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Jazzletter

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Other Voices

I finished reading *Slaughterhouse '99* and a depressed day trader goes on a spree in Atlanta. Then a man who wants to give a "wake-up call to America to kill the Jews" opens fire in Los Angeles on little children. With schools starting this week all over America, should we ask Tom Selleck where the next rampage will occur?

You may want to ask the impressive liberal Ted Turner, now a part of the Time-Life-Warner cartel. If he is a liberal, he has a lovely way of showing it.

Thanks for the alternative to crap you provide.

— Thomas Priesmeyer, Nashville, Tennessee

Since your thoughtful and compelling article *Slaughterhouse '99*, the body count continues: Atlanta, Granada Hills (insert latest massacre here), providing material for vapid chattering on CNN, Foxnews, MSNBC, what Howard Rosenberg calls Newszak.

However, your statement that (the Second Amendment) "has always been interpreted to mean that anyone can own a gun or guns, and this has been upheld by the courts" is not entirely accurate. The Supreme Court in *United States v. Miller* (1939) ruled that a federal law prohibiting possession of sawed-off shotguns was constitutional. The High Court stated that the right to bear arms is limited to weapons that bear a "reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well-regulated militia." While recognizing the right of the individuals to possess firearms, the Court created the limitation that the firearms must serve the collective purpose. There being no reasonable use for a sawed-off shotgun, possession could be barred.

Subsequently the Court has ruled in three other Second Amendment cases, preserving the rights of states to maintain militias. Peter H. Stone, writing in *Mother Jones* (January-February 1994) said, "The Supreme Court in 1980 reconfirmed that 'legislative restrictions on the use of firearms do not (encroach) upon any constitutionally protected liberties . . . . ' The legal precedents are clear. Almost any state or local gun-control action is fine; the Second Amendment does not apply. On the federal level, only laws interfering with state militias are prohibited." The *Miller* court referred to the militia as "a body of citizens enrolled for military discipline", not the general citizenry and, presumably, not private bands of angry, disaffected males living in rural Montana or Idaho.

Further, the *Los Angeles Times* (11/1/93) reported that "courts have upheld laws barring convicted felons from transporting guns in interstate commerce, requiring registration of machine guns, imposing licensing and record-keeping requirements on gun dealers and prohibiting firearms purchasers from providing false statements, and even an Illinois ban on possession of most handguns. . . . In these cases, the courts have held that the Second Amendment guarantees a 'collective right', not an individual one."

The cowardice is found not necessarily in the courts but rather in the state legislatures and the Congress, greedily trousering NRA dollars and doing their bidding. As your favorite songwriter said, "Money doesn't talk, it swears." Of course, with the present composition of the "Renchburg" court, as Nixon once called him, there is no guarantee this modicum will continue. This Court seems determined to return the nation to the ante-bellum days of Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun arguing over states' rights. I can almost hear Jesse Helms and Strom Thurmond calling for a reconsideration of the "unsettled slavery" issue.

The puerile gun lobby argues that we must protect ourselves against the "tyranny of the states." As if their pathetic arsenals would be a deterrence. They are unable to name a single Western democracy that has ever enslaved its people — although certain "urban" areas, the current code for black and Latino communities, may view the police as an occupying force. The Weimar Republic is no exception. Eleven years of self rule after 700 years of monarchy, and the Volk were begging for a leader.

Advocates on both sides of the issue fear the finality of a Supreme Court ruling on the right to bear arms.

I know that some readers have complained, but I hope you will continue to discuss important cultural issues in the Jazzletter, although there is no enjoyment in observing the train wreck of American Society.

— Bob Chinello, Northridge, California

Reading your work remains a sublime pleasure.

— Dave Becker, WDUQ, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

And speaking of Pittsburgh . . . .

The Pittsburgh Connection

Scratch any Pittsburgh jazz musician, and what you get is not blood but an exudation of civic pride. These folk are what I wryly think of as the Pittsburgh nationalists, and they will immediately rattle off a list of significant players born in their native city:

Roy Eldridge, Billy May, Billy Strayhorn, Billy Eckstine, Ahmad Jamal, Kenny Clarke, Art Blakey, Roger Humphries (who still lives there), Erroll Garner, Steve Nelson, Mary Lou Williams,

Eddie Safranski, Bob Cooper, Paul Chambers, Ray Brown, and George Benson. The film composer Jerry Fielding was born there.

Some of the natives stretch it a little by including Henry Mancini in their home-boy list, but he was actually born in Cleveland and spent his childhood in West Aliquippa. But then that is a sort of suburb of the city, and he *did* study music in Pittsburgh, so perhaps we should let them get away with it.

"Gene Kelly was from Pittsburgh," said my friend John Heard, the bassist and artist, "and so were Maxine Sullivan, Oscar Levant, Andy Warhol, Gertrude Stein, Adolf Menjou, Dick Powell, William Powell, Michael Keaton, and Shirley Jones. Lena Horne's father was the numbers king in Pittsburgh. Shall I keep going?"

Sorry I asked.

The disinterested observer could make a pretty good case for Philadelphia as a hothouse for jazz players, and Donald Byrd would run a number on you about the importance of Detroit and Cass Tech. Then there's Chicago, with Dusable High, and Brooklyn and for that matter Manhattan. Even poor oft-denigrated Los Angeles, and Jefferson High, produced a lot of great jazz players.

