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While You Weren't Watching
Part Two

Doug Ramsey covered for *JazzTimes* the recent *Blowing up a Storm* Memorial Day weekend of big bands, held for the benefit of radio station KLON — four days at Long Beach and on Catalina Island, California. Audiences were offered panel discussions, music played by 151 musicians, including some of the most illustrious in jazz, 22 big bands led by John Lewis, Bill Holman, and Terry Gibbs, the Gerry Mulligan Concert Jazz band conducted by Bob Brookmeyer and Manny Albam, a Thad-Jones Mel Lewis recreation also conducted by Brookmeyer, the Woody Herman band led by Frank Tiberi, a Miles Davis-Gil Evans reconstruction, and many more attractions. Yet the audience amounted to only about 1,500 persons. Ramsey remarked "the sea of white hair and white faces," and added, "Can a young, diverse audience be developed for this music?" And in conversation later with me, he was even more rueful. I told him that the concert in New York at Carnegie Hall that I emceed in June drew about 800 persons, few of them young.

Recently I addressed the international meeting of the Duke Ellington Society in Toronto. One of the things I told them was that there was too much gray hair in the room. I don't think there was anyone there under fifty, certainly no one under thirty.

The questions I was asked suggested the tenacity of resistance in some of the society's members to looking reality in the face. When I said that jazz, in common with all forms of real and good music, faces troubles, the desire not to know was manifest in the question from one woman, "What about the big-band jazz programs at Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center? They're drawing audiences." I pointed out that when Woody Herman was a boy, little Milwaukee had about ten vaudeville houses. For years now it has had none. When vaudeville finally died, it did it in New York, which has a huge population and draws audiences from its annual millions of visitors. Thus it will be in New York that jazz, if it's going to die, does it. That New York has two repertoire jazz orchestras is not indicative of much. For that matter, Dallas has two big jazz orchestras, and even their members and Dallas jazz lovers will tell you that Dallas is not a good jazz town. Once upon a time in America, towns of thirty or forty thousand could support two or three dance bands, many of them playing jazz-influenced music. And scores of name bands traveled the North American continent playing that music. We remember the most prominent and forget such excellent bands of those of Lucky Millinder and Will Bradley. And the population of North America was about half what it is now.

As for all the jazz recordings that are coming out, much of their content is archive material that costs comparatively little to issue. The sidemen were paid as a buy-out at the time of the original recordings. The same is true in classical music. After the establishment of fairly sophisticated stereo recording techniques, the quality of sound has improved only modestly, and not enough that the average home sound system would reveal it or the average listener would detect it.

You may read about the wealth of Wynton Marsalis, but the life of most jazz musician is very different. Trumpeter Jimmy Owens addressed their condition at a town meeting reported in *Allegro*, the New York city musicians' union paper, and an informative one on social issues in general. Owens described the hardships that jazz musicians so often face, even after long careers in some of New York's best clubs and jazz festivals.

"Out of work artists face financial needs, many times," he said. "The have health needs, and no health coverage. Jazz artists who have contributed enormously to America's culture often have not been able to receive a pension."

The reason, he said, was that musicians are defined as "independent contractors," which relieved employers of the obligation to pay statutory benefits.

According to the paper, "He compared that to the situation earlier in this century, when the companies that were to grow into today's media and entertainment giants — ABC, NBC, and CBS — began to accumulate the resources that built mighty corporations by paying pitifully small amounts to such jazz greats as Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington." It is worth adding that in the days of the "remote" broadcasts of the big bands from hotels and ballrooms, the networks didn't even pay for the "wire" that brought them the programs.

The employment situation for jazz musicians in New York is *not* good. Maria Schneider keeps her Monday night band going by paying the musicians figures that embarrass her. But she can't get more for them. Karolyn Kafer, one of the finest young jazz saxophonists around, recently left New York after months of playing double reeds in Broadway show bands and occasional jazz gigs that pay next to nothing. She moved to Los Angeles only to find the situation not much better there, and finally she returned to the Dallas area, where she went to school, because there she can at least teach.

