Deo*, and *Con Alma*, which is one of the most gorgeous tunes in the repertoire, partly because of the character of the bass line. *Lorraine*, by the way, is his widow.

There is a scene at the end of John Huston's *Moulin Rouge* wherein the dancers and singers of his youth gather as ghostly visions around the bed of the dying Toulouse-Lautrec. I sometimes see in my mind the people who gathered at the bar of Jim and Andy's on 48th later (later 55th) in New York: Ben Webster, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, Hank d'Amico, Jo Jones, Jack Whittemore, Judy Holliday, Nick Travis, Woody Herman, Coleman Hawkins, Lockjaw Davis, Alec Wilder, Willie Dennis, and more. The necrology is long.

Willis Conover, another of its habitués, wrote a poem about it. Willis said he dreamed it.

Missed Most, Bar None

Middle of the night:
Middle of a dream.
Please let things be
What they seem:

West 48th,
Then seven higher.
Warm, not cool:
My heart's on fire.

Hello, Ben!
Hi there, Bean!
Jo and Zoot
And Brooks and Gene!

Hey, there's Gerry.
There's Clark Terry.
Yeah: C.T.
And W.C.

Alec . . . Ruby
Rocky . . . Jim . . .
(I know lady:
You're with him.)

Goodbye, faces
Filling space . . .
Guitars . . . basses . . .
Goodbye, Place.

Even Dizzy would turn up there now and then, though of course he spent most of his life on the road, which is why Phil Woods called him Sky King.

I do not believe jazz is a moribund art. On the contrary, it is quite healthy. But one thing has changed: its founding figures, the great explorers who charted its terrain and defined it, are all gone, with the towering exception of Benny Carter. Armstrong, Bechet, Beiderbecke, Teagarden, Tatum, Hawkins, Hines, Cole, Ellington, Prez, Goodman, Parker, Strayhorn, Herman, Kenton, Basic, Bud Powell, Monk, Bill Evans. Now Dizzy.

I was inconsolable the day of Dizzy's death, even though Oscar Peterson had warned me it was coming. I turned to Benny Carter, who was bereft, though with his indestructible dignity and control. Benny said on the telephone, "He was one of those people I thought would always be there."

Television, and much of the print press, mishandled Dizzy's death. They emphasized his antic humor and the uptilted horn and missed the point. Every once in a while in conversation Dizzy would stop kidding and drop his voice. His tone would

become serious, and you knew that what he was about to say would be worth remembering. He once told me that if clowning would put an audience in a mood of receptivity to the music, he intended to do it. It had another purpose, one you would never suspect: Birks told me he never walked onto a handstand or stage without being nervous. His clowning had a third purpose: to rest his chops. Many of the brass players of his and the previous generation sang. So Birks would sing, and horse around, still more in the later years, because his lip was losing its endurance. But even toward the end, he could play blazing jazz. He had a way of throwing one leg forward as he raised the horn to his mouth that reminded me of a Reggie Jackson leaning into a pitch, totally focussed. Dizzy's cheeks would puff out, lifting the glasses on his nose, and . . . stand back.

For the most part the news media concentrated on the cheeks, the beret, the bop glasses, and the horseplay, cautiously stopping short of calling him what he was: one of the musical geniuses of our time. The New York Daily News, however, got it right, for the good reason that the man who wrote its editorial, Terry Teachout, is a former jazz musician. It said that for all the clowning and fun, "it is the music that will be remembered, for Gillespie was one of a handful of musicians who changed the face of jazz . . . No one who heard his knife-sharp sound cleave the stale air of a smoky nightclub or a crowded concert hall will ever forget it. It was full of joy — the brazen, irresistible joy of a true virtuoso."

"Rare is the revolutionary who sees the fruits of his youthful passion come to flower. Dizzy did . . . At . . . 75, the elder statesman of bebop was still equal to the cut and thrust of a jam session. His death was no surprise: he had been ill for months. Even so, it left his friends and fans feeling oddly empty, the way you feel when a beloved old building is torn down at last, leaving a ragged hole in the skyline that nothing can ever fill."

In addition to all that Dizzy Gillespie was one of the most generous and gentle men I ever knew.

I have avoided publishing obituaries, and this isn't one. It's just a saddened little tribute, a bit of time taken to say on behalf of Phil and Art and a lot of us who loved him:

'Bye, Birks.

A Death in the Family: The American Song Part Five

(continued from May)

What went wrong with the American song? Among other things, its ethnic character changed.

One of history's lessons to nations is this: Be careful whom you conquer, for you will absorb that people's values.

