Gene Lees

Jazzletter

PO Box 240, Ojai CA 93024-0240

September 2000 *Vol. 19 No. 9*

The Times and Henry Pleasants

Part Three

The *Gotterdammerung* of the Nazis faded to black in a bunker in Berlin, but its legacy is still with us. Wagner did more for the Nazi movement than write its underscore. He was the proto-Nazi, an anti-Semite whose operas glorified Teutonic gods and heroes whose specters, if we are to believe Jung, slumbered in the subconscious of Germans. In 1850-51 he wrote his virulent book *Jewishness in Music*, calling for the extirpation of all Jewish influences from German music. He even attacked Meyerbeer, who was Jewish and who had championed his cause in Paris. He left part of his fortune to the cause of anti-Semitism, and there is a direct line from Wagner to the entrenchment of anti-Semitism in the Third Reich. The irony is that, excepting in Spain under the Muslims, the Jews had rarely known a more hospitable land than Germany in the nineteenth century. One by one proscriptionist laws were rescinded, and in consequence assimilationist sentiment grew. The Dreyfus affair in Paris convinced the Hungarian journalist Theodor Herzl that the Jews would never be fully accepted in any land and must seek a homeland of their own. Hitler began stripping away from the Jews the very rights they had gained in Germany, and proscribed Jewish art of all kinds. The United States was the primary beneficiary of the flight of Jewish intellectuals and artists in the 1930s. Hitler gave the U.S., among others, André Previn and Kurt Weill. When André was conducting in Germany a few years ago, he found that his hosts had left as a gift in his hotel room a book of photos of famous German musicians. His own was among them. He laughed and muttered, "How quickly they forget."

Particularly anathema to the Nazis was jazz, which they proscribed as decadent Negroid-Jewish music.

It was in this shattered Germany that Henry, in Bonn, the new capitol of the western half of partitioned Germany, pursued his CIA craft, probably recruiting spies, as opposed to being one; I speculate that the story he suggested I develop came out of personal experience. He felt too strongly about it, and mentioned it on more than that one occasion.

One of the things that jazz did, as Henry emphasizes, was to restore the primacy of the performer, as opposed to the composer, as creative artist — and more particularly, the improvising performer. During the nineteenth century, the composer and then the conductor (earlier orchestras didn't even have conductors) took on the role of hero figures, and dominated music. The player was relegated to the role of obedient servant of the composer's presumed and the conductor's explicit wishes. One of the last areas of holdout was to be found in virtuoso soloists featured in concerti who were allowed passages of improvisation to show off their special skills. Glenn Gould said that the reason the continuo keyboard parts in Bach's orchestral music have become so trite is that they became entrenched in tradition by the musicians who played them over the years. Bach sketched them in figured bass somewhat like (but not exactly; John Mehegan tried without success to get jazz musicians to use figured bass) the chord changes of jazz. Bach intended to play those parts himself, and knew what he wanted, but they have been become fixed and no longer are improvised. Even the solo cadenzas in concerti are no longer improvised.

There were two other areas where the tradition of improvisation lingered late: among, ironically, the castrati, who were trained in it; and church organists, who still are. Fauré, for example, was organist at the Madeleine.

The ignorance of classical music in the early jazz critics caused a considerable amount of mischief, since they did not see how jazz was borrowing from it and more or less repeating its history. The early New Orleans music was polyphonic, multi-voiced. That changed in the 1920s; jazz became homophonic. The *Harvard Dictionary of Music* puts it this way:

Homophonic [from Gr. Homos, same, similar]. Designation for music in which one voice leads melodically, being supported by an accompaniment in chordal or in somewhat more elaborate style. Thus practically all music of the nineteenth century is homophonic. The term is the opposite of polyphonic, i.e. music in which all parts contribute more or less equally to the musical fabric.

Louis Armstrong (and with him Earl Hines) established in jazz the aesthetic of the heroic virtuoso solo with homophonic accompaniment. And some of the devotees of Jelly Roll Morton hated Armstrong for it. In their view, jazz became decadent with him and his followers.

In other words, polyphonic music is a form in which the

music makes its "sense" in the simultaneous movement of separate melodic lines, although chords are implied and indeed established in the process. It is, as it were, horizontal music. Homophonic music makes its primary sense vertically, in chords, although good chord progressions establish horizontal lines through voice-leading, as one hears in the piano of Nat Cole or Bill Evans (or for that matter any first-rate jazz pianist).

But jazz was not harmonically very advanced in the 1930s. The sevenths, ninths, raised elevenths, thirteenths, and strong modulatory tendencies had still not come into it, except here and there in passing tones. Such things were commonplace in European music by the late nineteenth century.

