more complicated writing. The saxes played tremolo; Don featured himself on alto a great deal to make up for the absence of soloists; the trombones and trumpets were assigned complex figures. The final results of all this were oblivion for the band and the emergence of Don Redman as full-time arranger for other leaders. In 1938 he arranged the famous recording of "Deep Purple" that went so far to establish the Jimmy Dorsey band as a jukebox favorite. He did "Hold Tight" for Jimmy, and a great many numbers for Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald, as well as some for Charlie Barnet, Jimmie Lunceford, Paul Whiteman, Fred Waring, and Harry James. Several of Count Basie's best arrangements were Don's.

The men who worked for Don say that no matter how you came into one of his bands, you left a musician. They seem sure that he carried enough in his head to fill the books of another twenty orchestras, and that the music he wrote and arranged and led was consistently ahead of its time. This diminutive man, who began his musical career as a cornetist at three, saw his way through a half-dozen instruments, as many bands, and the most varied abilities and activities; Don Redman was a style-setter and a pacemaker in jazz.

A career parallel to Don Redman's and similarly important in the preservation of jazz was that of Chick Webb. He was perhaps the greatest of jazz drummers, a gallant little man who made his contribution to jazz within an extraordinary framework of pain and suffering. His musical contribution ranks with that of the other great jazz dead: Bix, Tesch, Bunny Berigan, Chu Berry, Jimmy Harrison, Tricky Sam, Jimmy Blanton, Charlie Christian. His gallantry ranks high in jazz. His life carried him through the first years of the swing era; his music, along with that of Duke Ellington, Don Redman, and Ben Pollack, carried jazz through its deluge.

Chick Webb was born crippled, but that didn't seem to bother him and it very rarely bothered others. He was born on February 10, 1909, in Baltimore, Maryland, into a poor family, a family-conscious family; Chick remained close to his mother and grandfather for most of his life.

His first job was peddling papers, when he was nine. He was already following the parade bands around Baltimore and saving up for his own set of drums. When he finally got the drums he evolved a set of exhibitions which could be counted upon for a good Saturday night return, say a dozen dollars. The first steady drumming job to come Chick's way, after he had worked the Chesapeake Bay excursion boats for some time, was with the Jazzola band. The Jazzola band was not much musically, but it was important for two of its men, Chick Webb and John Trueheart, the guitarist. Chick and Trueheart met in the Jazzola band and remained close friends ever afterward. When Trueheart left for New York Chick wanted to go badly. But his friend returned quickly, out of luck. They decided to try again, together.

In New York Trueheart, luckier this time, got an out-of-town job, while Chick moseyed around town. He got to know Bobby Stark. And that fine trumpeter got to know Chick's drumming and got Chick a job in the band he played with, Edgar Dowell's. Chick clicked and sent for Trueheart. The two of them made sixty dollars apiece a week—"a fortune!" said Chick, who saved all but ten dollars of it weekly. Then the band broke up, and Chick was out of work for a year.

Playing Sunday sessions at Small's Paradise with Toby Hardwick, Johnny Hodges, Benny Carter, and Duke Ellington, Chick began to get around among the topflight musicians. Duke and he spent a lot of time together, and when the Ellington sextet landed its Kentucky Club job Duke found an opening at the Black Bottom Club for Chick to lead his own band. But Chick refused; he just wanted to play, not lead. Johnny Hodges wouldn't hear of the refusal, and Chick found himself leading a band.

The first Chick Webb band was a quintet: Trueheart on guitar, of course, Hodges on alto, Don Kirkpatrick on piano, and Bobby Stark on trumpet. The band played an engaging, relaxed jazz. After five months Duke helped it to another job at the Paddock Club, this time with a

payroll for eight. Elmer Williams came in on tenor sax, to stay with Chick for many years, and one Slats, a fine trombonist, joined up. This was 1928.

Chick Webb's Paddock Club band didn't read music but it cut the Fletcher Henderson and King Oliver bands in one-night Battles of Music at the newly opened Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. It impressed the listeners so much that although it was booked for a year it played on and off at the ballroom for ten. There were changes during that important decade, but the quality of Chick Webb's music on the Savoy stands remained constant. No matter what he played elsewhere, there was a certain meaning for Chick in the ballroom called "the Track"—because it looked like a racetrack—and this was Chick's musical home. He left the ballroom after his first year and stayed away for almost two years before coming back under Moe Gale's aegis; but after he came back he never left for such a considerable period again.

After some time on the road in 1928 Chick and his band went into the Rose Danceland at One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street and Seventh Avenue; they were a success. They stayed a year and a half, until Chick received an offer for a try at vaudeville. The try flopped. The band was badly presented in a setting that wasn't right for it. Chick wanted to go back to the Savoy, which had refused the band after its road tour because Chick insisted on adding men. Chick struggled for more months than he liked to remember. Fletcher Henderson "borrowed" Trueheart and Bobby Stark for an audition, and only Trueheart returned. The band broke up, but still Chick didn't give up. He had his choice of big bands to play with: Duke, Smack, any band he wanted, but he wanted his own band. Everybody recognized his drumming greatness; Chick by this time recognized his own leading talent and he was determined to express it.

A number of fine musicians recognized that leading talent too, and persuaded Chick to pick up sticks in front of them: Toby Hardwick, Hilton Jefferson, Elmer Williams on saxes; the legendary trombonist Jimmy Harrison;

Louis Bacon, Louis Hunt, and Shad Collins on trumpets; Elmer James on bass; Trueheart and Kirkpatrick. The new Chick Webb band won Moe Gale's favor, and he booked it into the Roseland Ballroom, where it did very well. After something more than a year there, Chick went out on the road again, and Claude Hopkins went in. Hopkins was a smash hit with his tinkling piano and Lombardo-like band, and the management insisted on his staying. Benny Carter joined Chick's band, then left it, taking a number of its men, and Chick was discouraged and struggling again. His band was out of work for seventeen months and very low in spirits. Then Jimmy Harrison died. Chick didn't know where to turn. Fortunately the Savoy did. They signed him up again; and in 1930 Chick Webb was safely ensconced once more at the big ballroom at One Hundred and Fortieth Street and Lenox Avenue.

Things began to break for Chick. He went on the road once more, with the *Hot Chocolates* revue touring company. The band seemed really set for big and important things, with an effective personnel, some fine arranging, and the unique encouragement that a full stomach and new clothing give.

The next time Chick went back into the Savoy he went back for good. He went back determined to build the best orchestra ever. He went back with a good band that got progressively better. Edgar Sampson joined up on alto, and the saxes consisted of Pete Clark, who took most of the clarinet solos as well as lead alto, Sampson on alto, and Elmer Williams on tenor. The trumpets were Renald Jones, Mario Bauza (lead), and Taft Jordan; Sandy Williams was on trombone, a fixture with the band until Chick's death; Elmer James was on bass, Joe Steele on piano, and Trueheart on guitar. Sampson's joining the band meant a lot. It meant a full-time arranger, for one thing. Originals like "Don't Be That Way," "When Dreams Come True," "Blue Minor," and "Stompin' at the Savoy" sprang from Sampson's fertile pen, and Chick was really on his way. Edgar Sampson became the band's

official greeter. If you came up to the Savoy during those years from 1931 to 1935, he was the man you could talk to most easily, the musician who'd explain to you about the music the band played, about the men who played it, and anything else you might have thought of to bother a working musician. Sampson's good nature and his freely extended good will earned him the affectionate nickname of "the Lamb."

For years the commercial attraction with the band was Taft Jordan, a dark man whose infectious grin popped on and off with the rapidity of an alternating neon sign. His big stock in trade was imitating Louis Armstrong, with a gravel voice and a relay of his own tricky gestures. He capped this with trumpet solos phrased Louis-like. Taft at his best was a compelling trumpeter. You can hear him playing on Chick's delightful theme, "Get Together," and singing and playing much like Louis on "On the Sunny Side of the Street."

Sandy Williams and Bobby Stark, inseparable friends and constant companions, kidded everybody all the time, kidded on and off the stand, kidded without respect for convention or propriety, and kept all the boys laughing all the time. As a trombonist, Sandy offered a powerful barrelhouse tone and jabbing phrases that punctuated Sampson's tunes with brilliant effect. When Bobby joined the band the trumpets really picked up as a team; his incisive, inspired solos supplied a necessary bite.

When John Kirby was with the band, during most of 1934 and part of the following year, the rhythm supplied the Webb band was at its best. Chick laid down a consistent bass beat that he rarely departed from, and decorated it with superb brushwork. Trueheart's musicianship was of a piece with his personality, unpretentious but firmly grounded in the principles of good guitar playing. His shyness never permitted him to take a solo, but few were his equal in giving a rhythm section definition. When Trueheart was forced out of the band in 1936 by a lung condition verging on tuberculosis, Chick saw to it that for more than a year and a half, as he convalesced, he

received his regular salary. Trueheart was more than Chick's good friend and the band's fine guitarist. He stomped off tempos for the band at the beginnings of all numbers. He had much to say in organizing "head arrangements," the on-the-spot compositions of the whole band, and helped to put together sets. Much of the direction and execution of the Chick Webb band of the middle thirties, just before it became famous, should be credited to John Trueheart.

Elmer Williams was the finest soloist Chick ever had on a saxophone. His booting tone and well-organized ideas helped put the sax trio of the early years on a footing with the brass. You can hear some short but effective Williams tenor on "Don't Be That Way" and "On the Sunny Side of the Street." After Elmer left the band, at the end of 1934, came Ted McRae, a youngster with a pretty tenor tone, who added an effective voice but just wasn't in the same class with Elmer. Altos never meant too much in Chick's bands, except in the early days when Johnny Hodges was playing for him. Edgar Sampson played good section sax and added a friendly solo every now and then. In the late years Hilton Jefferson was again in the band, an impressive, penetrating, flowing lead man. Hilton had been in for a short while in 1934, but his major work with Chick was in 1938 and 1939. Louis Jordan was a fair alto soloist, somewhat stereotyped in his ideas but contagiously enthusiastic and always driving. Wayman Carver on flute and later Chauncey Haughton on clarinet were effective soloists, whose best work was done with the short-lived small band Chick put together in imitation of Benny Goodman's chamber groups. The combination, called the Little Chicks, was made up of clarinet, flute, bass, drums, and piano.

At an amateur night at the Apollo Theatre in Harlem one Wednesday in 1934, Chick came down to see if anyone of genuine vocal ability might pop up. His vocals were being handled in the quivering tenor made popular uptown by the work of Orlando Robeson with Claude Hopkins' band. Chick's boy was Charlie Linton, and no

particular distinction attached to his imitative work. So Chick sat through some ordinary singing, dancing, and comedy until a nervous but personable girl came on to sing "Judy," a popular song then. She moved the audience and she moved Chick. He decided Ella Fitzgerald was the girl for him and hired her forthwith.

Chick brought Ella home to live with him and his wife. He clothed her, directed her life, brought her along with the band, and built everything around her as the long-sought, at-last-found commercial attraction the band needed. Here was a naturally gifted singer with an extraordinary feeling for singing the way a good jazzman plays, improvising, first rhythmically, in later years melodically. She had a little girl's natural stage presence and great communicable warmth. Ella Fitzgerald gave the final push needed to make the band the real success it soon became.

The end of 1937 was the beginning of Chick's peak period. Van Alexander was writing catchy arrangements, and the band's records were moving up. Ella was a big attraction, and Moe Gale got Chick, Ella, and the Ink Spots a sustaining program on NBC, "The Good Time Society," which stayed on the air almost half a year. The brass section was becoming famed as a unit. The boys in the band referred to Taft, Mario, Bobby, Sandy, and Nat Story (the second trombone) as the Five Horsemen. Crowds collected around the bandstand at the Savoy to hear them get off and to clamor for Taft's exhibitionistic "St. Louis Blues" and "Stardust," for Chick's fantastically driving solo on "Tiger Rag," for encore after encore from Ella.

Chick wasn't much of a reader, though he could follow a score, having taught himself the rudiments of sight-reading. As a musician, however, he was remarkable. He'd always stand at the side during rehearsals of new numbers and have section bits, figures, solos played over and over again until he was familiar with every bar in every arrangement. On the stand, if a musician or a section muffed something, he'd turn around and hum the right passage correctly, note for note, to the single or group offenders.

After an exhilarating night of playing, if he was pleased with a solo, he'd walk up to somebody in the band, say Sampson, tug at his jacket pocket—which was about where Chick reached up to—and begin, "Say, Sampson, did you hear that solo of Sandy's?" and, sliding a mock trombone with his hands, he'd sing over the whole solo in question. It might have been eight or thirty-two bars, improvised at the moment, but Chick's phenomenal musical memory kept it with him.

In early 1938 Chick Webb's band went into Levaggi's, a restaurant in Boston that had never before booked a jazz band, much less a colored one. The band did well. It came out of Levaggi's for one-nighters and theaters and went back for the early summer. When it returned it was an established band. "A-Tisket, A-Tasket," Ella's general idea for a swing-nursery rhyme, particularized by Van Alexander, had swept the country, and Chick's and Ella's record had been the brush that swept it. On the back of "A-Tisket" was "Liza," a fortunate coupling that showed off Chick's drumming and helped make the little man almost as famous as his singer. In August the band went into the New York Paramount Theatre. The future was assured. The scuffling was over.

But Chick was sick. He'd been sick for sixteen years and wouldn't admit it. Tuberculosis of the spine, seriously complicated by a misery-making case of piles, was moving through his small hunchbacked body. When the band went into the Park Central Hotel in New York—the first colored band ever to play it—in December 1938 Chick was in bad shape. When it left that spot for the Paramount again, in February, 1939, Chick was so sick he used to faint after shows. But he still wouldn't admit it. "I'm gonna be *so* well in another couple of months," he'd say. The band went off on an ill-advised tour of one-nighters, just after it had played its last New York date under Chick at the Apollo. Chick was so sick he almost always appeared with a literally gray face. But he was looking forward to a stationary summer spot. "Besides," he said, "I've gotta keep my guys working."

The last engagement Chick Webb ever played was on a riverboat just outside of Washington. He was so miserably ill then that he had to be rushed to the Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore—"just for a check-up," Chick insisted. He wouldn't let his publicity man give the news to the press. "I'm tired of them always reading about me being sick in bed," Chick said.

He was operated upon on the ninth of June, 1939. The doctors knew he wouldn't live and marveled at his ability to hold on through the week until the sixteenth. Chick was determined to live. But finally he realized his condition. On Friday he told his valet to "go home and get some sleep, 'cause I know I'm going." The valet tried to argue with him. But Chick knew the answer that always quieted his faithful valet-chauffeur and assistant-in-chief. "Ain't I the boss?" he asked. The valet went home.

At eight o'clock on the evening of the sixteenth, with his relatives and close friends around him, Chick asked his mother to raise him up. Raised, he faced everybody in the room, grinned, jutted his jaw, and announced cockily, "I'm sorry! I gotta go!"—and died.

Chick Webb left a formidable musical record behind him. He left vital memories and strong affections, but most of all he left a tradition of faith in his men and the music they played, of faith in himself and responsibility to all who worked and played with him, a tradition of musicianship and leadership.