The oft-cited example is Rome, which imitated the architecture and arts and even absorbed much of the language of the

Greeks. England is imprinted with the influence of India, as France is marked by her colonial periods in North Africa and Indo-China. Indeed, even a failed effort to conquer can alter a nation's character. Every time the United States loses a war, its cuisine improves and diversifies as it patriates the brides of its armies and the loyalists of its client dictatorships. Enslavement, however, is the surer way to cultural miscegenation and consequent inadvertent enrichment.

The most conspicuous example of this principle has been the influence of the chattel slavery of Africans in the Americas, a practice begun by the Portuguese, taken up by the Spanish, French, and the British who -- to their eternal credit -- were the first to abolish it. The African peoples affected all the cultures that conquered them, in everything from cuisine to social mores to music. Though there are conspicuous differences between the musics of Cuba, Brazil, Martinique, and the United States, a characteristic swing marks them all, as Dizzy made us aware. Probably the purest African influence was in the mountains of Cuba, according to composer Chico O'Farrill, who was born in Havana. Isolated from the world, their batteries of drummers played something that was probably more purely African than could be found in Africa itself, just as the folk music of remote Appalachian areas retained its English quality. That has gone now, in consequence of Castro's drive for universal literacy and the ubiquity of the portable radio. In 1962 I visited an Indian village up a tributary of the Demerara River in then-British Guiana. It was in a clearing surrounded by dense jungle. The indigenous people were listening to rock-and-roll on small radios.

In the United States, the African people developed a vocal-instrumental music we have come to call the blues. Where the term itself originates, I have no idea, but as a synonym for melancholy or depression it is obviously very old in the English language. My grandmother, who was English, used it, and I have seen it in a letter written to his family back east from a boy on his way to the California gold rush of 1849.

The origin of the musical form bearing the name is unknown. One theory is that the flattened third and seventh were introduced by the slaves in an attempt to sing an indeterminate pitch left over from Africa. But this fails to explain why you don't encounter these 'blue notes' in the music of Cuba or Brazil or any nation of the Americas except the United States. We read a lot about the adaptation of music from Protestant hymnals by blacks, but this overlooks that the place where jazz primarily evolved were substantially Catholic because of large French and Spanish populations, namely New Orleans. I have wondered if the blues developed when the slave population encountered both Protestant church music, which is heavily major scale, and Catholic, with its leaning to minor modes and Gregorian chant. Never having been educated to believe you couldn't mix the two, they perhaps did, seeing no reason why you couldn't play or sing minor-mode melodies against major-scale harmony. I once tried

this hypothesis on Benny Carter, who said he thought it was reasonable — and added that most blacks from New Orleans he had met were Catholic.

Whatever the reason for them, these "blue" notes produced a startling effect, rubbing against tones a half-step away, producing an eloquent effect that can suggest anything from deep sensualism through melancholy to laughter.

Sometimes the fifth too is flatted in the blues. With a flatted third, fifth, and seventh, you are only two tones — the flatted second and sixth — from using all twelve tones of the western musical system, and in the flat ninth chord the minor second comes into use, sometimes even as a melody note. As the harmony of jazz evolved, the system became constantly more chromatic and flexible. To be sure, the music was, as many observers have noted, merely following a few paces behind the developments of European concert music. And it is part of the false myth of the genesis of jazz that its early experimenters were ignorant gropers. From Will Marion Cook and James Reese Europe, whose band members were, in the testimony of Eubie Blake (who himself studied the Schillinger system), "reading sharks," through Jelly Roll Morton, whose early exposure was to opera, through Don Redman, who had two conservatory degrees, to Fletcher Henderson, James P. Johnson, Willic the Lion Smith, and Earl Hines, all four of whom were schooled in the European piano literature, the founding figures of jazz for the most part had good training and knew what was going on in Europe. You could look it up.

The chromaticism of jazz gradually affected the American popular song, which undergoes a considerable change in, approximately, the fifteen years that follow Irving Berlin's *Alexander's Ragtime Band*. Though ragtime's own brief season was ending, the word became popular and so did a certain swingy syncopation coupled to a chromaticism that was vaguely jazzy. Jerome Kern does not actually take part in it, writing a kind of music that, while being distinctly American, seems to look over one shoulder toward European chromaticism.

Jazz and popular music have always been symbiotic, and the interchange between the two accelerated as the jazzy dance band evolved. The communal ear was being educated to this new chromatic flexibility to the point where Kern could write and the public accept something as modulatory as *The Way You Look Tonight* and *The Song Is You*. Cole Porter could see a long-form song such as *Begin the Beguine* become a hit, Irving Berlin — who began as a diatonic primitive — could by 1934 get away with *The Continental*, and Duke Ellington could palm off the complex little masterpiece *Prelude to a Kiss* on an unprotesting public. The influence of jazz on Harold Arlen and George Gershwin is pervasive and rich.