But of Pittsburgh: "I think it must be something in the water," said Tony Mowad of radio station WDUQ, the Duquesne University public broadcasting station. He's been a jazz disc jockey for thirty-five years. Tony is a native, needless to say.

"Sammy Nestico is from Pittsburgh," I was reminded by trombonist Grover Mitchell, now the leader of the beautifully reconstituted Count Basie band (about which more in the next issue). The touch of pride in his voice is the give-away: Grover too is from Pittsburgh.

Stanley Turrentine reminded me of another native: "A lot of guys are asleep on Dodo Marmarosa. He was a great piano player. He could *play*."

Stanley was one of three Turrentine brothers born in Pittsburgh. The youngest, drummer Marvin, never got the chance to make a national name for himself. He was killed in Viet Nam. The oldest of the three (there were also two sisters) made a very large international name: trumpeter, arranger, and composer Tommy Turrentine.

"He died three years ago, May 11, 1996," Stanley said. Cancer. Tommy was sixty-nine. Somebody should run a statistical survey on the incidence of cancer in jazz musicians, who have spent their lives inhaling sidestream nightclub smoke.

John Heard said: "Tommy was a monster trumpet player, and he was a hell of an educator. When musicians came to town, they had to pass what we called the Turrentine test, the jam sessions at Local 471. He was the guy all us kids used to go out and watch."

Tommy was Thomas Turrentine Jr. The father, Thomas Turrentine, had played saxophone with the Pittsburgh Savoy Sultans. But Stanley was born in the dark of the Depression, April 5, 1934, and his father was then working as a construction laborer. "My mother cleaned people's houses," Stanley said.

John Heard believes that a proliferation of artistic creativity, including dance, occurred in Pittsburgh for a simple reason: money. The immense amounts of money invested in the school system, the Carnegie Library, the Pittsburgh Symphony, in museums, galleries, and concerts, meant that children were exposed early and heavily to their influences. Few cities in America have enjoyed the lavish artistic endowments of Pittsburgh.

I passed John's theory on to Stanley.

"John's right," Stanley said. "Oh yeah. The arts were a priority. You had to take some kind of music appreciation class — which they've cut out now — and they'd furnish you with instruments. A lot of guys who came up with me, if it hadn't been for the school system in Pittsburgh, they wouldn't be playing today. They wouldn't have been able to afford a saxophone or trumpet. The schools had all those instruments that you could use. If you played saxophone, you could take the horn home and practice until the end of the semester.

"The teachers there were excellent. I remember a teacher named Nero Davidson, a cellist. He played for the Pittsburgh Symphony. He was my high-school teacher. He looked at my hands and said, 'You've got great hands for cello.' I played cello for half a semester. But I didn't practice, because I was playing saxophone. I had good ears. I muddled through that. I'd go home and put the cello in the corner and grab the saxophone.

"We had all kinds of activities, there were art classes, and bands. My first band was called Four Bees and a Bop. I used to play for proms and basketball games. After the basketball games, they'd assemble in the gym and have a dance. It gave guys a chance to play.

"Oh I just wanted to play music. I wasn't exactly that big on school. Only reason I went to school was for lunch and band."

Pittsburgh was long viewed with a certain condescension as one of the blighted cities of America. The steel industries that generated all that money also fouled the air with so much smoke that, at times, streetlights would have to be turned on at midday, and at night the skies were orange with the light of coke ovens and Bessemer converters. Henry Mancini remembered that the first snowfalls would render everything white and lovely, but almost immediately the snow would turn black with soot and fly-ash.

The steel industry is long gone, the great mills lie idle and rusting. The air is clean. And Pittsburgh, which now thrives on high-tech and medical industries, is revealed as one of the most beautiful cities in America, its center on a sharp triangle where the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers meet to form the Ohio. Carnegie Mellon University is one of the country's best training-grounds for the arts, particularly drama, and saxophonist Nathan Davis heads the jazz department at the University of Pittsburgh. (He is an interloper, a native of Kansas City.)

The city is developing a vigorous little movie industry, and often one spots the city's dramatic backdrops in pictures. There are good images of Pittsburgh in the 1993 Bruce Willis cop movie, *Striking Distance*, and in the bizarre 1992 black comedy *Innocent Blood*, in which Robert Loggia plays a Mafia don who gets turned into one of the undead when he is bitten by a beautiful and sweet-natured French vampire. Weird picture; good views of Pittsburgh. Both films were made on location.

John Heard says Pittsburgh has "the mentality of a coal miner

with culture."

Interesting town, and it seems to live in a curious cultural cocoon, separate from the rest of the country. If it were a person, I would say: It knows who it is. And doesn't care whether you do.

"When I was coming up, man," Stanley said, "there was just so much music. It was always music. Even in elementary school. Ahmad Jamal talks about Mr. James Miller. He was a piano teacher. Ahmad used to take lessons from him.

"My father started me playing. I used to take lessons off Carl Arter. He was a great teacher. He's a piano player now, but he was a saxophone player then."

Given that all five of the Turrentine children, including the two sisters, were given music lessons, I told Stanley that in *almost* every case of people, men and women alike, who have made successes in music, there seems to be a background of family support for this most uncertain of enterprises. Consider the Jones boys, Hank, Thad, and Elvin. Or the Sims boys, Zoot, Ray, and Gene; the Candolis, Pete and Conte; The Swope brothers, Earl and Rob; the Heaths, Percy, Jimmy, and Albert, and so many more.

