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George Handy by Jeffrey Sultanof

Jeff Sultanof, familiar now to Jazzletter subscribers for his recent tribute to Budd Johnson, is an arranger, composer, saxophonist, and music editor. He has been reconstructing and editing the scores of Robert Farnon, and has edited for publication by the Hal Leonard organization a number of the scores of Gerry Mulligan and Gil Evans.

On April 10, at St. Peter's Church on East 54th Street in New York City, about a hundred and twenty-five persons assembled to pay tribute to a man whose name has been forgotten by the jazz world at large. If you are a serious big-band fan or were a musician working or listening to the latest sounds in 1945-46, George Handy's name will loom in memory. You may love or hate the music he created, whether one of his arrangements of a pop tune, a chart of one of the songs he composed with Jack Segal's lyrics, or one of his own compositions, but if you heard his music, you've never forgotten it.

One of my pleasures is sharing music with people, particularly those who have heard much music and have pretty developed tastes. Big-band fans are a special treat for me. Some of them surprise me by telling me they were "into" the new jazz sounds of the mid-forties before any of their friends. Other will even have happy memories of the Strand or Paramount theaters. I like to play them Boyd Raeburn recordings. Most of them have never heard George Handy's version of *There's No You, Temptation* or *Out of This World*, and these recordings usually have them climbing the walls. Musicians are different. When I played these recordings for me during my college days, they lit up in delight at these three-minute gems.

Ray Passman organized the event at St. Peter's. Raeburn vocalist David Allyn assembled the band, which included such musicians as Jerry Dodgion, Dean Pratt, Leo Ball, Loren Schoenberg, Wayne André, Ted Nash, Jimmy Madison, Bill Crow, Danny Bank, and, on lead alto, Hal McKusick, who'd come in from Sag Harbor to honor his former roommate's memory. Judy Scott had the unenviable job of singing Handy's tough arrangements — unenviable for the good reason that she and most of the band had never seen this music before. They sight-read it on the spot. George Handy's music is the last that I can think of that can be sight-read effectively, but the results were well-intentioned and, on the whole, pretty good. And those who attended had a wonderful time listening to the reminiscences of Allyn and McKusick. Bill Kirchner delivered a thoughtful appreciation of George, and Handy's widow Elaine thanked us all for coming and honoring George's memory. It was a chaotic but warm evening.

The service sent me right back to the original recordings. Once again I reminded myself of the two-year period in which a major

American musical voice expressed itself through a dance-band instrumentation. I had the same feelings when I first heard these recordings twenty-seven years ago, and thought the same thoughts when I was sitting in St. Peter's listening to much of this music played under Allyn's direction. What a human tragedy; what a tragedy for American music.

For George Handy was an original voice when American music needed him the most. He arrived at an important crossroad when composers were trying to blend classical music and jazz. Certainly this had been attempted before. Milhaud, Copland, Sowerby, Gruenberg, Carpenter, Stravinsky, and other "classical" composers had tried and for the most part given up. But the younger composer-arrangers for big bands had extensive backgrounds in classical music study and usually a wider musical vocabulary than those who came before them. Handy was blessed to write for an ensemble that embraced the most modern of big-band musics — several months before Stan Kenton began his Progressive Jazz period — and his talent had a level of maturity that permitted him to express himself fully. Pete Rugolo, Ralph Burns, and Paul Weston all came to hear Raeburn's band and admired Handy tremendously. But the band was too controversial for many listeners, and its recordings received poor distribution. Fortunately, the bulk of Raeburn's library (and the bulk of Handy's lifework) was recorded in radio transcriptions and programs intended for overseas broadcasting to servicemen. Since 1972, this music has been easier to hear than it was when it was first performed. And the scores survived, stored for many years in three cardboard boxes in a basement in Long Island.

Unusual and at times eccentric, Handy's music still sounds fresh and original.

George Hendleman was born in Brooklyn in 1920. His mother was his first piano teacher, and George went on to study at Juilliard and New York University. He also studied privately with Aaron Copland, which, he said, "did neither one of us any good." The standard jazz reference books tell us that he played with Michael Loring in 1938 and Raymond Scott in 1941, and in 1944 he joined Raeburn's organization.

Boyd Raeburn, born October 27, 1913, in Faith, South Dakota, had a downright bizarre career as a bandleader. His original ensemble was a pretty bad mickey-mouse group that headquartered in Chicago and toured the midwest. In 1939, he changed direction and led a swing band, but, like many territory bands, it sounded like a lot of other groups. In 1942, he hired Gerry Valentine and Budd Johnson to write the band's book, and the band was on its way. June Christy sang with this edition under her original name, Shirley Luster.

By 1944, an almost completely new band was playing in Washington, D.C. This was a fabulous unit, with such musicians as Johnny Bothwell, Earl Swope, Serge Chaloff, Sonny Berman, and Don Lamond. Ed Finckel, George (The Fox) Williams, Milt

Kleeb, and Handy (who came aboard in May) wrote wonderful arrangements. Then Handy met singer-comedienne and film star Betty Hutton, who got him a job at Paramount Pictures. The band continued to tour and was clearly rising toward great heights when Finckel left to join Gene Krupa. In desperation, Raeburn called Handy in California. The timing was fortuitous, as Handy had grown to hate writing for motion pictures. He rejoined the band in mid-1945.