And yet the jazz musicians were even then listening intently to current developments in European classical music. But as the so-called swing era came along, these practices did not at first penetrate into jazz, including the big bands. Given that the composers and arrangers were well aware of them, even of the music of Varèse, why weren't these more "advanced" harmonic devices used in jazz? Was it that the public just wasn't ready for them? "No," Mel Powell said, when I asked him that question. "This will surprise you. I think it was because the bandleaders were not ready for them." And he told me how Benny Goodman (who, later, hated bebop and aspired to be known for his Mozart playing) would butcher Eddie Sauter arrangements to "simplify" and "improve" them.

In point of fact, the harmonic practices of Jerome Kern in the 1930s were in advance of those common in the big bands of the period. Consider the modulations of the release of *The Song Is You*, and particularly that B7 chord at the end of it which, startlingly, takes you back into C. That one will lift the heart. And the copyright date on that tune is 1932. *You Stepped Out of a Dream* by Gus Kahn and Nacio Herb Brown (published in 1940) starts in C and goes immediately — third bar — into D-flat, and by the end of the front strain is in A-flat.

Jazz was still playing catchup to classical music, and even, for that matter, some of the best "popular" music; but that's why the musicians took to such tunes as *How High the Moon* and *Green Dolphin Street*, their modulating major-minor character.

The evolution of harmonic use is sometimes seen as an exploration over time of the implications of the overtone series. If you're a musician, you don't need an explanation of this; and if you're not, it won't make much sense.

The overtone series gives us what is sometimes called the natural scale.

The post-Schoenbergians, in essence, rejected the idea of the natural scale, said all tones were equal, and rejected the idea of the power of the tonic and the fifth, and of course of the return to the tonic in resolution. Bill Evans said to me once, in a short period when we shared an apartment and he would give me harmony lessons, "I think of all harmony as an expansion from and return to the tonic."

Henry Pleasants and Constant Lambert didn't think all tones are equal. They are not alone in this.

Composers assimilated into harmonic practice the extra tones included in the overtone series. This primarily related to the dominant seventh chord, to which classical musicians started adding ninths, flat ninths, raised elevenths, and thirteenths. Jazz musicians started doing it too, and one of the most startling practices, to my ears when I was in high school, having been conditioned by heroes of mine such as Edmund Hall, was the use of the major seventh on major chords, and then, even more radical, the major seventh with the ninth, not to mention suspended fourths, all of which now seem conventional and consonant. Perhaps my first encounter with such practices was in the writing of Frank Comstock for Les Brown. And soon sevenths were routinely used on minor chords.

The first bebop musicians, as Charlie Parker said in an interview, were not in revolution against anything. They just thought that this was the direction in which the music should go. By then, critics and some musicians had begun speaking of jazz as an art form, which it is, although one might argue that the worst thing that ever happened to it is was learning that it was. Much of it became self-conscious, even pretentious, like the beautiful girl enthralled by her mirror. As Henry put it in his next book, *Classical Music — and All That Jazz*, "Intellect is, unfortunately, inseparable from self-consciousness. When a music becomes self-conscious it has lost its innocence."

I loved it all, of course, having long been captivated by Debussy, Ravel, and Stravinsky. What I *did* find disconcerting, at first, was the rhythmic displacement of the bebop players, who started and stopped lines in places that had nothing to do with the traditional melodic balance of bar lines in two, four, and eight-bar units. Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker were liable to start a line seemingly anywhere, and stop phrases in unexpected places. Later I came to love it, for it contained what Whitney Balliett so aptly described as the essence of jazz, a coinage so widely quoted that I wonder if Whitney sometimes wishes he'd never said it. But it was perfect: he called it the "sound of surprise." With bebop surprise was piled on surprise. Not all of the older musicians could accommodate or adapt to it, Benny Goodman among them, and Cab Calloway called it Chinese music. Coleman Hawkins and Benny Carter could be seen as its harbingers. Dizzy played melodic lines with the rhythmic power and inventive intensity of drum solos. To hear that, in his and Parker's playing, was astounding. Forget the harmonic "revolution". It had all been done before. What had

not been done that they were doing now amounted to rhythmic revolution.

And it took jazz to a strange place. It was expanding the vocabulary of spontaneous invention.

Henry was at his best when he was discussing "Serious" music and the ways it went awry which, given his background, is not surprising. He was less reliable when he was discussing jazz. For example, he was ecstatic about two jazz pianists I didn't like, precisely because they had square, rather European time, and therefore didn't swing. And he accepted without question the idea of white jazz as a "dilution" of the black original from which it is derived.