Chapter 15

DUKE ELLINGTON

When one generalizes in writing or talking about jazz, one must always make an exception of one man. Whether the generalization is of time or place or prevailing attitude, it rarely fits the special case of Duke Ellington. In the first years of his career he and his musicians played the blues, and his particular piano style was clearly ragtime, but the total effect of the music he wrote and played at the time cannot be so neatly categorized. He took a serious beating in the years leading up to the depression, but he sailed serenely through the most bedeviled years in the modern era when jazz and its musicians were taking an unholy ruffing. He profited by the enthusiasms and rediscoveries of the swing era, but he had long been recognized as a serious musician by the time Benny Goodman came along. As a composer of large stature and the leader of an incomparable organization of talented individuals, he had been favorably received almost from the day he stepped into the Cotton Club in December 1927. The achievement was unmistakable; no such transformation of the basic and elemental in jazz had ever before been offered.

Duke started out to be a painter and achieved sufficient distinction in the medium in high school to be offered a scholarship to Pratt Institute in New York. But in 1917, before he turned eighteen, he left high school; in just a few months he would have graduated, but the lure of music was too much to be denied. To begin with he was strictly a ragtime pianist, imitating the flashy look of Luckey Roberts as he lifted his hands in wide arcs from

the keyboard, imitating the striking sound of all the ragtime pianists he heard around his native Washington. He had not had much training beyond a few lessons at the piano from his mother, which began at the age of seven, and some instruction in the rudiments of music by Henry Grant, his music teacher in high school, who noticed that the boy had a fresh interest in melody and an originality in his harmonization of tunes. Duke learned more playing his first job at the Poodle Dog Cafe, where he composed his first tune, "The Soda Fountain Rag." Whenever possible he used to play at a local lodge hall with the other youngsters in his part of town who were learning the obvious and the devious ins and outs of improvised jazz. Among his associates at the True Reformers Hall in 1917 and the next two years were Toby Hardwick, who was playing bass fiddle then, Arthur Whetsel, the cornetist, who was a premedical student at Howard University, and the banjoist Elmer Snowden. Whenever possible Duke played one of the five pianos in Russell Wooding's huge band, a strictly commercial organization that had little use for Duke's fanciful ideas. His great fun was playing with the little bands, the gig outfits that played the choice one-nighters that popped up from time to time, especially on weekends, around Washington. He played with such bands as those led by Lewis Thomas, Daniel Doy, and Oliver Perry, better known as Doc. Duke learned much from all of them, but most from Perry, who was most encouraging. While playing with Doc, Duke put an ad in the telephone book explaining that he was available, like Doc and Thomas and Doy and Meyer Davis, for all sorts of musical engagements. Duke got his share of jobs and began to shape his personnel; he shifted Toby Hardwick to C-melody saxophone, and moved Whetsel, Snowden, three brothers named Miller, and a drummer behind him. William Greer, known variously as Little Willie and Sonny, came to town to play at the Howard Theatre in the pit band and soon after quit to join Duke. Then they all quit Washington to join the bandleader Wilbur Sweatman in New York; Sweatman had sent for Sonny, but

Sonny wasn't being sent for unless he could bring Toby and Duke along with him. The job with Sweatman was short-lived—once again Duke's irrepressible improvisation got him fired—but the Ellingtonians had discovered New York, and Washington was never again more to them than the place where they were born and did their first playing.

In 1923, the year after the frustrating experience with Sweatman, four of them were sent for again, this time by Fats Waller, who had met them when he played with a burlesque show in Washington in the spring of that year. Duke went back up to New York with Toby, Sonny, Whetsel, and Snowden; their anticipations were high. When they got to New York they found bad news awaiting them: there were only promises, no job. But then the singer and mistress of ceremonies, Ada Smith, stepped in. Known as Bricktop—the name under which she later opened a very successful nightclub in Paris—she had a reputation and she had connections. She got the boys a job at a night club run by a politician and man-about-Harlem, Barron Wilkins. Barron's was a sumptuous and select uptown club, patronized by the downtown great of show business, by Harlem's own Bert Williams, and by Jack Johnson, the heavyweight champion. Barron's was in a basement at One Hundred and Thirty-fourth Street and Seventh Avenue but, according to the musicians who began to drop in regularly to hear the Washingtonians, Duke and his boys raised the roof. They played much rousing jazz and won their followers that way; they kept them with their soft and subtle transmutations of blues and ragtime phrases. Their clothes matched the rough jazz; their personalities, especially their speech, were more like the handsomely fashioned quiet music they played. They were naturals for Broadway with such an intriguing combination of the loud and the soft in music and manner; six months after they opened at Barron's they moved into the Hollywood Cafe at Forty-ninth Street and Broadway.

At the Hollywood they were once again taken up by show folk. Once again their variations on traditional jazz themes caught hold. The variations were more spectacular

at the Hollywood, which shortly after their arrival was renamed the Kentucky Club. They had a solid rhythm section, with the addition of silent, self-assured guitarist Freddie Guy. They had what they called a "jungle-istic" voice in the trombone of Charlie Irvis, who growled gruffly and suggestively on his horn, using a large bottle cap for a mute. Playing at a place called the Kentucky, playing jungle-istic music, they were ripe for the attention of Bohemia and Park Avenue, then both suddenly enthusiastic about the talents of the Negro—rooted, they thought, in the jungle.

Bubber Miley joined up in late 1924 with his extraordinary variety of growls, more reliable and controllable than Irvis's, with the aid of a plumber's plunger as a mute. Bubber had a ready smile and a chortling laugh and got both into his trumpet playing. He was a New Yorker who had grown up with Bobby Stark, Freddy Jenkins, and Benny Carter in the rough setting they called the Jungle on Sixty-second Street, but James Miley had learned a lot about the South from his mother and had listened long to the music of Southern Negroes. From a spiritual, a hosanna, that his mother had sung, he constructed the lovely melody which was his solo in his own "Black and Tan Fantasy," one of the first great successes of the Ellingtonians. From the sound of trains and the conversations in them, from the sound of organs and choirs and Negro churches, from the general hubbub of night clubs and the particular cries and grunts of nightclubbers, from anything and everything he heard around him, Bubber made his music. Duke was making what he called "conversation music" and was well aware of its potential qualities, and he knew too that his best talker was Bubber Miley. Bubber set the style which Joe Nanton enlarged when he joined the band for its short stay at the Plantation Club between engagements at the Kentucky, in the spring of 1926.

They called Joe Nanton "Tricky Sam," in amazed admiration of the ease with which he got out of hard work. He joined several months after Cootie Williams,

replacing Charlie Irvis; they were both set the task of imitating the eminent growlers who more than anybody else gave the Ellington music its striking identification. Tricky was a charmer with a high-pitched voice and a stream of facts, gleaned from the World Almanac and other reference works, with which he was glad to amaze you once you broke down his shyness. Cootie was a handsome man who had come to New York from Mobile, Alabama, in 1928 with Alonzo Ross's band, and had played briefly with Chick Webb. He had a husky bass voice that sometimes sounded like the trumpet growls he was learning to master. Both Tricky and Cootie made magnificent contributions to the records Duke was beginning to make in large numbers in the late twenties. Bubber continued to make records with Duke after he left the band, so that Cootie wasn't heard until early 1929 by the large audience that was buying Ellington records. Tricky began to record with the band as soon as it moved to the Vocalion label in late 1926, after it had made a series of rather ordinary sides for Perfect, Gennett, and Silvertone.

From the first Vocalion side, the band's theme, "East St. Louis Toodle-oo," its own special qualities were apparent. The "Toodle-oo" was Bubber's, a definitive demonstration of his growing melodic line, here a kind of middle-tempo plaint in which the accents were those of speech—a mildly demonstrative, elegantly phrased speech. The Ellington musicians knew that "Toodle-oo" was something special, and they recorded it again and again, for Vocalion, for Brunswick, for Columbia, for Victor. They knew that Bubber's "Black and Tan Fantasy" was a musical achievement too, and they gave it several plays in different recording studios. The appropriately named "Fantasy" shifted mood several times, chiefly to make room for the various plunger effects of Bubber and Tricky. In all of the Ellington versions of this adventure in musical—and, be it admitted, racial—colors, the original pattern was followed: the melodic phrases fashioned by Duke and Bubber gave way to growl

solos by Bubber or later by Cootie Williams or, still later, by Ray Nance, then by Tricky; the growl solos gave way to the ironic quotation of the theme of the Funeral March movement of Chopin's B-flat-minor piano sonata. The concluding bit of Chopin was Duke's bittersweet racial philosophy. To him, as to so many children all over America, it was the melody usually sung with the words, "Where will we all be a hundred years from now?"

Harry Carney joined the band in June 1926, on a one-nighter just outside Boston, and used his high school playing experience to great effect in the enlarged saxophone section, first as an alto saxist, then as the best of the baritone saxophonists, when Duke recorded for Victor in October of that year. On two sides, "Creole Love Call" and "The Blues I Love to Sing," the saxes played lovely obligatos for the lovely soprano voice of Adelaide Hall, whose wordless vocal on the "Love Call" was almost an obligato in itself. Adelaide Hall made only two other sides with Duke, tunes from the *Blackbirds Revue* in 1933, but her measured amatory acrobatics were enough to make her 1927 collaboration with Duke a jazz classic.

The band recorded first as Duke Ellington and His Kentucky Club Orchestra, then dropped the cabaret identification, but when it was such a signal success as a last-minute replacement for King Oliver at the Cotton Club uptown in 1927, it became obligatory to name its new playing home on records. Under the names of Duke Ellington and His Cotton Club Orchestra, the Whoopee Makers, the Harlem Footwarmers, Six Jolly Jesters, the Ten Blackberries, and simply Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, it recorded steadily, regularly, and wonderfully from 1927 to 1932. There were significant additions to the band, most notably in 1928 when Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges, and Freddy Jenkins joined up. Barney, who was born in 1906 in New Orleans, had studied with the great New Orleans teachers, the Tio brothers, had played with King Oliver and Charlie Elgar in Chicago after leaving New Orleans, and had also put in some time with Luis Russell before joining Duke, with whom he stayed twelve years. His impeccable clarinet playing in person and on such record sides as "The Mooche," "Blue Light," "Subtle Lament," and more particularly "Clarinet Lament" gave the New Orleans conception of his instrument a new life and a varied expression. Johnny Hodges, born the same year as Barney, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, had played some around Boston and with Chick Webb before joining Duke, had listened assiduously to the playing of Sidney Bechet, and, with Ellington, developed an alto and soprano saxophone sound with which to express ideas like Bechet's. Called "Rabbit" by the Ellingtonians because of his amusing facial resemblance to a bunny, Johnnny's playing suggested nothing so cute, though he was capable of a delightful lilt when it fitted. Essentially, however, his was the band's elegant voice; with an awesome technical ease and an incomparable beauty of saxophone sound, he traveled up and down and around melodic lines, scooping pitch in his own unique way, but never, in those days, lapsing into empty sound. Freddy Jenkins the band called "Posey" because of his elaborate gestures and grimaces when he took a solo. He was a left-handed trumpet player with a real gift for soft muted solos and a flashy talent too on hand cymbals, which he used as a clattering commentary in the band's more effervescent moments.

While Duke was at the Cotton Club he and his band made a movie short subject called, after the music it featured, *Black and Tan Fantasy*, in which the mood of Bubber's piece was made visual with a considerable use of low-key lighting. In 1930 the band journeyed out to Hollywood to play a part in Amos and Andy's first movie, *Check and Double Check*, and to feel individually insecure in the simulated atmosphere that surrounded the two black-faced white men, even though the players were treated as visiting celebrities on the RKO lot. They were celebrities: in Europe their records were being listened to and written about as works of art; in the United States, when jazz was given critical attention, Duke was always singled out along with Louis Armstrong to exemplify the

best of the native music. By 1932, when Lawrence Brown and Ivy Anderson joined the band, "hot collectors," as those who were building jazz record libraries were being called, were getting into vigorous arguments over the merits of the new additions and that of 1929, Juan Tizol. Lawrence, who had studied science at Pasadena Junior College and played with the Les Hite band when Louis Armstrong fronted it, was a further confirmation of Duke's growing taste for a languorous and luxurious music which had first been demonstrated when Tizol was hired. Tizol was a Puerto Rican who played the valve trombone with symphonic brilliance; he sweetened the sound of the brass section and also brought into the band Latin-American rhythmic accents, not in his trombone playing but in his shaking of the maracas, the rattling gourds which several other Ellingtonians quickly picked up. The addition of Lawrence brought the band a musician who could play sweet or hot, whose vast technique and big tone permitted him to extract any and all the possible playing effects from the sides of his trombone, from beautiful ballads to bumptious two-beat jazz. There could be no doubt about the over-all quality of the Ellington orchestra after the additions of 1932. The individual musicianship and colors of his six brass, four saxes, and rhythm gave Duke for the first time an adequate palette with which to express his matured ideas. Now, too, he had a singing voice always there, always ready, always good.

It was Ivy Anderson's fortune to have a voice and a personality that fitted an orchestra and an era so tightly that she was and will be remembered as long as the music and the time are remembered. Her life, like her songs, was a medley, a puzzling mixture. She was born in Oklahoma and educated at a convent in California, and she was as sophisticated a singer as jazz has produced. She had had some serious vocal coaching and sang in night clubs and revues, including *Shuffle Along*. With her neat coiffure, her impeccable clothes, her refined and delicate features, and her exquisite manner went an improper, rough voice, an impudent gesture, a sardonic smile that, in bewildering combination, tumbled audience after audience into her lap in the course of eleven years with Ellington.

She sang first, briefly, with Anson Weeks's band, and was featured at the Grand Terrace in Chicago. Then she joined Duke Ellington in February 1931. She left the Duke in 1942, suffering from asthma, the condition which killed her seven years later at the age of forty-five. After leaving Duke she worked irregularly; she made her final appearance in New York to raise the last few dollars necessary to buy an apartment house in Los Angles, which was to have been her security.

Since her departure there have been many other singers with Duke, some of merit, some just barely able to discharge their vocal responsibilities, but good or bad, successful or not, none has ever replaced Ivy. Her sound on records was that she made certain words and phrases indelible: "It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got that Swing," "Stormy Weather," "My Old Flame," "Oh, Babe! Maybe Someday," "It Was a Sad Night in Harlem," "All God's Chillun Got Rhythm," "A Lonely Co-ed," "Killin' Myself," "I Got It Bad and that Ain't Good," "Rocks in My Bed"—those are Ivy's songs. They are her songs not because she sang them first with Ellington, but because she embraced them, hugged them tight, possessed them, and then shared them with her listeners.

