

The Night People

by JEAN SHEPHERD

Take One Concert, Shake Well . . .

GOD, it's hot! I'm sitting here knocking down a container of iced coffee (America's most controversial and worst-prepared summer drink) while trying to jell a few coherent thoughts on last Saturday's jazz concert.

It isn't easy, and the heat isn't the only reason this is so. Every time I get myself involved in a thing of this sort, I come away with a montage of impressions that range all the way

from brief film-clips of hordes of the backstage hangers-on who seem to infest all jazz shows being for once tossed out on their duffs, to herds of grandstanding photographers who likewise show up at all these affairs and who seem to think jazz was created to be a subject for low-key black-and-whites.

I ran into one zealot festooned with Leicas who came backstage to complain that the "photographers" weren't allowed on stage. I asked him why he doesn't try the same stunt at the Met or a legit show or perhaps a recital at Town Hall, and also whether he didn't feel that this 35mm plague actually hurt the audience's enjoyment of the show. His answer was a piercing sniff and a comment to the effect that what the audience felt was entirely irrelevant.

I've worked enough shows to realize that this is one of the most effective ways for a freebee to parlay a \$1.10 seat in the bleachers into a spot just below the stage apron, where he remains rooted throughout the evening six rows in front of the poor fools who shelled out \$5.90 per and who are now getting a fine view of a drugstore plastic gadget bag and endlessly bobbing pinheads. I have no objection to legitimate photo coverage of these events by authorized people, but I do resent very much the "amateur" clickers who swarm like flies at a hog-killing every time a tenor-man opens his case. I know of at least two clowns (husband and wife) who always buy the cheapest seats they can get. They never sit in them, though, since they immediately plant themselves directly below the apron and swing their unloaded \$4 Japanese cameras into the approved position. They both loathe photography, but they like front seats. God, it's hot!

The concert went over well, I think. However, it must be made very clear that neither myself nor The Voice is in the jazz business. Last fall when Ed Fancher and I got into a casual conversation over a pizza one night about things we would enjoy doing, a plan for a whole series of informal fascos began to loosely evolve. The jazz shows have only been the beginning events. Actually, all we do is to think of something we would enjoy seeing ourselves, and then we try to organize it so we can. We also charge prices we would want to pay at the box office. Naturally, we haven't made much money, but we did hear Billie Holiday.

There has been talk about doing the same thing in other fields, such as theatre. If you have any ideas about what you would like to see or hear at reasonable prices, let us know. It was great hearing the "Little Orphan Annie" theme song rooking out over Seventh Avenue at 2 a. m. Which reminds me—try a glass of cold milk, a jigger of vodka, one teaspoonful of Ovaltine, one teaspoonful granulated sugar, crushed ice. Briskly shake in Orphan Annie Shakeup Mug. It makes even Daddy Warbucks seem benevolent.



Billie Holiday, rushing in from Philadelphia, touches up her make-up, backstage at Loew's Sheridan, before going on to sing at last week-end's Village Voice jazz concert.

Letters

Continued from page 4

better go for more worthwhile bargains.

It has always been my inspiration and contention that the artist who is easily discouraged, for whatever reason—if he quits or moves into obscurity, it's simply because he's all used up anyway. Nobody but the artist himself ruins himself, if truly that even ever happens.

The Extra Things

Myself, I paint the greatest things of ART in the land, but I've never sold any of it, never get to show it, nobody very much else thinks so, can't much give it away. But by golly its expression is fully enough contained, not contingent on cash blasing and critical endorsement, etc. I AM A SERIOUS ARTIST, and I'd like, too, some of the other extra things that sometimes go along with art, like money, recognition, credit, prizes, ribbons, encouragement, etc. But please, "art" will always take care of itself if it's anything at all, instituted, subsidized, organized, patronized or not. Incidentally, I'm just now sitting fully thfilled at my latest creation, which is sufficient to tide me a good while of many days strom on the present skimp-luck diet of porridge and beans.

—Gerald R. Speeden
East 7th Street

Dollars and Dedication

Dear Sir:

Since the end of World War II there has been a gradually growing anxiety as to what will happen to the Village and Villagers because of the constant encroachments of vanity building and the high prices of shelter going constantly higher—so much so that the average Villager, "the truly dedicated one," cannot continue to meet them.

Villagers work at menial and near-menial jobs to earn bread so that they may continue their dedications. Our governments, municipal, state, and federal, fail to realize that art in all its various forms is the first line of psychological defense, and that billions are wasted on "experimentations" in our government's armorial projects without the slightest consideration, for the peace-and-war constructive usages of fine art—

the real conceptual eyes of man's intelligence and defense . . .

I have witnessed for the past 40 years the proud spectacle of seeing that what is said, worn, written, and painted in the Village today is the marrow of the style and thinking all over our country tomorrow.

Some provincial and stupid thinking calls the Village "an annex to Bellevue psycho," but if we really measure cases, we find that there is hardly a profession that does not have its mental casualties.

What is really going to happen is that in spite of the problems confronting Villagers, we who are the dispossessed and the despised by a rank dollar-conscious civilization will survive, by the grace of God, and the miracle of the Village will, as in the past, continue to prove that dollars can't stop art.

—De Hirsh Margulies
Christopher Street

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French Lesson

Since I'm studying French at night school, I thought it might be fun if I gave you a short French lesson. N'est-ce pas?



Let's start with the common French phrase: "Junior, it's your night to wash the dishes." Junior is "mon fils." Night is "soir," and wash the dishes is "laver la vaisselle." Put them all together and you have: "Mon fils, c'est à toi ce soir de laver la vaisselle." You also have a very unhappy little French boy who's stuck with the dishes.

My suggestion to him would be to get his father to buy "une machine à laver la vaisselle." That's a dishwashing machine. An automatic one at that, run by "l'électricité."

No matter what your language, it's wonderful to get rid of the messy chore of doing dishes. You just stack the dishes in the machine and flip the switch. The dishwasher and dependable Con Edison electricity do the rest.

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