Men (and a woman or two, among them Dorothy Fields) of cultivation and brilliance had taken popular music to an extraordinary level of literacy and intelligence. It was an era that

prompted me to coin an aphorism: it was a time when much good music was popular and much popular music was good. And it was presented to the public largely through 15-piece jazz- and dance-bands, hundreds of them, staffed by musicians who were steadily expanding the techniques and vocabularies of their instruments. When men like Harry James, Bunny Berigan, Roy Eldridge, Jabbo Smith, and Tommy Dorsey hit the scene, the symphony brass players had never heard anything like them. Dorsey, for example, altered the tessitura of the trombone. Permanently. Symphony players now negotiate these registers, and you hear Dorsey's influence in someone like the magnificent Miles Anderson of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

And the music thus evolving was being heard around the world, to the vicious and eventually lethal disgust of the propagandists of Nazi Germany. The black contribution to American and thus to world music is inestimable. But it was not the only one. The Jews had fully as much to do with its development.

In an introduction to a collection of Kern songs published in 1955 by Simon and Schuster, Oscar Hammerstein, the lyricist most closely associated with him, wrote, "Jerome Kern and I were at one time contemplating writing a musical version of Donn Byrne's *Messer Marco Polo*. Discussing the general problems of adaptation, I confronted Jerry with what I considered to be a serious problem about the score. I said, 'Here is a story laid in China about an Italian and told by an Irishman. What kind of music are you going to write. Jerry answered, 'It'll be good Jewish music.'"

In his book *The Musical Theatre: A Celebration* — the last thing he wrote — Alan Jay Lerner said, "I cannot believe that almost three centuries of man's inhumanity to man, which reached a peak of organized violence with the Civil War, is worth a single bar of music. But without the presence of the black race in America, there never would have been the popular music or the popular musical theater that we know today.

"Nor did the American eagle flap its wings in joyous welcome to the other major contributors to the popular music theater, the Jews. Barred from all major industry well into the twentieth century, they turned their energies to unrestricted professions such as medicine and the law, shop-keeping and entertainment, both creative and interpretive. That social suppression was the father of artistic expression would be a hard case to prove, but, nevertheless, the overwhelming number of great composers and lyricists of the popular musical theater of the twentieth century were Jewish. So were the theater owners, so were the producers, and so were the visionaries who founded the motion picture industry."

When the Nazis denounced American jazz as decadent Negro-Jewish music, they got it half right. It was anything but decadent. It was on the contrary vital, infused with energy, and new. But since jazz, a black artistic creation, drew on popular

music for material and that music was the work of mostly Jewish composers and lyricists, they at least got its ethnic origins right.

So high is the percentage of Jews among prominent film composers that it is almost easier to list those who aren't. They include:

Daniel Amfitheatrof, Bruce Broughton, Bill Conti, Alexander Courage, George Dunning, Allyn Ferguson, Hugo Friedhofer, Michel Legrand, Henry Mancini, Billy May, Lyn Murray, Basil Polidouris, Miklos Rosza, Nathan Scott, Herb Spencer, Leith Stevens, John Williams, Pat Williams, and Scott Bradley - a man little known to the public whose scoring for MGM animated cartoons commanded great respect among his peers. Of these, probably fewer than half are of English origin. Alexander Courage was a Scot, and Allyn Ferguson has Scottish ancestry. Lyn Murray, though raised in the United States, was born in London and was as English as hangers and mash. Amfitheatrof was Russian, Friedhofer was German on both sides of his family, Legrand is French, Mancini Italian, Polidouris is of Greek descent, Rosza was Hungarian. A few black composers succeeded in penetrating the film-scoring world, among them the pioneer Benny Carter, then Quincy Jones, the late Oliver Nelson, Benny Golson, and J.J. Johnson. None of these composers is currently working in film-scoring. Neither of course are many of the older white composers in an industry so preoccupied with youth that scriptwriters and composers in their late thirties are considered to be over the hill.

Against that list, consider the film composers who were (or are) Jewish:

Jeff Alexander, Elmer Bernstein, Jack Elliott, Percy Faith, Jerry Fielding, Billy Goldenberg, Jerry Goldsmith, John Green, Fred Karlin, Wolfgang Korngold, Johnny Mandel, Arthur Morton, Alfred Newman, Lionel Newman, Alex North, Andre Previn, Robert Prince, David Raksin, Earl Robinson, David Rose, Leonard Rosenman, Laurence Rosenthal, Walter Scharff, Lalo Schifrin, Bernard Segall, David Shire, Fred Steiner, Max Steiner, Harry Sukman, Dmitri Tiomkin, Franz Waxman, Victor Young, and the great orchestrator Albert Harris. Max Steiner's family had converted to Catholicism. Dave Grusin is Jewish on his father's side.