He wrote: "Few of the fans, in the following decade, who proclaimed Benny Goodman 'the King of Swing' —" I don't remember anyone ever taking that sobriquet seriously, and it was doubtless the coinage of a press agent, not the fans "— had heard, or were aware of, the earlier big bands of Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Benny Moten, Erskine Hawkins, Jimmie Lunceford, Chick Webb or Count Basie, or knew that Goodman's principal arranger was Henderson and that Tommy Dorsey's was Sy Oliver, both Negroes."

The serious fans *were* aware of those bands. And Henry seems quite unaware that one of the first arrangers for the Henderson band was Bill Challis. Benny Carter said to me once, and he was emphatic on the point, "Bill Challis was my idol." Russ Morgan too wrote for the Henderson band. So did Will Hudson, who wrote for Cab Calloway as well. Thus white arrangers wrote for black bands before the great black arrangers, such as Oliver, Henderson, Benny Carter, the too-often overlooked Eddie Durham, and Ernie Wilkins wrote for white bands. Later, among the most important arrangers for the Basie band were Neal Hefti and Billy Byers. And there is all sorts of testimony to the influence of white players on black soloists, such as that (by his own statement) on Lester Young of Jimmy Dorsey, Bix Beiderbecke, and Frank Trumbauer, and of Bobby Hackett and Harry James on the young Miles Davis — again, by Miles' own statement.

Henry accepts other myths, too. He refers to a "revered jazz musician who was so down on his luck that he was reduced to playing with (corny bands). Bix Beiderbecke's playing with Whiteman is the classic example." Bix loved that band. He was not only not down on his luck, he was making very good money with Whiteman and proudly sending the records he made with the band home to his parents. And the Whiteman band at its best was a very good band indeed, the decades of disparagement by jazz critics to the contrary notwithstanding.

Re-reading Henry's books now, it is evident to me that his vision of jazz history was distorted by his own readings of history written, or derived from, the writings of jazz critics, such as Ralph J. Gleason and George Hoeffer, whose ignorance of classical music led to all sorts of mischief and mythology.

Norman Isaacs was deceived by the Serious Music establishment. Henry was, at least to some extent, deceived by the Jazz Establishment. And I would say this in defense of Isaacs: his conflict of interests, as the newspaper's managing editor and president of the Louisville Orchestra, was no worse than that of *New York Times* executives who serve on the board of Lincoln Center and have reduced the paper to functioning as its flack.

Henry first discovered jazz on hearing Sidney Bechet in 1934 at a dance sponsored by the American Newspaper Guild in New York; he was already twenty-four years old. He stayed close to the bandstand for four or five hours. He described the music in *Classical Music — and All That Jazz* as "inspired minstrelsy — joyous, despairing, hopeful, tender, exultant, forceful, compassionate . . . ." He encountered Bechet again in Switzerland in the early 1950s, and followed him to performances in various cities of Europe.

It seems to me that there is one critically important thing about jazz that Henry never fully grasped; if he did, he doesn't mention it.

Bill Evans used the terms "spontaneous music" and "contemplative music" to describe that which was improvised on an instrument and that which was composed on paper. They're good terms. Jazz is the former, classical music the latter. He was steeped in both. And he said that any music that was not in some way in touch with the process of improvisation was likely to be sterile. I said, "What about a composer sitting at a piece of paper with a pencil?"

"He may be improvising," Bill said. In other words, following the unanticipated impulse. Mozart's music is full of this, the completely unexpected note, placed there not in conformity to The Rules but by impulse. So is Billy May's. (Mozart never seems to have *re*written anything.)

Bill experimented with tone rows and had a taste for Webern. But I think he is right in that music made strictly according to some formula is likely to come out dead, and in strict serialism you can invert the row, play it retrograde, expand it, but the row must be kept inviolate. This strikes me as more restrictive than the chromaticism that had developed by the time of Wagner and Richard Strauss.

Though jazz may use the European harmonic-melodic system, and even its instrumentation, one thing sets it apart: it is the pulse, without which I find myself retreating to that hoary exclusion: it ain't jazz. By the phrasing and inflection, Henry would have defined Bill's three-piano performance of the love theme from *Spartacus* as jazz. I am not sure I would. I told Gerry Mulligan after the last performance by his quartet on the S.S. Norway months before he died that I was not sure this was jazz at all. It seemed to me to be some form

of late twentieth century improvised classical music. Gerry was pleased by that. I don't *care* whether something "is" jazz or not.

