

The Night People

by JEAN SHEPHERD

Watch It Grow

SO THE first Village Voice Jazz Concert was an overwhelming success. No doubt about it. There were crowds and there was excitement of a special sort. The same air that was felt outside the old Wanamaker's Building back in August, and in the Loew's Sheridan Theatre at 3 a. m. last month. Those people who were there know what I mean, and it isn't possible to explain it to those who weren't.

I knew it was going to be that way when at 11 o'clock the night of the concert I scuttled through the crowd that was scattered up and down 43rd Street and began to feel the carnival sparks even before I got near the box office. There's such a wonderfully exhilarating sense of anticipation and a sort of oneness with people when this fugitive thing happens

that I can't help but feel a small sorrow that life isn't always like that.

The Warmth Grew

It was great. When the curtain finally went up and the proceedings got under way, the warmth grew and grew until the final note, and even then it didn't lessen much, since the people in the crowd seemed to carry it right out of Town Hall with them and on down the street, ad-libbing their way through their own last chorus and finally to the subway and poor old Queens. It was great.

The thing is, though, we can't let this stop here. This is only a beginning, and I have a feeling that this first Village Voice Jazz Concert was the beginning of a lot of things for many of us. I also suspect that it was a milestone in the life of The Voice itself. From here on in, The Voice will become more than just a voice on paper (which is damned important these days too); it will become a voice in other cultural fields. For a long time now there has been a real need for some kind of rallying point around which creative people in every media could gather and find both encouragement of a practical sort as well as a channel of communication with the discerning public. True, there are many cultural trade-papers around, but they are invariably parochial in their views because they have either become specialized and have

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SONG TO A TUNE OF YEATS

Think of yourself only as a visitor, he said.
For each discoverer uncovers also great stars of ignorance
And planets twinkling with disaster.

"Love faster," she cried.
"Faster! Faster!"

Man's heart is film, his bone is lucent alabaster.

"O love me faster," she cried.
"Love me sweeter, faster!"

And we are here as Matthew was
And will go where Arnold's gone.
And shall not live on.

"Sing a song to cheer me,"
she cried:
"Sing on."

But man's fate is film:
His bone is brittle alabaster.

"Sing on, my darling love,
sing on."
—Tuli Kupferberg



jazz

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first one turns to the second and says: "Cool it, man—the licks."

Wide Range

The jokes vary from the home-made commercial version—a person seeing a TV set in which the picture has gone awry says: "Dig that crazy laundromat"—to the very far out or way out variety that is understandable only to the bop aficionado. One bopster observes a famous accident and says: "Man, did you see that airplane crash into the Empire State Building?" and the other says: "Solid!" as if in admiration of the pilot's aim. Or the one where a bop man finds himself in danger in

front of the jazz night club and exclaims: "Like help!"

Those are extreme examples. A middlebrow jazz joke would probably be the one where a chick walking along the seashore says: "Dig those crazy ash trays; wouldn't they make wonderful clam shells?" Or at a party where the people are smoking funny cigarettes, an FBI agent arises from their midst, flashes a badge, and announces: "You are all under arrest." The guy next to him laughs and says: "Man, are you high."

largely shut out news of happenings in other creative fields, or they have fallen prey to the deadening virus of The Formula, whether the formula be low or high.

Incidentally, one of the most refreshing things I've noted about The Voice is the lack of a set formula. The New Yorker is a good example of The Formula in action. Its views on almost everything are about as predictable as the political affiliations of the Chairman of the Board of Gen-

SHEP is off to Europe this week for a month-long broadcasting tour from four major cities over there. He rashly promises to manage to tuck in some European dispatches for The Voice also.

eral Motors. This is true of every department of the magazine, from the "Talk of the Town" to the book reviews. They represent conformity in its most insidious form. Not the bowling-team variety, but a sort that's far more subtle. Ironically enough, when Harold Ross set up the sheet back in the 20's, he noted that he wasn't interested in entertaining or comforting a little Old Lady in Dubuque. Today the New Yorker is the fodder upon which that Old Lady feeds, and she finds nary a discordant note from cover to cover.

During the past year I have spoken to many artists in widely different fields, and I have found that there is a real feeling that America is on the edge of some sort of cultural swell, and that exciting things are growing all around us. This, in direct contrast to much evidence to the contrary. I myself have felt that something was happening. It isn't easy to put a finger on it and say that here it is or there it is, but, damn it, it is, and I suspect that The Village Voice could become the spearpoint for much that is to come.

The Balloon Goes Up

Things around the office have taken a new turn. The balloon has gone up, and all of us are fortunate in being around to see it take off; a few of us have even been lucky enough to be in the basket. But those who are neither watching the balloon nor riding in the basket are indebted to The Voice, for all over America newspapers are dying at a time in history when we need more voices than ever before. Like I said, things around the office have changed, and the new spark in the air feels great. Watch if grow, man.

SALE! SALE! SALE!

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Sir Humphrey: By Jove, you're the only other
ill-fitting chap here —
you're wearing Murray Space Shoes!
Butler: Thank you sir —
I find them very comfortable.