Ivy sang "Stormy Weather" in the *Cotton Club Parade* of 1933, as they called the annual show at Harlem's most important night club; she also sang "Raisin' the Rent," "Happy as the Day Is Long," and "Get Yourself a New Broom." These fine songs, written by lyricist Ted Koehler and composer Harold Arlen, were typical of the music Duke recorded when he wasn't recording his own brilliant compositions. His chief provender, however, during the Cotton Club years, were his own three-minute masterpieces. His soloists made many contributions in the way of little figures, two-to eight-bar phrases, around which Duke could score a whole composition. "Sophisticated Lady," for example, the famous coupling on records with "Stormy Weather," was mostly Toby Hardwick's tune,

which Duke whipped into a thirty-two-bar chorus and made into a smash hit. Bubber's lovely "Black Beauty" was material both for the band and for a charming piano solo in which Duke wove tricky, raggy, endlessly inventive variations around the Miley theme. Harry Carney contributed "Rockin' in Rhythm," an extraordinary rhythmic exercise like Duke's own "Jubilee Stomp," "Saratoga Swing," and "Saturday Night Function." In the six minutes of the two sides of "Tiger Rag," the band sounded more like Fletcher Henderson's than Duke Ellington's, but the solos by Freddy Jenkins, Barney, Carney, Johnny Hodges, Bubber, and Tricky were Duke's voices and sounded like nobody else's. There were the mood pieces, in which plaintive melodies were given apposite sonorities, soft clarinet, low muted trumpet, restrained growls inflected as if they were heartfelt sobs. "Misty Mornin' " and "When a Black Man's Blue" are typical of the mood pieces; "Mood Indigo" is the most famous of them, with its exquisite combination of trumpet and trombone, both muted, and the clarinet in its lowest register. On the two sides of the twelve-inch recording of "Creole Rhapsody," Duke served notice that he was not forever to be content with the three-minute form. Still, through the thirties, Duke's medium was the ten-inch record, and to it he adapted all his composing ideas and skills. It is difficult to think of such tightly molded pieces as "Echoes of the Jungle," "The Mystery Song," and "Blue Ramble" as anything longer or shorter than they are; each orchestral statement, each solo is precisely where and as long as it should be.

Duke's success was almost without limits; certainly no jazz band of this quality sold so many records or pleased so many audiences. To most jazz musicians there was a kind of infallibility about the Ellington band; they regarded each new record as a definitive musical pronouncement. But Duke himself was not satisfied: there had been too many business complications; his organization had got too large for comfort; he wasn't at all sure that he had achieved anything much. Short of quitting, there seemed only one expedient measure, a trip to Europe. In the

spring of 1933 the Ellington band embarked for England, where it spent many weeks before a brief appearance in Paris. Everywhere he went Duke was received with such adulation and ceremony that it was inevitable he should rub noses (figuratively) and indeed play some jazz (literally) with two future Kings of England, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. The European trip gave him confidence again, made him realize that if his music could please discriminating audiences and stir controversy it was more than a complicated means of making a living. He came back to the United States set to double or triple his activity.

In the autumn of 1933 Duke took his band south for its first trip into the world of rigid double standards. To everybody's delight, the band was received as it had been in Europe. The marks of racial discrimination were unmistakable, but the band was not affected much more than it had been in England, where there had been one or two minor incidents.

After this very successful Southern tour, Duke went out to Hollywood to make a couple of movies for Paramount and to play at Sebastian's Cotton Club, where Lawrence Brown had got his start in the Les Hite band. In the mystery-musical film, *Murder at the Vanities*, the band played its own variation on Coslow's and Johnston's variation on Liszt's "Second Hungarian Rhapsody," renamed "Ebony Rhapsody." In short appearances in Mae West's *Belle of the Nineties* it took two lovely songs, "Troubled Waters" and "My Old Flame," and made them lovelier with the help of Ivy Anderson. The band also played some fine music in a short film, *Symphony in Black*, which apart from the Ellingtonians was nothing more than a rehearsal of Negro stereotypes.

On the way out to the Coast, in Chicago, the band recorded Duke's musical trainride, "Daybreak Express," which integrated railroad sounds and music more successfully and less synthetically than the French composer Arthur Honegger did in his famous "Pacific 231." Some of the success of the swinging express was its necessary com-

pression to fit the three-minute record form; once again Duke took advantage of a mechanical limitation. Another important recording made in Chicago was "Solitude," which, coming so soon after "Sophisticated Lady" and rivaling the latter's success, added much to the public's conviction that Duke was one of its favorite composers of popular songs. After Hollywood, in the fall of 1934, Duke made one of his many switches from one record company to another, back to Brunswick from Victor. He recorded "Solitude" again. "Moonglow," a song based on one of his own figures but accruing royalties for another composer. Toby's lovely "In a Sentimental Mood," and two brassy little triumphs, "Showboat Shuffle" and "Merry-Go Round." In September 1935 he reached the magnificent climax of his first decade of recording with the two records of a four-part composition, "Reminiscing in Tempo."

The title, "Reminiscing in Tempo," is a clue to the piece's construction. It rambles rhythmically over a series of related melodies. In it Duke reminisces about jazz and the places in which jazz can be played and all the things that can be done with jazz. He also soliloquizes, as he has explained, beginning the ramble "with pleasant thoughts." Then, he says, "something gets you down." The end comes when "you snap out of it, and it ends affirmatively." Something did get Duke down; his mother had died in May of the same year. Something did snap him out of it; the coming of the swing era brought Duke a larger audience and, if possible, a more intense interest in every twist and turn and divagation of his music. "Reminiscing in Tempo" was greeted with an astonishing furor of praise and condemnation. Some found Duke's reminiscing inflated, even pretentious, a lamentable departure from the three-minute form in which he had been so notably successful. Others, those who crowded the Urban Room of the Congress Hotel in Chicago in the spring of 1936, those who wore out copy after copy of the two-record "Reminiscing," cheered the adventurousness of the work and listened long and hard enough to discover

more expansive and better-developed form in all the qualities that had endeared Ellington to them.

It was for this second audience that Duke ordered his concertos, three minutes in length but, like "Reminiscing in Tempo," more ambitious in form. Barney's concerto was "Clarinet Lament"; Cootie's, "Echoes of Harlem." When the first two concertos did well, Duke fashioned two others, "Trumpet in Spades" for Rex Stewart, who had brought his perky cornet into the band in 1934, and "Yearning for Love," which didn't exhibit Lawrence Brown's capacious talents nearly as well as the earlier "Sheik of Araby" or the later "Rose of the Rio Grande." For his disapproving, mildly disaffected fans, Duke provided a series of good old-fashioned jam sessions, "In a Jam," "Uptown Downbeat," "Harmony in Harlem," and revived his very earliest jazz pieces, "East St. Louis Toodle-oo" and "The Birmingham Breakdown," to both of which he affixed the adjective "new."

Swing had come along in 1935, apparently to stay forever. In celebration of the enthusiastic jazz revival, Duke named two of his works "Exposition Swing" and "Stepping into Swing Society." It was difficult to decide who had stepped into whose society, but clearly the Ellington musicians were at home in the new music. Other bands noisily claimed swing as their very own, but every musician who played big-band jazz knew that almost his every phrase had in some way been shaped by Duke Ellington and his musicians.

Chapter 16

SWING

On February 2, 1932, Duke Ellington brought his Famous Orchestra, as the record labels have it, into a New York studio to record three sides. One of them became a jazz classic, "Lazy Rhapsody." One of them, "Moon Over Dixie," had almost no interest for Ellington fans, then or now. One of them, "It Don't Mean a Thing if It Ain't Got that Swing," named the whole era that was to follow in three years. Ivy Anderson sang it with all the strength and joy which her first work on records had to have; in her swinging singing and the band's similar playing the title was handsomely demonstrated. In December 1935 a bright little novelty record, with almost no discernible meaning except the implicit joy in its title and the execution of the meaning thereof, inaugurated modern jazz in general and the first few years of it in particular. The record was Eddie Farley's and Mike Riley's "The Music Goes 'Round and 'Round"; the era which was beginning was called Swing.

Maybe it was the swing away from the worst years of the depression that made the Christmas of 1935 the logical time to start the new era. Maybe the American people, or that group interested in the dance anyway, had had enough of Guy Lombardo and Hal Kemp and all the more pallid versions of jazz. Maybe this was simply proof that jazz would never die as long as fresh talent was available. Whatever the reason, it was the freshness of the music that Benny Goodman and his musicians played that made swing as inevitable as the success of "The Music Goes

'Round and 'Round" was incalculable. Benny was the logical man to take charge of the new music. Of all the talented musicians who came out of Chicago, he was clearly the most polished, the most assured, the most persuasive stylist. Of all the instruments with which one could logically front a jazz band, his was the last to reach public favor. Of all the clarinetists to achieve esteem, if only among jazz musicians, he was clearly the most generally able and specifically facile.

Before Benny, Sidney Bechet and Johnny Dodds and Jimmy Noone had established certain procedures, but none of them, in spite of their individual and collective inabilities and skills, had the kind of sound that made Benny's success so certain. Popular success in the band business has, like popular success in so many other kinds of popular culture in America, always depended upon some novelty interest. Benny's graceful, skillful maneuvering of clarinet keys certainly had such interest to dancers and listeners alike in 1935. It didn't matter what he played—"The Dixieland Band" or "Hooray for Love," "King Porter Stomp" or "Yankee Doodle Never Went to Town"—it was that infectious compound of lovely sound and moving beat that made Benny his large audiences. Sound and beat were both fashioned over many years of playing experience, most notably on the records with Ben Pollack from 1926 to 1931, and then with various bands such as Red Nichols and the Whoopie Makers, Irving Mills' Hotsy Totsy Gang, Jack Pettis, and various combinations under Benny's own name. When Benny became a success as a band leader he could look back to a career that was traditional for jazz and had ranged over most of the possible styles of the middle and late twenties and early thirties. His playing experience moved all the way from short-pants imitations of Ted Lewis to every possible kind of dance, radio studio, night club, ballroom, and one-nighter job. None of the problems he had to face were new to him.

Benny Goodman's first impact upon the country at large was the third hour, which Benny had all to himself, of the

three-hour National Biscuit program which was sent over the National Broadcasting Company network every Saturday night. Working with most of New York's first-rate white jazzmen, with many of whom he had shared stands before, Benny put together a startlingly good band for radio. He had made records with the Teagardens, trumpeter Manny Klein, Joe Sullivan, Artie Bernstein, and Gene Krupa; his standards were high. In his broadcasting orchestra he had the trombonist Jack Lacey, the lead alto saxophonist Hymie Schertzer, Claude Thornhill on piano, and George Van Eps on guitar. After a dismal showing at Billy Rose's Music Hall, a theater-restaurant which was distinctly not the right setting for his kind of music, he put together a band with which to go out on the road, and improved on his radio personnel. Gene Krupa became his drummer, Jess Stacy his pianist, Ralph Muzillo and Nate Kazebier his trumpeters. Though his saxophones and trombones were something less than the combinations of the best musicians that his previous recordings had suggested he might have, as sections they were well disciplined and swinging, on the whole the abiding virtues of the Goodman band that played the music called swing.

"Swing," as some of us knew then and all of us know now, was just another name for jazz; it was a singularly good descriptive term for the beat that lies at the center of jazz. It certainly described the quality Benny's band had. With Fletcher Henderson as his chief arranger, Benny's music had a quality that only the very great big bands had had before, and it reached more people than jazz had ever dreamed of for an audience. Fletcher's writing was such, so tight, so adroitly scored in its simplicity, that each of the sections sounded like a solo musician; the collective effect was of a jam session. With such an effect, it was possible to record essentially dreary material like "Goody Goody" and "You Can't Pull the Wool over My Eyes" and give it something more than a veneer of jazz quality. A big-band style was set that was never lost again, as the distinguished qualities of New Orleans and Chicago jazz had been, at least to the public at large, after

their peak periods. After the emergence of the Goodman band, all but the most sickly commercial bands tightened their ensembles, offered moments of swinging section performance and even a solo or two that were jazz-infected. Kay Kyser, in his last years as a working bandleader, hired Sam Bernardi to lead his saxes, and Noni, who had played alto with Tommy Dorsey, Bob Crosby, Charlie Barnet, and Benny for a while, converted not only his reeds but the band itself from a series of ticks and glisses into a dance orchestra of some distinction, with jazz inflections that had some of us looking forward to each new record. When Harry James became a successful trumpeter-leader as a result of a crinoline and molasses version of "You Make Me Love You," the essential swing style was preserved and some first-rate jazz sandwiched in between nagging laments and rhapsodies and pseudo-concertos for trumpet and orchestra. Charlie Spivak paid occasional respects to his jazz background, and there was some fair jazz in the music of the Dorsey Brothers after they split up and led their separate bands; in the band of the ex-society leader, Al Donahue; in radio studio groups; even in more than a few territory bands, those minor-league outfits that build a name and a public only within an easily negotiable geographical area.

Benny's success was far more than a personal one; his influence was lasting; his way was others' too. When Benny turned a poor road trip into a jubilant roar of approval at the Hollywood Palomar Ballroom, the cheers were not only for his band but also for the school of jazz it represented. Other bands playing music even vaguely related to Benny's were almost equally well received for a while, and it became expedient to identify one's jazz as "swing." Fortunately some of the bands that benefited from Benny's success were deserving, and a few of them developed and expanded the way of playing jazz called "swing."

Bob Crosby, Bing's singing younger brother, took over the distinguished remnants of the Ben Pollack band in 1934, and it, more than any other band, large or small, brought New Orleans jazz back to life. Bob had as his

band's centerpiece one of the best musicians ever turned out by that city, Eddie Miller, and, to match Eddie's tenor, Matty Matlock's clarinet; Yank Lawson's trumpet; Nappy Lamare's personality, vocals, and guitar; Bob Haggart's bass; and Ray Bauduc's drums. After the demise of the band the Dorseys led together in 1935, Tommy turned soft-spoken ballads into a big business and Jimmy tried several things, finding their chief musical success with a semi-Dixie style built around Ray McKinley's drums, and box office appeal with alternately up-tempo and medium or slow vocal choruses by Helen O'Connell and Bob Eberle. Charlie Barnet, who had had a New York playing and recording career like Benny's, if shorter, moved a step beyond the others in his band's performances of Duke Ellington manuscript; and Woody Herman, identified like Charlie with the squat little Fifty-second Street bandbox, the Famous Door, played the blues and pops and sang standards handsomely.

Fifty-second Street came to enthusiastic life shortly before Benny bowled over the Coast and then took over Chicago. The lifeblood in his trio and quartet, Teddy Wilson, had been an interlude pianist at the old Famous Door, across the street from Barnet's and Herman's later headquarters. The kind of performance Benny's small units made popular after Teddy drove out to Chicago to play a concert with the Goodman musicians in March 1936 was a Fifty-second-Street session: any number of instruments short of a big band could be combined as long as the beat was steady and the time allotted solos expansive. There were all kinds of groups along Fifty-second Street's two playing blocks in the thirties and early forties: Red McKenzie and Eddie Condon, together and apart, at first with Bunny Berigan, then with the cast that became Nick's permanent two-beat repertory company, Pee Wee Russell, Max Kaminsky, Wild Bill Davison, George Brunies, and George Wettling; Fats Waller, before Benny hit and carried him along with the others who played that kind of music; John Kirby, an Onyx fixture with Charlie Shavers, Buster Bailey, Billy Kyle, and O'Neil Spencer, the

Spirits of Rhythm, and Frankie Newton's band; singers like Billie Holiday and pianists like Art Tatum, who eventually became the Street's major luminaries. Perhaps the most significant of all the bands was the one that, even more than the Goodman band, typified, expanded, and carried swing forward—Count Basie's.

The Red Bank, New Jersey, pianist William Basie, who had started as a drummer, had become a Kansas City jazzman, working with Bennie Moten, then with his own twelve-piece band at the Reno Club. Benny Goodman and John Hammond heard the band out of a short-wave station, W9XBY, recognized extraordinary skills in the jumping rhythm section and the fresh patterns of Lester Young's tenor solos. With Benny's help, John, the most articulate and influential of the jazz critics of the thirties, did something about it. Basie moved to the Grand Terrace in Chicago, made records for Decca, and came on to New York's Roseland Ballroom in 1936. He picked up fans and followers as he went from club to record date to ballroom; the best of the swing styles was clearly his; the bridge to later jazz was built.

