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Renewals

My apologies for being so late on these issues. Two more will be along within a couple of weeks.

Recession and inflation have affected the Jazzletter as they have everything. If you look at most magazines, you will see that they are running thin. When I was writing a piece for the New York Times recently, I was told to keep it short because their space was limited: the ads were down.

The Jazzletter was rescued this summer by contributions from readers, but still I had to go out and do some singing and lecturing to raise money for it. It was fun, but it was also work, and it is the reason I fell behind in the schedule.

I have held the price at $50 for five years. I have no choice but to raise it to $60 for 1994. Though I began the call for renewals in September last year, resubscriptions trailed in through August. That makes for a lot of book-keeping.

If you're going to resubscribe, and obviously I hope you will, I'd appreciate your doing it promptly to obviate sending further notices. The renewal notice is enclosed. As always, I ask anyone who can't afford to resubscribe but wants just to let me know, and the Jazzletter will be free.

In the meantime, I am grateful to every subscriber for the support you have shown me in these 12 years. 1994 will be the thirteenth, and then we'll see . . . .

The Other Prejudice

If you watched the TV coverage of the navy's Tailhook sexual harassment scandal, you may have seen a tee-shirt worn by some of the men involved. It was emblazoned: Women Are Property.

A few years ago, Americans were debating whether a Catholic could be elected president. Could a Jew or a black be elected president? I don't think he could be nominated, much less elected. As for a woman, consider the savaging of Geraldine Ferraro and the vicious current attacks on Hillary Clinton.

Yet Israel and England have had women chiefs of state. So have supposedly backward India, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Nicaragua. Turkey, a largely Muslim country, has a woman prime minister. When Kim Campbell became prime minister of Canada a few months ago, her qualifications were discussed but not her gender. Though France thus far hasn't had a woman premier or president, women have held very high positions in government there. Why the United States should be so backward about the emancipation of women, I do not know.

There has always been discrimination against women in jazz, both by musicians and by the audience. Perhaps this is because jazz is perceived as a man's hanging-out-in-bars kind of music. The condescension is manifest in that time-worn remark, "She plays good for a chick."

The late Emily Remler told me of the discrimination she suffered from men. Another guitarist, Mary Osborne, told me that she had never experienced it. Not that she had noticed, that is. Vi Redd, who is a superb alto player, told me she had suffered far more discrimation for her gender than her color. (Gerry Mulligan is one of her champions, and if you ever hear her play you'll know why.) The myth is that women are somehow weak, delicate players. It isn't so, as any of the too-few recorded solos of Melba Liston will attest.

To be sure, the history of classical music contains the name of not one important woman composer, though there have been major women performers. In the one area where they have been encouraged to work, opera, they have produced probably more talented performers than men. And so it is in jazz: women are allowed to sing but discouraged from playing, which is why you'll find so many women instrumentalists — Mary Osborne, Vi Redd, Billie Rogers, for example — have doubled in vocals.

Social pressure impedes girls from even thinking about entering certain professions, such as engineering. They are given dolls, not toy trucks, to play with. Everything around her makes it clear to a little girl what is expected of her when she grows up: she will run a house, cook, and have babies. That's the job. She becomes the prisoner of her own image of herself.

On a desperately overpopulated planet, we had better start reconsidering this emphasis. This issue is about two women jazz musicians who have come into my circle of acquaintances.

Maria's World

If you find yourself in New York on a Monday, may I suggest that you check on a Greenwich Village club called Visiones? The telephone number is 1-800 831-2326. Ask if the Maria Schneider band is playing that night, and if it is, try to hear it. The club is at 128 McDougal Street at Third Street. The band plays two sets a night, at 9 and 11. Last fall Maria recorded the band at her own expense, an album of wonderful virtuosity, but it hasn't been released yet. For the moment the one way to hear her writing is in person.

Maria Schneider is one of the most interesting jazz composers to come along in many years. Her music is so fresh, so personal, so exquisitely crafted, that I hardly know what to make of it. It's amazing writing, impeccable in its linear detail. Though her conversation is scattered with self-doubt, hers is a huge talent, and I cannot foresee where it will take her. Perhaps, like the gifted Nan Schwartz, she will in time compose for film. I was talking to Gerry Mulligan about her on the telephone. "I'm very, very impressed by her," I said.