Henry knew of course that the pulse was an important element in jazz, but it seems to me that he did not understand or perhaps even perceive its hypnotic and ecstatic effect.

It is well known that repeated patterns, even visual patterns, affect the brain waves in ways we do not fully understand. For example, it is believed that long stretches of broken yellow line on a highway may put drivers to sleep — or into hypnosis? — causing accidents. In France, it is suspected that the evenly spaced poplars that line long straight country roads may have a comparable, and perhaps more powerful, effect. Those trees were planted in a time of the horse and wagon, when you passed them slowly. But drive down one of those roads at automobile speeds and the dark-light-dark-light flickering has a peculiarly disturbing strobe-like effect on the nervous system.

In actual clinical hypnosis, the steady repeat of a sound, or of a slow pendulum, gradually brings on a suspension of the critical intellectual faculty. The hypnotist has direct access to the subconscious, the soul, the psyche, whatever you want to call it. And since the judgmental, analytic faculty is suspended, any suggestion the hypnotist makes goes deep. That is why a person can be implanted with a post-hypnotic suggestion that will cause him or her to do eccentric things after the hypnosis is over.

There are all sorts of cultures in which a powerful pulse is used to induce an ecstatic, i.e. hypnotic, effect. Henry laments the movement of music away from dance (as does Ezra Pound). I long ago noticed the hypnotic effect of jazz. Duke Ellington used to do a mocking monologue about how to snap your fingers, nod your head, and so on, in order to appear hip. But Duke was wrong to mock it. It is part of the experience. Sitting in a nightclub, snapping your fingers, eyes closed, nodding your head from side to side, or better yet doing it with your head hanging forward, *is a form of dance.* You just happen to be doing it sitting down. It is a *participation* in the music. Throughout the world, including Africa, Haiti, Spain, in black and for that matter even white Evangelical churches in the United States, and among the American Indians, there is no separation between performer and audience: they are one, all participants in the music. Nothing swings more than a good gospel group. And that swing, with the hand-clapping, is inducing the ecstatic state that permits the direct uncritical acceptance of The Word.

When a rhythm section is really good, really tight, and finding the groove — or the pocket, if you prefer — it induces an ecstatic, or hypnotic state, which permits the direct and *unanalyzed* reception of the emotional content of the whole group, including what the soloists are saying. Nor need the rhythm section be completely specific. If *your own* rhythmic sense is strong enough, you can follow that pulse even when no one is actually playing it, as in the first blowing choruses in the Bill Evans recording (with Scott LaFaro and Paul Motian) of *Israel.*

One of the appeals of marijuana in the jazz world is that it is a hypnotic, and produces that suspension of the critical faculty that permits the direct almost-tactile experience of the music. That is also what makes it dangerous in the hands of children. Once a certain jazz musician had been smoking some serious pot. He was watching television. When I entered the room, I asked if he found the show interesting. He said, "Man, on this shit, the *wall* gets interesting." That of course is why the rock world so encouraged marijuana use among the fans: it suspended the critical faculty and made some really bad music seem profound.

But you don't need marijuana to enter the ecstatic state that permits the direct experience of music. The pulse of jazz will do it. You get beyond the think-think-think way of listening, beyond the what-am-I-experiencing-what-is-the-meaning-of-this? way of listening.

That is one of the most important distinctions between classical music and jazz, even among those who love both. And those who love both include just about every jazz musician I ever knew.

You experience jazz in a different way than you do classical music.

When Henry retired from the CIA and came to New York and I met him, one of the first things I did was to take him to Jim and Andy's bar on 48th Street, just west of Sixth Avenue, and introduce him to members of that incredible circle of major jazz musicians whose gathering place it was. He must have felt like the kid in the candy store. In *Classical Music — and All That Jazz* he acknowledges debts to John Dankworth, Jack Elliott, Hugo Friedhofer (to whom I almost certainly introduced him), Gerry Mulligan, Robert Share, and Phil Woods, among others. He says, "I am particularly indebted to Gene Lees," which saddens me, for it was over this book that Henry and I had a serious falling out.

Such was Henry's love of American vernacular music — I think H. Wiley Hitchcock coined that phrase — that he got carried away, in my opinion. He may have known music, but he didn't know the music *business*, and I did. He was completely seduced by rock music, attracted by what he perceived to be its vitality. I saw it as a specious vitality, substituting volume for energy, screams for true emotion. In *Classical Music — and All That Jazz*, he painted himself into a corner, and before its publication, I expressed this opinion, saying that this time he was extending himself too far, and was likely to get his head handed to him. .

