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Mail Bag

Thank you, thank you! That was like getting permission to take off a pair of shoes that pinch.

I always wondered what I lacked when others seemed to comprehend *so much* in serial music. Same with modern dance, with certain exceptions. And, married to a figurative painter for twenty-one years, I saw first-hand the pain felt by one who truly tried to create an ordered and empathetic world within the deep space of his own canvas, only to be dismissed as unimportant by those who venerated the accidental.

The original Second City troupe in Chicago had a skit in which a noted broadcaster-critic-artist was explaining some modern works to a group at the Art Institute. Severn Darden played him with a strong accent. After a description of the qualities (?) of the work, one of the women remarked, in a typically nasal suburban-Chicago voice, "Well I don't like it!"

He shot back: "Vell, you are WRONG!"

— Sara Frooman, Raleigh, North Carolina

Some of the funniest memories of my life are of those goofy academic lectures Severn Darden used to do at Second City. One of them was A Short Talk on the Universe. *It began, in a wonderfully manic German accent, "Now vy, you may ask, should ve talk about zuh universe? It's very simple: because zere isn't anysing else!"*

Intimidated self-doubt is the club by which even perceptive and intelligent people in the twentieth century have been reduced to the acquiescent acceptance of fraudulent crap in all the arts.

The game has been well and skillfully played by those who want a career and fame in jazz but have nothing, essentially, to offer. We'll get to them in due course.

That one line by your pianist friend in Louisville, *Twelve-Tone Tunes We All Love to Sing*, says it all.

— Creed Taylor, New York City ☎

I read *The Times and Henry Pleasants* avidly and carefully. *The Agony of Modern Music* was my favorite book back in those early New York days. Never did read Constant Lambert's book, though I used to see it on library shelves. Pleasants stirred me so with his arguments that I would often, even in recent years, grab the book just to read certain chapters and get fired up again. You lay it out splendidly, show correlating ideas about modern art, and then top it off by demonstrating how Pleasants himself was taken in by the jazz mongers, just as we were bilked by the Serious Music hucksters. It was depressing and infuriating to learn how the *New York Times* dealt with his obit. Made him look like a Moe Berg type.

Thanks for telling me about Schoenberg and the prevailing attitudes about him and that kind of music. It validates my instincts. The notion that music "progresses" has always bothered me. But what a revelation to learn that the same thing has been going on in the art business, and there is a connection between the emptiness of modern music and the emptiness of modern art. It never occurred to me. I just figured I was missing something.

— Dave Frishberg , Portland, Oregon

Vol. 19, Nos 7, 8, 9. Absolutely brilliant!

— Robert Farnon, Guernsey CI

I've just read your informative discussion of Henry Pleasants, a dear friend for many years.

I am sending some photographs which relate to his wonderful visit to Denton, Texas, in 1972, when we had our twenty-fifth celebration of the survival of jazz in a university that was dedicated to "Serious" music.

Henry was a delight, and seemed to enjoy being with some old friends here. I asked him to speak at one of the luncheons, and he gave a fine talk. Some time later I had the pleasure of being a guest, at his invitation, at his London residence near Buckingham Palace. I am sure you were probably there also. His wife was also a delight and played some recordings of her [harpsichord] performances at Henry's urging. We were thrilled.

— Leon Breeden, Denton, Texas

Leon for many years directed the lab band program at North Texas State University (now the University of North Texas) and was recently awarded his doctorate.

The Times and Henry Pleasants

Part Four

Barbarism is the absence of standards to which appeal can be made.

José Ortega y Gassett, 1931

"The white musician," Henry Pleasants writes in the peroration of his chapter titled *Pop and Rock*, "attracted by the vitality and the creative imagination of the American Negro's music, has, in the past, had little of his own to offer. But now, emancipated from the no longer fruitful musical procedures of the older European idiom, he is discovering a hitherto frustrated creativity. The new younger generation, both black and white, is making its own music on its own terms — not just on the musician's terms, but on terms valid for the entire generation."

This is almost certainly one of the comments that caused me to urge him not to publish the book. Aside from being involuted and unclear, that which is clear in it is sadly naive.