Handy's arrangements from 1944 are well-written and already showing a unique imagination — for example, *Who Started Love?* — but his compositions and arrangements during his second period with the band are in a class by themselves. Handy started off straightforwardly enough with such compositions and songs as *Tonsillectomy*, *Forgetful*, *Rip Van Winkle*, and *Yerxa*, the titles on the band's first record date with Ben Pollack's Jewell label on October 15, 1945. *Tonsillectomy* is an innocuous swing original perfect for dancing. *Forgetful* is burdened by a terrible lyric by Jack Segal; Handy had the misfortune or bad judgment to write several songs with Segal, all with wonderful melodies and horrendous words. *Forgetful* is the first opportunity we have to sample the direction Handy would go. An unusual introduction, at times quite dissonant and loud, goes in and out of tempo, finally leading into an impressionistic background for the vocal by David Allyn. Even the ending is rather strange, with trumpets singing out a mocking *nyah-nyah* figure. Except for Red Norvo's *Smoke Dreams*, this was the most unusual big-band recording with a vocal up to that time. *Rip Van Winkle* is a cute little song and a great record. If Pollack's label had enjoyed decent distribution, this probably would have been a hit. *Yerxa* is an Ellingtonian Johnny Hodges-style feature for Hal McKusick's alto saxophone, harmonically ambiguous at times. Attempts to dance to it would have been futile, given that the band goes into double time for two bars.

These records caused quite a stir when they were originally released, influencing many musicians. I've heard arrangers say that they were proud possessors of well-worn original copies. Not only were the arrangements terrific; the band's personnel grew stronger and stronger. Such musicians as Si Zentner, Ray Linn, Britt Woodman, Wilbur Schwartz (Glenn Miller's lead clarinetist), Harry Klee, Lucky Thompson, and Dave Barbour all played with Raeburn during George Handy's tenure with the band.

But Raeburn was having trouble keeping the band working. He subsisted on limited touring, radio transcriptions, and recordings for the Armed Forces Jubilee program.

Because of the Armed Forces Radio Service, many live recordings of all types of music were made for broadcast to overseas servicemen. In producing a series called *One-Night Stand*, they preserved sustaining (unsponsored) radio broadcasts of many bands during periods when such ensembles could not make commercial records. Because of two recording bans, ordered by American Federation of Musicians head James Caesar Petrillo, the years 1942 through 1944 and ten months of 1948 would be almost

entirely a musical blank without them.

In addition, AFRS created its own series. The one closest to the heart of many modern jazz fans was the Jubilee program, where such bands as those of Benny Carter, Harry James, Earl Hines, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, and Jimmy Mundy performed. The Billy Eckstine band's best performances were recorded for Jubilee.

Raeburn did three shows for the Jubilee series, including one for which Handy conducted his *Jazz Symphony* in four movements. The first movement later became the Raeburn theme, *Dalvatore Sally*.

Dalvatore Sally was featured on the band's next commercial record date, February 5, 1946. It showed that Handy was really getting farther out. Time and tempo changes, dramatic dissonant introductions, and polytonal backgrounds for vocals were hallmarks of his arrangements for the band. Historians have cited the influences of Stravinsky, Ravel, and Debussy. My ears also detect Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Ives, a composer Handy might have heard, since the music of this controversial figure was being championed by Bernard Herrmann on radio and John Kirkpatrick in the concert hall. Kirkpatrick gave the first public performance of the *Concord Sonata* for piano, a work that is still very difficult for most listeners.

Handy's arrangement of *Temptation* is quite far out; Ginny Powell was the band's female vocalist (and Mrs. Raeburn) and very few singers could have done as well with this chart as she did. According to David Allyn, the arrangement of *I Only Have Eyes for You* was written the night before the session, so that he would have something to record. If a Handy arrangement could be considered laid back, this is it. But it supports Allyn's voice beautifully.

The bulk of Handy's best work for Raeburn was preserved on the Jubilee shows, transcriptions for radio, and numerous sustaining broadcasts. On Jubilee, such arrangements as *Picnic in Wintertime*, *There's No You*, and *Memphis in June* were recorded. *Picnic in the Wintertime* is a stunning arrangement that includes quotes from *Jingle Bells* throughout. This piece warrants close study. As complex as it is, it is not difficult to sing to. *There's No You* quotes from *Clair de Lune* in such a subtle way that you might miss it. This is another piece that has so much in it that I hear new things these many years later. *Memphis in June* is a masterpiece, pure and simple. Handy created a subtle, beautiful setting for Ginny Powell that enhances Hoagy Carmichael's rural imagery of an afternoon in the south. Carmichael recorded this song himself on the long-defunct ARA label, but he loved Raeburn's version and obtained a copy of the radio transcription. Also on transcription is Handy's arrangement for Allyn of *Out of This World*, another masterpiece.

Raeburn was well-liked in the business and, reportedly, Duke Ellington and Harry James invested money in the band. Had Raeburn had the personality of Stan Kenton, he might have made a success of the band.