"You're not alone," Gerry said. "So is Brookmeyer." The first time I heard Laurie Frink playing lead trumpet, she was with Mulligan's band. Now she's a regular with Maria's.

Maria has chosen a difficult road. Instead of being satisfied to make a living as an arranger (assuming she could get work)

she has chosen to devote her career to her own music. Only a few persons in the history of jazz have been able to pull that off, the most significant being Duke Ellington. Horace Silver has always played his own music, as Charles Mingus did.

So in a way did Gil Evans, for even when he scored older jazz pieces by other composers, so personal was his approach that each piece amounted to a recomposition, somewhat akin to, say, Rachmaninoff's *Variations on a Theme of Paganini.*

If Schneider's writing puts you in mind of Gil Evans, it is not a coincidence. One of her pieces is titled *Evanescence*, in tribute to Gil. Gil was one of her early idols and later, almost by accident, she was his assistant and orchestrator, and occasionally his ghost writer, whereas he was her teacher. Thus Gil has directly and personally influenced jazz players and composers from the generation of Miles Davis and Gerry Mulligan right down to Maria's.

No one seems more improbable for a life role as a jazz composer than Maria. She is of slight build. She is rather small by today's standards. She has a beautifully formed body with graceful arms, hands, and legs. She has a full head of bright red hair, and she's quite pretty. She is elegant and rather proper in manner. The first time you see her, in a miniskirt, kick off a tempo and conduct a band, getting it roaring with her delicate and very feminine gestures, is a bit of a revelation, but you get used to it. She does not compromise her femininity. And she seems to have little trouble with male musicians, although that is because she picks those who will respect her musicianship. I first heard about her writing from Bill Kirchner; nor have I heard any musician speak of her with anything less than respect.

She was born of largely German and Dutch ancestry on November 27, 1960, in Windom, a community of something under 4,000 souls in the southwest of Minnesota.

"The town was named after the grandfather of William Windom, the actor," Maria told me a few months ago when she came to Ojai for a day's visit. "William Windom used to come to Windom to Prairie Days and things like that. It's a tiny town. But I was fortunate in that there was a woman who lived there when I was very young, Mrs. Evelyn Butler. She was a stride pianist and a very good classical pianist. Her son and her husband had died within a month of each other, and she came to Windom from Chicago to live with her daughter. For some reason my parents heard about her and invited her up for dinner. She came to our house and started playing stride piano. She had red hair. She looked like me, and I thought: 'That's who I want to be!' I was four or five. I knew even then that I wanted to be a musician."

If there is a constant that I have discovered in the lives of major musicians, it is that they had supportive parents, or at least one supportive parent. Maria is no exception to that rule.

"My father is a mechanical engineer, now retired. He is a very creative in a mathematical sense. I think it is so connected to music. He seems to have a grasp of the things I write that are more abstract. My mother read a lot of literature and poetry. She has a very verbal sensibility. I have two sisters. The oldest one is a lawyer, who did things like writing poetry and acting. The next sister did painting and became an architect. And I did music. I'm the youngest."

Somehow in that family, then, the general image of what a girl could expect to be was broken.

If there is a second constant in the lives of musicians, it is a good teacher encountered somewhere along the line.

"I studied with Mrs. Butler," Maria said. "She taught from a real theory perspective. Along with classical, she was teaching me to play out of a fake book. Right from the beginning, we studied chords. She was a great teacher.

"She was out of Art Tatum, and until I graduated from high school, I thought that was where jazz stopped. I was very removed from the world in that town.

"I left Windom in 1979 to go to the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. People started giving me records, like Herbie Hancock. I started hearing the left hand. And McCoy Tyner's voicings in fourths. Things that weren't stride. It was a complete shock, and I got really excited and started buying a lot of albums.

"I got a theory and composition degree, but the whole time I was playing catch-up on the 40 years of jazz that I'd missed out on. I started studying with some people in the community, including a Brazilian pianist, Manfredo Fest. And I studied with an arranger. Then I went to the University of Miami for the first quarter of graduate school, then transferred to Eastman and got a master's in writing and film scoring. It's a course called jazz contemporary media writing. I studied with Rayburn Wright. He was wonderful. Even Duke Ellington called him once to give him a lesson in writing something that involved strings."