The illustrious solo moments of the Basie band were those of Lester Young on tenor and Harry Edison on trumpet, but they weren't fully appreciated until some years after the band had passed its peak. The real star was what Paul Whiteman called Count's "All-American Rhythm Section" in a 1942 article in *Collier's*, selecting the best musicians in jazz. Freddy Green was a guitar rock; Joe Jones' drum tempos and Walter Page's bass intonation were neither as steady nor as consistent; and Basie himself provided only piano decoration, albeit charming. It was a unit, however, one which took fire from Joe's cymbals and warmth from Walter's strings, got good guitar time, and was capable of sustaining a string of choruses all by itself, with the titled head of the band and the section tinkling on the off-beats. "I don't know what it is," one of the Basie veterans once said. "Count don't play nothing, but it sure sounds good!"

There were others in the band who sounded good, too:

Benny Morton, whose trombone was languorous always and often lovely; Dickie Wells, who made funny noises up to fetching phrases on the same instrument; Vic Dickenson, who carried the sliding humor further. The famous Basie trumpeter when the band was most famed, from 1936 through 1942, was Buck Clayton, whose identifying grace was delicacy. When joined with a subdued Lester and Dickie and the rhythm section for a Cafe Society Uptown engagement, Buck's muted trumpet set the style for the small band within the large and pointed to Basie's major achievement: the ability to keep the roar implicit and the beat suggestive. At other times, it was all ebullience, a genial fire stoked by rotund Jimmy Rushing's robust blues shouting, the brass section's stentor and the saxes' strength. Men like the late Al Killian, of the leathery lungs, passed through the trumpet section. Tab Smith, an insinuating alto saxist of the Hodges school, replaced Earl Warren, the band's original ballad singer and lush reed voice, for a while. Several tenors tried at various times to duplicate the furry sound of Hershal Evans, who died early in the band's big-time career—most notably and durably Buddy Tate. Jack Washington was a baritone player of some distinction—and power, the key quality of an organization that for a while blasted every other band out of the way.

Jimmie Lunceford's showy musicians moved into prominence earlier than the Basie musicians—and moved out earlier. With the death of Lunceford in Oregon on July 12, 1947, the last edition of a once-great organization, already fading badly, was washed out completely. But the style remains, firmly embedded within the grooves of a select number of phonograph records.

Jimmie, a Fisk University graduate, recruited the nucleus of his first band at a Memphis high school, where he was an athletic instructor. He picked up Sy Oliver in the early thirties and his style was set, never to vary importantly until his and his band's demise. That style, sooner or later, influenced almost every important band in jazz. It was the most effective utilization of two-beat accents

discovered by any jazzman; it made a kind of impressive last gasp for dying Dixieland, with its heavy anticipations, its almost violently strong and whispering weak beats, its insistent, unrelenting syncopation.

There were about eight years of prime Lunceford, beginning with the Cotton Club engagement the band played in 1934, ending with the exodus from the band of Willie Smith in 1942. At first the band played flashy, stiff instrumentals in the Casa Loma manner, such Will Hudson specials as "White Heat" and "Jazznocracy." These and other Hudson pieces were used in turn by Glen Gray's Casa Loma Orchestra, a group of Canadian musicians who excited some enthusiasm in the year just before Benny Goodman took over, more because of their shrewd balance of ballads and mechanical jazz than because of any real musical quality. When Sy Oliver became Jimmie's chief arranger in 1935, the parade of two-beat specials most irresistibly associated with Lunceford's name began: "My Blue Heaven," "For Dancers Only," "Margie," "Four or Five Times," "Swanee River," "Organ Grinder Swing," "Cheatin' on Me," " 'Taint What You Do," "Baby, Won't You Please Come Home," etc. Bill Moore, Jr., showed up to replace Sy when the latter left to join Tommy Dorsey; Bill left a vital impression on the band's books with his "Belgium Stomp," "Chopin Prelude," "Monotony in Four Flats," and "I Got It" (the last backed on records by Mary Lou Williams sensitive "What's Your Story, Morning Glory").

Coupled with the instrumental style of the band, which, much as it emphasized its hacking two-beat, depended upon section precision, was a singing manner. Jimmie's boys whispered, wheedled, cozened, rather than sang. Out of the first husky efforts of the Lunceford Trio (Sy, Willie, guitarist Al Norris) grew the individual vocalists, Oliver and Smith, Joe Thomas, later Trummy Young. Their rhythmic attack at a low volume held a brilliance of innuendo which never failed to grab an audience's attention (for example, Trummy's "Margie," Sy's "Four or Five Times," Willie's "I Got It," Joe's "Baby, Won't You

Please Come Home" and "Dinah") as Jimmy Crawford's brilliant drumming grasped its pulse.

The band's soloists were always secondary to the arrangements in Lunceford's heyday, but some genuinely distinctive individual sounds did emerge from the group. Trummy Young played a wistful trombone. Willie Smith's agile, enthusiastic alto remains the most in favor, but there are tenormen who swear by Joe Thomas's soft tone, and those of us who followed the band eagerly in the mid-thirties remember with pleasure the solo trumpeting of Eddie Tompkins, who was killed in war maneuvers in 1941. Eddie can be remembered for other things, too: when the trumpet section consisted of his horn, Sy's, and first Tommy Stevenson's, then Paul Webster's, it was a high-flying unit, not only in the screeches it sometimes played in tune, but in its instrumental gymnastics, in its wild flinging of its three trumpets into the air in perfect unison.

At its zenith, Lunceford's was *the* show band, whether in its military formations on the stage or ballroom stand, in its multiple doubling of instrumentalists as singers, or its comparatively precise performances. Even after it passed from the serious consideration of musicians and critics as a contemporary jazz outfit, its old records retained interest, its old appearances stirred a nostalgic tear. Jimmie never did much more than wave a willowy baton, smile tentatively, and announce the names of his soloists and singers, but he held title to one of the genuinely distinctive swing bands.

Some of the powerhouse quality of the Lunceford band was picked up by its most slavish imitator, Erskine Hawkins and the Bama State Collegians. The self-styled Gabriel of the trumpet never did as much with the youngsters he brought from Alabama State University to New York as he might have. But he was luckier than most of the men who brought flashy outfits into New York for one or two or a dozen appearances in the late thirties and early forties, to leave an impression of crude strength and undeveloped talent and no more; he at least made enough of a reputation to be confused with Coleman Hawkins by some of the unknowing; he had a hit record grow out of one of his band's original works, "Tuxedo Junction." The Jeter-Pilar band came in from St. Louis several times and always charmed its listeners, but never had the soloists or the scores to make the charm linger. The Sunshine Serenaders came in from Florida and made a lot of attractive noise, but never with an identity all its own. The Harlan Leonard band blew in from Kansas City, and its breezy airs and brassy competence, coupled with the booming impression of the Jay McShann band and Count Basie, gave the impression for a while that there was such a thing as a Kansas City "style." But when these were compared with the Andy Kirk band, so very different really, so much more timid, so much more a matter of Mary Lou Williams' writing and playing talents, the style disappeared along with the comparison.

There was more of the Kansas City style—if Leonard and McShann and Basie were representative of it—in bands that had rarely if ever seen the Missouri metropolis. The massive Mills Blue Rhythm Band, bumping along behind the solos of Red Allen on trumpet and J. C. Higginbotham on trombone, was an example of this sort of jazz. Willie Bryant's swinging group of 1935 and 1936, with first Teddy Wilson, then Ram Ramirez on piano, with Puddin' Head Battle on trumpet, had much of the same spirit, some of it because of its leader's sprightly announcing and singing wit. The minor outfits—Billy Hicks and his Sizzling Six, Al Cooper's Savoy Sultans, Buddy Johnson's band—all had it in varying measure. Cab Calloway brought it when he began to fill out his sections with men like Milton Hinton on bass, Chu Berry on tenor, and Cozy Cole on drums in 1936 and 1937 and then Jonah Jones on trumpet a few years later. When Cab began to buy manuscript from men of the quality of Don Redman, he had a band to compete with Basie and Lunceford and even Ellington. If his box office could have matched his budget, if his personal public and the new band's following could have been coupled, his contribution to jazz his-

tory might have equaled his flamboyance and his fervor as a singer.

The white bands got the first swing customers; the Negro outfits followed close behind. About the same time that Basie was emerging as a national figure, so were the bands at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem—Teddy Hill's and Chick Webb's; so was Jimmie Lunceford, with his precision scoring and precision musicians; so was the band that Jimmie followed at the old Cotton Club, Duke Ellington's. Duke was almost as much in demand for rhythm and hot club concerts as Benny; his experiments, such as the four-part "Reminiscing in Tempo," were the subject of violent controversy among musicians and aficionados; his tone colors were adopted by all kinds of bands and musicians. Along with the Negro bands themselves, individual Negro musicians and singers were beginning to be accepted, even with white bands. Benny Goodman added Lionel Hampton to his trio and made it a quartet. Later, in the first of several reorganizations of personnel after short-lived retirement, Benny took on Cootie Williams and Sidney Catlett, and Charlie Christian was his featured guitarist and perhaps the very best musician he ever had.

Artie Shaw showed himself something more than an imitator of Benny when he signed Billie Holiday as his singer, and, though this was not an altogether successful arrangement, the hiring of Lips Page for Artie's comeback band in 1941 and Roy Eldridge in another return edition in 1944 proved entirely satisfactory on all counts. These were instances in which Artie's threats to revolutionize jazz and the business attendant upon the music leaped beyond words into inspired deeds. It was not always that way, partly because Artie's attempts at the sublime were undisciplined, partly because the sublime was not always accessible, even to the impeccably disciplined of jazz.

The first attempt, after an early success as a radio studio and jobbing clarinetist in New York, was with a combination of solo jazz instruments, rhythm section, and string quartet. In various combinations in 1936, it failed commercially, and musically too, because of a certain pro-

fective pallor that approached indifference. The new few editions of the stringless Shavians led to a simple swinging skill by 1938, best illustrated for the public by the fabulously successful recording of "Begin the Beguine," first demonstrated for musicians by the authority of soloists like Georgie Auld on tenor, Les Robinson on alto, Chuck Peterson and Bernie Privin on trumpet, and Artie himself on clarinet, with a formidable assist the next year by young Buddy Rich on drums. Then in the fall of 1939 Artie ran away from a choice engagement at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York, ran to Mexico because, he said, he was sick of the spectacle and the corruption of the jazz business. In a few months he was back with a lot of strings and at least one shrewdly chosen Mexican song, "Frenesi," which made his lush fiddle sound popular on records. With the strings, Artie made a variety of attractive dance records through 1942. With Billy Butterfield at first, then with Roy Eldridge; with Johnny Guarnieri on harpsichord at first, then with Dodo Marmarosa on piano, Artie recorded some small band jazz, riffy but fresh. The first group of small band sides made in 1940, the second made in 1945, joined to the 1938-1939 big-band jazz, represent Artie Shaw's swing contribution. Like his own playing, these alternately move and plod, occasionally catch fire and hold the torch brilliantly.

The accomplishment of the swing era, 1935-1940, is difficult to evaluate. Its achievement was of the magnitude of that in the New Orleans period. It found an audience for every variation on what was essentially the New Orleans-Chicago theme with an added Kansas City seasoning, and although some of the less talentel and more backward recipients of the success Benny Goodman brought them made ungrateful critical noises, they were restored to jazz life in the process. Nobody, least of all Benny himself, thought that a conclusion had been wrought and an end to the development of jazz accomplished. Some, as a matter of fact, musicians and audiences both, suddenly became aware of music outside jazz and became humble about the hot music, the improvisation, the beat. But, whatever the limi-

tations, the clichés, and the hollow repetitions, a new vitality had been discovered, continuity with Chicago had been established. Such was the conviction of vitality that, in 1950, when jazzmen were casting around again for a renewal of their forces and an enlargement of their audiences, they looked back with excited interest at the swing era—whatever the term "swing" itself meant, whatever the countless kinds of music that had masqueraded under its name.

Confusion surrounded the use of the two terms "swing" and "jazz" as soon as swing became popularly accepted. There was one school of thought, of which critic Robert Goffin was the most rabid exponent, that believed "swing" denoted the commercialization and prostitution of real jazz, that it had partly supplanted jazz, and that it consisted only of written arrangements played by big bands, whereas jazz consisted only of improvised music played by small bands. Another school of thought held that good jazz, whether played by one man or twenty, must have the fundamental quality of swing, a swinging beat, and could therefore legitimately be called swing, and that despite the different constructions put on the two terms by some critics, both words stood for the same musical idiom, the same rhythmic and harmonic characteristics, the same use of syncopation. Confusion regarding the meaning of the word "jazz" developed even among musicians themselves. A leader of a big band, telling you about his three trumpet players, for instance, would say, "This one plays the jazz," meaning that the man in question handled the improvised solos. Yet many musicians began to use the adjective "jazzy" to mean "corny," and some of them began to narrow down the meaning of the noun "jazz" to denote corn.

Before the word "swing" became popular there was none of this confusion. Fletcher Henderson and others played arrangements with big bands more than twenty years before the official arrival of swing as a jazz style, and nobody thought of calling his music anything but jazz. Yet during the swing era the same kind of music played by

big bands was considered by the Goffin school to be something apart from and interfering with jazz—just as, still later, the same type of critic deplored bebop and cool jazz and disparaged these developments in the evolution of jazz as departures from and betrayals of the pure tradition.

The truth is that there is absolutely no dividing line between swing and jazz. Roy Eldridge hit the crux of the matter at the height of the controversy. "Difference between jazz and swing? Hell, no, man," he said. "It's just another name. The music advanced, and the name advanced right along with it. Jazz is just something they called it a long time ago. I've got a six-piece band, and what we play is swing music. It's ridiculous to talk about big bands and small bands as if they played two different kinds of music. I play a chorus in exactly the same style with my small band backing me as I did when I was with Gene Krupa's sixteen pieces."

Fletcher Henderson agreed with Roy, though he made a slight distinction: "There is a certain difference in the technical significance; swing means premeditation and jazz means spontaneity, but they still use the same musical material and are fundamentally the same idiom. To say that a swing arrangement is mechanical whereas a jazz solo is inspired is absurd. A swing arrangement can sound mechanical if it's wrongly interpreted by musicians who don't have the right feeling, but it's written straight from the heart and has the same feeling in the writing as a soloist has in a hot chorus. That's the way, for instance, my arrangement of 'Sometimes I'm Happy' for Benny was written—I just sat down not knowing what I was going to write, and wrote spontaneously what I was inspired to write. Maybe some arrangements sound mechanical because the writers studied too much and wrote out of a book, as it were—too much knowledge can hamper your style. But on the whole, swing relies on the same emotional and musical attitude as jazz, or improvised music, with the added advantage that it has more finesse."

Many devotees of earlier jazz, whose nostalgic yearnings for the old idols of a dying generation involve an indis-

criminate contempt for anything modern, claimed that swing musicians paid too much attention to technique and too little to style, that the fundamental simplicity of jazz was lost in the evolution of swing. Theirs was an unrealistic argument. It is true that much of Louis Armstrong's greatness lay in the pure simplicity of his style and that he often showed a profound feeling for jazz without departing far from the melody; it is also true that such swing stars as Roy Eldridge, whom most of the fans of the old jazz despised, made vast technical strides and played far more notes per second in their solos. But it is true too that there were times when Louis's playing was complicated, and there were New Orleans clarinetists whose music was just as involved and technical as some of the jazz played by later musicians. More important, really good jazz musicians of any period or style have never used their technique as an end in itself; they use it as a means to achieve more variety, more harmonic and rhythmic subtlety in their improvisations. If somebody like Jelly Roll Morton has been blessed with a technique even remotely comparable with Earl Hines' or Art Tatum's, he would undoubtedly have been a far finer pianist, and it wouldn't have changed him from a jazzman into a swingman, because basically there is no difference between the two.