By August, when the band was playing at the Club Morocco, there was trouble brewing. According to Dr. Jack McKinney, who is writing a book about the Raeburn band, Ginny Powell was not happy with Handy's arrangements and insisted that her husband take a more active role in setting the band's musical direction. Raeburn, caught in the middle, ultimately sided with his wife. Handy quit, and the band's *esprit de corps* would never be the same.

Handy moved on. He wrote for Buddy Rich, Bob Chester, Benny Goodman, and Alvino Rey. Few of these arrangements were ever played publicly, though Rey recorded Handy's composition *Stocking Horse* for radio transcription. It later turned up on a Hindsight LP. *Stocking Horse* is another mini-tone poem, beautifully realized. Even though it did not have the dissonance of his Raeburn work, this piece could only have been composed by George Handy. Unfortunately, *Stocking Horse* cannot easily be performed, because the Rey band had six trumpets, and the six parts are equally important.

Handy had another major opportunity when Norman Granz commissioned him to write five minutes of anything he wanted for an album to be titled *The Jazz Scene*. This limited edition album of twelve-inch 78s was an ambitious undertaking for Granz, who did not yet have his own label and could only record musicians who were not contracted to other labels. On October 15, 1946, an orchestra was assembled to record Ralph Burns' *Introspection* and Handy's *The Bloos*. It took five hours to get the take on the latter that was finally released, and even that performance is a little scrappy. But what music! At times satiric, ironic, and yet subtle, this work is another incredible *tour de force* that must be heard many times to be appreciated. It is the most unusual version of the blues I've ever heard.

But it was not released for three-and-a-half years, and by then Handy's career had lost its momentum. In a sketch by Granz, Handy is quoted as saying that "the only thing (sic) worthwhile in my life is my wife Flo and my boy Mike. The rest stinks, including the music biz and all connected."

We know nothing of Handy until in the mid-1950s he made two albums for an RCA subsidiary called label X, which later became Vik. *Handyland U.S.A.* is a pretty straightforward small-group date which seems to have been recorded in a hurry. But it has its moments. *Handy, by George* is an album that is extremely difficult to find. (At least *Handyland U.S.A.* was reissued — in the late 1970s on a Spanish label, Fresh Sound.) According to Bill Kirchner, who has heard it, Handy wrote for a ten-piece ensemble for the album. Some of the old fire is evident but the overall impression is one of repetitiveness. *Handy, by George* is best heard in short spurts. Ultimately, it did not matter. When RCA killed the Vik label in 1957, it deleted the entire catalogue.

Handy wrote some wonderful music and played piano for Zoot Sims on albums for ABC-Paramount and Riverside, but by 1960 he was really a forgotten man. He continued to write, primarily for

the New York Saxophone Quartet. Leonard Feather's *Encyclopedia of Jazz in the Sixties* states that he also wrote for Kay Thompson. These must have been orchestrations, as Thompson wrote her own arrangements. (Kay Thompson's life warrants a full-length article. At one time she was the highest paid performer in Las Vegas.)

Then, nothing. At least nothing that was heard widely. Judy Scott told me that she asked Handy to write arrangements for her when she performed in the Catskill Mountains. Somehow the Borscht Belt and Handy make a strange pairing, but George lived most of his later years near Monticello, New York, with his second wife, Elaine Lewis. One of his last pieces was an adaptation for big band of a movement of one of his saxophone quartets, which he called *Worry? No. Waltz!*. It was played at the concert of the Raeburn band's music by the Mike Crotty band at the Smithsonian in 1980. A proposed New York concert of Raeburn music by Crotty's ensemble never happened.

There is a strange footnote to all this. In 1980, Bill Schremp went into the music-publishing business and marketed many of the Raeburn scores. He placed an ad for these in the musicians' union newspaper. When I saw this ad, I bought copies of all the arrangements listed and made my own scores from the parts.

Seeing that this large order came from Warner Bros., where I was then music editor, Schremp called me and was surprised to realize he was talking to a twenty-six-year-old big-band arranger who knew the Raeburn recordings intimately. He had high hopes for his publishing company, because he believed there was a market for this music for high school and college stage bands. I was skeptical. I knew that band directors needed to hear these pieces before they'd buy them, and that they were not easy to hear, except on bootleg albums. And this music needed extensive rehearsal if the bands were to play it at all.

Like Raeburn, Bill pressed on, believing that the incredible wealth of music he was making available would make his venture a success. He subsequently added works from the Elliot Lawrence, Sauter-Finegan, and Ray McKinley libraries to his catalog. For the first time, important scores by Johnny Mandel, Tiny Kahn, Gerry Mulligan, Eddie Sauter, and Ed Finckel were available, as well as the work of younger talents such as Mike Crotty and Bill Kirchner, whom Schremp raved about. The band directors in the main could not have cared less. Schremp's sales were poor indeed, and his company did not last long.

I doubt that there will ever be a large audience for the music of George Handy, just as there is a select audience for that of one of his contemporaries, Robert Graettinger. But there is no question that Handy's music will continue to stir the imagination of anyone who makes its acquaintance. He was a unique voice in a cookie-cutter field. In my own case, his music showed one way that disparate musics could co-exist when my teachers and friends insisted that they could not. His music will continue to inspire arrangers of tomorrow, those at least who seek it out and give it a

chance.