Rayburn, or Ray, Wright is one of those unsung heroes of jazz. The vast majority of jazz fans have never heard of him, and yet he exerted and still is exerting an enormous influence in the music. He was for 20 years or so the staff arranger of Radio City Music Hall. He was already a respected teacher of arranging and composition when he was offered a post at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, which has become, like North Texas State University (now University of North Texas) and the Berklee College of Music in Boston, an important force in the music. Wright's influence will continue, though he died of cancer in 1990, because of a textbook he wrote, ***Inside the Score***, and because of all the arrangers and composers he taught, among them David Berger, Sy Johnson, Bevan Manson, Dave Matthews, Manny Mendelson, John Odo, Mike Patterson, Lance Rubin, Dave Slonaker, Bill Kirchner, John Fedchock, and Maria Schneider.

Fedchock, later known for his trombone work and writing for

Woody Herman, was working on his master's at Eastman when he and Maria met.

"George Russell came to Eastman as a clinician," Maria said. "He said, 'If you want to develop, make money at something outside of music. Because if you make money doing that thing but not doing it the way you want to, you get yourself pushed in different directions, and you'll end up not focussing on what you want to.'

"I'd thought about moving to New York and writing commercially," Maria said.

George Russell's advice sank in. After finishing school in 1983, she made the move to New York, but not to write commercial music.

"I got an apprenticeship grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to study with Bob Brookmeyer. He hooked me up with Mel Lewis."

And thereby she came in contact with another of the major mentors. Through his band and his curiously blunt kind of coaching, Mel developed any number of young jazz musicians and placed them before the public.

Maria said, "Mel was sweet. He was nice to me, but also gruff — painfully honest. He said, 'Maria, what you really have to do is start your own band.'

"I wrote one thing for Woody Herman. I wrote a couple of things for Mel. It was an honor to write for these people. For Mel I had to write a certain thing, for Woody I had to write a certain thing. I started to think, 'How do you develop your own thing unless you start your own group?' Mel kept saying, 'You should start your own group as a workshop.'"

But the time for that was not yet. She was about to enter on her greatest educational adventure: working for Gil Evans.

She said, "I met a writer in New York named Tom Pearson, who had worked in Los Angeles. He had a band. I met him at a music copying office where I was working. We went out for coffee. He asked who was my favorite writer, and I was talking about Gil this, Gil that. That night I got a call from Tom. He said, 'I didn't tell you this, but I know Gil really well. He needs somebody to help him out with some things.'

"So I called Gil and met him. I started working with him at the end of 1985, and I was with him until he died in the spring of 1988. I started out copying for him, and that developed into re-orchestrating some of his things for standard instrumentation. He needed them so he could go to Europe and work with those radio orchestras there. And then, slowly, the relationship changed. He would guide me through things that he wanted orchestrated. And I started orchestrating for him.

"Gil and I got along so well. We talked a lot about music. I waited for him to ask me for a tape of my music. I wasn't going to say, 'Would you like to listen to my music?' And finally he asked to hear my writing. Then he started having me help him out when he was overloaded with work. I learned a lot.

"I think we got along because I'm pretty good about deadlines. I tend to get nervous about getting everything done, and Gil tended to be very relaxed. Sometimes deadlines and things would slip away from him. I think we were good for each other that way. He was always telling me to loosen up, but if I'd been as loose as he was, I think I'd have been the last person he wanted working for him.

"We were working on the Paul Newman film, *The Color of Money*, getting some music together for it. We had a recording session. In the morning I came over to his place in the west 70s between Central Park West and Columbus. I was supposed to finish up some stuff. I had had a back problem. My back was really stiff. We were trying to get out the door. He was finishing up some bit of writing. We were late. The limo was there waiting, and his son Miles was there."

Miles Evans, who now conducts the Gil Evans Orchestra, was named after Gil's best friend, Miles Davis.

Maria said, "Gil was still in his underwear. Miles said, 'We've got to get going.' Gil said, 'No, wait, Maria's back hurts.' He said, 'I've got the perfect book.' He pulled out this yoga book, and started showing me the proper way to sleep. He spent a long time reading to me and showing me the proper position to sleep. To this day I still sleep that way, and it works. It's sleeping on your side with your upper leg up and your lower leg extended.

"Then he said, 'You shouldn't drink too much water. People drink too much water.' He was telling me all these things about my health.