Most people who like jazz of any style, school, or period admire Duke Ellington, whatever their reservations. Do they consider his music swing or jazz or both or neither? If the devotees of early jazz were to follow their theories consistently and logically they would have to say that an Ellington number was swing while the arranged passages were being played, but as soon as a man stood up to take a sixteen-bar solo, it became jazz. If, as so often happened with the Ellington band, a solo that was originally improvised was so well liked that it was repeated in performance after performance until it became a regular part of the arrangement, then would it still be jazz? The question becomes even sillier when you realize that music such as Charlie Barnet's, Hal McIntyre's, and Dave Matthews', and that of other prominent swing musicians, written in

exactly the same idiom as Ellington's, sometimes using identical arrangements and sometimes entirely different arrangements in the same style, was passed off or ignored by these jazz lovers as "commercial swing" of no musical interest.

Since the word "swing" was accepted by the masses and couldn't be suppressed, it might have seemed logical to let the term "jazz" fade out of the picture entirely and to call everything swing from 1935 on, whether it was Benny Goodman, Louis Armstrong, Eddie Condon, or Duke Ellington. But that word "jazz" has a habit of clinging. It has figured in the title of almost every book written on this type of music, from Panassie's *Le Jazz Hot* on; an important exception, curiously enough, was Louis Armstrong's book, *Swing that Music*. Louis, although he has always been one of the chief idols of the nostalgic jazz lovers, liked the new word and used it frequently in preference to "jazz." Of the distinction between the two terms, he said, "To tell you the truth, I really don't care to get into such discussions as these. To me, as far as I could see it all my life, jazz and swing were the same thing. In the good old days of Buddy Bolden, in his days way back in nineteen hundred, it was called ragtime music. Later on in the years it was called jazz music, hot music, gutbucket, and now they've poured a little gravy over it and called it swing music. No matter how you slice it, it's still the same music. If anybody wants to know, a solo can be swung on any tune and you can call it jazz or swing."

Benny Carter, always a thinking musician, expressed essentially the same sentiments in different words, in an ordered argument: "I don't think you can set down any hard and fast definition of either 'jazz' or 'swing.' Both words have been defined by usage, and a lot of people use them in different ways. For instance, a lot of musicians use the word 'jazz' to denote something that's old-timey and corny. As I understand it, though, 'jazz' means what comes out of a man's horn, and 'swing' is the *feeling* that you put into the performance. Well, the jazz that comes out of the horn happens in so-called swing performances

too. So even if 'jazz' and 'swing,' as words, do mean two separate things, as musical elements they're very often combined in one performance, and to talk about swing having replaced jazz, or followed it, is just nonsense."

Red Norvo wanted to junk the old word. "The word 'swing' doesn't signify big bands playing arrangements—that's the most obvious thing in the world. My records with the Swing Sextet and Octet had no arrangements, but they were swing, just the same as other records I made which did have arrangements. 'Swing,' to me, stands for something fresh and young, something that represents progress. Jump is another good name for it, too. I certainly hope it isn't jazz we're playing, because jazz to me means something obnoxious, like that Dixieland school of thought."

Lionel Hampton was differently concerned about the names people called his music. In his years with Benny Goodman (1936-1940) he was content with "swing," particularly when used as a verb to describe his own performances with the Goodman Quartet and those of the various groups of musicians who recorded under his leadership in the distinguished jazz series he made for Victor. Both Lionel as an individual and his pickup bands swung. So did his first big band, organized in late 1940—partly because of his own spectacular drive; partly because of his guitarist, Irving Ashby, a much more sparkling musician then than later with the King Cole Trio; partly because of Lionel's other soloists, especially the violinist Ray Perry. Later editions of Lionel's band intensified this concern of his with the beat. The band that played a concert at Symphony Hall in Boston in the winter of 1944 and at Carnegie Hall in New York in the spring of 1945 was an overwhelming organization which swamped the thirty-odd strings Lionel gathered for the concerts and almost accepted discipline. But in spite of a few subdued solos from the gifted but generally noisy tenor saxophonist Arnett Cobb and a dynamically versatile brass section, all the music ultimately gave way to wild exhibitions by the many drummers who passed through the

band and by Lionel himself. It was engaging for a while, but after a few years of the frenzy of "Flying Home," "Hamp's Boogie Woogie," and "Hey-Ba-Ba-Re-Bop" one could listen only for the occasional moments of Milt Buckner's chunky piano chords or a random sax or brass solo of distinction. Lionel called his music "boogie woogie," "rebop," "bebop," or "swing," as the fashion suggested, but at its best it was only the latter, and at its worst it was a travesty of the other styles, if any representation of them at all. Finally, those who were interested in music came only to hear Lionel play vibes and were best satisfied with his slow, insinuating ballads, especially his big-band "Million-Dollar Smile" and the lovely set of solos with organ and rhythm accompaniment, released by Decca in 1951.

The music that will longest be associated with Hamp is not his own band's, in spite of its charged moments, but rather the combinations of other men's musicians he led in the Victor studios in Hollywood, Chicago, and New York from 1937 to 1940. His first date featured Ziggy Elman, and so did his last significant session but one before recording with his own men. Ziggy was typical: he was a lusty trumpeter with a personality perfectly attuned to the manners and might of swing. Cootie Williams was another of the same stripe. So were Red Allen and J. C. Higginbotham, Benny Carter, Chu Berry, Johnny Hodges, King Cole, and Coleman Hawkins, on their instruments. There was the memorable "One Sweet Letter from You," with Hawk, Ben Webster, Chu and Benny Carter. There was "On the Sunny Side of the Street," to some still Johnny Hodges' best side. There was Ziggy's best playing on records, whenever he appeared with Lionel. Finally, there was the electrifying Hampton, welding the disparate personalities, topping the unified groups, epitomizing an era and its way of joining talents and styles.

Lionel Hampton has always found a large audience for his music, the combination of audiences that made swing. As few other bandleaders after the swing era, he held that combination of audiences. But within a decade after his

band made its first appearance, it was no longer of musical significance as a band; its final effect upon jazz—as with most of the important swing bands—was the effect of its soloists, especially Hamp himself.

Chapter 17

THE SIDEMEN

If it accomplished nothing else, the swing era produced one lasting effect. The enthusiastic acceptance of the new cause by college and high school youngsters and their immediate elders focused attention on the sideman.

All jazz bands, large and small, have a nominal leader and sideman. As with the word "jazz" itself, the origin of the term "sideman" cannot be accurately traced, but its meaning is obvious. Like so much of jazz nomenclature, it is a decriptive word: inevitably the members of a jazz band sit to the left and to the right of center, a center sometimes occupied by a playing leader, sometimes by the drummer or a whole rhythm section. When sidemen take sides, left or right, in a big band, they fall into solo or section chairs and are prepared to take up a set of varying chores. In a small band everybody is a soloist. When swing came along its enthusiasts began to pay attention to the least members of the bands for which they had enthusiasm. The hot men, as they called the soloists, moved in an aura of acclaim hitherto reserved for a very small number of acknowledged great. The effect was cumulative and retroactive: hot collectors sifted through their records to find unappreciated beauties in a trumpeter here, a clarinetist there, a drummer somewhere else. Bix Beiderbecke, the biggest sideman jazz has known, was rediscovered; the records on which he had played suddenly became valuable collector's items. On records and off, in one-nighter and ballroom and hotel appearances, new

bands were listened to avidly, with the hope that some new genius would pop up in brass or reed or rhythm sections. The apotheosis of the sideman was complete.

A considerable impetus to this new interest in the sideman was provided by the writing of two men. John Henry Hammond, Jr., who had learned much about jazz as a record collector in his years at Hotchkiss and Yale and more in his trips from Connecticut to New York to hear the sizable jazzmen in person, had become an indefatigable writer and organizer of jazz record dates by 1935. In his short-lived jazz column in the Sunday *Brooklyn Eagle* he set a model for all future writers about jazz. With fervent adjectives and accurate judgment, he called attention to the fine musicians playing with Fletcher Henderson and with Benny Goodman. He helped Teddy Wilson to get the Brunswick contract which accounted for perhaps the most significant series of jazz record dates in the swing era. He was almost personally responsible for the emergence of Count Basie's remarkable band from a Kansas City night club. Some of the best musicians of the period owe their professional existence to his efforts.

George Simon joined the staff of *Metronome* in 1935, fresh from Harvard and the little jazz band he had led from the drums in the New England houseparty territory. George went to work with a special interest in the complexities of the large band and the abilities of its musicians. He set up a rating system for bands, based on the report-card letters A to D, and the words which preceded his rating, "Simon Says," became famous among musicians. George's reviews set a style in jazz criticism; a summary of the basic qualities of a given band, its musical style and commercial appeal, would be followed by a painstaking analysis of each of the sections, paying equal attention to the sound of, say, the saxophone section as a whole, to the lead alto saxophonist, and to the jazz soloists, be they alto and tenor, or two tenors, or alto, tenor, and baritone. He revealed the inner workings of a jazz band to his readers, stressing the large responsibility of the musicians who never took a solo but whose work, good or bad, was

so important a part of the ultimate effect of a band's performance. He emphasized the delicate balance of the scored arrangement and the improvised performance, making less mysterious and more meaningful the electric effect of the Benny Goodman band and other swing outfits.

In the band which Benny took across the country in the fall of 1935, to score such a resounding success at the Palomar Ballroom in Hollywood in early 1936, there were at first few stars. Benny's band was the perfect example of the brilliant coordination of individuals to make up sections and sections to make up an orchestra that the first jazz critics were writing about. Bunny Berigan made some records with Benny but didn't go out on the road with him. Nate Kazebier, who played the trumpet solos, was not of Bunny's stature, but he did have a pleasant tone and his solos swung. Joe Harris, who had come over from the disbanded Ben Pollack orchestra, had an attractive barrelhouse edge to his trombone playing. Dick Clark was a fair tenor, but it was rather the sax team, with Toots Mondello's or Hymie Schertzer's rich lead alto sounds, that gave this instrument distinction in the Goodman band. Gene Krupa made interesting faces as he chewed his gum and sweated his way through drum solos, but—much as these intrigued fans—they were less important than the overwhelming drive of the rhythm section as a whole especially contributed by Jess Stacy's piano and Allan Reuss's guitar, and taken up by the whole band; this drive gave to Benny's music its distinguishing quality. Jess was a fine soloist too, and Helen Ward contributed throbbing ballads suggestive in style of Ethel Water's best singing, and finally there was the superlative clarinet playing of the leader.

Benny's best work, however, was not with the big band, but with the trio he formed with Teddy Wilson and Gene, and with his quartet, formed when Lionel Hampton joined on the vibraphone in the summer of 1936 in Los Angeles. In the trio and quartet records Benny's Chicago training and Teddy's vast experience, reaching from Tuskegee

study to Detroit, Chicago, and New York playing, made the difference. Teddy had worked in the Erskine Tate, Jimmy Noone, Benny Carter, and Willie Bryant bands, and had accompanied the Charioteers, the most musicianly of the vocal groups of the thirties. Teddy had a style essentially his own, compounded of some of the staccato elements of Earl Hines' piano playing, the various drifts of other men's ideas which inevitably make their way into the jazz soloist's playing machinery, and a way of fashioning fill-in runs of his own between phrases that gave his every performance lift and integration. His precise articulation on the keyboard proved just the right complement to Benny's swooping cadences and sweeps across the clarinet registers. Lionel Hampton, a Louisville, Kentucky, boy who had grown up in Chicago and had played exclusively in Los Angeles before joining Benny, added a ringing vibraphone note to the chamber unit of the Goodman organization and a power-drive on vibes and drums all his own. None of the many records these musicians made together, with Dave Tough replacing Gene for eight sides and Lionel drumming on one, was bad.

Gordon Griffin, better known as Chris, joined Benny in the spring of 1936; Ziggy Elman joined in September of the same year; and before the year was out, in December, Harry James filled out the trumpet section. That trumpet section, with first Murray McEachern and then Vernon Brown on trombone, a succession of tenor saxophonists (Vido Musso, Babe Russin, Bud Freeman, and Jerry Jerome), Jess on piano, Gene and then Dave Tough on drums, and an inspired leader, made the band great. No single record caught the enormous impact of that band, although the two-sided twelve-inch "Sing, Sing, Sing" and such ten-inch instrumentals as "Bugle Call Rag," "Somebody Loves Me" "Roll 'em," "Sugar Foot Stomp," "Don't Be that Way," and "Big John Special" suggest its quality. There is more of it in the four twelve-inch long-playing sides, issued in 1950, of the Carnegie Hall concert of January 16, 1938. Most of that concert is on those

records, which capture with remarkable fidelity the band itself, Jess Stacy's five lovely choruses in "Sing, Sing, Sing," and the inspired collaboration of musicians from the Count Basie, Duke Ellington, and Benny Goodman bands, and Bobby Hackett—a collaboration that thrilled all of us present that glittering night. This was Benny's achievement, the matching of equal talents on all the jazz instruments with little concern for box office and much for musicianship. To a greater or lesser degree, insofar as they matched that achievement, other bands and musicians made a permanent or transient impression during the swing era.

During these years a bandleader did not have to be much concerned with box office; as long as his musicianship and that of his sidemen were better than average, the box office was his. Benny provided the spark; those who followed kept it going, and they spread their collective light over all three jazz audiences—the first and perhaps the last time that phenomenon has occurred. The three jazz audiences are made up of groups of varied size and commercial importance. The first, usually called by musicians who cannot reach it "the great unwashed," consists of members of America's middle-class majority, those whose entertainment consists chiefly of novelty, whose escapist predilections were so much in the ascendant during the depression years. The second group, mixed in quality and source, but essential for jazz success, is the compromise group; it will take a certain amount of musical quality, prides itself on its intellectual broadmindedness, likes to dance the latest dance and to be *au courant* with the latest musical idea, but must have that idea presented to it as a novelty. This group requires less thick sugar coating than the first and will often be receptive to music which is anathema to the first, but for all practical purposes the appeal to both is the same. The third and last group, the group which has kept jazz alive through its worst days, consists of the diehard fans, college boys and those slightly older, who combine analytical skill with taste, know what they want and where to

find it, and make it possible for the experimental jazz musician to find an audience if not a living. Somehow, in the swing years, all three of these groups combined to form a large and generally appreciative audience for jazz. Sometimes members of the first group showed an interest in the finer points of jazz and even looked for the distinguishing marks that separated quality from quantity. The new jazz titillated musical nerves that had been drugged almost into insensibility by what the jazz musician calls the Mickey Mouse and "cheese" bands, the purveyors of predigested pap. For half a decade it jostled the huge numbers of the first and second groups, made some into jitterbugs, others into at least mildly comprehending listeners, and made it possible for the skilled jazzman to play with pleasure and for profit and to build a reputation more or less commensurate with his talent.