At that Ellington society meeting, a woman challenged my statement that there was no jazz station in Los Angeles. Quite defensively, in fact, she said, "What about KLON?"

KLON, in the first place, isn't in Los Angeles, it's down the coast in Long Beach. And in the second place its signal doesn't penetrate much of Los Angeles.

Compare this to the situation in Los Angeles in the early days of bebop. In a 1976 liner note for a reissue of the Savoy sessions involving Slim Gaillard, Harold Land, Art Pepper, and more, Patricia Willard described the wealth of jazz nightclub activity all over Los Angeles at the time, and then noted what was going on in radio:

"Black and white disc jockeys were staunch supporters for bop. Of the hip black disc jockeys, 'Mayor of Melody' Joe Adams on KOWL was first in Los Angeles, joined in 1947 by Roy Loggins;

Blowin' with Roy on KALI and Bill Sampson on KWKW . . . . Of the non-black disc jockeys, Gene Norman probably was the best known, both for his nightly two-hour KFWB *Eastside Time* and his *Just Jazz* concerts at the 6,700-seat Shrine Auditorium and 3,500-seat Pasadena Civic Auditorium . . . . Gene's publicist would invite all the djs in town to pick up complimentary tickets at the boxoffice. In exchange for this courtesy, *25 jocks on a dozen or more stations* (italics mine) would play the artists' records all week and urge listeners to show up. The majority of the concerts were sell-outs.

"Dave Dexter spelled Gene on KFWB Sunday nights . . . . Alex Cooper spun jazz all night on KXLA; Al Poska on KHJ. Jack the Bellboy was a jazz pioneer, midnight to 6 a.m. on KFVD. Hank the Night Watchman was his successor. Six-foot-six-inch tall Carlo Bailey . . . . was a friend to jazz on KXLA and KBIG. Al Jarvis interspersed some jazz into his KLAC *Make Believe Ballroom* and Steve Allen supported jazz and played jazz on his late-night KNX music and talk show."

After that, Willard gives a further list of jazz activities in L.A. radio. And this was right after World War II, when the population explosion that would turn Los Angeles into the megalopolis it is today was only beginning. And the activities of KLON in Long Beach (whose spectacular weekend of live music drew so small an audience) is perceived as evidence of the health of jazz radio in Los Angeles?

Almost all the stations that now play jazz in the U.S. are part of public broadcasting, usually housed in universities or other institutions. Because they don't have advertising revenues, they pay negligibly for the use of music, not even to composers, and like all other radio stations in the United States, none at all to performers.

All the arts are affected by the changes North American society are undergoing. In New York City and most of America, rising costs occurring when financial support is dwindling, coupled with this aging of the population, make it increasingly difficult to fund what is perceived as high-culture art: symphony orchestras, opera companies, and others. This is evident in some new federal studies. A *New York Times* report on February 12, 1996, under the byline Judith Miller, said:

"Although the new research does not examine the problems of specific cultural institutions in specific cities, the studies have clear implications for New York City. They show a decline in the percentage of people interested in attending most of the fare of concert halls, theaters and musical states, a disproportionate number of which are in the city.

"For reasons that social scientists are still trying to sort out, only art museums, jazz and, to a lesser extent are attracting roughly as high a percentage of people among the younger generations as among older ones. These categories leave aside, of course, the thriving popular culture: rock music, movies and television."

We should pause for a moment to examine the misleading statement that jazz is thriving. What kind of jazz? A certain kind of rock whose practitioners proclaim what they do to be jazz? The soprano-saxophone meanderings of Kenny G? New age?

1995 was one of the best box-office years Broadway theater has enjoyed in decades. But much of the money derived from revivals, which is encouraging to the extent that at least some good if old music is getting heard. But a lot of the money is coming from the hugely successful trash of Andrew Lloyd Weber and a new generation of mediocre, to be kind about it, composers.

The Presidential Committee on the Arts and Humanities in a report released in February said that the institutions that have made New York City the cultural capital of the United States, and to a large extent of the world, were in trouble unless the demographic trends could be reversed — hardly a high hope. The population is aging, and will continue to do so: for its future elders are among us, the baby boomers already into their fifties.