Schneider

"Finally we got to the Nola studio on 57th Street. The guys were just kind of walking around. It was Gil's band, thirteen or something. Gil started reprimanding them for not working on the music and practicing. He said, 'You know, we got detained. We've been busy writing this music. I'm so disappointed in you.' He was like a disappointed father, and here we'd been talking for about an hour about sleep techniques. They were all upset, because they loved and respected Gil. They looked like beaten puppies. But they loved him so much.

"Gil and I did a lot of nice projects together."

Even in her remarks about him, one senses Gil's paternal attitude to her. Gil was a very gentle man, sensitive and idiosyncratic and with a bizarre sense of humor. Having known them both, I can almost picture the relationship.

Maria said, "He'd give me a tape of something and give me an idea of what he was looking for. I was sort of an orchestrator. Sometimes he was specific and sometimes not. I'd bring something in and he'd tell me how he wanted to change it and why. I got a good sense for how he'd do it. It was great.

"I worked for him right until he got sick, before he died. He had surgery and then went down to Mexico. I think he stopped taking his medication and started doing mud baths. He got an infection and died of peritonitis in the spring of '88.

"Gil was so interested in all cultures and all sorts of music. He took in so much stuff. He was a synthesis of that. All these unique things came together. People become nothing that unique because they are an outcome of one or two things. Gil listened to so many different things, and outside of music he was interested in so many things. He had a book on African face painting. He had a mind that soaked everything up. An interested man.

"Before he died he wasn't really talking that much to his friends. Sometimes when we worked together, I didn't get a real chatty thing going. There were nights when we'd sit and listen to music, but in general I felt that if we weren't doing work I didn't want to bug him. In a way that was maybe a mistake. Sometimes I think Gil wanted me to relax and spend time with him, but I had this way I looked up at Gil, I didn't want to be in his way, I just wanted to help him.

"One day he called me up. I said, 'How're you doing, Gil?' He was telling how he wasn't feeling well and he was worried that something was really wrong and he'd been to the doctor. I kept thinking he was going to say we were doing a project and could I come over. But it wasn't that. He just wanted to talk. That was the last time I ever talked to him. After that he got really sick.

"Gil was very fragile at the end. He became very thin. His death was really sad for me.

"In Gil's writing, every line makes such beautiful musical sense. That last Miles concert in Montreux, a bunch of us put together from old sketches."

The reason the scores had to be reconstructed by Maria and Mike Patterson, among others, is a simple one: Gil apparently put so little value on them that he simply threw a lot of them out. That Montreux concert was taped for television and has been shown on PBS. It is a travesty. Miles looked like a living corpse and played very badly. The balances so necessary to the colors of Gil's writing are lost. I found the program so depressing that I got out my Miles Davis-Gil Evans records and played them in the middle of the night until they washed away much of the memory of the program.

But because of that show, many of Gil's scores have been reconstructed. "I did *Miles Ahead* for that concert and recording," Maria said. "Just in putting that together, each individual line is so beautiful. Sometimes the vertical chords that result from the horizontal lines on their own are so strange, but everything has such a gravitational pull. Everything is moving ahead. Something feels tense, but it's going some place. It's a real feeling of forward motion.

"Another thing is the surprise element. There was one thing I orchestrated for him, it went from one note in anticipated eighth notes that got real fat. He wanted the instruments with low tessitura to go into their highest range and the instruments with high tessitura to go into their lowest range. You get that real strain in the instruments. He pushes instruments out of their normal tessitura, and you get a real character. You get something in the tone besides just the obvious.

"Gil used to say that the marvelous thing about Miles' tone is that it was Miles' tone in every register, from bottom to top. There wasn't that division of sound. And Gil was so sensitive to tone. That's what he liked in Miles. He said over and over again that it was the tone.

"Gil's music is so full of a real sensitivity to color."

Maria was rapidly losing her mentors. "It was really weird," she said. "I had been writing for so many people, my teacher at Eastman, Rayburn Wright, Mel Lewis, Woody Herman, and Gil. And they all died. I thought, 'Maria, you are so blessed. You got in on the tail end of all these really great people's lives.'

"I'd been given the gift of working with them, and I wanted to synthesize a lot of things. The way to do it was to go straight ahead. Not write jingles, not write commercials. Not that anything's wrong with it. But I just have something I want to get to. I'm sure it's going to be a long road, and I'm sure it's gonna keep changing. But I want that."

After Gil's death in 1988, she continued studying with Bob Brookmeyer. "And I did a lot of copying work," she said.