After his praise of the inventive virtuosity of the great jazz musicians in his previous books, he now seemed to turn not

only on them but on himself:

Jazz, he wrote, "has emulated the self-destructive procedures of contemporary Serious music," about which he was of course quite right. But then he plunges impetuously on:

> Modern jazz, insofar as it is written out at all, may not be so difficult to read as a score by Berio or Stockhausen. But what is written out will normally be the smallest part of the assignment. In order to be made effective, its performance will require an improvisatory sophistication far beyond even the exceptionally gifted amateur. In the early days of jazz, in the 1920s and 1930s, every school and college youngster with talent enough to achieve rudimentary facility on piano, drums, trumpet, clarinet or saxophone, could learn to play the new tunes tolerably in a jazz style. In Europe and the British Isles, particularly, this kind of amateur participation survived well into the 1950s and 1960s in what came to be known as traditional jazz.

This paragraph baffles me, and, presumably, did when I first read it. Since when is the measure of music that it can be played by amateurs?

> But this was not satisfactory to the young Americans of the post-World War II generation, to whom traditional jazz already seemed old-fashioned and out-of-date. Nor was this new generation satisfied with what was provided by the professional songwriters and sung by professional singers, good as many of the singers were. The youngsters wanted a music closer to the facts of life; and they found it, initially, in folk music, an area already explored not only in Nashville and in the field of the country blues, but also by such minstrel-researchers as John Jacob Niles, Richard Dyer Bennett, Burl Ives and Alan Lomax. This music was not only more mature in its textural substance; it was also easier to play and easier to sing. It was also easy to compose. A guitar, a few rudimentary chords, a simple tune and a bit of literary invention addressed to a topical theme, and our young man or woman was making his own music.
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> It may well have been the healthiest thing that had happened in music in several hundred years. Young musical America — its requirements and its tastes ignored by the professionals of both the Serious and the jazz communities — simply took music into its own hands. And it produced, in due course, its own professionals — Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Simon and Garfunkel and many others.

That's a rock in the road too big to drive around. Henry had repudiated, whether aware of it or not, everything he had previously stood for. Three hundred years, from the time he published the book, takes us back to the middle 1600s, the youth of Henry Purcell, almost to Monteverdi, and embraces the entire body of western music from that point on, the Bach family, Mozart, Beethoven, Berlioz, Chopin, Brahms, Ravel, Gershwin, Harold Arlen, Johnny Mercer, Cole Porter, Dietz and Schwartz, Charles Trenet, Antonio Carlos Jobim and the entire astounding body of Brazilian "popular" music. It is the encomium of incompetence, ignorance enshrined. After years of championing the virtuosic inventivity and extraordinary technical skills of Dizzy Gillespie and others, he reverses himself and extolls the new pops because it is "easier to play."

Henry is admiring of the multiplicity of sources the Beatles drew upon. But he is at one with Constant Lambert in lamenting the eclecticism and "time traveling" of Stravinsky and others. Eclecticism is a fault in such composers; it is a sign of vitality and exuberance in the Beatles. He writes: "In them are assembled, for the first time, all the various and diverse elements of American music in the midcentury except jazz . . . ." He's right about the last point. Jazz is excluded from the various undigested borrowings, for a good reason: Paul McCartney said, "I despise jazz." He said that to me, at a party in London I attended with John Dankworth and his wife, Cleo Laine. And according to Richard Rodney Bennett, who has worked with McCartney (we shall return to this point), he still does.

That is one of the reasons the Beatles never knew what it was to swing.

Henry writes:

> (The) Beatles, from the very first, reached, and were found acceptable by, a larger audience than had existed for any of the various styles from which they worked. As they matured, and as their production grew in variety and sophistication, their appeal spread to an intellectual audience that had never before had ears for any Popular style or personality.
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> Serious-music critics — but only, of course, the very few who listen — have detected qualities in the music of the Beatles and some of their imitators, both British and American, that escaped them in even the most sophisticated achievements of jazz. William Mann, music critic of the London *Times*, for instance, whose interest had already been aroused by Presley and Bill Haley's Comets, and who has followed the Beatles with enlightened critical attention from the beginning, was led by *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* to foresee a new kind of integrated LP, "a pop song cycle, a Tin Pan Alley *Dichterliebe*."

Re-reading this, nearly thirty years after it was written, I was struck by the same *Aha*! phenomenon that lit up Tom Wolfe's Sunday morning on reading the *New York Times*.