Two studies commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts said that despite higher incomes and levels of education, younger Americans were unlikely ever to see a live performance of "highbrow" art, including classical concerts and recitals, opera, and theater, whether musical or dramatic.

"This is a sea change," said Richard Peterson of Vanderbilt University, a sociologist who has specialized in studying audiences and co-author of one of the studies.

"We're talking about a massive shift in taste and tradition from a generation of 'war baby' cultural highbrows to future generations of cultural omnivores, younger Americans who think Patsy Cline, reggae, B.B. King and hip-hop are as important as the New York Philharmonic. If I were a New York-based 'snob' cultural institution, I would be worried . . . .

"The Depression and World War II babies have always been and remain enthusiastic about the arts. Until they're deaf and their teeth fall out, they go. But younger generations show far less interest than their parents did when they were young. Indeed, the prospect is that in each succeeding generation, a smaller and smaller percentage of the group will attend most of the performing arts."

Other reports indicate another trend: a sharp drop in the rate of philanthropic contributions to cultural institutions. Nina Kressner Cobb, a historian who wrote the President's Committee report, said that between 1987 and 1993, household donations to the arts declined "dramatically" when compared to gifts to other philanthropic institutions, the size of the gift per household falling 47 percent: from $260 in 1987 to $139 in 1993. Such contributions are critical to the survival of such institutions.

Cobb quoted a Treasury Department economist who said that while America produced a record number of new millionaires — in 1979, there were 18,700 of them with pre-tax incomes of more than $1 million; in 1990, 64,000 — the newly rich were far less likely to make contributions to the arts than those in the generations before them. This change, she said, "reflects a decline in the notion of stewardship, of civic culture itself. It is unlikely that we

would get a Rockefeller family with all its generosity today. These are truly discouraging numbers."

A co-author of one of the NEA studies is Judith Balfe, a sociologist at the City University of New York, College of Staten Island, who foresaw a "crisis" in all the arts of the higher level.

"It was once a hidden crisis," she said, "but now it can no longer be denied."

Her study concluded: "As the sheer number of nonparticipants increases — many with simply no interest in these arts, others with real hostility to them — political pressures to cut arts funding become increasingly difficult to resist."

And of course Republican pressure to cut funding for the National Endowment and the Public Broadcasting System, and indeed even to abolish them, has been under way for some time. The NEA's budget was cut last year by 40 percent, from $167 million to $99.5 million. This is hitting arts groups and individuals all over the country. For example, on May 2, 1996, the *Dallas Morning News* reported that NEA grants to local arts groups were down 47 percent, from $386,400 to $205,000. The grant to the Dallas Symphony fell from $150,000 to $78,000, that to the Dallas Opera from $113,900 to $70,000.

And what is this accomplishing?

Dr. Hale Smith is regarded as one of America's finest composers. He graduated from the Cleveland Institute of Music (a fellow composition student was Jim Hall), played piano with Dizzy Gillespie's quintet, and went on to a distinguished career as an arranger, editor, and educator. He is professor emeritus from the University of Connecticut. And he is a member of the board of the New York State Council for the Arts.

In a letter to *New York Newsday* published March 23, 1995, he wrote:

"Art today is thought to be entertainment. It may be entertaining, but entertainment is not its true purpose. Every human society throughout history has defined itself through the search for beauty. The ability to create music, literature, architecture is basic to our condition as human beings; without that ability there would be no civilization.

"All tyrants have recognized that creativity has to be proscribed before a society can be subjugated. In the twentieth century alone, we have the examples of Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, China — wherever tyranny has risen. In our United States we have experienced the brazen attacks on our freedom by Joseph McCarthy and his followers, and today we are again facing attempts to limit creative expression by those who either know no better or — unfortunately — know only too well the possible consequences of their actions. And, again, the artists are the first to suffer political pressure and proscription.

