

BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK...

NOTES (Musical) FOR BICENTENNIAL

NEW YORK Herewith a warning that should be adopted this bicentennial year alongside such American slogans as "Remember the Main," Pearl Harbor or even Mother's Day. Let no man or group engage in a bicentennial bypass of jazz during this 200-year celebration.

For jazz is not only one of the American Negro's greatest contributions to modern art and culture but its melodic rhapsodies are as American as apple pie, the constitution and George Washington. There is nothing more American than jazz. It sprang from the fields of the South. It had its genesis along the rivers where America organized its transportation, mainly along the Mississippi and on to New Orleans. And here is where the Negro gave birth to this wildly popular musical phenomenon--along the rivers and tracks of early America.

Yes, above all else jazz, is truly American--spirituals, folk songs of Dixie, chantley of working men on the levees and labor gangs at the site of railroad tracks. Jazz, its rhythmic patterns, dolorous pliants and sonorous peals, is pure Americana, even though it was not written by the Founding Fathers.

It must be heard in every hall and convention this bicentennial year--from choir lofts and pulpits, from rostrum and forums, in hotels and dance floors. Yes, hit it everywhere, for to ignore it would be another act of discrimination against the American Negro. The purest American Music is jazz and its very soul is Negro.

Forget Beethoven for the nonce. Respect Tchaikovsky, Bach, Chopin, Brahms and John Strauss. None of them was born in America but such musical giants as W.C. Handy, Father of the Blues, and Duke (The Great) Ellington were. So were Satchmo, Fletcher Henderson, Ella Fitzgerald, Cab Calloway and the immortal Chuck Berry.

Do we remember Beethoven and forget 100 years of the rhapsodies of such greats as Count Basie, Andy Kirk, Lips Page, Mary Lou Williams, Roy Eldridge, Jelly Roll Morton, Chick Webb, Pearl Bailey and Billy Holiday?

The litany of jazz artists is endless and would require tomes to record. But what a strange combination of melodies evolved from pure jazz! Each strain is a variation from one artist to the next. The closest to a definition is this: "a kind of" music, chiefly extemporaneous, characterized by melodic, harmonic and rhythmic syncopation. Real jazz defies description. It is a wierd, rhytmic intonations of a Ellington, a Basie or a Goodman. And they come straight from the scores of the strange creations of such a Jazz Giant as Smack Fletcher Henderson, of almost a century ago.

This is what they created in New Orleans in the long ago. The sounds spread rapidly to Kansas City and Chicago and finally and somewhat lazily to New York during World War I. Here Jazz gained fame chiefly because a Philadelphia transplant Louis Mitchell and his wild drum combined with Marion Cook's Band at Procter's Theater on 23rd St., and brought down the house. Mitchell's fame spreas when he organized the Original Dixieland Band in February, 1914, and later he was booked for Europe where they became wild about American Jazz.

As usual, the Whites knew a good thing when they heard one, as they did at Harlem nightspots. So later they copied and commercialized Jazz and booted out the Blacks. They had heard the real thing from Fletcher Henderson's Band. Fletcher, a product of Georgia, had come to study chemistry, at City College with music as a sideline to help pay bills. But soon he met W.C. Handy, recorded with the immortal Mamie Smith's Blues combo and became one of the greatest aggregations in the history of jazz. And at this time Duke Ellington was coming out of Washington and his opening at the Cotton Club in Harlem, Dec. 4, 1927, was an historic milestone for jazz.

Ellington had followed Henderson to New York. But both of them put the great ballrooms on the map. Their music resounded over the famed Roseland and Savoy ballrooms. The coming of jazz to New York made such an impression that all bands of note had to be booked here. Here came Joe (King) Oliver, Chick Webb, Louis Russell and the great Louis Armstrong and a legion of others. But in a short time the White intruder hove into view. He took over and created his own bands.

Jazz, of course, is what throws American music lovers into paroxysms. And what's wrong with paroxysms when there is very little else to cheer about? So give us Jazz this bicentennial and never mind the jazz about Bach, Beethoven and Brahm.---STAY LOOSE.

Motown Record Corporation Sweeps 10 Awards in Ebony Music Poll

Motown Record Corporation furthered its distinguished and eminent success as a leader in the music industry by sweeping 10 major awards in the prestigious Third Annual Ebony Music Awards.

Over 4.5 million readers selected the winners, and Motown product and artists were perennial favorites in almost every category including awards for: Best Jazz Album, Best Blues Album, plus six individual and creative awards for: Best Tenor and Alto Sax, Best R&B/Pop, Male Singer, Instrumentalist, and Composer, and Best Blues Female Singer.

Smokey Robinson and The Temptations became the first Motown artists to be inducted into Ebony's R&B/Pop Hall of Fame.

Stevie Wonder added three more milestones to his prolific and luminous career by winning Best Male Singer, Instrumentalist, and Composer in the R&B/Pop category.

Grover Washington, Jr., and Esther Phillips, who records on the Kudu label, distributed by Motown, captured the coveted awards for Best Jazz Album, 'Mr. Magic', and Best Blues Album, 'Esther Phillips W/Beck', respectively. Washington also won individual awards for Alto and Tenor Sax, while Esther Phillips garnered Best Blues Female Singer.

All the winners will be presented their awards on the Ebony Music Awards Show, a 90-minute Special which will be co-hosted by Marvin Gaye along with Natalie Cole, taping July 20 in Los Angeles.

"Wake Up Susan" New Spinners Single

From the excitement amongst the staff of Atlantic Records, it looks like the Spinners and Thom Bell have presented them with another gold nugget in the form of the new single and forth-coming album. The new single is entitled "Wake Up Susan" and Spinners fans will welcome the long-awaited new release. If the indications prove to be valid, the group will add number ten to their list of million sellers.

Spinner fans will also have the opportunity to hear some of the new material as the group

has a heavy schedule of performances slated for the rest of the year. They will, however, take time out to host and perform the Jackie Wilson Benefit at the Latin Casino, in Cherry Hill, N.J. on October 3rd.

The benefit will feature top record industry artists along with the Spinners who feel that his numerous contributions to the industry make Wilson a more than deserving benefactor during his personal crisis.

Join Ray Willis and Maria Donoso for a look at what minorities are doing in Southern Nevada.

Along with special local and nationally known guests, they make this an interesting and informative half-hour.

Sat. 4:30 PM Sun. 7:00AM

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