Having fought white racism all my life, it makes me uncomfortable to find myself in the position of defending the white musician. In the days of my early involvement in jazz, nobody in the profession thought in terms of color at all. But Henry learned his jazz history from writers such as Ralph J. Gleason, who, being of the political left and ignorant of musical history, used jazz as a whipping stick for the white world. We have already noted that Bix Beiderbecke and Frank Trumbauer exerted a considerable influence in jazz. Jack Teagarden pioneered the high-speed trumpet-like facility on trombone that would later be explored by such brilliant musicians as J.J. Johnson and Curtis Fuller. Tommy Dorsey permanently altered the tessitura of trombone, even for symphony players. Gerry Mulligan developed a solo style on the baritone saxophone that has been widely emulated. In order to lower Mulligan to a second tier of importance, critics often cite Harry Carney as a forerunner. But Carney was mostly a section man, and Mulligan transmuted this clumsy instrument into a deft and exemplary solo voice. Scott LaFaro by 1961 was the model for countless bass players. And we can specify the date because he died that year in an automobile crash. He was twenty-five, and maybe the most important influence on jazz bass after Jimmy Blanton and Ray Brown. Henry should have known about him: the book came out ten years after LaFaro's death. And then there is Bill Evans, one of the most influential musicians in jazz history. Herbie Hancock has attested to Bill's influence on him.

Jack de Johnette, who is not only a formidable drummer but also an outstanding pianist, said that the whole Bill Evans trio — Evans, LaFaro, and drummer Paul Motian — changed the way rhythm sections played through the use of unstated time. "I remember the effect it had on rhythm sections in Chicago," Jack said, "because I was at the time a pianist, playing with a bassist who also played cello. We would sit up nights late, listening to the trio records. I noticed the rhythm sections in Chicago started playing that way. So I saw that influence start happening, where the time was broken up."

Henry's last paragraph in his chapter *Pop and Rock* reads:

"Given this new circumstance, and the wealth of talent already visible in the white contribution, it seems not impossible that the future may see less dilution [of the black influence] and something more like an even exchange, embracing the young Serious composer and musician, too, as reflected in the mature records of the Beatles."

The "mature records" of the Beatles are to a large extent the handiwork of George Martin. Surely no one thinks that John Lennon and Paul McCartney came up with a string quartet in a record, or a symphony orchestra for the ending of another of their tracks. During Martin's tenure with them, the quality of their songs rose, and after they decided they could produce themselves, it plummeted. They never again came up with a melody as good as *Norwegian Wood* or *The Fool on the Hill.*

Henry Mancini told me, "I was asked to make an appearance on a television special [the Beatles] were shooting in Manchester, to play one of their tunes on the piano. That was all I had to do. I was curious about them, and I went. As I was playing the song *If I Fell* during rehearsal, I became interested in a little counter melody it had — a kind of thumb line, if you want to call it that. It was very nice. I mentioned it to John Lennon and asked, 'Did you come upon that as you were writing, or work it in later? How did that come in?'

"He said in his Liverpool accent, 'I don't know, Hank. We leave those things to George.' Of course, he meant George Martin, their producer and a schooled musician. I guess Paul McCartney and John would play their songs for George, and he would advise them during the polishing process."

Hank added that they were "by no means the only rock group to receive this kind of assistance."

Both in Britain and America, *real* musicians were brought in to prop up the three-chord wonders and lift the level of their albums through a process quaintly called "sweetening" but often going much beyond that. Patrick Williams worked on some of the Simon and Garfunkel material. Producer and publisher Milt Okun told me how long and hard he had to work to get a basic track out of John Denver. Claus Ogerman worked on so many rock and pop albums that he grew disgusted, retired from the American music business, and went home to Germany to write classical music. "I got tired of writing string roofs for rock groups," he said.

These musicians — arrangers and composers — were in a position somewhat analogous to the superb Hollywood studio singers like Marni Nixon and Anita Ellis who dubbed voices in films to be lip-synched by stars like Rita Hayworth who couldn't sing. So flagrant was the ignorance in this world of pop and rock that Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young were able to boast that they could actually go on a stage and perform one of their albums.