In that sense, it was not in vain.

Discography

I first experienced the music of Boyd Raeburn in 1970, on a bootleg LP. Radio transcriptions and AFRS broadcasts have been fodder for bootleggers for almost thirty years, and the sound quality of the LPs ranged from excellent to horrendous. One album, on a label called Sounds of Swing, made the music sound as if you were hearing it through an old telephone. Today, great care is taken in remastering this music. The Hep label in Scotland has benefitted from the engineering talents of John R.T. Davies for many of its releases. Hep originally issued the Raeburn Jubilee broadcasts on LP. These performances are now available on Hep CD 1.

Raeburn's transcriptions from this period are available from two sources. The 1944-45 Lang-Worth transcriptions are now available on the Circle label, which is licensing the recordings from the current owner of the Lang-Worth catalog. (These are legitimate issues and composers are getting paid.) CCD 22 includes *Who Started Love?* and CCD 113 has Handy's arrangement of *Is You Is or Is You Ain't (My Baby)?* Sound quality is excellent, transferred from the original sources.

Raeburn's Standard Transcriptions from 1945-6 include most of the Handy compositions and arrangements I have described. They are currently available on Hep CD 42.

The Hep and Circle CDs are moderately priced. I've been able to find them for \$11.99 and \$12.99. And there's a lot of wonderful music by the other Raeburn arrangers. If you are a Johnny Mandel fan, for instance, the Circle CDs include some of his early work. The Hep CD contains one of my favorite Mandel big-band pieces, *The Eagle Flies*.

Ben Pollack's Jewell label was acquired by Savoy in the 1950s. For many years Savoy kept two LPs of Raeburn in print. When Arista owned Savoy, Steve Backer and Bob Porter prepared a two-LP set of all the Jewell Raeburn tracks, which also include some lovely arrangements by Johnny Richards. Savoy passed through Muse label owner Joe Fields before it was finally bought by Denon (Nippon Columbia). The Raeburn set is now out on one CD, Savoy Jazz SV-0273. Again, I've seen this CD sell for about \$12.99.

After being out of print since the early 1960s, *The Jazz Scene* has been reissued as a two-CD set. It reproduces the original album packaging, is extensively researched, and even includes alternate takes of some tunes, including an additional performance of *The Bloos*. The catalog number is Verve 314 521 661-2. You should be able to buy it for about \$28.

The Riverside Zoot Sims album *Zoot!* is currently available as Fantasy Original Jazz Classics OJCCD-228. I believe this is also on cassette.

A loose end. Handy and Jack Segal wrote a song called *If Love*

Is Trouble that was recorded by Johnny Hartman with the Dizzy Gillespie Orchestra. For years it was assumed that Handy wrote the arrangement, even though it is not in his style. Bluebird 07863 66528-2 contains all the RCA Victor Gillespies, including this one, and the notes state that the chart was by Jimmy Mundy. I believe this to be so. Once again, nice melody, lousy lyrics. You should buy this set for other reasons.

I need not elaborate.

— Jeff Sultanof

Eulogy by Bill Kirchner

Delivered at St. Peter's Church, New York City, April 10, 1995
Bill Kirchner is a saxophonist, composer-arranger, educator, record producer, and writer.

I first encountered the music of George Handy in 1979 when I was working with Mike Crotty's big band in Washington, D.C. The band was devoted to playing Crotty's own music, but by an odd set of circumstances, it was offered a chance to do some radio broadcasts of music from the 1940s. So the band's manager, Bill Schremp, got an idea of locating the library of the legendary Boyd Raeburn band. Schremp discovered that some of the music was in the hands of Boyd's son Bruce Raeburn, who is now a distinguished jazz scholar. Incredibly, the bulk of it was sitting in three cardboard boxes in someone's basement in Long Island.

Schremp obtained all of this music on loan, and the band began to play the works of Eddie Finckel, Dizzy Gillespie, George Handy, Johnny Richards, and others. At the time, I was a budding jazz composer with an interest in history, but to me George's name was simply that — a name, nothing more. Playing his music, however, was a revelation. To hear those still-fresh and oft-startling sounds resulting from manuscript paper that had been untouched for thirty years was an extraordinary experience for me, and indeed for all of us in the band. We later did two concerts of the Raeburn band's music, including one at the Smithsonian Institution that included such Raeburn alumni as David Allyn, Mel Lewis, Angelo Tompros, and George himself.

I've concluded since then that George was one of an elite group of post-World War II visionaries. As the Swing Era faded into history, adventurous composers sought to widen the parameters of jazz, just as Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and others were doing instrumentally. They were enthralled with the innovations of bebop, and equally intrigued by modern classical composers, such as Stravinsky, Bartok, Prokofiev, Debussy, and Ravel. So Eddie Sauter, Gil Evans, George Handy, John Lewis, Gerry Mulligan, George Russell, John Carisi, Johnny Mandel, Bill Holman, J.J. Johnson, Bob Graettinger, Charles Mingus, Ralph Burns, and a few other exceptionally talented souls wrote works that used all of these musics in uniquely personal ways. They wrote in the best

jazz tradition — without concern for musical pigeonholes and semantic prisons. And, I should add, often with little or no financial compensation.