The wide acceptance of a free jazz expression brought into jazz, for several years at least, a new growth of styles and development of stylists. There was a self-confidence abroad, as a result, that turned small jazz musicians into medium-sized ones and medium-sized ones into great ones. Sidemen who without this general encouragement would never have thought of becoming bandleaders tossed other men's music and jobs aside and went out with their own bands—sometimes to lose thousands of dollars, occasionally to make many more thousands of dollars. Woody Herman fronted a group of musicians from Isham Jones' sweet dance band who had decided to form a cooperative organization. The Herman band's greatest distinction, until new blood took over and turned it into perhaps the best of all the white bands in the mid-forties, was Woody's profound feeling for a torchy vocal. There were also such soloists as Joe Bishop, who played the fluegelhorn sweetly, and Neal Reid, whose trombone accents were amusingly guttural.

In the Bob Crosby band, Eddie Miller played the clarinet a bit and sang some, but more important, his tenor saxophone lines, in their organized length and smooth, unvibrating line, anticipated the mature conception of that

instrument that developed in the early days of bebop, as a result of Eddie's and Lester Young's and Bud Freeman's pioneering. Throughout its history the Crosby band featured Matty Matlock on clarinet, Nappy Lamare on guitar, Bob Haggart on bass, and Ray Bauduc on drums, as well as Eddie. At various times it had such biting Dixieland trumpeters as Yank Lawson and Muggsy Spanier, and the extraordinary trumpet variety that Billy Butterfield provided. From 1938 to 1940 Irving Fazola enriched the band with his exquisite clarinet tone and perhaps the most polished concept of the New Orleans reed tradition. Warren Smith and Floyd O'Brien were variously responsible for the barrelhouse trombone sound, and the piano, important to the band after Bob Zurke joined in 1936, grew less honky-tonk when Joe Sullivan came in in 1939 and a good deal less so when Jess Stacy brought his suave keyboard ministrations in to replace Joe. The Crosby band was easily the best of those which consciously and occasionally conscientiously endeavored to keep the New Orleans and Chicago traditions alive in the late thirties.

Several of the men Tommy Dorsey featured in the years from 1935 until December 1939, when the band was revised along powerhouse lines suggestive of Jimmie Lunceford's band, were authentic Dixieland and Chicago voices too. At different times such trumpeters as Max Kaminsky, Bunny Berigan, Pee Wee Erwin, and Yank Lawson kept a spirited conception alive in a band that had been dedicated to more commercial pursuits by its leader. First Joe Dixon and then Johnny Mince challenged Benny Goodman's clarinet leadership with a more distinctly Dixieish line than any Benny ever played once he took out his own band. Dave Tough joined Tommy a few months before Bud Freeman did, and left a few months earlier, lasting from the early spring of 1936 to the end of 1937. The most exciting moments in the Dorsey band's performance before its revision in style—apart from Tommy's tonal mastery of the trombone—surely belonged to Dave and Bud. They imparted to Tommy's

small band, the Dixie outfit he called the Clambake Seven —in cheerful adoption of the term used by jazz musicians both in annoyed disparagement of a poor jam session and in warm approbation of a good one—a freshness and a fervor which cut through the trivial material that was on the whole the Seven's basic feed. Brother Jimmy, elder of the two Dorseys, made over the remnants of the Dorsey Brothers' band into an effective accompaniment for Bing Crosby on his radio program and a fair commercial Dixieland band, which was at its best in such novelties as "Parade of the Milk-Bottle Caps" and "A Swing Background for an Operatic Soprano." Freddy Slack played some ingenious boogie-woogie piano for Jimmy, and Ray McKinley, a two-beat drummer with Ray Bauduc's kind of skill, kept the weak and strong accents in good order, especially when he took some of Jimmy's musicians into Decca's Los Angeles studios and made four knock-down-and-drag-out sides in March 1936.

There was some Dixieland flavor in the music of the Red Norvo band, but, as always with Red, it had the individual identification of a richly talented, always experimenting, always developing musician. Kenneth Norvo, nicknamed after his red hair, had, like so many jazz musicians, started as a pianist, but in high school he became a xylophonist. He joined a touring Chautauqua organization when he was seventeen and then went into vaudeville with a band called the Collegians. He did a stretch in Chicago with Paul Ash's theater band and then went into vaudeville for himself. After short stints with his own band in Milwaukee and as part of a radio-station band in Minneapolis in 1928, he played with Victor Young and Ben Bernie for a while in Chicago, then did more than a year at NBC as a member of its Chicago studio band. In 1931 he joined Paul Whiteman and stayed with him for three years, after which time he extended his repertory, married Mildred Bailey, and formed plans for his own band. Red had made xylophone solo records accompanied by such men as Jimmy Dorsey and Benny Goodman, had led two first-rate pick-up bands through

two different sessions, and had brought the nucleus of his medium-sized dance band to records—first under his own name, then under the name of the Len Herman Orchestra, then as Ken Kenny and His Orchestra, then under the name of his trumpeter Stew Pletcher—on several different labels before he inaugurated the superb series recorded for Brunswick from 1936 to 1939. At first the band featured the delicate sounds made by Stewie, Herbie Haymer on tenor saxophone, Red, and his incomparably gifted singer, Mildred Bailey. Then Hank D'Amico joined to fill the saxophone section to the full complement of the thirties—quartet size—and to add a lovely clarinet voice. Through this change and the eventual addition of a second trombone, the imaginations of Red and his sometime trumpeter and sometime arranger, Eddie Sauter, were allowed full play. The beat of the band was essentially in two, but the harmonic transformation of such familiar tunes as "I Know that You Know," "Liza," "Remember," and "Russian Lullaby" bore no resemblance to Dixieland. Eddie's sometimes witty, sometimes brash, usually gentle, and always unhackneyed arrangements showed the mark of discipline derived from such composers as Stravinsky, Prokofiev, and Bartok, mixed with and expressed through a distinctly American personality. Out of his fresh manuscript, solos leaped delicately into place and Mildred's voice arose with that extraordinary grace of phrase and impeccable intonation that regularly distinguished her singing. She and Red were billed as Mr. and Mrs. Swing and justified the sobriquet not with the volume which audiences were coming more and more to expect of a swing band in the late thirties but with the subtlety and sagacity of their rhythmic ideas.

The resolute Dixielanders of the period found their haven at Nick's, first on the west side of Seventh Avenue in Greenwich Village, and then across the street, when the crowds it attracted enabled the titular owner of the two-beat emporium to build new quarters at Tenth Street and Seventh. Here Eddie Condon led the band he called the Windy City Seven or the Chicagoans or simply his

own, always featuring the wry squeaks and sometimes amusing departures from pitch of Pee Wee Russell's clarinet, usually with George Wettling on drums, Brad Gowans or George Brunies on trombone, Artie Shapiro on bass, and Max Kaminsky on trumpet. Here Bobby Hackett made his New York debut, startling audiences with the accuracy of his imitations of Bix Beiderbecke on the cornet, the instrument to which he had switched in Boston after leaving his native Providence and his first instrument, the guitar. His soft sound and melodic imagination, so much like Bix's, stood out on the first records that Milt Gabler made for his own label, Commodore, named for his music shop, international headquarters for serious jazz record collectors. Though Bobby's colleagues on those first Commodore dates were such eminent Nicksieland musicians as Brunies, Pee Wee, Bud Freeman, Jess Stacy, Artie Shapiro, Wettling, and the redoubtable Eddie Condon, with Jack Teagarden added for three sides, it was his playing that made the records of more than passing significance. When Bobby made his own dates, with some of the same musicians, for Vocalion, it was he who once again dominated the performances. One doesn't slight even such a musician as Jack Teagarden if one points to Bobby's commanding authority on these records; so powerful an echo of Bix, with almost as rich a melodic gift, was hardly to be expected so soon after his death. Even after Bobby joined Horace Heidt for a little less than a year and Glenn Miller for longer, between 1939 and 1942, his deft melodic variations, up and down and around figurations, and always with continuity were of unceasing sweetness and high style.

Bunny Berigan was another trumpeter with overtones of Bix in his playing, but his style was essentially his own. He plumbed the lower depths of the trumpet and found an expansion of ideas in his bottom notes that no other trumpeter was able to use to such advantage. Bunny, who died at the age of thirty-three in 1942, started to play the trumpet in Fox Lake, Wisconsin, where he was born. His grandfather came home one day with a trumpet, handed it to Bunny, and said, "Here, this is you.

Play, you!" Bunny's first jobs in his teens were with local bands, and it was with one of them that Hal Kemp, when he was passing through Wisconsin in 1928, heard Bunny. A year and a half later Hal sent for Bunny to join his band, the best of the treacly outfits that served depression fantasies; it employed an effective series of reeds, played by its saxophonists in imitation of a Debussyan sound, and also boasted a fine pianist and arranger, John Scott Trotter, who later joined Bing Crosby as permanent conductor and arranger. Bunny played with Paul Whiteman during one of the Whiteman band's many appearances at the Biltmore Hotel in New York in the early thirties, and then began to gig around New York with a band that played college and society engagements. He graduated, with many of his associates of those bands, into radio work. He did a lot of recording in 1933 and 1934 with the inventor of the goofus, Adrian Rollini, who was much in demand at the record studios. He recorded the famous "Mood Hollywood" with the Dorsey Brothers in 1933 and with them, too, accompanied Mildred Bailey on eight fine Brunswick sides in the same year. In 1935, his big year as a part of pick-up recording dates, he made the memorable four sides that the Casa Loma band's arranger, Gene Gifford, arranged and led with Matty Matlock, Bud Freeman, Claude Thornhill, Dick McDonough, Wingy Manone, and Ray Bauduc. In 1935 he also made Glenn Miller's first date, with the fine trombonist Jack Jenney, Johnny Mince, and Eddie Miller; with Jack and Johnny, Chu Berry, Teddy Wilson, Gene Krupa, George Van Eps, and Artie Bernstein, the bass player, he made, under the leadership of Red Norvo, four sides, including the superb coupling of "Bughouse" and "Blues in E Flat." With Benny Goodman that year he made just under two dozen sides, among them "King Porter Stomp," "Jingle Bells," "Stompin' at the Savoy," and "Blue Skies," on all of which he takes brilliant solos. In 1935 and 1936 Bunny was also a staff musician at CBS, for which he led a series of jazz units, the most famous of which was the group known as Bunny's Blue Boys. He was a featured performer on the Saturday Night Swing Club, which went

on the CBS network in 1936, one of the best jazz programs, sustaining or sponsored, ever to become a regular feature on a radio network. He was part of many radio and record bands accompanying singers—but none so impressive as Mildred Bailey, one of whose Alley Cats he was, with Johnny Hodges and Teddy Wilson, on the four sides recorded under John Hammond's supervision for English distribution; and Billie Holiday, whom he accompanied on four sides in 1936, with Artie Shaw and Joe Bushkin. That was the year he was also a Fifty-second-Street regular, appearing at Red McKenzie's club and sitting in at other places, showing off his long and large and almost unquenchable drinking and playing capacity. At the end of 1936 Tommy Dorsey was looking around for someone skilled enough to give his brass section the proper lift; logically enough, he settled on Bunny Berigan. Bunny settled on the Dorsey specialties like one of the early pioneers; he made "Marie" and "Song of India," "Melody in F," "Liebestraum," and "Who'll Buy My Violets" into his own vehicles, making it possible for jazz fans to endure the glee-club chattering in tempo that sold the records to millions. While with Tommy, Bunny continued to make records under his own name; these and his fetching performances on the Dorsey sides made him a record name, and he soon took advantage of his fame by forming his own band. In that band, which opened at the Pennsylvania Hotel in April 1937, were some fine young musicians: the talented arranger and pianist Joe Lippman; a jumping tenor saxophonist down from Canada, Georgie Auld; one of the very best of bass players, Arnold Fishkin; a couple of fine trumpet players, Benny Goodman's brother, Irving, and Steve Lipkins; and a veteran drummer, George Wettling. Bunny joined Victor's select swing circle; his records enjoyed a full-size publicity campaign along with those of Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, and Fats Waller. With those eminent recording stars, he contributed two sides to the twelve-inch album *A Symposium of Swing*, one of the most ambitious efforts of the time to capture the full flavor of a

jazz band. To that album Bunny brought his inimitable singing and playing of "I Can't Get Started" and "The Prisoner's Song." Thereafter he had almost two years more of recording for Victor, but less and less success. He continued to play beautifully, made a lovely Beiderbecke album, playing some of Bix's own tunes and others associated with Bix, and was generally impressive in person too. But drink, as it had for so many other jazz musicians, was beginning to do for Bunny. He was irritable, subject to roaring arguments; his musicians and he were not getting along together. In February 1940 he junked his band and rejoined Tommy Dorsey. For six months he was an ornament of the band and helped Tommy regain some of the popularity he had begun to lose. But six months was all that an irritable Bunny and an always high-tempered Tommy could take together. When they broke up there was nothing left to do but start a band again, and Bunny went back to the road. He was in no condition to manage the strain and stress of one-nighters; his constant refuge was the bottle. There were several breakdowns and a siege of pneumonia in Pennsylvania before his band came in to play a job at Manhattan Center in New York on June 1, 1942. Bunny didn't play with his band; he was in Poly-clinic Hospital, dying of cirrhosis of the liver. Benny Goodman, who was playing at the Paramount Theatre, brought his sextet over to Manhattan Center to help out. Bunny's friends went to visit him at the hospital, among them the bass player Sid Weiss. Bunny looked up at Sid, a slight little man. "And they tell me *I'm* sick," he said. "Looks like you should be here instead of me." That was the afternoon after the job at the Center. That night Tommy Dorsey, who was playing at the Astor Hotel, received a call from the hospital. He rushed over there. He looked at Bunny and knew the trumpeter hadn't long to live; actually it was a matter of hours.

Another musician of great dimensions, who died shortly before Bunny, was Leon Berry, better known as Chu; he was killed in an automobile accident in 1941, while he was on his way from one Cab Calloway engagement to

another. Chu had joined Cab in the summer 1937 after working in a series of bands, with all of whom his playing was something close to magnificent. He was, along with Roy Eldridge, one of the stars of the Teddy Hill band, which alternated with Willie Bryant and Chick Webb in 1934 and 1935 at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. Earlier Chu had come to New York from West Virginia by way of Chicago, had played with Sammy Stewart at the Savoy and with Benny Carter, his "favorite saxophone player over anybody." Later he moved with Roy into Fletcher Henderson's last important band, the Chicago outfit of 1935 to 1937. With Roy, Chu made four sides for Commodore that rank among the greatest of jazz records, the ten-inch "Sittin' In" and "Forty-six West Fifty-two," and the twelve-inch "Stardust" and "Body and Soul." With Calloway he made a solo record, all his, of "A Ghost of a Chance," which to many people is the definitive example of tenor saxophone playing, a series of beautifully integrated melodic variations on the tune, with that rich tone and steady beat which Chu had in common with Coleman Hawkins and Ben Webster.

There was a kind of somber, dramatic magnificence to the end of the swing era; death achieved it. In 1939 Chick Webb died. In 1941 Chu died. In 1942 Bunny Berigan, Charlie Christian, and Jimmy Blanton died. In 1943 Fats Waller died. The era called "swing" died with them. The United States was at war, and some of its best jazz musicians were in the services. Jazz was going through almost violent changes of idea and execution. With death and destruction a certain perspective was gained. The war years were consecrated to reminiscence and critical evaluation. It was possible as never before in the history of jazz to see and hear where they all fitted in —the singers who were beginning to draw the largest audiences for themselves; the pianists who set so many and reflected as many more of the basic styles; the sidemen who contributed so much, through solos and teamwork; the figures of transition in whose hands the old music was left and the new music was born.