Nodding, Stanley said, "I had my daddy's horn, a 1936 Buescher, which he gave me. That was the best horn I ever had.

"That was when I was at Herron Hills Junior High.

"We were poor. But we didn't know it. When I'd come home from school, I'd have to practice. During dinner, we would be talking about bands and musicians. It was always about music.

"The radio was our entertainment. We had games. If we were listening to Duke or Basie or Woody Herman or Benny Goodman, Paul Whiteman, all those guys, we'd have little tests. My dad would say, 'Who's playing trombone? Who's playing third trumpet? Who's playing first alto?'

"My father would take me to concerts like Jazz at the Philharmonic. And I'd walk within a radius of three blocks and hear about four bands, trios, quartets. There was always music in the neighborhood. And as soon as they took all the music out of the neighborhoods, I mean, it just . . . ." His voice trailed off in a resigned eloquent silence. Then he resumed:

"And we used to exchange records. We used to trade the Charlie Parkers, Dizzy, Don Byas, Wardell Gray. We just listened to music all the time.

"I knew I was going to play music when I was seven. My mother said I'd hear something on the radio and I'd sit down at the piano and start playing it by ear.

"Ray Brown used to come by the house. Joe Harris, the drummer out of Pittsburgh who played with Dizzy's first big band, was around.

"I remember just as clear when Ray Brown came by and got Tommy, my brother, and took him on the road for the first time with Snookum Russell's band. Joe Harris was in that band also. It was a great band.

"When I was growing up, we had an eighteen-piece band. It was Pete Henderson's band. My brother did a lot of arranging for it. We'd hear Dizzy's arrangement of, let's say, *Emanon, Manteca*, and somebody would write it out.

"I was listening too. My father's favorite saxophone players were Coleman Hawkins, Chu Berry, Lester Young, Charlie Parker, Don Byas."

I said, "I have often thought Don Byas is still under-rated."

"Oh, you better believe it! I've got his picture in my office at home, beautifully framed. You know, I had the privilege of meeting him, after he came from Europe. He was playing with Art Blakey. He came to a friend of mine's, a lieutenant colonel retired. He was a big jazz fan named Bick Ryken. When I worked in Washington at the Bohemian Caverns, we would hang out.

"We went to his house, me and Don Byas, and just talked and listened to music until the wee hours of the morning. He was a great man. I was just in awe of him. The technique! He was really sick by then, and about two weeks after that he died.

"He said a lot of profound things to me that night. He felt that he made a mistake in going to Europe and staying for over thirty years. He was one of the first guys. He felt that he wasn't getting the respect here that he got over there. But he said that as he thought about it, he felt the battle was here, and he could have been a bigger influence. Don said to me that he should have made his career here. And over there he became like a local musician, and that was it.

"He was a tremendous player. So many people came from him. Lucky Thompson and Benny Golson are very similar to his style of playing.

"I had all kinds of idols. Illinois Jacquet. Coleman Hawkins. Lester Young. But I wouldn't *dare* try to play Sonny Rollins. I wouldn't dare try to play their thing. Because . . . it *ain't me.*

"My father told me, 'Put this solo on.' I'd try to play this Lester Young solo, and I'd get so *frustrated.* Oh man, I'd want to play it note for note. I'd try to play a Wardell Gray solo exactly. I might play the notes, but it didn't *sound* like Wardell.

"My father sat down and told me, 'Stanley, let me tell you something: I have yet to hear a musician that can play *everything*. This is a big world. There's a lot of music out there. If you look within yourself, you'll find a lot of music.'

"That kind of calmed me down. It got me out of that 'I want to be a star. Like Lester.'"

"Well your friend from Pittsburgh, Ray Brown, said, 'Nobody does everything best.'"

"No! It's impossible," Stanley said. "Look within yourself, you'll find a lot of things, that's what my father told me. That cooled me out. I'm not afraid of playing myself. As a matter of fact, that's the only way I can play."

My several days of conversation with Stanley began by happenstance in the middle of the night at a ship's rail. It was in October, aboard the S.S. Norway, on its most recent jazz cruise of the Caribbean. I was out on the balcony of my cabin, contemplating a stunning silver path of light across calm waters to a low-hanging full moon. The rows of cabins on that top deck are separated into private units by gray plastic partitions. I was leaning on the rail, awed by the moon's display. Someone came out onto the adjacent porch, a big man, and he too stood staring at the moon. I said, "Good morning." Or maybe he did. And we introduced ourselves.

He said, "I'm Stanley Turrentine."

For whatever reason, I had never met him before, although I had certainly enjoyed his playing, big-toned, bluesy, powerful, almost forbidding. He is like that physically, too: tall, big-shouldered and big-chested. But often men of imposing physique and bearing seem to feel no need to prove manhood, and are notably gentle, even sweet, men. Stanley seems to fit that mold. John Heard, chuckling, said, "Tommy was a wild man. Stanley was much quieter."

In the course of the next few days, Stanley and I talked several times, and I repeatedly heard his current quartet, which is superb. Sometimes the conversations were in his room, sometimes on the balcony. Ahmad Jamal was in the room on the other side of mine.