The most curious thing about the Pleasants chapter on pop and rock is that he doesn't even mention a magnificent body of popular music, indeed some of the best of the whole twentieth century, that was in its fullest vigor at that time: that of Brazil. He does not mention Antonio Carlos Jobim, Carlos Lyra, Roberto Menescal, Oscar Castro-Neves, and their mentors, Dorival Caymmi and Ari Barrosa (who wrote what we call *Brazil*, though the original Portuguese title means *Watercolors of Brazil*). The Jobim songs with lyrics by Newton Mendonça or the poet-diplomat Vinicius de Moraes are masterpieces. And if Henry was trying to limit himself to songs popular in the English-speaking world, the Brazilian songs burst on the United States, England, France, and indeed all the world. The Brazilians solved the problem of forward motion in ballads. Whereas in the classic American ballads, harmonic progression had been the chief propellant, Brazil's eighth-note samba drum pattern permitted the composer or singer to sit on one chord for several bars, if he so chose, or use subtle and sophisticated harmony. Jobim did all these things, writing exquisitely sinuous melodies with subtle harmonies and powerful rhythmic motion. As for guitar playing, nothing in all rock or pop music of North America or England compared with that of, among others, the Brazilians Oscar Castro-Neves, the late Baden Powell and Bola Sete.

At the same time, some marvelous melodies were coming to us from France and the score paper of Michel Legrand, often with striking literate lyrics by Alan and Marilyn Bergman. A lot of these songs were written for movies, which brings us to the penultimate chapter of *Serious Music — and All that Jazz*, a chapter on movie music, which Henry titled *The Lyric Theater*. In the Acknowledgments at the start of the book, he writes, "I am particularly indebted to Gene Lees, upon whose articles on music in the motion pictures in *HiFi/Stereo Review* and *High Fidelity* I have drawn for my chapter on The Lyric Theater."

And the new lyric theater, as he sees it, is film, with its use of underscore and sometimes song as an integral part of the drama. Henry traces opera from its roots in Hellenic drama through its evolution into song form into the music drama of Wagner, where the emotional and narrative content was carried largely by the orchestra. He discusses the decline of opera, saying that the tradition peters out with *Wozzeck* and *Turandot*. The new Lyric Theater, in his view — and it is essentially sound — is in the movies.

But this being so, he plunges into egregious error, saying (the book's date is 1971), "The composer, today, who writes for films — or for television serials and commercials — has an additional handicap in a fifty-year-old tradition of inferior music. The studios where their music is produced have been slow to discover that good and original music pays; and the conspicuous odor of hack-work that society as a whole assumes to be inherent in the craft of film scoring has certainly been notable in most of its previous history."

What?

This dismissal includes the glorious scores of Hugo Friedhofer, including *The Best Years of Our Lives, Boy on a Dolphin, One-Eyed Jacks, The Young Lions, Seven Cities of Gold*, and many more, all the way back to *Marco Polo* in 1938, a score so remarkable that we will have occasion to mention it later.

And then there are the scores of Alfred Newman, including *The Razor's Edge*, *All About Eve*, and many more, the pinnacle among them being perhaps *Captain from Castile*, which is truly magnificent music. More composers and scores can be cited. He doesn't mention Victor Young, Bronislau Kaper, or Lynn Murray, and gives only glancing mention to Erich Wolfgang Korngold.

Mahler declared Korngold a genius when he was only ten years old. Korngold, a German-speaking Czech, born in 1897, was a major composer of Serious Music in Europe, renowned for his symphonies, sonatas, string quartets, his Violin Concerto in D, and his *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*. He emigrated to the United States and sought entree into the film industry, which he achieved quickly and easily. My beloved friend Hugo Friedhofer was assigned to him as orchestrator. One of the reasons was that Hugo spoke German and Korngold at that time spoke almost no English. Hugo was assigned to Max Steiner for the same reason. Korngold wouldn't let anyone but Hugo touch his scores. This was before Hugo himself became established as a composer. In 1936, Korngold won an Academy Award for his score to *Anthony Adverse*. His scores include *The Prince and the Pauper, The Adventures of Robin Hood* (for which he collected another Academy Award in 1938), *Juarez, King's Row, Of Human Bondage*, and more. Hugo said, "I revered him as a composer, and I adored him as a man."

Korngold, however, had two strikes against him: his music was accessibly tonal when this had grown unfashionable virtually to the point of being *verboten*, and in America he wrote for the movies, which, in the minds of the Serious Music establishment, made him a hack, a sell-out. Only now, with the gradual loosening of the dictatorship in music, is his reputation being resurrected. I recently heard a sonata for violin and piano of his that blew me away.