This list was compiled originally with the help of the late Hugo Friedhofer and revised recently with that of Dave Raksin. Raksin, whose scores include *Laura* and *The Bad and the Beautiful*, is one of the great sardonic wits of the music world. Some years ago he scored a western called *Will Penny*. "I love westerns," Dave said. "My music cutter on that film was Bill Simson, one of my favorites to work with. I had to write a theme for this thing, and when I finished it I was playing and singing it. Bill said, 'I don't understand why you Jewish composers are so good with westerns.' I said, 'Well you have to remember my Russian background and look at the title I gave it: *From the Steppes of Central Utah*.'"

What that list of film composers makes clear is that well over half of them are (or were) Jewish, though Jews constitute less than ten percent of the American population. And in musical theater the discrepancy is even more startling. With the exceptions of Cole Porter, Vernon Duke, and Vincent Youmans, all the major (and most of the minor) post-operetta composers have been Jewish, along with almost all the lyricists. The list includes Harold Arlen, Irving Berlin, Leonard Bernstein, Jerry Bock, Sammy Cahn, Cy Coleman, Howard Dietz, Dorothy Fields, George and Ira Gershwin, Oscar Hammerstein II, E.Y. Harburg, Sheldon Harnick, Lorenz Hart, Jerry Herman, Jerome Kern, Burton Lane, Alan Jay Lerner, Frank Loesser, Richard Rodgers, Arthur Schwartz, Stephen Sondheim, Jule Styne, and Kurt Weill.

Even outside the theater, in the pop song world that used to be known as Tin Pan Alley, the number of Jewish composers and lyricists has been inordinate:

Abel Baer, Alan and Marilyn Bergman, Sami Chaplin, Con Conrad, Mack David, B.G. (Buddy) de Sylva, Adolph Deutsch, Sammy Fain, Arthur Freed, Mack Gordon, Jay Gorney, Werner Heyman, Frederick Holland, Bert Kalmar, Sol Kaplan, Fran Landesman, Richard Mohaupt, Joe Myro, Mitchell Parrish, Ralph Rainger, Leo Robin, Harry Ruby, Jack Yellen, and many more. (Some of these people worked in films and theater as well.) Even Wolfe Gilbert, who wrote *Waiting for the Robert E. Lee*, was Jewish.

There have been notable exceptions, of course, including Hoagy Carmichael, Johnny Mercer, Richard Whiting, and Jimmy Van Heusen, who was born Chester Babcock. But not many.

I became fascinated by this statistical aberration, and only the more so because of a remark made to me by the great Austrian-born actor Joseph Schildkraut. I got to know him fairly well when he was appearing in *The Diary of Anne Frank*. We were talking about the predominance of the Jews in great violin playing. I had noticed, reading biographies over the years, what an astonishing number of great violinists and even lesser but excellent players in orchestras, were not only Jewish but Russian Jewish and on top of that who had been born in or had families who came from to Odessa.

The Jews, Schildkraut said, surpassed as musicians in the creative, interpretive arts, not as composers. "Name me," he said, "the great Jewish composers in European music."

I immediately said, "Mahler, Schoenberg, Mendelssohn..." "Keep going," he said. And I couldn't.

"You see?" At a later date I would have added Solomon Ebree, Mercadante, Arthur Honegger, and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco. But the list still isn't very long.

But why, I asked, had there been an explosion of Jewish composition in the United States if the tradition was so thin in the old countries? Schildkraut had no answer for me.

When I asked Arthur Schwartz about this Jewish predomi-

social aspect: ->
also: popular culture
vision (as negro!)
-> lib vs. drama: anti!

socially important in Europe, free in US!

nance in American popular music and particularly the theater, he answered in a slightly nervous tone. "I wonder," he said, "if that would be true of the producers and directors." He was clearly trying to avoid even a remote implication that the Jews were a clique of people who hired each other and kept everyone else out of their inner circle. When I mentioned this to my friend Leonard Marcus, who is Jewish, then the editor of *High Fidelity*, he said, "The Jews don't want to be noticed as a group." Not even for excellence? "No, not even for excellence."

Yet if Arthur Schwartz were alive and we were discussing it again, I would have to quote Alan Lerner -- and point out that the vast majority of music publishers in America have been Jewish. This did not mean they tried to keep anyone out, as witness the way Max Dreyfus championed Harry Warren, Italian, and Cole Porter, one of the very few WASPs, perhaps the only one, to succeed as a composer in American musical theater.

I got no satisfactory explanation from E.Y. (Yip) Harburg, when I put the question to him. Harburg said, "I think it's because Jewish music is inherently dramatic, and this has worked well on the stage." David Raksin said at that time, "I think the Jewish musical sensibility is very lyrical, and this has been effective in the theater and in films." Both were inadequate answers, because

(a) if Raksin's reasoning were correct, the Jews should have produced operas in Europe. Jewish composers in Europe created no major operas, nor, apparently, even minor ones. (The opera buffa of Offenbach is in a different category.)