"Ahmad and my brother were very good friends," Stanley said. "I'd come from school, and Ahmad would be practicing on our piano."

I asked Stanley how he came to break out of Pittsburgh, to become one of its famous expatriates.

"That was back in the Jim Crow days. At that time, Lowell Fulsome, blues guitarist, had a band. Ray Charles was the pianist and vocalist. The secretary of the union, local 471 — separate union — called me and said they were looking for a saxophone. I was about sixteen-and-a-half years old. I decided to go.

"My Mama cried, 'Oh Stanley!' I said, 'Oh Mama, I don't wanna make you cry. This is just something I have to do.' I made sure my father wasn't there that day! He was at work. He probably would have deterred me from going. I felt that, anyway.

"I just got on the bus and left home, went on the road. We headed straight down south. It was bad."

"Woody Herman hated the south," I said.

"Well there were a lot of reasons back in those days," Stanley said. "You knew that, literally, our lives were in danger. Just for playing music. A guy put a forty-four in my face. Drunk. He said, 'Can you play the blues?'"

He laughed. "That's why I play the blues today, I think!" His laugh grew larger: "'Can you play the blues?' 'Yes, sir!' I'm still here, so obviously I could play the blues."

How anybody can laugh at such a memory is beyond me, but I've heard that kind of laughter from Clark Terry and Dizzy Gillespie and so many others, and I am always amazed.

Stanley said, "I was the youngest guy in the band. We had what we called a flexible bus — held together by bailing wire and chewing gum. It broke down every hundred miles or so. We'd see a lot of strange things. We'd pull over and somebody would be hanging in a tree.

"You'd run into all kinds of crazy rules. You'd have to step off the sidewalk and walk in the gutter if some white people were walking toward you. You couldn't eat in restaurants. You couldn't stay in the hotels. We had rooming houses — sometimes! If you wanted to eat something, they had places 'For Colored Only.' It was outside the restaurant. They didn't even give you a menu. You had to eat out there. Lynchings were commonplace.

"Some of the places, even up north — I call it Up South — it was no different.

"We'd see some of these horrors. And you'd get up on the bandstand, and release it. You'd go through some trying thing. And Ray Charles would sing the blues, sing whatever he's thinking about. He doesn't say a word about what the incident was. But it's *there*. That was part of the experience that I had.

"How serious that bandstand is to me. It's like a safe haven to me. You get up on that bandstand, and it's very serious. That's what I tell the kids in the workshops I do. That bandstand is what we love to do. That's the way we express ourselves. I say, 'It's not the bandstand, it's *getting to* the bandstand.' With the little dues I paid, I can imagine what Lester and Coleman Hawkins and all those guys had to go through, 'way worse than it was for me.

"I tell the younger cats, 'Hey, man, you didn't research it. Listen to these cats. They've got some experiences. They're not in books. You can't write this stuff down. It's in the way they play. They play the pains of their experiences. You'll never get that experience. And those cats probably couldn't explain it even to themselves. I know I couldn't, because you want to forget a lot of the things you had to go through just to play music, to express yourself.

"But, you know, the good side is that it teaches you to admire things. And it teaches you not be *afraid* to express yourself. A lot of guys today, they want to copy all this, too much of that. They're great musicians. But you don't hear any stylists. They read, they've got all the blackboard knowledge, but you hear one piano player, or one trumpet player, they're all playing the same thing — to *me*. You can't distinguish one from another.

"After that job, I came back to Pittsburgh. I didn't want my mother and father to see me without money. Sometimes we went on gigs and the promoter left with the money. I went through all of the usual stuff. I wouldn't go home until I had something new or some present for them, to try to show them: 'See, Mom, I'm doin' okay.'

"I stayed in Pittsburgh for a while, working around in bands. Then me and my brother moved to Cleveland. He started working with Gaye Cross. Coltrane was with the band. I was working in a band with Foots Thomas. And then I used to occasionally get some gigs with Tadd Dameron. Nobody wrote like him. He had a quartet or quintet. Then 'Trane left Cleveland and went with Earl Bostic, and later when he went with Johnny Hodges, he recommended me to Bostic. We traveled the chittlin' circuit. Walking the bar, and entertaining the people."

I mentioned that Benny Golson had described walking the bar, and said that his friend John Coltrane did it too.

"*Everybody* did it," Stanley said. "You did if you wanted to work! That was part of it. You had to entertain the people. I stayed with Earl for three years and then came home, and about two years after that I had to go into the army. I was in the 158th Army band for two years, stationed at Fort Knox, Kentucky."

"Weren't Cannonball Adderley and Junior Mance in that band?"

"Not in *that* band. They were in it before me. Nat Adderley had been in that band too. And then, when I got out of the Army, in 1958, Max Roach was playing in Pittsburgh at the Crawford Grill. He had Art Davis on bass, and Julian Priester, and George

Coleman, and I can't remember who the trumpet player was. The trumpet player, and George Coleman, and Art Davis left the band. Max had to replace them. He called my brother, and my brother suggested me and Bobby Boswell, another bass player out of Pittsburgh. And we joined Max. That's when I really got national and international acclaim. We played in New York, we traveled to Europe, we started making records.