George was one of the most creative of these giants, and as a result of his recorded work for Raeburn, he became, in Leonard Feather's words, "the most talked-about new arranger of the day."

Unfortunately, he had that favorite of all jazz euphemisms, "personal problems." Which means, of course, heroin addiction. George remained addicted for a number of years, and then was on methadone maintenance for the rest of his life. Although he continued to write wonderful music until well into the 1960s, his output eventually dried up, and he never became the important influence that his talent merited.

Nonetheless, I think we in the late 1990s would do well to regard George as a model. In this era of three-second sound bites, drive-by shootings, and — too often — drive-by jazz composers, consider George Handy. Who, by the time he was twenty-five, was a master of orchestration. No matter how unorthodox his voicings are, they have a kind of clarity and translucence that separates the masters from the wanna-bes. And he had an enduring personal vision that only great musicians possess, which is why, a half-century later, we still listen to *Dalvatore Sally* and other stunning Handy compositions and arrangements.

George Handy has yet to receive the recognition due him. It's saddening, but not surprising, that the best-informed tribute to him following his recent passing appeared not in any American publication, but in the *Guardian*, a British newspaper. Those of us who know his work need to keep listening and — even more important — to spread the word.

George Handy, like Charles Ives, Herbie Nichols, and many other once-neglected titans of American music, may yet get his due.

— Bill Kirchner

Life with Stanley

I have encountered enough reviews of Donald L. Maggin's book *Stan Getz: A Life in Jazz* (William Morrow, New York 1996) — most praising it, a lot aghast to learn that Stan Getz Was Not a Nice Guy — that I decided I had a duty to read it. I was surprised by its small errors and large omissions and failure to convey just how dreadful a man Stan actually was.

For example, of Gary Burton, who joined Getz in 1964, Maggin writes: "Burton was a pioneer in the use of four mallets — rather than the conventional two — on the vibraphone and, as a consequence, could play resonant four-note chords on the instrument." That's just in case you didn't know two mallets are the usual. The passage surely embarrassed Gary, if he read it: he was ten years short of being born when Red Norvo recorded *Dance of the Octopus* in 1933. (Let's not split the hair that Red was playing xylophone; vibraharp is a metal xylophone with resonators, and the

mallet technique is the same.) Teddy Charles was doing it in the 1950s or earlier, and Mike Mainieri was incredibly skillful at four mallets at least as far back as the late 1950s.

Reverently in love with Stan Getz's playing, Maggin tries to blame Stan's panoply of faults on something or someone else. The book is full of *faux* psychiatry, tracing Stan's behavior to the defects of his mother (Mama always gets it!) or those of his feckless father. Stan is only brutal and cruel when he has been drinking; he is not that violent when he is on heroin. This brings to mind something Woody Herman said to me about Stanley, as he always and sarcastically called him. "I dunno," Woody said. "I think I liked him better when he was a junky." According to Maggin's documentation, Woody was probably right, as usual.

After a time I found myself skipping over Maggin's endless and tedious reviews of seemingly every record Stan made. He clearly is a record reviewer *manqué*, and these descriptions of the tracks of albums are full of words and phrases like "slashing sardonic, softly romantic, and fiercely lyrical . . . virile . . . contemplative, darkly hued . . ." It gets a little thick. If you removed from the book these exhaustive descriptions of Stan's albums, and the reviews by others that the author quotes, you'd reduce the book by about a third of its length. If you cut away all the digressions redigested from other books, it would reduce it more. It recapitulates Benny Goodman's history, including the retelling of how the band hit big in California. It has lengthy backgrounding on Woody Herman and others along the way. Maggin expends a paragraph quoting some of Lester Young's inventive expressions, as if he had just delightfully discovered them. Most of them, such as "feel a draft," have been widely known in jazz for decades. And he relishes Al Cohn's better-known witticisms, which have already been widely quoted.

The book nowhere seems more naive than when it tries to teach its reader technicalities of music. On page 39, Maggin begins, "The chords of a song provide the spine or structure of the harmony." No, the chords *are* the structure of the harmony. Then he goes on to talk about the "comfortable" tones of the scale, those in accord with those in the chord. I have never, ever, heard that term used. Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong were using non-chordal tones more than sixty years ago, and one of the first things you learn at Berklee is the use of chromatic "approach tones," as they call them. Maggin tells us that "western music is based on a scale of twelve notes." No, it's not. Most western music is diatonic, and diatonic music is based on a scale of seven notes. The twelve tones are those of the chromatic scale, not the standard major and minor scales in use. (And there are two minor scales, melodic and harmonic.)

The peculiar thing about this paragraph is that it is useless to a musician, incomprehensible to a layman, and dubious in either case. A perceptive editor would have omitted it. Maggin is even more awkward in trying to describe bossa nova rhythm. To try to convey an impression of samba in words is a little like attempting

to describe a spiral staircase without using your hands.