"So, the issues at stake are larger than the NEA and the NEH. They and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting are merely lightning rods. The fact that the $167 million allocated to the NEA results in approximately $3.4 billion being returned to the U.S. Treasury in the form of income taxes should open the eyes of anyone not blinded by the smoke screens of today's pseudo-conservatives. I — among millions of taxpayers — have the right to expect that a percentage of my tax monies be allocated to those things in which I believe. Funding for the arts is one of the best investments our country can make in itself."

Art Critic Robert Hughes said in a speech, reported May 27 in *The New Yorker*:

"As I was reading the papers a few weeks ago, hoping to find out what some deranged car salesman in San Diego might have paid for Mrs. Kennedy's diaphragm, I had a small revelation. It wasn't about the greed of the children of the sanctimonious, toffee-nosed buyers at Sotheby's, or even about the buyers — those poor, depleted souls, the ultimate victims of America's now psychotic cult of celebrity, trampling one another like thirteenth-century peasants trying to touch the withered bone of some saint so they could be cured of scrofula or the pox. It was that the auction so clearly represented what so many people in this benighted nation imagine to be the proper form of patronage of the arts — the absolute rule of free-market forces.

"Now, I would bet you that quite a few of those lucky buyers hold certain assumptions in common. One is that artists, playwrights, musicians, dancers, and photographers are basically a bunch of whining left-wing layabouts trying to bot off the public purse; after all, if a painter was any good, he could paint a fluffy pussycat that would get into one of the lavatories of Camelot and eventually sell for a hundred grand. Another is that taxes — *their* taxes, their money — should not be wrung out of them at the rate of 65 cents a year by élitist do-gooders and then used to underwrite exhibitions by homosexual photographers or small theaters they've never heard of in towns they've never been to.

"Still another assumption is that government should, as the exquisitely named representative Dick Armey might say, get out of the business of culture. And that the National Endowment for the Arts, along with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, should therefore be abolished, thus producing a leaner, trimmer America. We now have a Congress that faithfully reflects these views, and a President who thus far in his term has uttered the word 'arts' about as often as President Reagan spoke the word 'AIDS', and probably won't have the guts to defy Congress on such a minor but heated issue.

"Of course, the economic argument is the merest flimflam. The drive to abolish the NEA or to cut its funds to the point where it's unworkable (which amounts to the same thing) has nothing to do economy — not in a Congress that last year voted the Pentagon seven billion dollars more than it had asked for.

"Eliminating the NEA is simply a bone that Congress can throw to its extreme right. It is a cheesy piece of political symbolism, mounted by opportunists who want to show their populist credentials, and who don't care what the destruction of the NEA — and its ripple effect on state arts funding — does to the public culture

of America. To reuse a title that their ideological supporter Hilton Kramer gave to one of his few books, this is truly 'The Revenge of the Philistines.'

"Over the past 30 years, the NEA has given out tens of thousands of grants, only about five percent of which have been to individual artists. It has given grants to little theaters and to struggling dance groups, to small-town chamber-music ensembles and to local art-education programs. It has also given money to large museums to help them put on great exhibitions, to major symphony orchestras, and to opera, classical ballet, and all other forms of performance. It has supported some bad stuff, some mediocre art, and some stuff that proved quite ephemeral. But it has also funded a great deal that was good and some that was superb, at very minimal cost. And we are all spiritually and culturally the richer for its existence.

"One of the ways you measure the character — indeed, the greatness — of a country is by its public commitment to the arts. Not as a luxury; not as a diplomatic device; not as a social placebo. But as a commitment arising from the belief that the desire to make and experience art is an organic part of human nature, without which our natures are coarsened, impoverished, and denied, and our sense of community with other citizens is weakened. This may sound like rhetoric, but after 26 years of writing in America, I know it in my heart, my sometimes mean and irritable writer's heart. The arts are the field on which we place our own dreams, thoughts, and desires alongside those of others, so that solitudes can meet, to their joy sometimes, or to their surprise, and sometimes to their disgust.

"When you boil it all down, that is the social purpose of the creation of mutuality, the passing from feeling into shared meaning."

