

BILLY ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

WRITE (HOT JAZZ)---The sound went forth from this place on a Sunday afternoon, and now the world should at last recognize that jazz has finally, and rightfully, been elevated from the honky tonk to the pinnacle of the classics. It was "Jazz At The White" and its patrons were The President of the United States, no higher can you get, and Mrs. Jimmy Carter. Its stars were many of the recognized stalwarts of a sound which has allowed this nation to match creative culture with the rest of the world. The very best was there to contribute to the historic quality of the happening. About it some of them said:-

PRESIDENT CARTER:- "It was an unique combination of two characteristics which made America what it is; individually and free expression of one's inner spirit. I am very grateful for what the creators of the jazz idiom have done for America. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I, As President of the United States, welcome these superb representatives of this music form. There are performers here who represent the history of this music throughout this century; some quite old in years, but still young at heart."

MRS. CARTER:- "It's been an exciting day for us. I think that everybody enjoyed the music and the New Orleans food. Since we have been in the White House we have had the opportunity to meet a lot of great people that we would not have known, and I think this day is special. We have enjoyed meeting people that we have listened to and enjoyed their recordings for so long. It's a great experience for us."

TEDDY WILSON:- To this great pianist the event was "One of those special things, like Benny Goodman's 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert. The first jazz tour of the Soviet Union in 1962. Or the occasion of my joining Benny Goodman in 1936 to climax the first interracial move in American life on a national public scale. To me this one, Jazz at the White House fits well into the category of very special events, a smooth and rhythmic salute to the 25th. anniversary of the Newport Jazz Festival."

BENNY CARTER:- This great versed musician's vocal feeling was an inspirational as his music; "I think it is one of the greatest happenings in the interest of jazz that ever took place on this level, particularly at this time. Of course jazz, as far as you and I am concerned, has always been respectable, but in the eyes of many people this will give it added respectability. I think it is a good thing that President and Mrs. Carter are recognizing it for what it really is."

LIONEL HAMPTON:- The Republican beat-heart of America wanted our democratic President to be commended. "It's really great to see all my wonderful friends here, said he, some of the great musicians in the world, Clark Terry, Illionis Jacquet, Mary Lou Williams, Jerry Mulligan, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock and Max Roach."

ILLIONIS JACQUET:- "It's great! A step forward in the history of jazz music. It will enlighten the world, and especially, America, regarding the contribution of jazz to the culture of civilization."

GEORGE BENSON:- To this young man, who so recently has come upon success like thunder across the strings of a guitar uttered; "Its a tremendous experience"

LOUIE BELLSON:- Like he was thumping for a return session, this great drummer said there has got to be a sequel. "How can they miss with artists like Teddy Wilson, Jo Jones Milt Hinton, Clark Terry, Sonny Rollins, McCoy Tyner, Ron Carter, Coc Cheatham, Mary Lou Williams, Dexter Gordon, Katherine Handy Lewis, George Benson, Lionel Hampton and the others. I think it's great and feel deeply honored to be a part of it."

ROY ELDRIDGE:- "It's about time they take jazz up to the front of the bus. I remember when we started playing at Carnegie Hall. Pretty soon jazz will be accepted where it belongs in this country. This proves that it's moving ahead."

DIZZY GILLESPIE:- "This is cool, the right place for the hottest music in the world. You can only deny a good thing for so long before the truth of its worth comes busting through. All of us are happy that President

and Mrs. Carter have recognized this and we are here today. This is the kind of "command performances" I dig. If a queen can do it, why not a President?"

It was quite a happening and folks from throughout the country were invited to eye the event and ear the concert style sounds. Imagine Eubie Blake opening the show to be followed by Mary Lou Williams. Then a group made up of Lionel Hampton, Joe Jones, Teddy Wilson, Benny Carter, Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge, Illionis Jacquet, Milt Hinton, Coc Cheatham and Chick Cores. Or Charles Mingus. Gerry Mulligan, Zoot same. Stan Getz, George Benson, Herbie Hancock at ear tempters. Well it happened on the lawn of the White House and it will be a day that many will long hum about. Many of those who were invited will 'archive' their invitations. Among those who received them are Mrs. Ebie Blake, Pearl Bailey, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Belafonte, Mr. and Mrs. John Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. John Prochpe, Mrs. Lucille Armstrong, Mr. and Mrs. Ahmet Ertegun, Mr. and Mrs. John Hammond, Commissioner Ersa Poston, "Bunny" Mitchell and her mom, Nat Hentoff, and a whole parcel of White House and government wheels including Vice President Mondale who brought his three children.

No-way can you write about "Jazz At The White House" in one sitting. so some of the facts and fancies have been reserved for the next write time. It was really an effervescent experience, one which should do all the good things for this great American sound that those who were involved expect it to do. However, if nothing else, it was a top level salute to the 25-anniversary of "The Newport Jazz Festival" by the first family of the nation and many of the number one professionals of the sounds with a jazz beat . . . STAY LOOSE.

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