It is especially clear in a paragraph in the *Introduction* to the book. Henry wrote:

> All my schooling has been in their tradition; and their music, i.e. the music of the European masters is still the only music that I can play or sing. I listen to Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald, themselves airborne on the buoyant pulse of

their own American music, with admiration and envy. I too would like to fly; but my wings were clipped long ago by a conventional musical pedagogy, concentrated vocally on the German *Lied*. Although American by birth and upbringing, I am, musically speaking — and above all, rhythmically speaking — an earthbound German.

This is also the music in which I am most at home as listener and critic.

Aha. The obiter dictu, as Tom Wolfe put it. The revelation. It explains why Henry was absolutely smitten by those two jazz pianists I find endurable: they have stiff, square, European time, and therefore do not swing. Henry reveals more in this paragraph than he realizes. He also explains why various classical critics jumped on the Beatles bandwagon. And why Oberlin College instituted a course on the Beatles without ever having done one on Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, or any of the other great twentieth-century masters of the song form.

These critics and academics have European time. They could *hear* the Beatles, but could not *hear* someone like Barney Kessel or Dizzy Gillespie or Oscar Peterson. They include another champion of the Beatles, Leonard Bernstein. Bernstein had square time. I found Bernstein discomfiting, even embarrassing, when he chose to pontificate on the subject of: jazz, which he understood no better than Aaron Copland and most of the other buns from the Boulangerie.

The key lies in this word "time" as it is used by jazz musicians. On several occasions, writing for "classical music" publications such as *Musical America*, I would be chagrined on reading something of mine in print to find that some editor had changed it to "timing", which is not what it means at all. Henry admires the beat and pulse of jazz, and seems to think the terms are synonymous. A strong "time" sense is imperative to making the music swing. It is not a matter of the *beat*. Essentially jazz swings with a 12/8 pulse that floats *over* the beat. The feeling of jazz eighth-note patterns can be approximated by writing the figures in eighth-note triplets and tying the first and second in the grouping. But that isn't it exactly either, as you will find in a New York minute if you write something that way and hand it to a symphony orchestra. What they see is what you get, and it comes out as stiff as a dead cat — particularly from string sections. Jazz arrangers will write such passages in straight eighth notes for a jazz band, knowing that the jazz experience tells the musicians how to play them. To approximate it crudely in words, what you are seeking is a doo wuh-doo wuh-doo feeling. If you write it in tied triplets for a symphony orchestra, what you get is doot du-doot du-doot.

As a further proof of the validity of the new rock, Henry cites *Down Beat*'s decision in 1967 to start covering rock. He quotes a June 29 editorial by editor Dan Morgenstern, which says that "*Down Beat*, without reducing its coverage of jazz, will expand its editorial perspective to include the musically valid aspects of rock."

I thought Dan was being very circumspect in his choice of words.

In point of fact, this decision was not evidence of legitimacy but of expediency. Henry clearly did not understand the nature of magazine publishing. Magazines cater to the audience sought by their advertisers. There is nothing wrong with this. A golf magazine is designed to draw an audience that buys golf clubs, balls, and shoes, and the makers of this merchandise advertise there, rather than in a magazine aimed at bee keepers or morticians. *Down Beat* had long been supported by the manufacturers of musical instruments and attendant accessories. This caused the magazine to court young readers, since there are more kids in college stage bands than there are professional jazz musicians. But by 1967, there was, thanks to rock, more interest among the young in guitars and wah-wah pedals than in Rico reeds and Conn trombones. *That* is the reason for the change of policy, and Dan Morgenstern's phrase "musically valid aspects of rock" suggests to me that he wasn't all that thrilled by the "new direction."

Thus it was in other media of communications. A new manager of the National Public Radio station in Indianapolis some years ago issued a directive to the staff that they would have to prove the need for the station's programs by the number of listeners they attracted. Otherwise programs were to be cut. And NPR was supposed to be the alternative to commercial broadcasting, with its perpetual search for the lowest common denominator of public taste. NPR, which existed without advertisers (but public television no longer does!), became a numbers game too. Each year these stations would broadcast marathon pleadings for public donations, and of course the larger the audience, the more they could hope to take in. "It's about numbers," the distinguished jazz broadcaster Oscar Treadwell said. "All else is blowing smoke."