"I stayed with Max about two years. So I got on the New York scene. I got married and had my first child, Sherry, in 1959. I left Max and went to Philadelphia. My wife was from Philadelphia. We moved to a section of Philadelphia called Germantown.

"Jimmy Smith, the organist, lived about two doors down. One day I was coming out the door, and he was coming out his door, and he said, 'Hey, man, you wanna make a record?' Just like that. I'd known him for quite a while. When he'd come to Pittsburgh, I'd come and play with him. We got to be pretty good friends. I just jammed with him and hung out with him at the time. So when he said, 'You wanna make a record?' I said, '*Yeah.*'

"We jumped in his car, and went up to Rudy Van Gelder's in Englewood Cliffs in New Jersey and recorded. He had built the new studio by then."

"And you couldn't smoke in it," I said.

Stanley said, "Well you could smoke in the studio, but you couldn't smoke in the control room."

"I asked Rudy why, and he said that that stuff gets into the equipment. And of course it does. If you smoke, look at the windshield of your car and imagine what gets into your lungs."

"You couldn't smoke there," Stanley said, "and you couldn't touch *nothing.*

"He didn't have an assistant, as engineers usually do. He did *everything.* He'd have an eighteen-piece band, he did the whole thing.

"Well we went up to Rudy's and made a recording. It was called *Midnight Special*, and it was a hit for Jimmy. I made about five albums in that period.

"Then Alfred Lion approached me. He wanted to record me. I started recording with Blue Note and stayed about fifteen years. They've put those records out on CD now. The only way I found out was from a little kid. I was playing a festival in California. I think it was at Long Beach. A kid came up to me with about ten CDs. He said, 'Oh, Mr. Turrentine! Would you autograph these — your new CDs?' And I looked at them, and there were things from 1960, 1964. But they were *new* to that kid."

I said, "And you're put in the position of being in competition with yourself. Your old records are competing with your new records."

"You know what? I don't mind that," Stanley said.

"So long as you get your royalties."

"They have to give them to you, if you know. But they're not going to *let you* know. You have to find out."

"In the immortal words of Henry Mancini, 'Do not ask and ye shall not receive.'

"*Receive,*" Stanley said in unison. "Right. So you have to watch. I've got a great entertainment lawyer.

"So they released this stuff, and this kid came to me, and the records were *new to him.*"

The professional association that followed his period with Max Roach would prove to be one of the longest of Stanley's life; and it became personal as well: that with organist Shirley Scott, whom he married.

"I was living in Philadelphia," Stanley said. "Just finished a record date with Jimmy Smith. Lockjaw Davis had left Shirley's trio. Arthur Edgehill was on drums. I replaced Lockjaw.

"My relationship with Shirley lasted for thirteen years — and three children, three daughters. We got together in 1960. We traveled all over.

"Shirley recorded for Prestige and I was recording for Blue Note. Sometimes I would be on her record. My name would be Stan Turner. When she recorded with me, she would be Little Miss Cotton."

(Two of these collaborations with Shirley Scott are available on Prestige CDs: *Soul Shoutin'*, PRCD-24142-2, and *Legends of Acid Jazz*, PRCD-24200-2. Prestige is now part of the Fantasy group. Stanley also recorded for Fantasy for a time, starting in 1974. Three albums are available on that label: *Pieces of Dreams*, OJCCD-831-2, *Everybody Come on Out*, OJCCD-911-2, and *The Best of Mr. T*, FCD-7708-2.)

"Oh man, Shirley was phenomenal," Stanley said. "She was very serious about the organ and about music. She had her own way of approach. We had a great time.

"After Shirley — that was 1971 — I started to record for Creed Taylor at CTI."

That association began at a dark time in Stanley's life. He and Shirley had been divorced. He was facing some financial reverses. And he had no record contract. One day the phone rang. A man's voice said that this was Creed Taylor. He wanted to know whether Stanley might be interested in recording for his label, CTI. With an inner sigh, Stanley said yes, and Creed asked if Stanley could come to his office next day for a meeting.

I checked with Creed about that first encounter. Creed said he was nervous about meeting Stanley, assuming, as we are all prone to do, that the music reflected the personality of the man. Creed had been listening a lot to the Blue Note records. Creed said:

"He's completely individual. It's the voice of Stanley Turrentine, and nobody could imitate the aggressive melodic magnificence of Stanley's playing. I loved it. And I loved the stuff he'd done with Jimmy Smith and Shirley. He's such a powerful voice on the instrument, and I anticipated that the personality to follow would be: Look out! He's the antithesis, for example, of Paul Desmond. Stanley was not at all what I anticipated."

Stanley arrived at Creed's office in Rockefeller Center. I can easily imagine the meeting. Creed is a shy, reticent man, difficult to know at first, seemingly reserved and distant, but warm and considerate when you get past that. Stanley told me he went into that meeting in a state of depression, telling Creed he was facing some financial problems. Creed asked him how much it would take to ease them. Stanley gave him a figure. Creed wrote him a check

and asked how soon they could get into the studio.

They were in the Van Gelder studio in Englewood Cliffs the following week, beginning a relationship that both men remember with warmth — a highly successful relationship.

"We made a record called *Sugar* and it was a hit," Stanley said. "*Sugar*, the title track, was his tune. "I've had a band ever since then.