The reason I dwell for a moment on Korngold is that, well

before Henry Pleasants saw film as the new lyric theater, Korngold perceived this — as far back as the 1930s, when Hugo worked with him. Hugo told me Korngold called movies, especially such films as *Robin Hood*, "operas without arias."

I had long been interested in film scoring. I think this predates my work in Louisville, but it certainly was accelerated when at the *Louisville Times* I was given the additional duties of drama and film critic. I did not resent the load: in effect, it sent me to a kind of school, studying drama and film and all the arts at the same time. I became very attracted to the best film scores precisely at the time I was yawning over some of the Louisville Orchestra commissions. Coincidentally, the movie and record industries were discovering that there was a public taste for such music, and had begun issuing these scores on LPs. I was particularly taken by the 1957 film *Boy on a Dolphin*, partly for its spectacular images of the Greek isles (sadly, the print now is hopelessly faded) and partly for the striking score by Hugo Friedhofer.

In this score, Hugo adapted a Greek song as his main theme. The style of the whole score is heavily Greek, and it wonderfully evokes the atmosphere of the story's locations. In another of his scores, *Vera Cruz*, Hugo comparably evoked moods of Mexico. In *Marco Polo* (written when he was about thirty-five), he executes a tour de force of regionalism. In a montage sequence of a few minutes, showing Marco Polo's passage through various lands on his way to China, he wrote in the musical styles of these countries. But what of the "real" Hugo Friedhofer? Had he an identity of his own? Most assuredly. I can spot one of his scores within a few bars, no matter the regional style.

There is nothing more inappropriate in Hugo (or any other film composer) writing in a regional style than there is in Bizet's writing in a Spanish style in *Carmen*, Tchaikovsky's writing in an Italian style in *Capriccio Italiano*, or for that matter Ravel's writing in an American style obviously inspired by George Gershwin in the *Piano Concerto* and a Spanish style in *Rapsodie Espanole*, and Rimsky-Korsakov in a quasi-Arabic style in *Sheherazade.*

I have never understood the use of the term *eclectic* as one of opprobrium, and as the years have gone by, my objection to this objection has grown stronger. If a composer wants to draw on elements of other styles, other cultures, other idioms, I see nothing wrong with this. Samba rhythms and styles have been completely assimilated into jazz. The composer or improviser is or should be limited only by the scope of his musical vocabulary. Attempts to develop a "third stream" comprising elements of European classical music and jazz were always impaired by the cost of orchestral performance. And that is why the most successful exploration of this terrain has occurred in film scoring: the studio or producer ultimately was paying for the music. Henry writes: "In the music that one hears today —" remember, this was 1971 "— in the motion pictures, television serials and even in radio and television commercials may be discerned the first promising evidence of an ultimate conjunction of the American and what still remains of the old European strain in Western music."

Henry has high praise, and justly so, for the music of Henry Mancini for using elements of jazz for non-criminal pursuits, such as falling in love, in movies. Mancini made the break-through, and other film composers will tell you so. Henry Pleasants thought there might be "a golden age of American songwriting, centered this time in Hollywood rather than in New York." But it had long had a center in Hollywood, where virtually all the major songwriters — Kern, Porter, Gershwin, Berlin, and particularly Harry Warren — worked at least part of the time.

But Henry did not see, or at least assess, the threat to film music posed by the conglomerate takeover of everything. Mel Brooks, in his *Silent Movie*, called the film studio of the story Engulf and Devour.

First of all, the use of a song or songs from a film — the sappy *Lara's Theme* from *Dr. Zhivago*, for example — became so important that producers and studios began pressing for songs that incorporated the picture's title, no matter how unsuitable to a lyric it might be. Bizarre lyrics were written for improbable titles, such as *Born Free* (1966, music by John Barry, lyric by Don Black), and a plodding western called *Shalako* (1968), with Sean Connery. It has a superb and instantly recognizable score by Robert Farnon and a theme that sinks under the weight of a numbingly dumb lyric, titled of course, *Shalako*. *Born Free* was a successful song; *Shalako* attained the obscurity it richly deserved. .

Hugo Friedhofer drily suggested that his score for *Broken Arrow* should have been given a title song lyric. He offered:

You led me from
the straight and narrow,
but you broke my heart
when you broke my arrow.