Chapter 18

PIANISTS

In the development of jazz the solo talents of a few individual instrumentalists have contributed much. The names of some of these men stand for distinct styles and stages in the progress of jazz: trumpeters Louis Armstrong, Roy Eldridge, Dizzy Gillespie; trombonists Lawrence Brown, Trick Sam, Teagarden, Bill Harris, J. J. Johnson; saxophonists Coleman Hawkins, Benny Carter, Lester Young, Johnny Hodges, Charlie Parker, Lee Konitz; clarinetists Benny Goodman and Buddy DeFranco; drummers Gene Krupa and Sidney Catlett; bassist Jimmy Blanton; guitarist Charlie Christian. But when we come to pianists there is trouble; there is nothing orderly about the development of the pianists as jazz instrumentalists.

For one thing, there are too many of them. The early history of jazz produced only a handful and not too startling a group at that. From New Orleans we had Jelly Roll Morton and some of his contemporaries. Ragtime established James P. Johnson. But nothing especially important musically happened to jazz on the piano until the music got to Chicago and Earl Hines was heard in his proper context, the Louis Armstrong recording bands. This was more like it, and very pleasant to listen to. Then Joe Sullivan, Jess Stacy, and Fats Waller arrived, and within their bands, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson and his brother Horace, and Count Basie.

Then, an avalanche; Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson, Mary Lou Williams, Nat Cole, Johnny Guarnieri, Joe Bushkin, Mel Powell, Nat Jaffe, Erroll Garner, Dodo Marmarosa,

Jimmy Jones, André Previn, Bud Powell, Lennie Tristano, Paul Smith; not to mention the local boys who have stayed local, such as Detroit's brilliant Bobby Stevenson, New Orleans' variously talented Armand Hug, and Chicago's Mel Henke; and not to mention the boogie-woogie pianists.

The list is astonishing in its length and, with the exception of the last big group of indefatigable primitives of boogie-woogie, in its quality. Analyzing the records of these men carefully, with as little personal prejudice as possible, one can see clearly not merely that jazz is rich in good pianists, pianists of wit and wisdom and experimental audacity, but that it has produced more titans on the piano than traditional music has in this century. Try to make a similar list of really distinguished concert pianists. I don't think it will be half as long. Then play the records of the pianists mentioned in the preceding paragraph, forget the comparisons, and sit back to enjoy a parade of luxurious sound, jazz at its best so far, promising profundity, on its way to full musical maturity.

Earl Hines plays a firm, vigorous piano that has been effectively apostrophized as "trumpet style." It's more accurately described as "trumpet-with-band style" because, while Earl is establishing the trumpet's melodic line with his right hand, he is setting up large ensemble chords with his left, splashes of counterrhythms, flashing tremolos, sometimes suspending the beat with that characteristic ringing pedal tone. He strikes out with full chords far removed from the C-major and C-seventh fundamentals of blues piano. But in all of his career, almost from his first appearance in 1925, at the Club Elite in Chicago, he has been the greatest force in shaping the forms and style of jazz piano and pianists.

It is hard to name a pianist of any importance in jazz, no matter of what school, who hasn't been influenced by Hines. Teddy Wilson, Mary Lou Williams, Art Tatum, Nat Cole, Jess Stacy, Mel Powell have all been more or less under the Father's influence. Fats Waller was a school unto himself, but most of Fats's associates and imitators

have been strongly swayed by Hines; their playing constantly reflects his style.

When this most important of jazz piano stylists began his musical studies in Pittsburgh in 1915, he was a trumpeter, then a pianist, but never thought of becoming a dance-band musician. His father was a trumpeter, his mother a pianist and organist. Earl used to play on chairs all around the house, and when his mother could no longer stand the monotony of chair tones she switched him from Duncan Phyfe and Sheraton, sofa style, to a piano, ragtime style.

At nine Earl wanted to be a trumpeter, but his mother saw to it that he was given piano lessons. After four years of private tutoring his keyboard proficiency was such that he was invited to give concerts around town, at schools and small halls.

"They gave me ten dollars and a box of handkerchiefs for a concert," Earl recalls, "and they said, 'He's great.' I had to learn sixty or seventy pages of music for each concert and work like a dog for ten bucks, some linen, and some kind words. It didn't look like a hell of a career, and so at sixteen, I cut out."

He broke in at a Pittsburgh night club, after school, playing nine months at the Leader House as accompanist for singers, as intermission pianist for the club, which didn't have other entertainment and consequently relied heavily on the inventiveness and imagination of such of its random entertainers as young Hines.* After a couple of years of gigging around the Smoky City, Earl left for Chicago and what he hoped would be greener fields. There it was that he really began his career; there he shaped his style and worked in association with most of the great musicians of the time—the late twenties and all the thirties. There he himself became a great jazz musician.

The Club Elite Number Two, at Thirty-fifth and State, one of a chain of night clubs that were more elite in name than in clientele, was his first employer. He opened there with a small Pittsburgh combination, featuring Ver-

nee Robinson, "one of the fine hot fiddlers of the time," Earl says. He stayed for about a year. Of this period Earl recalls most vividly the steady expatriation of distinguished contemporaries.

"An awful lot of good jazzmen went abroad then," he says, "guys who've never been heard from since. A guy like Teddy Weatherford, for example. A fine pianist. He went over to Europe, played all over the Continent, then went to China. He died in India. I certainly wish I could have heard him again."

In 1926 Earl joined Carroll Dickerson at the Entertainers' Club. The Dickerson band played forty-odd weeks on the Pantages vaudeville circuit, hitting as far west as California, then returned to Chicago and went into the Sunset Cafe. That's where Louis joined the band, choosing what Earl calls "the younger set" in preference to King Oliver's New Orleans émigres, who had made overtures to Armstrong to rejoin them.

When Louis took over the Dickerson band, Earl became its musical director. With musicians like Louis and Earl, Big Green on trombone, Darnell Howard on clarinet, Stumpy Evans ("one of the great tenor players," according to Earl), and Tubby Hall on drums, this was an impressive band. Then Louis, Earl, and Zutty Singleton formed a friendship and musical association that seemed indissoluble. "It got so," Earl says, "that you couldn't hire one of us without the others." The three of them, trumpeter, pianist, and drummer, formed the base for what are clearly the best records Louis ever made, the Okeh series that included "West End Blues," "Skip the Gutter," and "A Monday Date" (Hines' composition); and the series highlighted by "Basin Street Blues," "Beau Koo Jack," "Heah Me Talkin' to Ya," "Tight Like This," and "Weather Bird.' The first set was made in June 1928; the second, in December of the same year.

During this time, 1927 to 1929, when Louis had moved up to the Savoy Ballroom (Chicago's, not New York's), Earl moved across the street from the Sunset to the Apex Club to play piano with Jimmy Noone. With

that style-setting clarinetist, Earl made the memorable file of 1928 Apex Club Orchestra records for Vocalion, eight sides of which were later reissued in Jimmy Noone's Brunswick Collector's Series album.

After a little less than two years of the Noone band Earl "got tired of the hours and the work. Too hard, man, too hard." The QRS Piano Roll Company was taking a flier in the record business and they invited Earl to record for their new label. He went and did eight sides. And they, "not knowing what it was all about, released all eight at once. Oh, it was a panic!" But the sides were fine, all Hines originals: the inevitable "Monday Date," the brilliant "Blues in Thirds," "Panther Rag," "Chicago High Life," "Chimes in Blues," "Stowaway," "Just Too Soon," and "Off Time Blues."

In 1928 Lucius Venable Millinder, better known as Lucky, was organizing a show for the Grand Terrace, a new Chicago night club. He searched around for a band for the place and could find none with a big enough name and enough talent, so he wired frantically to Hines in New York to come back to Chicago and build him a band. Earl went and stayed twelve years. Whenever he went on the road, from 1928 to 1940, he was always sure of his share of the moneys that were paid other bands at the Grand Terrace, for he became the club's chief attraction and also its over-all booker and musical supervisor.

In a dozen years at the Terrace and several after that, Earl made a sheaf of wonderful records—and some not so good—for Brunswick, Decca, and Bluebird. Such jazz luminaries as trumpeter Walter Fuller, clarinetist and fiddler Darnell Howard, tenor saxophonist Budd Johnson, tenor and arranger Jimmy Mundy, trombonist Trummy Young, drummer Wallace Bishop, trumpeters Freddy Webster, Ray Nance, Pee Wee Jackson, Shorty McConnell, Charlie Allen, and Dizzy Gillespie were, if not all Hines discoveries, at least musicians who seemed to discover themselves when they went with the Father.

The "Father" tag, by the way, was bestowed upon

Earl by radio announcer Ted Pearson, a knowing jazz aficionado, who came down to do a broadcst one night at the Grand Terrace. Although older than most of his men, Earl was neither by temperament nor physical constitution the parent of his band musicians in the way that Paul Whiteman, who was known as "Fatho" to most of his regular employees, was. The name was only a presumption of musical paternity which Pearson made for Earl at the time, but one that stuck—and grew more appropriate over the years.

The Father started Herb Jeffries on his singing career; he went to Detroit to get Herb for the Grand Terrace. "Georgia Boy" (Arthur Lee Simpkins) was a Hines discovery, as were Ida James, Valaida Snow, and Ivy Anderson. Earl remembers when Duke was looking for a vocalist and cast about at the Terrace for a girl. Duke sent for sómebody, but it was decided among the GTers that this girl wouldn't do, and they told Ivy to go. But Ivy wouldn't. She said she wouldn't audition for anyone, damned if she would. She was finally persuaded to go on stage at the Regal, where Duke was playing that week, to see what the colored audience at the South Side theater would think. She broke it up and was hired on the spot. Ivy played the Oriental Theatre, downtown, the next week, and from then on, of course, was Duke's star singer. Billy Eckstein (as he spelled his name then) and Sara Vaughn (as she spelled hers) were Hines stars before Billy organized his own band. The Palmer Brothers, the delightful male vocal group, are other Hines alumni.

Over the years, Earl says, "I've always had a funny ambition, to do something like Waring and Whiteman along jazz lines. Groups of singers, large bands, every kind of instrumentation and scoring possible." It isn't that he ever actually wanted to give up his regular type of band, a bona fide dance crew spotted with fine brass and reed and rhythm soloists. He simply feels that the size and scope of popular music are broadening enormously all

the time and that the future may permit more orchestral experimentation.

Hines has four favorite records out of all that he has recorded. These are late band works. It's not that the Father underestimates the significance of his early recordings; it's just that he is most concerned with present-day problems and thoroughly delighted with the instrumentation and instrumentalists that became available to him. The four Earl Hines sides that really knock Earl Hines out are "Tantalizing a Cuban"; "The Boy with the Wistful Eyes," featuring his vocal quartet of several years ago; Billy Eckstine's "I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good"; and his own brilliant "Boogie Woogie on St. Louis Blues," all on Bluebird—and all but the last scarce as pterodactyl's teeth.

With good bands, and a thoughtful, mature conception of jazz grounded in such firm traditions as a baby art can have, Earl has done well over the years. Because his authoritative, broad-shouldered, conservatively dressed figure looks like a heavyweight boxer's, because his music is so much in and of our time, Earl Hines' listeners sometimes used to forget that he was one of the pioneer jazzmen who helped start the whole thing. They were reminded of it in the barn-storming concert tours and gala night-club appearances of Louis Armstrong's troupe in 1950, which featured, in addition to Earl, Jack Teagarden and Barney Bigard. Then in 1951, with a Columbia Piano Moods album, came another reminder, that Earl was still a modern pianist, speculative, experimental, fresh. That's as it should be with a man of his equipment and imagination and sharp awareness of his own time and that to come.

Thomas Wright Waller, known to millions for obvious reasons as "Fats," died at the age of thirty-nine. His sudden death stunned musicians and music lovers. The high-spirited, effervescent, boisterously energetic pianist and composer had just completed a four-week personal appearance at the Florentine Gardens in Hollywood. The engagement ended on Saturday; Monday he boarded the

Sante Fe Chief for New York; Wednesday, December 15, 1943, he had a sudden heart attack, and when the train pulled into Kansas City he was dead. An autopsy revealed that he had had bronchial pneumonia.

On December 20, at the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, a vast crowd, including hundreds of prominent representatives of the music world, came to pay homage to Fats. Pallbearers included Count Basie, Don Redman, Claude Hopkins, Andy Kirk, Andy Razaf, J. C. Johnson, and James P. Johnson. Virtually every prominent pianist in New York who had known Fats was present, including Mary Lou Williams, Willie (the Lion) Smith, Cliff Jackson, as well as the musicians from Fats's regular recording band and others who had made records with him. Mounted police had to clear the way for the cortege through streets thronged with admirers. The following day a memorial program was arranged at Cafe Society Downtown; an hour of it was broadcast, and dozens of Fats's associates and admirers took part in the tribute, proceeds of which went to the New York *Amsterdam News* Children's Fund. James P. Johnson, the pianist whose style had inspired Fats in his formative years, composed a "Blues for Fats" which he played soon afterward at a concert in Town Hall, New York.

Fats was born in New York City. His father was the Reverend Edward Martin Waller of the Abyssinian Baptist Church. Fats studied piano and organ and when still a very small boy often used to play the organ in his father's church for Sunday services. His formal training was under Leopold Godowsky and Carl Bohm. Andy Razaf, lyric writer who collaborated with Fats on most of his outstanding hits, says that Fats "knew Brahms, Liszt, and Beethoven as well as he knew jazz, and often discussed and analyzed their work."

Fats went to De Witt Clinton High School in New York. When he was about fifteen years old he turned up one day in an amateur pianists' contest at the Roosevelt Theatre in Harlem, on the site where the Golden Gate ballroom was later built. He won the prize, playing one of

J. P. Johnson's tunes, "Carolina Shout." It wasn't long before he was playing professionally. One of his earliest jobs was as house organist at the old Lincoln Theatre on One Hundred and Thirty-fifth Street. About that time he began writing songs and quickly produced a hit, "Squeeze Me," which he did with Spencer Williams.

While Fats was working at the Lincoln he made a friendship that lasted throughout his life and contributed very happily to his career; he met Andreamentana Razafinkeriefo, who, out of consideration for American tongues, had shortened his name to Andy Razaf. As Andy says, "I used to listen to him there often, and eventually, because everyone knew him and everyone was his friend, I somehow came to meet him." Andy was the son of the Grand Duke of Madagascar, who had been killed when the French took over that island; Andy was born in Washington, D. C., just after his mother had escaped to this country. Forced to leave school in order to earn a living, he started his songwriting career as an elevator boy in an office building where one of his regular passengers was Irving Berlin. When Fats met him, he persuaded Andy to take songwriting more seriously. As Andy tells it, "One of the first things we did as a team was cash in on a vogue for West Indian songs. As soon as we got broke all we had to do was grind out two or three West Indian numbers, take them up to Mills or some Broadway office, and get a nice sum for them. Around that time there was a heavy demand for cabaret-type songs with blue lyrics. We did hundreds of those too."