"Creed was a wonderful producer, a great producer. I think he set a precedent for the music. Even the packaging. His covers were works of art. As a matter of fact, the covers *sold* as art. Packaging had never been done like that. And he had a CTI sound.

"And look at the people he had in that stable during the time I was there: Herbie Hancock, George Benson, Grover Washington, Freddie Hubbard, Jack De Johnette, Ron Carter, Billy Cobham, Hank Crawford, Esther Phillips, Milton Nascimento, Airto, Deodato. Oh man, it was just tremendous."

I told Stanley that one of the things I had noticed about Creed, during many of the recording sessions I attended with him, and sometimes worked on, was his capacity seemingly to ignore the clock and its measure of mounting expenses. He never let the musicians sense anxiety. His wife told me that this tore him up inside, and the tension was released only when he got home.

Stanley said, "He is so invisible! Did you ever notice that there are not many photographs of Creed? He's always in the background. Away from it. So many of the other producers, they want to be seen.

"I'd go into the studio sometimes, and record. No strings or anything. I'd go on the road and he'd hire Don Sebesky or somebody to add the strings. Or Chico O'Farrill to put brass arrangements behind it. Or Thad Jones. A lot of people got a little antsy about him doing that. I figured it helped me. It enhanced the records. I made a lot of albums for him. Maybe seven or eight. He was a *music* guy. There are no more cats out there like that. He *loved* the music. He loved the guys he was interested in. He heard *them* and tried to enhance what they were doing. He had such great taste. And we were all on that label at the same time.

(In the continuing process of corporate megamergers, the Turrentine CTI records have become the property of Sony-Columbia, and they are unavailable, as, for that matter, is that entire excellent CTI catalogue.)

"The record companies today are something," Stanley said. "There are no more music people in the business. They're just accountants and lawyers. The musicians are just numbers. How many records do they sell? They don't even have the courtesy to send you copies of your own albums.

"My wife called one of the record companies. She got the secretary of the vice president. She wanted to order some of my records. The girl said, 'Who's the artist you want to get? She said, 'Stanley Turrentine.' She said, 'Who?' That's just one of the things.

"But you know something? I think the Internet is going to bring some justice to the record companies. They're running scared now.

"I think the younger players, those coming up today, have got more schooling than most of the guys I know, as far as music is concerned.

"But you can't read your press releases all the time." He laughed his warm laugh. "And you can't believe what you read in the press. If you start believing that's what you are, then your attitude changes.

"I'm not afraid to be myself, good, bad, or indifferent."

I said, "We were talking the other night about Dizzy's generation, who saw the value of *entertaining* the audience."

"Oh yes. Well you know, Dizzy was just a natural. He was a genius as a musician. We all know that. But, as far as knowing how to read an audience, that's very difficult to do, and Dizzy could do that at the snap of a finger. He could look over an audience and know exactly what to play. And the audience, all of a sudden, unbeknownst to them, were all with it.

"There was another cat that did that, that I worked with: Earl Bostic. I don't care how many thousands of people he would be playing for, it seemed to me that he'd just look them over from the stage and knew exactly what to play. That's what I am trying to learn, continually trying to do. Because that's part of playing. I think. You have to be entertaining people some kind of way, you know what I mean? I mean a lot of cats get up there and play snakes, play all their wares. And they can't get a gig.

"Most of the people who made it knew how to entertain. Look at Duke Ellington. He was a master at reading the audience. How to capture audiences! Basie, Jimmie Lunceford. Oh man. Andy Kirk. All these cats.

"When I get up on the bandstand, even me — " it was as if he were embarrassed to have mentioned himself so soon after these others " — I say, 'Hey, let's have some fun.' And that's what we try to convey. And the audience will start to have fun too. You can't fool 'em. There are many things we are selling. Sound, first, to me. This is just my opinion, it might be wrong. I've been wrong many times. Anyhow. Sound, feeling, and emotion. A lot of people think feeling and emotion are the same thing. That's not necessarily true in playing. Not as far as I'm concerned. I've seen cats that could play with feeling but no emotion, and cats who could play with emotion and no feeling.

"You don't have to be a Juilliard graduate to figure out those three things: sound, feeling, and emotion. That's what we're selling out there. The layman knows these three things. Let's face it, man. A lot of cats are playing a lot of stuff, or think they are. And if you don't ring that cash register, you'll find you'll be playing nowhere. This is still a business. And Dizzy and those cats, Miles, all of them, took it to the max. And people used to go in to see Miles to see what was he going to do next. When was he going to turn his back? Or is Monk going to stand up from the piano and just start dancing? There are all kinds of ways.

"But the ability to read the audience is a very important thing."

Stanley does it well. And his enthusiasm and that of the members of his current quartet communicate to an audience. The rhythm section comprises bassist Paul Thompson, at twenty-four the youngest in the group, drummer Lenny Robinson, and pianist David Budway. When Stanley is playing the head of a tune, or taking his own solo, he strides the bandstand (he has one of those

tiny microphones in front of the bell of his tenor) with the authority of a captain on the bridge of a ship. When he isn't soloing, he'll sit down on a stool and listen with smiling satisfaction to the others. Even then, he cannot keep from moving. He tends to rock his hips back and forth on the stool, reminding me of a phrase I got from actor George Grizzard in 1959. We had spent some time hanging out in Paris together that year. George came home some months ahead of me, and he was appearing in *The Disenchanted* on Broadway with Jason Robards Jr. I called him as soon as I got off the boat in New York. He invited me to the play, and afterwards he asked what I wanted on this, my first night home. I said, "A real American hamburger and some jazz!" We went to P.J.'s for the first and several joints for the latter. In one club or another, I can't remember which, some group was really cooking, and George coined a phrase that has stuck with me. He called it "Good old ass-shakin' jazz."