And he suggested that *Towering Inferno* (for which he did not write the score) could have supported a title song, and suggested a lyric for it:

I met my love
in a Towering Inferno.
My heart was on fire,
and so was my suit.

Hugo may have been jesting, but some of the lyrics written for "title songs" came close to being just that silly. Lyrics were written on the titles of James Bond movies, including

You Only Live Twice, From Russia with Love, and *Goldfinger,* the ultimate temptation to a lyricist's imagination. Fortunately, no one demanded a title song for *Jaws*.

Henry Pleasants wrote:

> The evolutionary cycle of opera as a form of lyric theater . . . has been complete for some time. But we have in the motion picture not only the medium for the introduction of a new cycle, but also a medium in which the technical problems that have previously inhibited the achievement and maintenance of a balance between the lyrical and the prosaic are readily soluble. The motion picture is less dependent than the legitimate theater on continuous conversation, and the propriety of music as a sustaining element, filling silence and the accompanying action and movement, is self-evident.
>
> Music can be introduced and withdrawn so inconspicuously that the listener is hardly aware of its arrival, its departure or its effects. Intervals in the action and the text can be filled with music in a way that contributes to the continuity of each. Music can be used descriptively, dramatically and atmospherically. It can heighten tension, build suspense and broaden humor. It can establish and elaborate mood. It can be used for all these things, and it is being so used, more or less, in every motion picture made nowadays anywhere in the world.

In view of Henry's enthusiasm for film as a new form of lyric theater, it is all the more strange that he does not mention Korngold's conception of film as "opera without arias." But there is an even stranger omission in this chapter:

Nothing makes the case for Henry's general view of music in the twentieth century better than movie music.

The new generation of movie composers, as he notes, was trained in both European classical and American vernacular music, and some of them mixed them with grace and facility, as witness Henry Mancini's score for *Arabesque*. For the most part, "avant-garde" classical techniques were tested repeatedly and found effective in creating tension, *but not release from it.* An example is Lalo Schifrin's score for *Hell in the Pacific*, in which an American soldier (Lee Marvin) and a Japanese (Toshiro Mifune) are stranded on an island during World War II. They are trying to kill each other. Gradually a reconciliation, even friendship, ensues. During the early part of the film, Schifrin (who studied with Koechlin and Messaien at the Paris Conservatory) uses harsh "contemporary" devices to create fear and suspense. As the friendship emerges, the music becomes more consonant, melodic, and lyrical. I asked him about this. His simple answer was, "But of course!"

Henry could have used that: movie composers, their orchestras already funded for them, rapidly learned that these techniques and devices were useful *to create fear and tension.* And not much else. And a lot of them had fun with these effects in the music for horror films.

Henry quotes Quincy Jones. Actually, I think he is quoting something Quincy said to me in an interview I did for the *New York Times*. In any case, Quincy said:

"Only in film, the good ones, anyway, do you have a chance to express as much as you know musically. The level of music here is very high, and it's getting better all the time. Everybody is writing the best he can. Where else can you write good music for a living these days? I'm writing closer to what I want than I ever have in my life. As a matter of fact, I believe that the best music being written in this country today is coming out of films."

Henry adds: "So do I. And not only in America."

That era when Mancini, Lalo Schifrin, Patrick Williams, Johnny Mandel, Benny Golson, J.J. Johnson, and others were creating marvelous and very American film scores would turn out to be brief, in part because scores and indeed all American non-classical music would be cynically exploited and manipulated for profit, by no one more resolutely than Quincy Jones.

Quincy did not write at his own highest level. He became involved with so many assistants, orchestrators, and ghosts — most significantly, Billy Byers — that one lost in the fog all vision of what he might have achieved. And he became far more interested in money than music, being the chief architect of the career of Michael Jackson.

Henry writes, "Music is already so integral an element in motion pictures, and so attractive to the motion-picture public, that most of the major studios have their own music-publishing and recording subsidiaries, and there have been instances where the music for a film has been more profitable than the film itself."