This, too, should have been cut, and the space saved by this and other excisions could have been used for a lot that Maggin left out. He fails to recount Stan's remark (to which Lou Levy was witness), on being asked his idea of the perfect tenor player: "My technique, Al Cohn's ideas, and Zoot's time." Nor does he note Bob Brookmeyer's widely-quoted remark, on hearing a rumor that Stan had undergone heart surgery, "What did they do, take one out or put one in?"

Someone, on hearing that Stan had had heart surgery, said, "Did they find one?" I can't remember who said it.

Stan was perhaps the most widely-disliked musician in jazz, although a few persons, including Lou Levy and Johnny Mandel, say they liked him. I have previously quoted what Antonio Carlos Jobim said when I reminded him that like himself, and me, Stan was an Aquarian. "I think I'll change my sign," Jobim said. When I mentioned to Kenny Washington that I had met only a very few jazz musicians I disliked, he said, immediately, "Who are they?" I began, "Well, Stan Getz," and Kenny said, "But he's on everybody's list."

The book fails to mention Stan's relationship with accountant, manager, and record producer Norman Schwartz, one of the industry's most unashamed and cunning crooks: Norman once said to me, "Never trust a Hungarian Jew." He was one. I should have listened. His victims included Gary McFarland. "One thing I do have to say for Stan," one musician remarked. "He's the only man who ever succeeded in screwing Norman Schwartz."

Neither does the book mention the occasion on which Stan was hired to play on the sound track of a French film, insisted on all expenses paid, and stiffed the company for a staggering London hotel bill with all sorts of things charged to it. Beating people out of money, even small amounts, was one of Stan's pleasures in life.

Maggin never mentions Stan's call to Creed Taylor when *The Girl from Ipanema*, with Astrud Gilberto's vocal, became a hit. Betsy, Creed's secretary, told him Stan had called a few times. Creed thought he was going to ask that Astrud be given some sort of royalty; she hadn't even been paid for the date. On the contrary, Stan was calling to be sure she *wasn't* going to be paid. I have verified this with both Betsy and Creed. The story made the rounds, prompting Al Cohn's widely-quoted remark, "It's nice to see that success hasn't changed Stan Getz."

One Jewish musician who worked for him told me Stan was an anti-Semite. (I won't name him, because this was said in confidence.) The phenomenon of the Jewish anti-Semite is not unknown, of course. My late friend Maurie Kessler once asked me to accompany him as he picked Stan up at the Four Seasons hotel, across from the old CBC building on Jarvis Street in downtown Toronto. As Stan came out the hotel door, he said to Maurie, "If I knew you were coming, I'd have baked a kike." I didn't find it funny. And I think it was meant to stab.

Stan was an incredibly obnoxious person much of the time,

though he was capable of a certain charm that seduced some people but always impressed me as smarmy.

One afternoon in the late 1970s, when I was living in Tarzana, California, I got a call from Sergio Mendes, who lived not far away in Encino. He was all excited. He said, "Stan Getz is at Donte's! Let's go and see him tonight!"

I said, "Why?"

Sergio was taken aback. I told him that Stan was one of my least favorite persons on earth. Sergio protested that all that notwithstanding, he still wanted to go: "When I was growing up in Brazil," he said, "he was one of my idols." I gave in.

Sergio and his wife came by that evening in his Rolls-Royce and picked up my wife and me and we went to Donte's, a favorite hangout of musicians in North Hollywood. Like so many venerable jazz clubs, it's no longer there.

Stan was not having a good night. Joanne Brackeen was on piano, Clint Houston on bass, and they were garnering all the applause from an audience that was full of musicians, particularly pianists. Displeased, Stan played some ugly and insulting tenor, resorting to the guttural slap-tongue sounds of which he was capable.

As the set ended, Sergio said, like the veriest young fan, "Introduce me!"

Seeing my wife and me, Stan came straight for our table. I stood up; Sergio stood up. I said, "Stan, I'd like you to meet Sergio Mendes."

And Stan, so help me God, with an ugly glower said to Sergio, "You've made a lot of money in our country."

And my wife, to her eternal credit, said, "And you've made a lot of money with *their* music."

The book quotes Diane Schuur in describing how she arrived at Stan's hotel room in San Francisco in 1980. She was hooked on cocaine and alcohol. Stan said to her: "Can we say a prayer?"

She said, "Sure, no problem."

"So we prayed," she said. "And then we tooted and then I did a sexual favor for him because I was so high."

Getting a blow-job from a strung-out blind girl isn't exactly a class act. But then Stan was never a class act, except in his playing — and not always even there, although he was indeed one of the most brilliant musicians jazz has ever known.

There were two hookers who hung out at Jim and Andy's, not to seek customers, but on the contrary to escape them, for the jazz musicians never bothered them, accepting them for what they were and who they were. One of them was named Marge; she died at 36 of alcoholism. Everybody liked her, and I enjoyed talking to her because she was extremely intelligent. She came from a well-to-do family against which she rebelled, doing what she did.

One night late, Marge was so drunk that she had her head down on the bar. (Remember that front banquette, just left of the door as you looked forward? I saw Stan passed out cold there one night.) Jimmy Koulouvaris, the owner, asked me if I'd escort Marge

home; he didn't want anybody hurting her.