Watching Stanley in delighted involuntary motion, I thought of that phrase.

I was particularly struck by the work of David Budway. There was something radically different about it. He is a highly percussive player, a really loud pianist, but his playing brought to mind something Buddy Rich once said: "There is a musical way to play loud and an unmusical way." Budway's percussive approach to playing really caught my ear. I was listening to it with Tony Mowad, the aforementioned jazz broadcaster. Tony is a stocky, husky man with a mustache and deep-toned skin. "You know," Tony said with the pride peculiar to Pittsburgh people, "David is my cousin." And, he said, the outstanding young guitarist Ron Affif, now living in Los Angeles, is another cousin, also born, like David Budway, in Pittsburgh. (Indeed, including Stanley, three quarters of the quartet is from Pittsburgh.)

Something struck me then. I said, "Tony, what's your ethnic background?"

He said, "Lebanese."

"Then that may explain it."

I have long held a theory, one that Gerry Mulligan shared, that white American jazz musicians tend to play with a stylistic influence of the music of their national origins. The Italians play very Italian, the Irish play very Irish — consider Mulligan and Zoot Sims — and so forth. Paul Motian is Armenian, and he told me that he grew up listening to the complex polyrhythms of Armenian music. This is hardly a universal principle, but it is an interesting insight into styles. At least Gerry Mulligan thought so, and I do.

And so. Was I hearing an Arabic influence in David Budway's playing? I asked him.

"Big time!" he said without hesitation.

Budway is a highly-trained classical pianist, little known nationally or internationally, because he chose until recently, when he moved to New York, to remain in Pittsburgh, teaching classical piano at Carnegie Mellon University and jazz and classical piano at Duquesne and playing with the Pittsburgh Symphony. He is yet another to shatter the myth of irreconcilable difference between jazz and classical music, which persists in spite of the careers of Mel Powell, Keith Jarrett, Joe Wilder, John Clayton, and many more. He has completed two as-yet unreleased classical albums with Hubert Laws, one devoted to all the Bach flute sonatas, the other to "impressionist" composers including Poulenc and Ravel.

His father, David told me, played "classical" violin but also toured with his brother, David's uncle, playing Arabic music. "I called my father the Arabic Bird," David said. David soaked in this music, at home and on the Lebanese radio station he listened to. "I got used to those Arabic rhythms, things like 9/8 and 10/4, the stuff was all over the place," David said.

And although the piano hardly lends itself to the melismatic practices of Arabic vocal music, David's playing does hint at Arabic minor-scale practices. Primarily, however, it is his rhythmic concept that seems so Arabic to my ears.

Stanley clearly delights in the group, as they do in each other. "I have a chance to play with some nice young musicians," Stanley said. "All the cats are nice. They're gentlemen. We have a good time. We all listen to each other. That's what makes it fun. We're trying to play *together*."

Stanley remains in close contact with his daughters, and he is concerned for the fragile health of his ex-wife, Shirley Scott. He has married again. "Three times and I finally got it right," he said.

"I think this is one of the happiest times of my life."

The Pittsburgh Connection

If the New York Times *covered sports like they review books, baseball fans would storm the* Times *building like the Bastille.*

— Saul Bellow

The past year has seen the publication of an unusually large number of excellent and essential jazz books. The *New York Times*, which often (though fortunately not always) has determined the life or death of books, follows a pattern of assigning important jazz works to reviewers with questionable qualifications, or hidden agendas, or both, to trash groundbreaking books such as Ted Gioia's *The History of Jazz*, thus far the definitive single-volume survey of the music, and Richard M. Sudhalter's monumental *Lost Chords*.

Because the tone of Peter Keepnews' overtly hostile review of Gioa's book is so supercilious and patronizing, as though it were the conceit of some over-arching lightweight, a brief survey of Ted Gioia's career and expertise seems in order.

An accomplished composer and a highly skilled pianist in the Bill Evans mode, Gioia originated the Jazz Studies Program at Stanford University when he was only twenty. Steeped in the interdisciplinary cultures of music, art, and philosophy, Gioa wrote a book titled *The Imperfect Art: Reflections on Jazz and Modern Culture*, which won the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award of 1989. His *West Coast Jazz: Modern Jazz in California 1945-60* (overlooked in the *Times* review) is widely regarded as the definitive work on the subject. A multi-linguist, Gioia is an authority on the music of Latin America.

Since the *Times* was reviewing Gioia's book and not his career,

all this may seem beside the point, and would be, were the book as negligible as Keepnews implies. But Gioia has poured too much research, insight, talent and dedication into *The History of Jazz* to be blithely savaged on trifling and spurious grounds.

Keepnews attacks *The History of Jazz* for not including musical notations, even though he acknowledges that Gioia "presumably aimed (the book) at people who do not necessarily read music or know much about music theory."