Once again, he is naive. The movie companies *always* had music-publishing subsidiaries, a means to take half the money from the scores from the film composers. Though the composers fought against it, their efforts in the end were futile. By "publishing" scores they commissioned, the studios obtained half the royalties generated by the music through recordings made from it ("mechanical royalties"), subsequent presentation of the films on television ("air play" royalties), and, in countries other than the United States, presentation in theaters. Only in the United States do composers receive nothing for the use of their music in theater presentation of the films. Henry knew nothing of these business considerations and their ramifications. The movement toward conglomeration had already begun. CBS owned Columbia Records, and Columbia owned the April-Blackwood publishing companies — April a BMI affiliate, Blackwood an ASCAP affiliate. RCA Victor, part of the NBC complex of companies, owned the Sunbury-

Dunbar publishing companies. The danger of vertical monopoly was obvious; the government did nothing about it, leading Ken Glancy, when he was president of RCA Records, to ask, "What ever happened to the anti-trust laws?"

But my blood ran cold when Warner Bros., already a complex of movie and record companies, bought the Chappell publishing house, legacy of the visionary publisher Max Dreyfus and repository of the scores of Cole Porter, George Gershwin, and many (maybe even most) of the creators of the great classic American songs. We will have occasion later to consider how far this movement to Engulf and Devour, in Mel Brooks' phrases, would go and is still going.

And the great new lyric theater on film that Henry so optimistically anticipated would never come to pass. In the thirty years (almost) since *Serious Music — and All That Jazz* was published, an entire generation of producers and directors came into power in the movie industry. The fifteen-year-old Elvis Presley fans of 1955 were by the end of the century sixty years old, and had raised a generation of children and another of grandchildren almost completely devoid of American cultural history, and more to the point, of the elusive something called taste. The educational medium of network radio was gone, replaced by Top Forty radio stations. The "Woodstock generation" came into control of the movie industry. The children and even the grandchildren of Elvis Presley fans now dominated American entertainment industries.

It is hard to say when the use of records as "sound track" came into use. In a sense, it goes back a long way: the use of Glenn Miller records, for example, to evoke a mood of World War II. But with the Woodstock generation increasingly in control of not only movies but of the entire entertainment industry, the use of rock records — actual records, leased from the record labels — as underscore became more and more common. Only a few of the master film composers, notably Mancini, Johnny Mandel, and Jerry Goldsmith, were finding work. (Excepting one documentary, Hugo Friedhofer didn't write a film score in the last ten years of his life.) A few younger composers of ability, such as James Newton Howard, Rachel Portman, and Basil Polidouris, were able to penetrate the industry, but others were left out and in any case the large-orchestra scores grew scarcer, and some of the newer composers, among them Jan Hammer, who generated the intrusiive electronic music for the TV series *Miami Vice*, and Danny Elfman, a former rock musician, founder of the group Oinga Boinga, who wrote the ghastly music for the *Batman* movies, were a whole new breed.

Many of the "scores" came from what Henry Mancini used to call "the hummers", those who could whistle or hum a tune, get somebody to write it down, perhaps someone else to develop and orchestrate it, and call themselves composers.

Many "scores" were performed not by orchestras but by synthesizers. A story circulated in Los Angeles about a musician who is called on a date using a large orchestra. Afterwards a friend asks how it was. He says, "It was great, man. We must have put two synthesizer players out of work." I have never been able to determine whether the story is apocryphal, but it is pointed. Synthesizer players were being hired to "compose" film scores, and they were uniformly dreadful, degenerate descendants of the electric organ music heard in the old daytime radio dramas.

If Henry Pleasants was naive in noting that the movie companies had publishing divisions, so in a way were we all. Although I was lamenting this trend to monopoly as far back as my days with *High Fidelity* in the 1960s, neither I nor anyone else had any idea how far this would go. In its January 2000 issue, *Brill's Content* carried a fold-out diagram, covering four pages, of the monstrous ownership of the various media conglomerates. It would be impossible to list it all here, but some samplings are instructive.

Time Warner, far the biggest of them, owns:

TBS Superstation, Turner Network Television (TNT), the Cartoon Network, the Atlanta Braves, the Atlanta Hawks, the Atlanta Thrashers, World Championship Wrestling, New Line Cinema, CNN, CNN/fn, CNN/Sports Illustrated, *Time, Fortune, People, Teen People, Money, In Style, Wallpaper, Sunset, Parenting, Southern Living, Sports Illustrated, Sports Illustrated for Kids, Progressive Farmer* (would you believe?), the Book-of-the-Month Club, Little Brown and Company, the WB television network, Warner Bros Studio Stores, Warner Music Group (which includes the record labels and a huge music-publishing operation), and Central Florida News 13 in Orlando, as well as Columbia House direct-mail record sales. Its Time Warner Entertainment division owns HBO, Warner Bros. Pictures, Warner Bros. Television (which produces *ER* and *Friends*, among other things), *MAD Magazine*, and Looney Tunes. It also owns Time Warner Cable, which has more than thirteen million customers.