Thus it was too in tax-funded broadcasting in other countries, such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Compounding the problem was that as younger persons were hired, these companies (and NPR) were staffed by people who had been *raised on rock* and knew nothing of Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Harry Warren, Duke Ellington, Fats Waller, Count Basie, and the other major makers of the great body of twentieth century non-classical music. I recall a letter to the editor of the *New York Times* back in the 1960s. The writer was a professor. He said that we were in danger of producing a generation of people who had grown up "a-historical." We now have it. Indeed, more than one generation. It is possible to drive across America with your car radio always on and not hear one song by Kern, one track by

Ellington. A vast body of magnificent American musical achievement — one of the greatest such accumulations in cultural history, of a scope not yet evaluated — was being buried under layers of commercial musical dross.

All that was pending when Henry wrote *Classical Music — and All That Jazz.* With his minimal knowledge of the music business, he did not understand the implications of the buying up of music-publishing firms by the record industry. The two businesses were being fused, and this trend to monopoly troubled me a great deal.

In the days of the early success of rock, publicists were apologetic about it. The position of record-company press agents (and I knew them all personally) was that because it was a rhythmic music, rock-and-roll would lead "the kids" to an appreciation of jazz. This was like saying that *Little Lulu* and *Casper the Friendly Ghost* would lead to a taste for Terrence Ratigan, Tom Stoppard, and Jean Anouilh.

The substantial sales of Glenn Miller's records occurred, let us remember, in an era when few young people owned phonographs, as they were called then. The sale of Beatles — and Bob Dylan and Rolling Stones and Lovin' Spoonful — records came when the children of a large and affluent middle close mostly did. And the record industry, discovering through the Beatles just how much money could be made by the merchandising of the meretricious, shifted its strategy. It stopped apologizing for rock. Indeed, it switched signals completely. The press agents began marketing the stuff as high art. It was a brilliant maneuver in what at the time I called esthetic gerrymandering. They shifted the borders between trash and treasure, between the magnificent and the mundane. Rock musicians who commanded three chords were now "composers" and "recording artists."

The Beatles were awarded the O.B.E., the order of the British Empire, for — this was undisguised at the time — the amount of money they had brought into British coffers. It was a significant slippage of the standards, with many more to come.

Drugs got added to the mix. The record companies at first pretended innocence of awareness of the drug references in songs. This was another hypocrisy. Because of the success of Bob Dylan's records, with all their drug references, on the Columbia label, a meeting was held in the A&R department at RCA Victor, with some of the producers pleading for the right to make drug records. This was granted, and a Jefferson Airplane album that had been delayed because of suspect songs was approved for full release. I predicted at the time that all these drug-touting records would lead to a devastating pandemic of drug abuse in America. The industry labeled me, God forbid, a Conservative, and argued that anyway, entertainment did not influence society, it merely reflected it. It is a litany that is still being repeated, though the damage done to American society by its entertainment industry in the last thirty years is, or should be, obvious.

One of the fundamental flaws in Henry's thinking lay in his failure to come to define his terms in discussing popularity. In *The Agony of Modern Music*, he cites instance after instance of the successes of composers of Serious Music prior to the twentieth century. "The only verdict that counts is the public's," he writes, and then: "The truth is that every great composer, without exception, has been appreciated, admired, applauded, and loved in his own time."

But by whom? And by how many? The music he admires was subsidized by the church, the aristocracy, and royalty. An opera that was a smashing success played before a house of how many? A thousand? Three thousand? And for how many performances? The music was heard only within the range of the unamplified human voice. The operas and symphony concerts were not attended by farmers, shoemakers, shop-keepers, and their adolescent children.

By the time of the Beatles, the ownership of "stereos" was close to universal among adolescents. When I was listening to Benny Goodman and Count Basie in high school, I could count on my two hands the kids I knew who owned phonographs. And since friends such as Kenny Wheeler and I used to buy used juke-box records, discovering that the good instrumental sides we wanted were practically unplayed and the trashy commercial tunes that so often were on the A side were played white, we knew that the best music was *not* popular, but rather such stuff as *The Hut-Sut Song, Rum and Coca Cola*, and *Papa Loves Mambo.* If a band like that of Kay Kyser recorded a good piece of material such as *Sand,* proving that it could really play, that was not the side that was the hit on the juke boxes. But let's return to that sentence of Henry's:

"(The) Beatles, from the very first, reached, and were found acceptable by, a larger audience than had existed for any of the various styles from which they worked."

There is no way of comparing this *popularity* with that of, say, *Rigoletto,* because in the time of the Beatles, music was a universal fad among the young, the vast majority of whom had access to music not only on stereo equipment but on an overwhelmingly conformist broadcasting industry unlike anything dreamed of at the turn of the nineteenth century. The difference was one Henry did not grasp or at least did not acknowledge. De Tocqueville did. His *Democracy in America* was published in 1835, a hundred years before the rise of the Benny Goodman band.