(b) Jerome Kern's comment to Hammerstein to the contrary notwithstanding, American theater music written by Jews isn't very Jewish at all -- except when it is intended to be, as in Bock and Harnick's *Fiddler on the Roof*, which in any case is more Russian than Jewish. Otherwise, American Jewish music is very American. There was never a more American composer than George Gershwin.

But if in America there was such a flowering of music by Jewish composers, why was there no comparable phenomenon in Europe?

And one day it dawned on me:

Music was commissioned in Europe by the church or the nobility, including kings such as Frederick the Great. And neither group was going to let the Jews into their courts, except as performers, who were treated much like kitchen help anyway.

A good hypothesis to explain this success in America came from a friend, Richard Conger, who is not a composer or lyricist but a retired submarine commander with a love of theater. Dick was one of the highest-ranking Jewish officers in the U.S. Navy. Dick said, "In Europe the Jews did not dare to be original. They became what we used to think of the Japanese as being, marvelous imitators. We were under severe restrictions in Europe, but in America there was a frontier before the immi-

grants and a wealth of new subject matter and material. We were forced to be chameleons in Europe. In America, the composers didn't write Jewish music, they wrote music out of what they found here. That's why it sounds so American."

Kurt Weill seems to corroborate this point. In Germany his music had a starkly German character, but in America he wrote very American music, as we have already noted.

Mendelssohn's music is not Jewish in the way one could say that Verdi's, Puccini's, Rossini's, Vivaldi's, and Corelli's is Italian. Nor is that of Mahler. In a sense there is no such thing as Jewish music, except liturgical music. And little of the liturgical crept into Jewish secular composition. If Mendelssohn and Mahler wrote German music, I do, however, believe I detect a strong lyrical sensibility that is more Jewish than German. It is German music leavened by that aesthetic. (I must say I find Schoenberg's music very German indeed.)

The Jews, then, brought to America a developed aesthetic sense, a passion for music itself -- it was a stereotype, but not an unfounded one, that every Jewish boy had to learn the violin -- and respect for learning (probably no other immigrant group carried so intense a belief in education) combined with a lack of musical preconception. The Italians, the Irish, the Germans, all brought strong musical preferences, traditions, and styles from the Old Countries. The Jews, for so long denied the right to public expression of a culture of their own, did not. When they entered the art of music here, their ears were able, as it were, to attune rapidly and accurately to the sounds, the rhythms, the very feeling of America. Mahler and Mendelssohn wrote European music.

If the courts and, more obviously, the churches of Europe were not accessible outlets of musical expression for Jewish composers in Europe, they faced no comparable barriers in America, where a considerable number of theatrical impresarios, such as Florenz Ziegfeld, and virtually every major executive of the movie industry were Jewish.

And the tasks before them were dramatic: to enhance or create emotion in drama, whether on the stage or in film. When a composer writes music for, say, a western, his intent must be to evoke not his own cultural heritage but the locale, mood, and color of the story. If it is true that the Jews had in Europe been forced to be cultural chameleons, this adaptivity became advantageous when the composer was required to write for the stage and films in the twentieth-century United States.

I suggest, then, that it is not so much that Jewish music is inherently dramatic, as Yip Harburg said -- as a matter of fact, I'm not sure I agree with him -- as that the Jewish historical experience left in composers a lack of preconception, a power of observation, and an ability to feel for characters that is invaluable in composing for drama. David Raksin did not compose *Laura* to communicate the essence of David Raksin. He composed it to communicate the essence of Laura.

and here to get
in the music!

Jews in Europe were not the
only ones who had to learn
the violin. I was told that
even the Irish had to learn
the violin. (I was told that
even the Irish had to learn
the violin.)

The character of the music of the United States -- and I use that definition carefully, since Mexican music is, like the Brazilian samba, also American music -- has been determined by two conspicuous minorities in its population, blacks and Jews, the former creating and determining the character of its most important instrumental music, the latter its most important vocal music.

Furthermore, of those other whites who have contributed vastly to both this classic vocal popular music and jazz, the majority are of non-English origin. They are Italian -- there are probably more Italians among jazz musicians than any other white group -- Jewish, Irish, German, Polish, even Armenian (Paul Motian and Turk Van Lake) and Scottish. But the WASP jazz musician is a very rare creature. Furthermore, in the interpretation of the American song, the singers (both the good ones and the bad) have been mostly from these non-English groups, with a particularly strong representation from the Italians: Tony Bennett, Russ Columbo, Perry Como, Vic Damone, Frank R'one, Frank Sinatra, Julius LaRosa, Tommy Leonetti among them. Look more closely and you will find that even many of the singers with adopted English names are Italian, for example David Allen, Morgana King, Frankie Laine, Dean Martin, Jerry Vale, Connie Francis, and April Stevens. Dick Haymes was Scottish, and Jack Jones is Welsh. Prior to the rise of the Italians, the Irish, Bing Crosby among them, had a good run in American popular music. But I can't find anybody who was of English origin, unless it was Buddy Clarke, about whom I know very little. The Celts, then, have a pretty good representation among the great singers of American songs. But not the English. (Jo Stafford is one of the exceptions.)