We set upright, and I propped her up as we walked to her apartment. It was up a steep flight of stairs in a building a block or two north of Jim and Andy's and therefore on West 50th or 51st Street. The night air and the walk sobered her somewhat. When I got her safely into her apartment and turned to leave, she grabbed my hand and implored me to stay a while. I sat down on a sofa with her and we talked. Or rather, she talked. It poured out of her, about her family, about her brother who owned an automobile agency and was homosexual, about the dangerous johns she would encounter, about the life of a prostitute, and about poetry, of which she had a surprising knowledge. I realized that Marge was desperately lonely, living a life in which she could see no future.

Marge did some of her business in her apartment. Johns would call her there, or she would pick them up in bars and bring them back here. One night, she told me, she had received a call from a client who wanted to come over. Before he could get there, there was a knock on the door. And there stood Stan Getz, so drunk he could hardly stay erect. She wanted him to leave, but fearful that he would fall down the stairs, she let him in. He wove his way to her bedroom, took off his clothes, very carefully folded and hung them — a fastidious neatness about his clothes, which Maggin remarks, was one of his fetishes — and crashed across her bed. Since that was her working area, she had to tell her client, when he arrived, to leave. A couple of hours or so later, she was talking to her girlfriend on the phone, the other hooker who hung out at J and A's; I remember that she was from western Canada — Moose Jaw, I think.

Marge was sitting on the sofa, telephone in hand, when Stan emerged from the bedroom, naked. He walked up to her and tried to stick his joint in her mouth.

She said, and one does not forget such lines, "What's the matter with you, Stan? You don't offer me any romance and you don't offer me money. No!"

Stan went back to the bedroom, dressed carefully, and prepared to leave. He paused in the doorway, turned and said, "Jews are cheap," and left.

The book does not tell much about Stan's drug victims. Stan was a sort of Johnny Appleseed of heroin use. We will never know the number of those he hooked, but one promising Swedish musician that Stan turned on ended up dead of dope.

One of his victims, Beverly Byrne, was his first wife.

Beverly was brought into the Gene Krupa band by her brother, Buddy Stewart (Byrne was the family name; he changed it). She replaced Anita O'Day, of whom Maggin writes: "Anita left the band in the middle of a performance at the Palladium, suffering from physical and emotional exhaustion" Oh is that what you call it?

Stan was with Benny Goodman when he met Beverly. "Beverly was naive and easily led," Maggin writes. "She worshipped her brother Buddy and had blind faith in his judgment. Since he and his wife and both of Beverly's parents were alcoholics, she had

little difficulty in accepting Stan's addiction." So in a way it was all her fault that when Stan married her, he was easily able to hook her on heroin. This is like putting the rape victim on trial rather than the rapist.

I never met a musician who knew Stan and Beverly who didn't detest him for what he did to her. He gave her a habit and children and when she had been reduced to a pathetic, tragic figure, divorced her and got custody of the kids.

I met Beverly once. When I settled in New York City in the summer of 1962, I stayed for the first couple of weeks with my friend Bill Rubinstein, an outstanding pianist I'd met when he was Carmen McRae's accompanist. Bill was a kind, decent man, tall and good-looking, from upstate New York. So coolly did he carry his habit that I never knew, even after living with him, that he was a junky; I found out when he died of heroin. (His friend and mine, the outstanding bassist Hal Gaylor, who fought and won his own battle with junk, buried Bill's ashes at the roots of a young tree on his property near Greenwood Lake, New York.)

During that brief time of cohabitation, Bill and I went one night to some bar in Greenwich Village. I heard a woman's voice of awesome power coming from a back room. Bill and I went back, and he introduced me to Beverly Byrne. She was now in her thirties, but looked much older, because of the ravages done to her by alcohol and her heroin life. (It's the life that does it. Good heroin does no physical harm.) She had no teeth. And she was, without exaggeration, one of the greatest singers I ever heard.

"Stan never acknowledged her singing," bassist Bill Crow, who worked in the Getz quintet that included Jimmy Raney, told me. "Beverly was a tragedy, even before she started drinking. She was so in love with Stan and didn't know what to do about it.

"They were living out at Levittown, and he was often in no condition to drive, so I would drive him home. I was living alone at the time, so I would stay over with them.

"Stan always seemed like the little Mama's boy when he was sober, but when the chemicals, booze or drugs, broke down that first line of armor, he would turn evil. And I mean *evil*."

That is a point about Stan. I don't think Stan was just troubled or complicated or complex. He was all of that, of course. But there is such a thing as evil: Pol Pot, for example. And I think Stan was truly *evil*.

Singer Dave Lambert was from Boston. So were Beverly Byrne and Buddy Stewart, and they were like his kid sister and brother, and for what Stan did to her, Dave hated him. I knew Dave fairly well, and Bill Crow, who knew him much better than I, confirmed my memory of this.

"Gerry Mulligan," I said to Bill, who had worked in both Stan's and Gerry's quartets, "*despised* Stan. And since Gerry had been strung out too, dope had nothing to do with it."

"Dope had *nothing* to do with it. Clark Terry despised Stan," Bill said. "And how many people do you know that Clark disliked? If you wanted to ruin Clark's day, all you had to do was mention

Stan Getz. I only ever knew of two people Clark hated, Stan Getz and Cat Anderson.