The assault on independent radio had been going on for some time when Ronald Reagan, the ever-friend of the entertainment conglomerates, totally deregulated it. At one time, no one company could own more than ten AM and ten FM stations in the country, and no two in the same market. Ronnie took care of that, and now Viacom/CBS owns 163 AM and FM Infinity Broadcasting Radio Stations, sixteen local CBS television stations, the CBS radio network, the CBS television network, CBS.Marketwatch.com, the Nashville Network, Country Music Television, Simon and Schuster consumer books, Scribner, Blockbuster, Paramount Pictures, Paramount Television, Spelling Television, MTV music television, MTV films, Nickelodeon, Nickelodeon Movies, the Paramount Stations Group (which owns nineteen local radio stations), United Press International, Showtime,

and TV Land.

Universal Seagrams owns A&M Records, Interscope Records, Island Def Jam Music Group, Motown Records, Universal Pictures, Universal Studios Hollywood, Wet 'n' Wild in Orlando, and Spencer Gifts, whatever that is.

Walt Disney owns ABC.com, Infoseek, Go Network, Family.com, Walt Disney World Resort, Disneyland Resort, the Disney Magic cruise ship, Walt Disney Studios, Miramax Films, the Disney Store, Hyperion books, *Discover* magazine, the ABC television network, ten local ABC television stations, forty-four ABC radio stations, the ABC radio network, ABC Entertainment Television, the Disney Channel, the Toon Channel, *Los Angeles* magazine, the Anaheim Angels and the Anaheim Mighty Ducks.

NBC/General Electric owns the NBC Television Network, NBC studios, thirteen local TV stations, Paxson Communications, and CNBC US. With Dow Jones it owns CNBC Europe and, in partnership with Disney, the Biography Channel, the History Channel, and the A&E network.

The News Group, which you may never have heard of — it's Rupert Murdoch's octopus, the megaphone of his reactionary politics — owns the *New York Post*, the *Weekly Standard, HarperCollins* books, *William Morrow* books, Zondervan Publishing House (which publishes bibles), Avon Books, Regan Books, Fox Broadcasting Company, Fox Television, twenty-two owned-and-operated Fox Television Stations, the Fox Channel, FX Networks, the British Sky Broadcasting, and the Los Angeles Dodgers. In a linkage with Time Warner, it owns Music Choice Europe.

The/Newhouse/Advance Publications/Condé Nast publishing group owns *Details, Wired, Glamour, Allure, Vogue, W, Jane, Architectural Digest, GQ, Gourmet, Self, Bride's, Vanity Fair, House and Garden, The New Yorker, Parade*, and twenty-four local newspapers, among them the New Orleans *Times-Picayune.*

Sony owns Sony Electronics, Sony Music Entertainment, Sony/ATV Music Publishing, Columbia Pictures, and Columbia TriStar Television.

Even the old *New York Times* is a heavy player (it owns eight TV stations and the *Boston Globe*), as is the *Washington Post,* which owns thirty-six local newspapers, six local TV stations, and *Newsweek.* The two newspapers jointly own the *International Herald Tribune.*

Hearst owns thirty newspapers, *Colonial Homes, Cosmopolitan, Country Living, Esquire, Good Housekeeping, Harper's Bazaar, House Beautiful, Popular Mechanics, Redbook, Town and Country, Floor Covering Weekly,* twenty-two local TV stations, and King Features Syndicate.

And there are others, though none so large as these. Furthermore, that diagram was published in January; who knows what has been engulfed and devoured by now? Will Time Warner merge with AOL?

On this sinister process, David Halberstam commented:

"The object of these mergers is never to improve the service. The person [conglomerates are] interested in is not the person who buys the newspaper, not the person who gets the broadcast in his home. The person they're interested in is the person who buys the stock . . . . "

And, if I may interject, notice how much stock-market reporting there is now on TV, and even more significantly, how much stock-broker advertising. Halberstam continued:

"[Conglomeration means] there is less and less real commitment to the reader of news. Disney is not a company that's interested in excellence in journalism. They just squeeze, squeeze, squeeze. It's been a disaster. The stock prices become the only part of the report that matters.