It is as if the English in America didn't sing. And so they produced no popular singers of stature. Nor have they, for that matter, produced a conspicuous number of opera singers. (Beverly Sills and Jan Peerce are Jewish.) They haven't produced a lot of violinists, as you will see if you look over the personnel of any American orchestra. The majority are Jewish.

The countries with the strongest vocal traditions have the strongest representation in American popular music. Particularly conspicuous are the Italians. The cliché of the cop at an intersection in Italy directing traffic while singing something from *Rigoletto* just happens to have some truth to it: I saw just such a sight once in Verona.

England does not have a strong vocal tradition. (Mary Garden was a Scot.) It doesn't even have a very strong instrumental tradition. One is hard-pressed to draw up a list of great English virtuoso concert violinists and pianists. There have been only a few important English symphony conductors. I don't know the family history of Colin Davis, but the name is Welsh. The outstanding English conductor was Sir Thomas Beecham, one of whose icier broadsides was a statement that the English were the most unmusical people on earth.

England never produced an influential classical composer. One of its greatest figures was Henry Purcell (1659-1697), who died when J.S. Bach was twelve. I find his music fascinating, and deserving of greater recognition than it has even now. Many of his songs were published in his lifetime, but his instrumental work was less known, and much of it was not published until after his death at the age of 38. A few dramatic works were printed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Purcell Society, founded in 1876, attempted to publish all his works, and volumes of them came out intermittently after that. Incredibly, the task wasn't completed until 1965, nearly three centuries after his death.

Purcell is best known to modern audiences for a single work, the miniature opera *Dido and Aeneas* of 1689, written for a girls' school in Chelsea. Purcell might have become a great composer of opera, except for one fact: all composers work in the forms available to them in their time, and there was no public opera in England in Purcell's lifetime.

His music had no influence outside England, and little apparently within it, and in his later work, as he put it in a foreword to a set of his chaconnes in 1683, he "faithfully endeavour'd a just imitation of the most fam'd Italian Masters."

After Purcell, a silence falls, interrupted by Elgar and Delius, and lasts until the twentieth century. I am not enthralled of Elgar, though I bow to the judgment of those such as David Raksin and my English pianist friend Peter Pettinger (who has recorded the complete small body of Elgar's piano music) who find beauties there. And even among Elgar's champions, I have yet to encounter one who proclaimed him a major composer. Certainly he influenced nobody. As for Frederick Delius, I have trouble accepting him as English. He was born in 1862 in Bradford, Yorkshire, two years after his father, a German manufacturer, became a naturalized British subject. The family spoke German at home, and Frederick at eighteen moved to Florida, where he became an orange planter and studied music with an organist friend. At 24 he abandoned Florida for Leipzig where he underwent further musical training, and became a friend of Edvard Grieg (who was of Scottish ancestry). In 1888 he moved to Paris, and spent the rest of his life there, dying in 1934 at his home in Grez-sur-Loing. His reputation was entirely on the continent, his work remaining unknown until Beecham became his most important advocate. His influence remained minimal until Robert Farnon, a Canadian of Scottish-Irish descent, absorbed some of it, along with that of Debussy, Ravel, and Sibelius and -- in view of his own enormous influence on modern orchestration -- disseminated it among American arrangers and film composers.

Sir Arthur Sullivan was born in London, but his parents were Irish, and so was his name. In any case his music is rum-tum, to borrow a term from George Bernard Shaw.

Some years ago the Welsh motion-picture composer Terry

James said to me, "The whole Romantic movement, the wearing one's heart on one's sleeve and all that, never touched England at all. I can't think of one important composer who took part in it, except Elgar, and *The Dream of Gerontius* is rather watered-down Wagner. Sir Donald Francis Tovey called it *Gerry's Nightmare*."

The English try to claim Handel as their own, but he didn't set foot in England until 1710, when he was 25 and already an established composer. The following year his Italian opera *Rinaldo* was produced there. It made him a large reputation in England and opened the way for more Italian opera. It came about 15 years too late to do Purcell any good.