"Stan would deliberately hurt people. I was very young at the time, and he said things to me that made my blood run cold. He particularly seemed to like hurting people who loved him."

One of Stan's habits was to hit on just about every woman he met. "He seemed to want to prove that all women were bitches," Bill said.

I said that Stan would hit on your wife or girlfriend right in front of you. "Sure," Bill said. "If he could take her to bed and you knew about it, that added to his pleasure."

Stan and his second wife, Monica, invited Helen Keane and me to spend a weekend at Shadowbrook, the mansion they bought (largely with her money) overlooking the Hudson River at Irvington. The ambience was weird; some sort of fight broke out in the house with one of the servants, and Stan hit on Helen. She and I sort of looked at each other and caught the first train we could get back to New York. I never went back to Shadowbrook.

Stan's second wife, Monica Silverskiold, came from a distinguished Swedish family. Rumor in jazz had it that Herman Goering was her uncle. Maggin clarifies that. Goering married the sister of the wife of Count Eric van Rosen, Monica's grandfather, and so Goering's wife was only a collateral relative.

Monica comes across in the book as a sort of educated boob. I know Monica moderately well, and she's no boob. She is a highly intelligent woman, and the one thing that has always baffled me about her is that she would submit to Stan's abuse for all the years that she did. At one point the book says she underwent plastic surgery on her face and breasts. For vanity? Or because Stan had smashed her face in once again?

Bill Crow says Stan's control over women was amazing. He told Maggin (or one of Maggin's researchers; Maggin didn't do all the work himself), "He always had five or six girls. I remember on my first job with him in Boston, I couldn't believe the skill with which he manipulated these women He had them all in different rooms of the same hotel, and one night they were even all sitting at the table in front of the bandstand And each of them thought she was with him. I don't know how he managed this. I was absolutely flabbergasted."

What the book does not even hint is that Stan used Monica as his hatchet man. He put her up to doing his dirty work, arguing with his record companies, making his deals, and helping him screw anybody who crossed his path. Monica could be amazingly persistent; the only reason I wrote the liner notes for the Getz/Gilberto album is that Monica so bugged me on the telephone to do them that I wrote them in a few minutes and phoned them to her. (I was horrified when they were nominated for a Grammy; I thought they were crap.) I later felt a little sheepish when she sent me a potted plant with a thank-you note.

Creed Taylor and I dreaded getting phone calls from her, because she could be so hard on Stan's behalf. I came to dislike Monica intensely.

And then, after she and Stan were divorced, she called me. I had lunch with her, and then Maurie Kessler and I took her to some jazz club or other to hear a group. Occasionally after that (I haven't seen her in years) she would telephone, and I was amazed to find the depth of her intelligence, the scope of her compassion, and the sheer humanitarianism of her urges. She was doing some sort of social work. I came to like her immensely. She admitted that some of the worst strain on her had come from doing Stan's dirty work. And of course her acquiescence in Stan's machinations permitted him to do his nice little *Who, me?* act of naive innocence. That was Stan's trick.

Maggin doesn't mention the incident when Jazz at the Philharmonic was held up for some time by British immigration officials because they had been tipped that somebody in the troupe was carrying dope — it was Stan, of course. Finally the authorities were about to strip-search Ella. At that Granz threatened to take his musicians back to America; the intercession of the British impresario Harold Davidson somehow resolved the issue. But Stan was doing his *Who, me?* act there, too. Oscar Peterson told me about the incident. And about another one:

Ella Fitzgerald was singing. Stan and Oscar's trio were playing behind her. Suddenly Stan began playing unrelated scale exercises — "You know," Oscar said, "with that horrible straight practice tone." Ella complained to Granz, who took the issue up with Getz. "Who, me?" Stan said. "I wasn't doing anything!" Norman screamed for Oscar, who was the straw boss. Oscar confronted Stan, who did his *Who, me?* Oscar said, "You really don't think you were doing anything? I'm sorry, Stan, I didn't understand. You've just got bad ears." Of course no one ever had better ears.

The reviews of Maggin's book generally reflected a kind of horror at the man it describes. Maggin didn't go far enough. He barely penetrates the surface of Stan's despicable character. And he certainly doesn't explain it. In love with Stan's playing — and who with ears wasn't? — he seeks an explanation (and in the explanation an excuse) for him and never finds it. Indeed, one of the odd qualities of the book is that Stan remains elusive to the end. Maggin, and this is understandable, could not comfortably take the last step and face the reality of good and evil. There really is evil in the world. I think Stan was the embodiment of it, and often when I hear him, I recall Whitney Balliett's apt description of his "whining tone of self-pity." Who, me?

Considering the pain Stan caused, the lives he ruined, I have occasionally wondered whether the beauty of his playing was worth it. Even though we would never have experienced the brilliance of *Focus*, the album he made with Eddie Sauter — one of the greatest in jazz history, and indeed Stan's own favorite — would the world be better off had Stan never lived?

There is no question in my mind. The answer, to me, is yes.

I'll leave the last word to Ralph Burns. When I was researching my biography of Woody Herman, Ralph, who wrote *Early Autumn* as a vehicle for Getz, said, "Stan was a prick, but he could play."