As for the crisis as it affects New York City, Vartan Gregorian, former head of the New York Public Library, and now president of Brown University, said:

"I've long believed that this extraordinary generation of New Yorkers, this generation of suffering, of memory, of the Holocaust and World War II, this heavily Jewish generations of goers and givers who have supported the arts so intensely, so generously, is not likely to be replaced.

"It was easy to raise money in New York because you never had to persuade people to give, but rather, that your institution was worthy. It's getting much harder."

Any sociologist who says this change is puzzling is either disingenuous, unobservant, or merely stupid: American taste and higher cultural aspiration have been systematically destroyed over the last 40 or so years by the mass media.

At the Ellington Society gathering in Toronto, one man asked ask me, with a slight hostility to a sobering message, "What answer do you have to this problem?" His tone implied that if I couldn't supply a ready solution, I must be wrong in my view of the problems facing *all* the arts.

"I don't have one," I said. "If a doctor says you have cancer, it doesn't mean he's wrong because he hasn't got a cure."

Now, while I would hesitate to make a leap into optimism, there may be possibilities of reversal of at least some of the trends.

For one thing, we may be on the verge of some reform, some turn from the frighteningly destructive cultural trends we are living through. I wouldn't count on them, but we should consider them.

In his 1990 letter to Steve Ross at Time Warner, Steve Allen referred to charges he heard frequently that the entire entertainment industry "has come increasingly to *depend* on the marketing of vulgarity, obscenity, and sex."

He wrote: "I have the feeling that many in our industry have not yet perceived the mounting degree to which millions Americans — I believe the majority — are angry about this.

"I'm concerned that we're going to *get* censorship unless we make some sort of a pass at cleaning up our own act.

"I take it that we all know the reason for the increasing resort to vulgarity and sleaze — it sells. It's probable that there isn't a single executive in our industry who would make a conscious philosophical decision that the present avalanche of filth is any sense *good* for our society. No, the reasons for the growing ugliness boil down to ratings points and dollars.

"I suggest that the time has come to decide on which side of the crucial dividing line each of us wants to stand . . .

"Don't feel that you need to respond to me about this. I would only hope that you will discuss the issue with your associates and consider the possibility of resisting rather than accelerating the current trend."

Ross, a man with a reputation for smooth ruthlessness who had engineered the Time Warner merger, didn't even acknowledge the letter. Neither did 30 other executives to whom Steve sent the letter. That letter is now proving prescient. And the collisi between "the media" and the First Amendment is a step closer.

A study, commissioned by the cable industry itself, found that the violence on television "poses" some risks. Isn't that amazing? Decker Anstrom, president of the National Cable Television Associated, in a brief press release went so far as to say, "We acknowledge that cable, like the entire television industry, has a responsibility to participate in serious and substantial efforts to address TV violence."

"It's time to say enough," said Robert Lichter, co-director of the Center for Media and Public Affairs, a Washington D.C. think tank. "We know there's lots of violence. Now the question is what do we do to protect people from it."

And it is precisely at this line that the confrontation between society's sense of its own endangerment and the First Amendment occurs.

The Telecommunications Reform Bill passed by Congress requires the entertainment industry to establish a ratings system and manufacturers of receives to install a computer chip that will allow

parents to screen out violent programs.

This has several flaws. For one thing, it would be years before enough of these new TV sets were in place to make any difference. For another, so many children are born into violent homes that it is unlikely that any of the parents therein will bother with the chip. As Senator Paul Simon noted, "The homes that need it the most are not the homes where it will necessarily be used."

Others don't want to wait. "Let's get down to business now," said Senator Fritz Hollings of South Carolina. He has authored a bill that would create "safe harbors" by restricting violent programs to hours when children do not make up a substantial part of the audience. He said, "Instead of dilly-dallying and talking about doing something, let's pass the bill and get this gratuitous violence off the air."