Though the book is often seen as a paean to American democracy, and in many ways it is, Tocqueville nonetheless feared what he saw as the tyranny of the majority. In Chapter 11 of his book, he writes:

> It would be a waste of my readers' time and of my own to explain how the general moderate standard of

wealth, the absence of superfluity, and the universal desire for comfort, with the constant efforts made by all to procure it, encourage a taste for the useful more than the love of beauty. Naturally, therefore, democratic peoples with all these characteristics cultivate those arts which help to make life comfortable rather than those that adorn it. They habitually put use before beauty, and they want beauty itself to be useful.

It normally happens in ages of privilege that the practice of almost all the arts becomes a privilege, and every profession is a world apart into which all and sundry cannot enter. Even when industry is free the immobility natural to aristocratic peoples tends to form all those who practice the same craft into a distinct class, always composed of the same families who know one another and among whom a corporate public opinion and sense of corporate pride soon develop. Hence each craftsman belonging to this industrial class has not only his fortune to make but also his professional standing to preserve. Corporate interests count for more with him than either his own self-interest or even the purchaser's needs.

That sounds like the pride in excellence of jazz musicians.

So in aristocratic ages the emphasis is on doing things as well as possible, not as quickly or as cheaply as one can.

In contrast, when every profession is open to all, with a crowd of folk forever taking it up and dropping it again, when the craftsmen don't know or care about one another and indeed hardly ever meet, being so many, the social link between them is broken, and each, left to himself, only tries to make as much money as easily as possible. The customer's wishes are his only restraint, but he is too involved at the same time in an equally radical change of attitude.

Where wealth and power are permanently in the hands of a few, it is these people, always the same, who enjoy most of the good things of this world; necessity, convention, and their own modest desires keep the rest from such enjoyment.

This aristocracy, keeping its high place without contradiction or enlargement, always has the same requirements felt in the same way. The heirs to this hereditary superiority naturally like things very well made and lasting.

This affects the whole way a people looks at the arts.

Among such nations it often happens that even a peasant will sooner do without things he wants than get imperfect ones.

Craftsmen in aristocratic societies work for a strictly limited number of customers who are very hard to please. Perfect workmanship gives the best hope of profit.

The situation is very different when privileges have been abolished and classes intermingled and when men are continually rising and falling in the social scale . . . .

The great songs of the American Golden Age, as it is now perceived to be, were *not* made for a mass audience. The best of them came out of the New York musical theater, and that was never in those days a music of the masses. Furthermore, during the Depression, there was almost no record industry; it was indeed on the verge of collapse. Vincent Youmans, Richard Rodgers, Arthur Schwartz, Cole Porter, George Gershwin and others of their stature (and all knowing each other, as in Tocqueville's paradigm) were for the most part born to wealth or at least to the middle class, and to education, the exceptions being Irving Berlin and Harold Arlen. So were the lyricists. Broadway musicals, particularly in the Depression, constituted music of the rich, by the rich, and for the rich. Oklahoma farmers were not the patrons of musical theater. But material from musicals was disseminated through the new medium of network radio, and for a while, even the Kansas City milkman had a liking for such songs. That is why it was an era when much good music was popular and much popular music was good.

Tocqueville continues:

> There are . . . in any democracy men whose fortunes are on the increase but whose desires increase much more quickly than their wealth, so that their eyes devour long before they can afford them. They are always on the lookout for shortcuts to these anticipated delights. These two elements always provide democracies with a crowd of citizens whose desires outrun their means and who will gladly agree to put up with an imperfect substitute rather than do without the object of their desire altogether.
>
> The craftsman easily understands this feeling, for he shares it. In aristocracies he charged very high prices to a few. He sees that he can now get rich quicker by selling cheaply to all.
>
> Now, there are only two ways of making a product cheaper.
>
> The first is to find better, quicker, more skillful ways of making it. The second is to make a great number of objects which are more or less the same but not so good. In a democracy every workman applies his wits to both these points.
>
> He seeks ways of working, not just better, but quicker and more cheaply, and if he cannot manage that, he economizes on the intrinsic quality of the thing he is making, without rendering it wholy unfit for its intended use . . . . In this way democracy, apart from diverting attention to the useful arts, induces workmen to make shoddy things very quickly and consumers to put up with them.

Hello? Do I hear the dawning of the Age of Aquarius, of Sir Paul McCartney, Sir Elton John, Lord Andrew Lloyd-Weber, Valujet, and Alaska Airlines?

Not to mention Firestone, which has given a whole new meaning to *the rubber hits the road.*

To be continued