She married John Fedchock, and in 1989 they started their own band. They have recently, in what for Maria has been a painful transition, parted. There are no children to complicate the separation. "I haven't had a real desire for kids," Maria said.

"John now has his own band, and when I can't be at Visiones

one night next month, he's subbing for me with his band.

"I've just been moving ahead, working on my band and on my own music.

"I feel that I've been treated well. Bob Brookmeyer and Mel and Gil. I never felt anything from them, never felt they hired me because I was a woman or on the other hand wouldn't give me a chance because I was a woman. I always felt like it was really fair." (It is worth noting that Emily Remler also studied with Brookmeyer.)

"I think the struggle is within the mind, because of culture. Personally I've had a good experience. But I think it takes a real kind of perseverance and strength to just break through and say, 'I'm going to go for this.' I think the hardest part is in your own mind: to say, 'I want this and I can do this.' Because if you have this in your mind and you do your work and do it well, the opportunities are open for you.

"Sometimes, I get the feeling that if people don't know who you are and they haven't heard of you and you say, 'I compose,' they think, 'Yeah.' But then if they hear you and they like you, they say, 'Wow!' It's a sort of a shock. But you have to expect that. I'm probably the same way. It just takes people a while to get used to it. It's like a strange phenomenon. I hope it changes. I hope it doesn't always have to be the case. I think there would be more women in all sorts of artistic professions.

"I think it starts at a young age. I think guys when they're young are more comfortable about being in the stage where they're not doing it well and they're making mistakes. A woman from a young age is scared of appearing bad in front of men.

"But I think things are really changing for women. I know I felt I had to have a profession. There's a lot of pressure to be beautiful and all these other things on top of it. For a man, it's enough to do what you do well. Men may want to be handsome, but a man's self-image is not so based on things that aren't about productivity or creativity.

"A woman isn't really taught at a young age that her creativity and personality and what she brings to something are valuable. It's more about what you look like, and are you sexy. It's demeaning, and it doesn't teach you to value your own inner gifts, while men are taught that.

"My band hasn't been a profit-making thing. But it has been a vehicle for people to hear what I do. It spurs other activity. I worked with the UMO Jazz Orchestra, a radio orchestra in Helsinki. I went over and rehearsed with them and did a concert of my music. The man who ran it heard John's and my band the very first night and invited me over to do that. I'm hoping to do something in Cologne. I know about that band, because I always copied Brookmeyer's music when he went over with them, and he'd always send me the tapes."

The band in question is virtually unknown in America. It is on staff at West Deutsche Rundfunk (WDR), the west German television and radio network, which actually maintains three orchestras, a full symphony orchestra, a light music orchestra, and a jazz band, a superb organization with an international personnel. Roger Kellaway and I worked on a project for it two years ago. It's one of the best bands in the world. Since Maria's visit to Ojai, an assignment with the WDR band has come through: she is going to Cologne to conduct it in December.

"I hope to do more of that sort of thing," she said. "I think about getting opportunities. If I can do other things on the side and just scrape by, that's cool. I didn't get into music to be rich. The only time I really feel good about myself is when I feel I've written something where I've learned something and added something new and it's moved someplace.

"I hate writing. I mean, for me, writing is miserable. There are moments when I love it, when it feels like it's coming together. But in general it's miserable. If it's just churning out music for a dollar, I'd rather do something else. It's not fun to crank something out."

I told her Lillian Helman's great line: "The pleasure of writing is having written."

"Yes!" Maria said emphatically. "After you come up with something and you look back and say, 'Wow! I did that.' And then you don't even feel like you did it. You feel like it's an accident, pure luck, something out there that you happened to catch, and you feel like you'll never do it again unless you just get lucky. I feel like every piece I write, I'm jumping out into a free fall."

Maria tried to sell her album to just about every jazz label in New York. They all passed on it. But now, at last, she's placed it — in Europe. It is coming out on Matthias Winckelmann's Munich-based Enja label, and should soon be available here. You'll be able to hear her then, if you haven't already dropped by Visiones to catch the band.

I got a card from her the other day. She wrote, "The week has been a blur. I started teaching this week, an advanced jazz harmony course. It keeps me on my toes. I've made big discoveries, though, as I've had to analyze the harmonic detail of my own work for students. It's amazing how mathematical intuition turns out to be. I've almost freaked myself into thinking, 'How did I do that? I can't possibly do it again.'"

Oh yes she can.