After that Handel courted royal favor in England, and lived the rest of his life there, working under royal patronage. It must be remembered that the king by now was George I, the elector of Hanover, a man of limited intelligence who never did learn to speak English, had no interest in his adopted country, whose hobby was cutting out paper dolls, and whose grandson's greatest achievement was losing the American colonies. This of course in no way reflects on Handel as a composer. Composers throughout history have had to cater to depressing people in order to get the resources to do the work they love. Handel was for his time a very independent man. Operas were written mostly to show off the skills of singers. He hated their vanity, in a moment of outrage he defenestrated a tenor. But to refer to Handel, a German who wrote Italian operas for a German court, as English is like claiming that Hindemith, Bartok, Toch, Krenak, Stravinsky, and Schoenberg were American because they lived in the United States.

In the twentieth century, when England at last produced some very fine composers, including Ralph Vaughan Williams, William Walton, Benjamin Britten, and Sir Michael Tippett. But these great men come too late to affect the evolution of music. England's place in musical history is inconsequential. Consider the importance to that history of Germany, France, Russia, and particularly Italy, the fount of the entire European musical tradition. Even little Finland gets in some good ticks with Sibelius. European music would not have deviated from its course had England sunk into the sea when the Romans left it.

Why should this be so? The question has tantalized me for years, partly because I am English by ancestry and parentage. This curiosity perhaps dates from the time in the 1960s when I said to Gerry Mulligan over dinner, "You know, Mulligan, sometimes I think you and I are the only WASPs in the music business."

Gerry said, "Speak for yourself. I'm Irish."

And from that time, in conversations or interviews, I would ask white jazz musicians about their ethnic origins, running a little mental census, finding out that even those with WASP names were of some other ethnic origin, such as Phil Woods, who is French and Irish, and Herb Ellis, who is Scottish and

Irish, or Jewish. The principle holds even in Canada, with players such as Rob McConnell, Guido Basso, Eugene Amaro, Frank Falco, Michel Donato, Ian McDougall, Lorne Lofsky, Moe Koffman, and Dave McMurdy. Possible exceptions: Don Thompson, Terry Clarke, and Ed Bickert. Kenny Wheeler is not a WASP: he's Catholic. Even in England, many of the best jazz players have been Scottish. Benny Carter told me that when he organized his celebrated "English" band in London in 1936, most of the musicians were Scots, including the trumpeters Duncan Whyte and Tommy McQuater, clarinetist and saxophonist Andy McDevitt, pianist Eddy MacCauley, and the superb trombonist George Chisholm. Many English musicians, such as the late Victor Feldman and the fine drummer Martin Drew, have been Jewish. And others, like the Americans of Irish descent, bore Celtic names such as Jack Parnell.

The question is interesting first, because, like Mount Everest, it's there. Second, there is an entire branch of studies called ethno-musicology, which is generally applied to "exotic" peoples such as Africans, Eskimos, and Peruvian Indians, that is almost little explored in American music.

Henry Mancini says that in the Italian pocket of population in Pennsylvania where he was born, he might as well have been raised in Italy. I grew up in Southern Ontario, in an austere social and cultural atmosphere that had been determined by what are called the United Empire Loyalists, those who clung to the crown and fled New England during or after the American Revolution, either out of genuine loyalty or because they had been stripped of their properties by American carpetbaggers. They were thus the most conservative element of the descendants of an English element noted for its rigidity, anti-sensualism, and hostility to all things aesthetic. Stephen Leacock said that the best place and time to die was in Toronto on Sunday, because the transition was so slight. He also said they didn't bury the dead in Toronto, they paraded them up and down Yonge Street. Leacock was not without bias. He was a Scot who lived in Montreal. But he had a point. Toronto, known to Canadians as Hog Town and, even more sarcastically, Toronto the Good, seemed to be a city organized *against* pleasure. When I was a student there in the mid-1940s, there were no cocktail bars, only dreary "beer parlors." I don't think there was one really good restaurant in the whole city.

I was steeped in English history, English drama, English poets. My father had played in English music hall, and so I grew up absorbing a repertoire of music-hall songs, skits, and doggerel - and a vague awareness that the "good" music of the world was something other than English. It was American, French, German, Russian, but not English. And so in noting this curious absence of the English from the ranks of great composers, I am not expressing a prejudice, I am noting a statistical aberration and confessing my bafflement over it. England after all is a country that gave us Shakespeare, the playwright who is

and yet English to say play means writing
heavenly - but not (necessarily) French!
to mention Shakespeare
to Shakespeare - 23rd century

and immobility (very...)
 23 special effort in act
 (nothing is given)
 no leaving. couple

in 20's & 30's: 'new' science helped by tech's; gradually under-100
100+ years into human history, as more people whose governments have better ways with the world
that the world beyond after war & even
I was terrible post-war frenzy (→) the world will be

Small *Mt. melting just (and part of the)*
vertical Mt!