This brings us dangerously close to the censorship feared by all true believers in democracy as the worst system of government except for all the others. A society that feels itself sufficiently endangered will, however, resort to it, as this one did in World War II. My late friend Robert Offergeld once said something I can never forget: "Great civilizations of the past were destroyed by barbarians from without. This one will be destroyed by the barbarians from within." A certain amount of sentiment for some sort of restriction is already widespread. A 1990 survey by the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression found that while 90 percent of Americans believed the government should not tell you what views to express or how to vote, 40 percent believed the First Amendment does not apply to the arts and entertainment, and more than 42 percent thought the government had the right to ban the sale of records with sexually explicit lyrics. Fifty-five percent of the 1,500 persons surveyed said they would support banning the broadcast of songs with sexually explicit lyrics. (In Australia, legislation to do just that is pending.)

Compounding the dilemma of censorship is that if the various mergers in the arts continue, censorship will exist anyway. It will be exercised by the corporations. But then it always has been. Any time an executive of the media rejects an artist's work, he is exercising a form of censorship. Jazz, for example, has been censored off most American broadcasting. A radio station that declines to play someone's recording, a newspaper that declines to print someone's letter, is exercising a form of *de facto* censorship.

But the unrestricted continuation of these mergers of media giants will extend to an awesome degree the censorship powers they already exercise. This is something that those concerned about the First Amendment dilemma never discuss, not at least in those terms.

Perhaps hope, albeit a slim one, lies elsewhere — in the marketplace, after all.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported on July 4, 1996:

"After spending billions over the last two years on megamergers and consolidation, the entertainment companies are performing like some of Hollywood's bad, bloated movies. Giants like Walt Disney, Time Warner and Viacom Inc. are struggling with various combinations of heavy debt, management problems and questions of how best to integrate their sprawling empires. A Salomon Brothers index of six entertainment stocks is up just 12 percent for the past 12 months, compared with a 26 percent increase in the S&P 400 index. 'We see nothing in the near-term horizon to turn that performance around,' says analyst Sharon Williams.

"What happened in one year? For one thing, most companies took on too much debt for mergers, and they have done little to rein in costs, cut overhead or find more efficient ways to do business. Accustomed to the free-spending culture of Hollywood and the assumption of unending growth, executives at many entertainment companies have little experience managing in a more competitive, slower-growth environment. They also remain among the highest-paid executives in corporate America."

This report came only a few days before release of a study by the Public Policy Institute of California on the distribution of income in the state. The study indicated that California reflected the national trend toward a greater gap between rich and poor for the past 30 years. But it's worse in California, where much of the entertainment industry is located. The growth in the income gap in California has exceeded that of the nation for the past seven years.

Barry Diller, who used to head Paramount Pictures, then started the Fox network, said, "There were so many years of success without anyone being called to account that it masked growing fissures in the way the industry does business."

The *Wall Street Journal* report said:

"What's more, studios have been counting international markets for films and television shows, but they have been agonizingly slow to develop. In Europe, Asia and Latin America, U.S. companies also face inhospitable regulations and outright piracy. On the technology front, studios long relied on new formats to expand movie sales. But nothing has come along since the video disk — and though new digital disks are in the works, it may be years before such products catch on, if ever.

"Most of the big entertainment mergers were based on the theory that growth would come if companies could control both programming and distribution — for example, owning a movie studio and a TV network or cable system."

Ironically, this is just what the Supreme Court ruled they could not do, years ago when it forced the movie studios to divest themselves of the theaters they owned.

"But owning distribution doesn't seem as crucial now that phone companies and direct satellite services are jumping in to compete with cable operators, eager to carry anyone's content. The Internet is siphoning off viewer time for all television — and may soon start grabbing advertisers as well.

"Meanwhile, networks are proliferating at a time when the overall network share of viewers is declining."

Yes. In other words, instead of 15 or 20 channels of bad

television, we may soon be able to get 500 channels of bad television.

Producer Richard Zanuck (who made *Jaws* and *Driving Miss Daisy*) said, "Some sanity has to be brought back into the process. There is not an easy way to turn off the tap unless there is a series of failures."

While all this was happening, the record industry finally admitted, sort of, to a drug problem.