Karolyn's Too

Karolyn Kafer and Maria Schneider have much in common. They are mid-westerners of German descent, both the daughters of engineers, both graduates of important jazz schools. But the differences are many. Where Maria has doubt, Karolyn has certainty. When I asked if she knew Maria, she said she knew of her. "She's a lot older than I am." Yes, I seem to recall that when you're twenty-four, a nine-year gap seems like a lot.

Karolyn was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin — home town of Woody Herman, Bunny Berigan, and Hildegarde — January 27,

1969.

A few months ago, she played lead alto for a band Doc Severinsen put together for a gig in Atlantic City. The lead alto player is the boss of the section, and has to be strong. Karolyn is that. She told her section mates they weren't playing with enough strength.

I asked her if she had encountered prejudice and resentment from musicians. She said: "Nobody does it to my face. They know I'll rip their heads off."

That's right. Not to her face. It's like racial prejudice: not to your face. That sax section went back to New York and complained bitterly about her.

Yet it was precisely because of her qualities of assertion and certainty that I met her.

I had been singing for a week at a club called Senator in Toronto with a quintet comprising Guido Basso, fluegelhorn; Rick Wilkins, tenor; Don Thompson, piano; Neal Swainson, bass; and Barry Elmes, drums. These are incredible musicians, among the best in the world. Most of the songs had my own lyrics, although I did, as I always do, a tribute to Johnny Mercer in each set. Senator is a big club, and we sold it out two sets a night for a week. Anybody who can't sing well with such a group should consider another line of work, and they made me sound better than I am.

I had been asked to do a concert with the Dallas Jazz Orchestra, an excellent band made up largely of North Texas State University graduates. I had to lecture at the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival the night before. So there certainly would be no time to rehearse big band charts in Dallas. Thinking, erroneously, that I could use Don Thompson's charts with a quintet drawn from the Dallas Jazz Orchestra, or DJO, as it is known, I asked for rhythm section, trumpet and tenor. I was picked up at the airport by Jane Barton and Celeste Guerrero, both members of the DJO board of directors. Celeste is the widow of drummer Paul Guerrero who taught at North Texas State and played a lot with Woody Herman. Jane is a former music teacher with two master's degrees who found that music is not the easiest way to make a living and now heads her own highly successful travel agency.

The first thing I learned was that I would not have the tenor and trumpet I had requested.

Celeste played me a tape of the band's recording of *Cherokee*. I was much taken by an alto solo by someone who seemingly had learned a thing or two about authority from listening to Phil Woods. Nobody really equals Phil's kind of bite, but this was pretty impressive. "That's Karolyn Kafer," Celeste said.

"I've heard about her," I said. And then, by some eerie prescience, call it just a hunch, a foresight of pending disaster, I said, "Can you get her for me tomorrow?"

"We can try," Celeste said.

Rehearsal had been set for 4 p.m. I had asked to have it advanced to 3, but the orchestra manager told me it was not possible. At the last minute, I was told that I would not go on at 8 p.m., as I had been told, but at 7. I began to sense a colossal screw-up.

I went down to the Venetian Room of the Fairmont Hotel at 3:30; busboys were still clearing away the buffet table from the Sunday brunch. By 4 the musicians began to arrive; Karolyn was the first. I introduced myself and we shook hands. The piano, which I had been assured was an excellent Yamaha, was a jangling monstrosity that sounded as if it had been played for years by Maurice Rocco. I told the band manager, "Get this thing out of here — now!" It was removed. The missing Yamaha mysteriously appeared.

Meantime the sound man was setting up his equipment, piping the room full of the roar of some heavy metal radio station. Vacuum cleaners hummed as Mexican women cleaned the carpets of debris from the brunch. Try rehearsing against all that.

I was advised that I would not have the DJO's regular pianist. The sub was a pleasant enough young man whose experience, however, had been in Latin bands. The rhythm section was good, and the guitarist, Kim Platko, was excellent. Rehearsal finally started about 4:15. We would have to settle on the material that the group could most easily learn.

Obviously I couldn't use the Don Thompson charts: the horn lines might confuse everyone. I reverted to trio charts Roger Kellaway had long ago written for me. I immediately selected the easiest tunes, including *Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars*, since everybody knew the changes.