considered -- even in countries noted for prickly national pride, such as France -- the greatest in history, and a considerable body of other literature as well, although we should pause to note that much of what is considered English literature should properly be described as Celtic. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, John Millington Synge, Sean O'Casey, Oscar Wilde, William Butler Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, and Samuel Beckett were all Irish, and Terrence Rattigan -- one of the finest playwrights of our time -- may have been born in London but he has a name as Irish as that of Gerry Mulligan. Emyln Williams was Welsh. Harold Pinter is Jewish. And an enormous number of Britain's finest actors and actresses (and quite a few of those in the United States) are Celts. Richard Harris once asked why it was that whenever he won an award, the newspapers referred to him as English and whenever he got drunk and got into trouble as Irish. And Sean Connery is a fervent Scottish nationalist. Arthur Conan Doyle, Robert Louis Stevenson, Sir Walter Scott, and Robert Burns were all Scots. The Irish have been called a word-drunk people, and certainly they seem gifted with a wanton eloquence. And I think the Scots follow them not far behind.

England nonetheless has a massive theatrical and literary tradition, and a very honorable place in the history of painting. That being so, the comparative English unimportance in classical music is all the more difficult to understand. And here is another puzzle: for all the richness of Celtic folk music, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales have not produced in all their history one important classical composer. *(dramatic) [?] [?] [?]*

In the twentieth century there is a change, not only in England but in America as well. The American English -- the designation used in its strictest sense -- begin to give us important composers, such as Charles Ives, Elliot Carter, and a particular favorite of mine, Samuel Barber, even as England at last yields up Vaughan Williams, Britten, Walton, and Tippett.

But in popular music and jazz, the English in America remain conspicuous by their scarcity. The collective body of this music was created by two minorities, Jewish and black Americans. Constituting together something like 20 percent of the population of the United States, they created perhaps 90 percent of its best distinctive music.

11 In the 1950s came the change: the WASPs were heard from,
 & indeed, everybody chose quads! - Logan!

Country and western music had been around for some time. It was known until about that time as hillbilly music. You heard it up into Canada, and the Maritime Provinces of Canada's east coast were linked into it. Hank Snow was a Canadian.

For the most part, however, this was music of the Bible belt, heard in the roadhouses of Kentucky and Tennessee and Alabama and Georgia. If urban educated southerners liked jazz, as many of them did, the working people did not. Their taste was for a simple and triadic music with lyrics that were for the most part lachrymose, lugubrious, and banal, relieved now and

then by flashes of near-poetry as in the work of Hank Williams. Sometimes it was so much so that I find it hard to believe that the writers weren't putting the profession on when they turned out songs such as *You Have Decorated My Life by Painting Your Love on My Heart* and *Dropkick Me, Jesus, through the Goalposts of Life*.

Today there is some very good writing in that field -- that of Mickey Newberry, for example -- and indeed the best song-writing being done in America today is in the country field.

Country-and-western, as its practitioners now like it to be called, is largely a music of voice and guitar. It has never given rise to an extensive instrumental tradition, comparable to jazz, except for the striking and sometimes virtuosic bluegrass, which is fascinating, if limited, stuff. It has produced brilliant players, however, such as Hank Garland and Thumbs Carlisle, both of whom were also fine jazz players when given the opportunity. Before he became a movie actor, Jerry Reed was an outstanding guitarist, heavily influenced by jazz. Nashville is awash in first-rate players, and a few years ago I noted that the musicians who had been playing the country sessions I'd attended in daytime were playing jazz in the bars at night. The line between jazz and country is frequently and easily crossed in Nashville.

The other contribution of the Anglo-Saxon Protestants, the music known as rock-and-roll, grew out of hillbilly music and the country blues. Later some black influence was absorbed into it, but the WASPs never did get the hang of making it swing. When the English in England took it up, and then when Americans began imitating English groups imitating American models, the black character of the music became even more diluted, and any trace of swing vanished. Instead of the subtle 12/8 feeling of black music, white American rock was now played with strict, stiff European eighth-note time.

The change came in the 1950s, though no one foresaw the scope of it. Bill Haley's *Rock Around the Clock* was an augury of things to come, and right behind it came Elvis Presley. Network radio was breaking up, no longer producing music of its own, and the radio stations of the nation, left to their own resources, sought an ever lower common denominator of musical taste. Driven entirely by advertising revenues, interested in what the industry calls cost-per-thousand -- how much money it takes to reach a thousand listeners -- they sought ever-larger audiences. And thus Top Forty was born.

The great era of black and Jewish popular music in America was coming to an end.

(To be continued)

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↳ Wasp built with like Bowling paper Keras

X (sandy) \rightarrow dominant growth mode HV \rightarrow Rocks
(asphalt)
(seismic) \rightarrow low seismic
(if Radiation Depth)