"*Synergy* is one of the great bullshit words of all time. The CNN-*Time* [collaboration] on Tailwind — that's the best example of what happens with synergy . . . When I was a young reporter in the Congo and Vietnam, the *New York Times* asked me to carry a camera. I found I couldn't see the story as a reporter. You can only serve one god . . . . You can only do one thing, and if you're lucky, you do it well. I don't think there's anybody at the head of one of these large corporations that cares very much about journalism."

Ralph Nader said:

"[Conglomerates usually] have a policy of what sells and what doesn't, and they don't veer from that . . . .

"Sex, violence, scandal, celebrity — that's the criteria. . . . Just look at the qualit[ies] of the CEOs. [Viacom CEO] Sumner Redstone: what's he interested in? Raising stock and making money. [CBS CEO] Mel Karzamin — the classic monetized mind. He's profited from Howard Stern. This is the replacement for [CBS founder] Bill Paley! Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw — they know their news is mostly a crock of dung.

"Ninety percent of all broadcasting is devoted to entertainment and advertising . . . . Even on the twenty-four-hour news channel[s], there's a huge amount of lifestyle, fluff, weather, sports, and stocks. With all these channels on cable, do they have a citizen-action channel? Do they have a labor channel? Of course not. Because [the corporate chieftains] control it so completely. {I try telling people:] You own the airwaves. Do you realize that? Legally, [we] own it and radio and TV are tenants. They don't pay rent and [yet] they dictate what goes on the air.

Peter Bart, the editor of *Variety*, said:

"When I was an executive at Paramount, in 1971, if an actor asked for an exorbitant amount of money, I could say, 'We can't afford you.' [When studios were independent entities], they were undercapitalized. It was the industry's dirty little secret until the Viacoms and Rupert Murdochs came and Hollywood became a corporate state. And that was what kept the economics of Hollywood in line.

"[Now] a movie studio is part of the huge corporate

cocoon, and therefore, theoretically, a studio should be willing to take bigger risks because one bad movie or even one bad summer in all likelihood won't erode the value of the [parent company's] shares. But the way it works out, the studios are if anything more risk averse. They are desperate to hedge their bets. It's the nature of bureaucratic self-protection. Every unit of a multinational corporation has to meet its numbers.

"That pressure is reflected in the kind of pictures that get made. The prototype is *Runaway Bride*. It has that sort of prechewed quality to it, the sort of pablum that studios chewed on for ten years, that's gone through endless re-writes, has been pretested by endless focus groups, and is successful — if insipid.

"The old-time studio bosses followed their hunches. Today, these green-light decisions are very much a matter of committees, focus groups, rule by consensus. Not exactly a recipe for art."

Remember when Ted Turner said he would never sell his CNN complex of companies to Time Warner? I said of his idealism at the time, "Wait till the price is right." How long do you think it will be before one of the conglomerates buys up *Variety* and debars Peter Bart from voicing dissent?

Do you think you will see criticism of their holding corporations in any of the magazines cited above, or in books published by their subsidiaries?

These mega-corporations are *destroying our art.*

And how much esthetic leadership can we expect from the corporate heads? They are rock-and-roll reared, deeply ignorant of cultural (and especially musical) history. The late Lee Atwater, chairman of the Republican National Committee and George Bush's attack dog (he designed the scurrilous Willie Horton ad campaign against George Dukakis) played guitar in a rock group. William Bennett, the former "drug czar" and self-appointed morals czar, putative intellectual of the Republican party (in which case God help them, and us), is a rock-and-roll fan. Multi-billionaire Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft, who has his own rock band, put $240,000,000 into a rock museum in Seattle. Think what that money could have done for real musical education, or any kind of education; or medicine.

Most of us who grew up on Superman and Batman outgrew them. These people have not outgrown rock, which composer David Raksin once described as "music at the level of finger painting." Listen to the new television commercials.

To be continued

AT NTSU, 1972

From left to right, Rich Matteson, Oliver Nelson, Mundell Lowe, Clark Terry, Patrick Williams, Leonard Feather, Henry Pleasants, Marvin Stamm, Leon Breeden. (Photo courtesy of Leon Breeden.)