No one in the group had any real take-charge quality — except this tiny girl, standing five-foot-two and weighing perhaps all of a hundred pounds, who didn't look as if she were big enough even to hold the tenor saxophone hung around her neck, much less play it. She had time, she had assurance, she was reading through the material quickly, transposing effortlessly. She knew what she was doing.

I thought we could save rehearsal time if I did a few things with the pianist alone. I gave him the chart Roger Kellaway had written for me on *Once Upon a Summertime*. I asked him to play it rubato. I soon realized he didn't grasp the concept and couldn't play that way. And he played one chord with such an odd voicing that it threw me. I threw the tune out. I asked Kim Platko, who was using a nylon string guitar if, with Roger's changes, he and I could do the Jerome Kern-Oscar Hammerstein *The Folks Who Live on the Hill* as a duet. He ran it down flawlessly. One run-through, schedule it and pray. Next case. And so it went. I threw in two Mercer songs I liked to talk about because of the brilliance of the writing, *I Remember You* and *I Thought About You*.

I told Karolyn: "You've got to help me. There isn't time to rehearse enough material to fill an hour tonight. I am going to

have to do a lot of talking between the tunes, and I'm going to ask you to do a lot of blowing to stretch them out. And you're going to have to kick the tempos."

"I hope I remember them," she said.

"You will," I said.

The sound man continued blasting noise out of his speakers. At one point he hooked a microphone cable around Karolyn's sax stand and almost dumped her alto from the stage onto the floor below. Finally she got feisty with him: he'd almost smashed her horn.

There was a moment of comedy. Several times I had said something to the musicians like, "You do sixteen bars and I'll come back in at the release."

I encountered blank stares from everyone, including Karolyn. Were we having some failure of communications here? And finally Karolyn said, "We're just puzzled. What do you mean by the release?"

"The release, the release! The bridge."

"Oh," she said. "We've never heard that term."

And I started to laugh. Warning, guys: don't use the word "release" in Dallas. I told Karolyn, "You'd better learn it, because it's widely used, and furthermore some people call it the channel."

Somehow we pulled it together. At 6:50, Karolyn and I took off in different directions to change clothes. I told the band manager we could not possibly start before 7:15.

She was a wonder. She took charge and held everything together. The tempos were right, the control was right. We did only seven tunes, but with narration and Karolyn's solos, we filled the hour to an audiences that was astonishingly rapt. The next day we got an excellent review in the Dallas Morning News. I couldn't believe we'd pulled it together from such a mad, chaotic rehearsal.

The band performed after I did. It's an excellent band, led by trumpeter Galen Jeter, a great high-note player who was a protegee of the late Bill Chase. He plays a lot like Bill. And I got to hear Karolyn play her solo on *Cherokee*.

The next evening Jane Barton held a dinner party. Karolyn came. I said, "I want to talk to you. Let's find someplace quiet." Jane offered us her den.

"Tell me how all this got started," I said. "How did you grow up, and where?"

"We lived in a suburb of Milwaukee called New Berlin. My father is an electrical engineer. My mother was an R.N., a nurse. She doesn't do that any longer.

"There are three kids in the family. My two brothers are older than I, twenty-nine and thirty. My mother plays clarinet. All the kids played piano. My dad played drums in high school. We had a lot of music in the family, but not professionally."

"How come at your age you're not a rock and roll baby?"

"I listen to rock and roll. I listen to all kinds of music. Even country. I got interested in jazz in high school — in middle school, actually. I started tenor sax in grade school. In middle school we had a stage band. We had an excellent program. That's how I got hooked on jazz. I was never interested in heavy metal. That's not for me.

"From there I went out and bought records. The school system was very important to me. I had excellent band directors, three of them. We went to competitions and won, all over Wisconsin and Texas and Florida. There was not only jazz but classical as well. I loved going to the stage band. I dug it so much even though it was at 7 o'clock in the morning.

"In sixth grade, I was practicing eight hours a day. That's what I wanted. I didn't really dig playing the piano that much. When I started playing tenor, I thought, 'It seems to come easily. I really want to do it.' I must have been something like twelve."

"The tenor looks as if it weighs as much as you do."

"It's heavy," she said.

"Gerry Mulligan gripes about the weight of the baritone."

"That's really heavy," she said. "But I love playing baritone."

"What else do you play?"

"Oboe, bassoon, clarinet, flute, and piccolo. I started the other doubles in grade seven. I started oboe because my band director in high school said, 'I really need an oboe player.' And I said, 'I'm not playing oboe. It'll ruin my embouchure.' Then I thought about it. I had a few lessons on oboe. I had hardly any lessons at all on saxophone until I came to college.