In mid-July, the *Los Angeles Times* carried a headline:

Heroin Deaths Fuel Music Industry's Soul-Searching

The story starts with the death in New York City from heroin overdoes of Jonathan Melvoin, a keyboard player on tour with a group called the Smashing Pumpkins. He was the son of jazz pianist Mike Melvoin.

Michael Green, president of the NARAS, inevitably called it "a tragedy." Green has been heading a month-long anti-drug campaign within the record industry. The *Times* story:

"Though many record company presidents had voiced skepticism about the fledgling effort, they said they have been shocked into rethinking their views in the aftermath of Melvoin's death and a string of other recent heroin casualties.

"The question is: Can — or should — rock be tamed?

'I believe in drug use,' said the head of one major record label who requested anonymity. 'It's part of growing up and the creative process. It's not for me as an individual to interfere with what people are doing with their destiny.'"

"Rock 'n' roll is steeped in rebellion," the story continues. Against what? one wonders. Against getting rich? "But each new drug-related incident offers a sobering reminder that the life-style has also produced a sordid tradition of addiction and death that is ingrained in the music."

Jazz too has had its junkies, but the drug users were always a sort of secret society within the profession, not a vociferous gang of proselyitzers. When Gene Krupa got busted on a marijuana charge (of which, his friends still insist, he was innocent), it ruined his career. Rock and roll preached to its audience the use of drugs in a way that jazz never did.

Ginna Marston, an executive vice president of Partnership for a Drug-Free America, said, "It's got this glamorous image from the culture, and there's very low awareness of the risks among the younger part of the population." Yes, like those who do not know a bullet hurts. "All of pop culture in the '90s has really contributed to sending a message to kids that heroin is cool and glamorous."

Finally, the *Los Angeles Times* story was as interesting for what it didn't say as much as for what it did. All the weeping was over the death of rock "artists". Nowhere in the coverage did one find even a hint of a sense of responsibility for the countless young people dead of drugs because of the "cool" advocacy that has been going on now not just in the '90s but for three decades.

Even if the American society succeeds in finding some way to restrict the abuses of its media, to curb the excesses of Howard Stern, Don Imus, Rush Limbaugh, Andrew Dice Clay, and their ilk, to get the incessant sexuality and violence off the tube and out of the movie houses, to curb the powers of huge corporations over the media of communications and with it their own unacknowledged powers of censorship, all this without tearing to tatters the First Amendment, it seems to me that it is too late. The great media of communications have done their damage. They are run by a generation of executives in their thirties and forties, themselves raised on four decades of cultural trash, and replacing them with those who do know the beauty of spiritual of great art, even of merely good art, is probably impossible. We developed, as I recall a historian predicting in a letter to the *New York Times* that we would, a generation (and now two generations) of people who are, as he put it, "a-historical."

The avaricious, the unprincipled, the ruthless, took over the system, and even if you pried their hands off the controls, with whom are you going to replace them? Someone like the former secretary of education, William Bennett? He's a rock fan, and even considers himself an expert on it. He was also for a time the national "drug czar" and showed no sign of even a faint understanding of the role music had played in creating the problem. Where are you going to find young movie executives who know the difference between an orchestra and a synthesizer, between a real composer and someone like Danny Elfman?

André Previn tells the story of receiving a call, while he was conducting the Vienna Philharmonic in Japan, from the head of the Disney studio, who told him the company was interested producing a new *Fantasia*. André was thrilled by the idea, entranced by its educational possibilities, and by the time he got back to Los Angeles had drawn up a list of great symphonic classics he thought suitable for the project. After describing them, he was somewhat stunned when the head of the studio said, "Well, I don't know anything about that kind of music. I had in mind classics like the Beatles." André closed his briefcase and left.

Those with culture and knowledge and discrimination and a true deep awareness of the effects of art, the good as well as the bad, on the human psyche, for the most part have white hair. Many of the younger persons I have talked to who do have sensitive perceptions, and a sense of history, feel like misfits, thrown around on very small rafts on a sea of cultural garbage.

You don't like it?

I don't like it either.

But nobody promised us a rose garden, and it seems to be too late to restore the soil in which we might grow one.