Quoting the late flat-earth eccentric Stanley Dance that "the full story of jazz could not be properly told in less than five or six volumes," Keepnews concedes that "a concise one-volume history is always useful especially for the interested fan who wants to be introduced to the music's past without being overwhelmed by it" — which is precisely what Gioia set out to do, and has done.

An incredible bulk of Keepnews' review — nearly a full column — is devoted to Gioia's "faulty" version of the notorious refusal of the Pulitzer music committee to award Duke Ellington the Pulitzer Prize. "The difference between these two versions of the story may seem minor," writes Keepnews, "but if Gioia had taken the time to double check his facts, he would have ended up with an account that was not just more accurate but more interesting as well. It is also worth noting — " it is? " — that Gioia does not specify when it occurred, other than to place it during Ellington's 'final years' (it actually happened in 1965, nine years before Ellington died.)" After alerting readers to this egregious oversight, Keepnews then chides Gioia for mistaking the year Ella Fitzgerald took over the leadership of the Chick Webb band. As I have noted before, most jazz critics would rather catch another jazz critic in a mistake than raise Bix from the dead. The reason is one on which Gene Lees once commented: "Since there are probably no more than half a dozen writers making a full-time living reviewing jazz, there is an overt or subconscious desire in many of them to destroy anyone else who writes about the music."

Any competent book critic knows a review should conclude with an overview, a summing up of the work. Instead, Keepnews' in his final paragraph, which shows no awareness of the scope and achievement of the book, is given over to an astonishing and lengthy swipe at Gioia for "referring to musicians by their first names or nicknames. Such informality seems inappropriate and arguably even disrespectful in a work of this scope. After all, how many historians of European concert music have ever referred to Beethoven as Ludwig? For that matter, how many reviewers of this book are likely to refer to its author as Ted?"

Since the practice has been, for at least fifty years, the norm in jazz journalism — and indeed in the common conversation of jazz musicians — only one word seems fitting and appropriate for this brand of criticism. The word is chickenshit.

While it is fruitless to second guess the psyche that fueled Keepnews' jeremiad, there is seems little doubt about the hidden agenda that shaped the *Times*' astonishing attack on Richard M. Sudhalter's monumental, ground-breaking *Lost Chords*, whose subtitle *White Musicians and their Contribution to Jazz, 1915-1945*, was in itself sufficient to rattle the cage of the Albert Murray-Stanley Crouch-Wynton Marsalis alliance, to which reviewer Jason Berry is obviously in thrall. Author of *Up From the Cradle of Jazz: New Orleans Music Since World War II* and identified by the *Times* as "a jazz scholar at the Historic New Orleans Collection," Berry views Sudhalter's book through the parochial prism of a New Orleans specialist to pronounce it "flawed" in his opening sentence, without revealing what these flaws may be, other than to condemn its "assimilationist view of jazz which comes off as a strained polemic."

Nowhere in Berry's review is an acknowledgment of the sedulous, scholarly, decade-long research invested in *Lost Chords*, its overdue celebration of hundreds of neglected musicians, its musically annotated analyses of recordings both famous and obscure, its felicitous style, its ready wit, and a readability that buoys the neophyte yet provides solid substance for the professional musician to ponder. In a patently false rendering of Sudhalter's views that one is tempted to call willful, Berry charges that "his notion that each strand in the tapestry of jazz holds comparable weight devalues the genius of African polyphony."

This looms as a deliberate misrepresentation of Sudhalter's work, which was inspired partly to refute the years-long pilgrimage of the Baraka-Murray-Crouch-Marsalis crow-jim alliance to write all whites out of jazz history. Nowhere in *Lost Chords* can be found a remote inference that its author is elevating white musicians at the expense of black ones. Berry concludes his polemic with the cliché, as dull as it is inappropriate, "if only he had used more light and less heat to make his case." Jason Berry has written the most irresponsible and basically dishonest review of an essential jazz work ever to see print, and there's a lot of heavy competition for that spot.

Such reviews are typical of the *New York Times*' continuing disservice to jazz. A profile (July 25) of pianist Brad Mehldau by one Adam Shatz flaunts the eye-popper that "Bill Evans belongs to the tiny coterie of great white jazz pianists, a club that also embraces Lenny Tristano, Paul Bley and Keith Jarrett." This may come as a surprise to those who believe this "tiny coterie" also embraces Roger Kellaway, Jessica Williams, Dave McKenna, Warren Bernhardt, Alan Broadbent, Renee Rosnes, Ted Rosenthal, Walter Norris, Benny Green, Bill Mays, Dick Hyman, Joanne Brackeen, Bill Charlap, Geoff Keezer, Benny Green, Lou Levy, Ross Tompkins, Mel Powell, Dodo Marmarosa, Adam Makowicz, Ralph Sutton, Al Haig, George Shearing, Dick Twardzik, Jess Stacy, Joe Sullivan, and more.

In addition the *Times* has shot the moon for the Abominable *Side Man*, a sordid travesty of the jazz life aimed at expense-account squares who comprise the major audience for our hopelessly retrograde Broadway theater, and continues to mount a campaign to advance the cause and the case of the Wynton Marsalis super-hype industry.

Finally, it should be noted that the *New York Times Book Review* refuses to publish correspondence protesting its policy of hiring mean-spirited mediocrities, often with old scores to settle, to pass judgment on the works of their betters.

— Grover Sales