"I realized very early that I love to perform. It's not only jazz. I love to do shows, I love to do classical. But it is mostly jazz.

"I wanted to go to North Texas State. I heard the albums of the One O'Clock Lab bands, and I couldn't believe the quality of them. I applied for a scholarship and I got a call from Neil Slater, who is the director of jazz studies now. I came here in 1987. Most of my audition tape was on tenor but while I was driving here, I decided to audition on alto. Now most people know me as an alto player.

"I did my undergrad bachelor's work in jazz studies in four years. I could have gone on to another school, but I stayed because I wanted to work as a t.a. — teaching assistant. I was an instructor of applied saxophone and I was conductor of the Four O'Clock Lab Band. Then I moved up to the Three O'Clock Band, and I couldn't go any higher. Prof. James Riggs, who is professor of saxophone, has the Two O'Clock and Neil Slater has the One."

(The One O'Clock Lab Band is not named after *One O'Clock Jump*. The NTSU band program was set up by Dr. Gene Hall shortly after World War II, although there was a stage band there as far back as 1927, when it was still a teacher's college. Under Gene Hall's direction, the bands were named after their

hours of scheduled rehearsal. Gene was my friend. He died a few months ago. Like Rayburn Wright at Eastman and Gordon Delamont, who trained Rick Wilkins and Rob McConnell, in Toronto, he is one of the unsung heroes of jazz.)

"I took the Four O'Clock to the Notre Dame Collegiate Jazz Festival," Karolyn continued. "Then with the Three O'clock, I did some things that had never been done before except with the One O'Clock. I had two guest artists, Ed Shaughnessy and Lou Soloff. We had no budget, but we did gigs. If I may say so, I'm a good manager. We had a gig for, like, a thousand dollars, the first night of school. It was a dance. Neil let me borrow the One O'Clock's dance book. The guys wore tuxedoes. It was just *happening!* We had a singer. Man, I mean, it was perfect!

"Then we would do these high schools gigs for $200, but we'd do eight of them. It forced the guys to get out and perform, and play in front of audiences.

"And then I took them on a tour. I booked it, I arranged it, I did everything. Everyone heard through the grapevine that I was going to do it and nobody believed me. With the band, I raised all the money. I got a grant from the Philanthropic Foundation here in Dallas. I didn't discuss any of that with anyone until I knew what I had. I made a press kit, with our picture and the bios. I sent it out. Everything was top notch. Everybody was saying, 'There's no way. She's crazy.'

"We went to the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, then Northern Illinois, Drury College in Springfield, Missouri, the University of Wisconsin in Whitewater, my high school, Eisenhower High, then the University of Wisconsin in Parkside. We were gone for a week of one nighters. We did it in four vans. Everything was perfectly planned out. And the guys had so much fun! They even got paid per diem. The band was so professional. They played their buns off, and they became so close that week.

"I expect a lot of them, and I'm real hard on them. But I was so proud of them. This was in March of this year. A month later we went to Colorado."

"What's next?" I asked.

"I'm working on my master's in woodwind performance, which takes about three years.

"My shorter goals are to finish my master's. After that I would like to move to New York or L.A.

"I'm not worrying about my personal life. I see people. I moved down here with a guy, and I've had very meaningful relationships. But my career comes first. Period. I'm married to my career. If something comes along, I'll know it. At this point I don't want to have kids. I'm a kid myself. I think it would ruin me. I'll just have to cross that bridge when I come to it. I can hardly find enough time in the day for my music.

"One thing I like to do is play lead alto. And you have to take charge, you have to be assertive. I've been very successful at that. Some people say I play 'way too loud. I just say, 'Hey, man, blow up.'

"I know the prejudice is out there. But personally, it doesn't bother me. I do not lose any sleep over it. There have never been any run-ins. But you can tell the vibes the way somebody looks at me. I do my thing, and if they like me, fine."

I like her. I can't help thinking that if she were a man, qualities that some musicians deplore in her would be admired. I confess that it surprised me a little to find that someone so dainty and pretty and feminine is not only intelligent. She's also smart, which is a different thing, tough-minded and determined.

One evening not long ago, those qualities saved me from what could have been an embarrassing musical mess. I will not soon forget it.

Kafer