Fats worked with other lyric writers and composers too, including James P. Johnson, J. C. Johnson, Spencer Williams, and Bud Allen, "who was Fats's permanent sidekick, helping to keep him on time for dates, get him home and generally look out for him." But most of Fats's famous songs were written with Razaf. Together they wrote the scores of several big musicals, the first of which was *Keep Shufflin'* in 1925, which contained the songs "How Can You Face Me" and "My Little Chocolate Bar."

After this success Connie and George Immerman asked

them to do the score of a Connie's Inn show, and "things really started humming," Andy says. "It was hard to tie Fats down to a job; my mother used to make all the finest food and special cookies for him just to keep him out at our home in Asbury Park, New Jersey. We were working on a show called *Load of Coal* for Connie and had just done half the chorus of a number when Fats remembered a date and announced, 'I gotta go!' I finished up the verse and gave it to him later over the telephone. The tune was 'Honeysuckle Rose.'"

Fats made records in 1929 in what Razaf describes as "amazingly informal" record sessions. The first time he led a band under his own name alone, as Fats Waller and His Buddies, the group "was gotten together only a few hours beforehand, when he suddenly realized he had to round up some men. Fats arrived on the date with a rhythm section comprising just himself and Eddie Condon on banjo, but the records they made ('Harlem Fuss' and 'Minor Drag') caused quite a stir."

In later years Fats's recording sessions continued to be "amazingly informal," with a "standard setup at the piano—one bottle on top, a reserve bottle underneath. Fats would fix up head arrangements, hardly ever bothering with written music for the men." He did have an arranger, however, Ken McComber, whom Andy calls "Fats's closest white friend."

In 1929 Fats and Andy wrote the score for *Hot Chocolates*, a musical which was produced in Harlem so successfully that it was later brought to Broadway. Reminiscing about his show, Andy says, "I remember one day going to Fats's house on One Hundred and Thirty-third Street to finish up a number based on a little strain he'd thought up. The whole show was complete, but they needed an extra number for a theme, and this had to be it. We worked on it for about forty-five minutes, and there it was —'Ain't Misbehavin'.' In addition to this outstanding song, their score for this review contained "Rhythm Man" and "Black and Blue," the tune which Frankie Laine so

successfully revived when he himself was coming into the big time in 1947 and '48.

Fats and Andy turned out many other popular song hits together: "Aintcha Glad," "Blue Turning Gray over You," "Concentratin'," "Gone," "If It Ain't Love," "Keepin' out of Mischief Now," "My Fate Is in Your Hands," and "Zonky." But Waller and Razaf had one ambition that was never realized—they wanted to get "a break in Hollywood as a team." Despite their many hit tunes, this never happened, although Waller himself did get to Hollywood briefly. He proved himself an unforgettable personality when the movies took full but belated advantage of his miming talents in *Stormy Weather*. He stole scenes with his gaily artful manner and his ad-libbed catch-phrases, such as the characteristic "One never knows, *do* one?"

In 1932 Fats went to Europe. He planned to appear as half of a piano-and-vocal team, with Spencer Williams, in London and Paris. But the story goes that one day Spencer couldn't find Fats anywhere; "he'd gotten high and jumped on the first boat back to New York." He didn't return to Europe after that until 1938, when he had a very successful trip, and, Andy says, "he picked up some Scottish dialect in Glasgow, had one long ball in London."

Fats's erratic qualities, probably both cause and effect of his heavy drinking, hurt him more than once. He was drunk at his Carnegie Hall concert in 1939, turning what might have been a triumph into an embarrassing fiasco. About three years before he died he was very ill. A doctor warned him to go on the wagon, which he did for several months. He was ill again in 1942, and again was told to take it easy—in fact, he was warned that he would die in a few months if he didn't. However, as his friend Andy says, "Fats could only take it easy for just so long. Life to him was one long crescendo, and he had to live it fast; but he never consciously hurt anybody but himself. . . . I shall always remember him as a great, happy guy who lived a happy, carefree life that ended much too soon.

"Fats's heart was as big as his body. Money meant nothing to him, and he was a soft touch for everybody; having a good time and looking out for his family were his greatest interests." Fats was married twice; he had one son by his first marriage and two by the second.

And speaking of Fats's musical achievements, Razaf says, "Fats was the most prolific and the fastest writer I ever knew. He could set a melody to any lyric, and he took great pains working on it, getting the exact mood and phrasing until the melody would just pour from his fingers. I used to say he could have set the telephone book to music."

Fats began to record regularly in 1922, both for player-piano rolls and for disks. He accompanied some eight blues singers of varying ability and by 1929, the same year he did the score for *Hot Chocolates*, he was recording his own alternately lovely and lusty compositions. In the year of the Great Crash he recorded such famous original keyboard exercises as "Handful of Keys" and "Numb Fumblin'," such beautiful original melodies as "Ain't Misbehavin' " and "My Fate Is in Your Hands." The next year he recorded his famous piano duets with Bennie Payne, who was later featured with Cab Calloway for many years; the tunes were "St. Louis Blues" and "After You've Gone." The charming tinkles of the two pianos suggested the multifaceted musical personality of Fats; his several sides as an organist, his work accompanying singers and expanding the musicianship of the sides made under the names of the Waller and Morris Hot Babies (the latter was Tom Morris the clarinetist) and the Louisiana Sugar Babes, implemented that impression; his vocals, after he became a star of the Victor label in May 1934, made the impression last. Fats made hundreds of sides for Victor between May 1934 and January 1943, brought at least one first-rate soloist, the guitarist Al Casey, to national attention, and sold millions of records. None of these accomplishments, however, ranks with his contribution to jazz piano.

One inevitably chooses one's own favorite Waller

records: the delicate mincemeat his satirical playing and singing make of such a dog tune as "The Bells of San Raquel"; the bumptious delight of his "Jingle Bells"; the gentle trills and exquisite phrasing with which he makes an attractive tune, "Thief in the Night," into something more; the affecting religious feeling of his organ performances of such spirituals as "Deep River," "Go Down, Moses," and "All God's Chillun Got Wings"; his incomparable and surely definitive performances of his own songs. Whichever one chooses of these styles, built out of approaches musical and/or commercial, one chooses unique distinction. In all these styles, at moments or throughout a performance, there is the languorous legato conception of the piano keyboard which Fats brought to jazz. By definition the piano is a staccato instrument, technically a member of the percussion family, and incapable of being slurred or tied together into glissando phrases. Nonetheless, a few remarkable pianists, such as Moritz Rosenthal, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and Fats Waller, have been able to elicit from the hammered strings of the piano a sustained sound which approaches the long bow of the violin, viola, cello, and bass and has the added quality that only a sustained tone on an instrument which does not sustain tone can provide. As further extension of and contrast with this miraculous achievement, Fats offered long rows of delicate trills and evenly articulated arpeggios in his performances, especially of ballads. Sometimes the trills had the effect of a sudden snap or sputter. Count Basie, in his first recording with his full large band in 1937, "Pennies from Heaven," played a seeming parody of these snaps and sputters when he took his piano solo. But while parody of Fats's keyboard devices was possible, as Fats found it possible to parody many others' vocal tricks in his own singing, no pianist ever really succeeded in capturing his grace and limitless flow of tonal beauty. All that was possible was parodying, such as Count Basie's, or admiring mimicry, such as Johnny Guarnieri's. When Nat Jaffe and Earl Hines recorded eight sides as a memorial album for Fats in February 1944,

they wisely played within their own styles; however sincere a compliment imitation might have been, they realized that Fats was inimitable.

Fats Waller wasn't imitated so much as he was absorbed, and none absorbed him better than Art Tatum. Though his style was often thought to be derived from Earl Hines', Art himself always acknowledged Fats as his primary source. In one remarkable early morning I spent with Art and Nat Cole and Erroll Garner at an after-hours club on the East Side of Los Angeles, Art played a kind of conversational battle of music with his two distinguished colleagues. The upshot of the evening, full of glittering displays of the techniques and ideas of the three pianists, was a discussion between Art and Nat in which the former put the latter to rights about his derivation. "Fats, man. That's where I come from. And quite a place to come from." And after Art had demonstrated again and again, with astonishing and undeniable Waller detail, Nat was prepared to acknowledge Tatum's acknowledgment and in turn to affirm his own source—Earl Hines, of course. Through all of this Erroll bounced away, with delightful Impressionist asides in the ballads, a little of Hines, a little more of sophisticated ragtime, and still more of Waller, as much the father of Erroll's style as of Tatum's.

From Fats, Art borrowed the left-hand pattern of alternating single notes and chords called "stride" piano. To Fats, Art added the tenth, the bass beat based on the chord of that interval. From Fats, Tatum took touch, soft, sinuous, and classically disciplined. To Fats, Tatum brought bravura execution, deftly inserted arpeggios, appoggiaturas, and other brilliantly interpolated ornament, all performed with an ease that ultimately won him the high praise of Rachmaninoff and Vladimir Horowitz.

From his very first appearance before a large audience, in an amateur program on a radio station in his native Toledo, it was obvious that Art Tatum was something of a keyboard phenomenon. He had switched to the piano from the violin in his middle teens. After that amateur

show he was hired as a staff pianist at radio station WSPD. His extraordinary fifteen-minute morning programs on that station were picked up and piped across the country by the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company (now the American Broadcasting Company). He was beginning to get a reputation. Adelaide Hall took him out of Toledo to tour with her for a year in 1932, with a long stopover in New York—just time enough to amaze some of the more sensitive natives. After another sojourn in Toledo, during which he considerably enhanced his radio reputation, Art went to Chicago to become a fixture at the Three Deuces. He had recorded for Decca and Brunswick in New York in 1933 and 1934, sides which were snatched up with an almost delirious glow of excitement by collectors around the world. In Chicago he did not record, but when he got to Hollywood for a short appearance in 1937 he picked up a quintet, most notable for the trumpeting of Lloyd Reese and the clarinet playing of Marshall Royal, and led these capable musicians through four barrelhouse sides, "Body and Soul," "What Will I Tell My Heart," "With Plenty of Money and You," and "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm." These and the four sides he recorded in New York in November of the same year, shortly before his 1938 tour of Europe, are properly celebrated by Tatum enthusiasts. The New York sides, "Gone with the Wind," "Stormy Weather," "Chloe," "The Sheik of Araby," show Art at his sensitive and gentle best in the first, and at his most exhibitionistic in the third; the Hollywood sides, on the contrary, show him at his roughest and most roisterous—the beat dominates these performances and for once Art's technique takes a back seat, although there was no more than a handful of pianists alive at the time who could have maintained so firm a beat at so fast a tempo.

With the coming of swing came cash and kudos. Art made a Decca album that sold very well in 1940; his name helped sell Joe Turner blues records for the same label, and, even more important, he played some of his

most tasteful and titillating piano back of Joe's shouting on eight sides in 1941. With Tiny Grimes to plop a mighty plunk on the electric guitar and Slam Stewart to hum a mighty buzz an octave above his bowed bass line, Art put together a trio in 1943 that, for two years at least, combined box office and musicianship as they had rarely been paired before. It was during the several long runs of the Tatum trio at several of the Fifty-second-Street hot boxes that Art's several limitations as a pianist and musician became clear, and some of us who had shouted, "You can't Imitatum!" began to look for excuses for such an excess of hyperbole. For one thing, there were the quotations, endless interpolations of the familiar phrases of Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," perhaps, Sousa's "The Stars and Stripes Forever," maybe. Occasionally the quote was apposite—when, for example, Art inserted the melancholy strains of "Good-by Forever," made more poignant in a transposition to a minor key, in his trio performance of "The Man I Love," there was relevance and sly wit. But apposition and relevance were rare in Tatum's quotations, and rarely to be found in those of Tiny Grimes, otherwise an able swinging guitarist. Then, too, there was the vocal exhibition of virtuosity: Art was taking himself more seriously than he should have; he was interrupting conversation that cut, however softly, across his playing—one of his now legendary interruptions was delivered on his feet, after an abrupt breaking of an individual measure; he turned to the audience and asked in stentorian tones, "Do I have to perform a major operation in here to get quiet?" Sometimes Art would go uptown to Harlem after a full night's and morning's work on the Street, arriving at an after-hours place at, say, five or five-thirty A.M. He would look around the room eagerly, peering beneath the half-closed lid of his one good eye. He would find somebody to play with, somebody unusually courageous and similarly foolish. For Art played for keeps. These were battles of music, and their winner was always Art Tatum, who slaughtered his opponent with unmatchable keyboard demonstrations.

But Tatum was vulnerable too. The discovery came as a shock to followers, fans and musicians alike, who in their jazz enthusiasms rarely stopped to formulate standards or used such standards as were around. Shortly after the rabid applause had reached a deafening peak, then, came disillusionment, diminishing audiences, declining interest. After a hiatus of a few years, in 1950, Tatum again became an important jazz name, this time properly applauded as he deserved, but no longer worshipped as a piano-playing archangel, a role too big for any man.

Teddy Wilson, born the same year as Art, discovered the tenth-bass independently of Tatum at about the same time. Most directly influenced by Hines, the lineaments of whose style can be felt in one Wilson performance after another, Teddy nonetheless was as original as Art in his elaboration of piano jazz. Even as Art, Teddy tended to ornament, but he added a less frivolous and adventitious decoration. With Goodman, with his own big in 1939, and thereafter with his several little bands, Teddy played a live, sometimes muscular, sometimes gentle piano. As a soloist he became adept at stringing together ballad phrases with fresh countermelodies and fill-in phrases and a steady moving beat. He submitted himself to traditional keyboard disciplines and later combined his serious piano studies and jazz-playing experience to become one of the finest teachers jazz has ever known, both privately and at such institutions as the Juilliard School of Music and the Manhattan School of Music.

In 1946 he became a member of the staff band at WNEW, the New York radio station that has proved most adventurous in its programming of popular music, both live and recorded. In nightly sessions with the WNEW band and in a long-playing Piano Moods record Teddy has shown himself to be not only a fine swing pianist, but an able exponent of more modern idiom too.

The capacity for growth which Teddy Wilson exemplifies so well is in various degrees typical of most of the significant pianists who followed in the footsteps of Earl Hines, Fats Waller, and Art Tatum. Nat Jaffe, who died

of a vascular ailment at the age of thirty, is a splendid case in point. A well-trained New York musician, he had the usual Gotham gigging beginning, then, following the tradition, put in time with such bands as Charlie Barnet's and Jack Teagarden's. Finally he became a Fifty-second-Street regular. As an accompanist he developed an uncanny intuitive feeling for every complication, every minute melodic and rhythmic variation of which a finger is capable. Billie Holiday swore by rather than at him and insisted he double from whatever club he was playing in to whatever club she was singing in, as her accompanist. His few solo records, made in 1944 and 1945, suggest what he might have become if he had lived beyond the latter year. On four twelve-inch sides with the guitarist Remo Palmieri and the bass player Leo Guarnieri, he integrated Debussyan melodic ideas, jazz phrases, and a fresh rhythmic conception, never losing his continuity; one of these sides, "These Foolish Things," is something of a jazz piano classic. In the four sides he made as half of the Fats Waller memorial album he ran the gamut of his and jazz's styles; one of these sides, "How Can You Face Me," has a singular melodic beauty that does credit both to Fats as a composer and to Nat as interpreter.

Another first-rate accompanist, in his later years perhaps the best jazz has ever known, is Jimmy Jones. He came to New York to become a Fifty-second Street regular in Nat's big year, 1944. Jimmy arrived as one-third of the Stuff Smith trio, plying his strings alongside those of Stuff's violin and John Levy's bass. Like Nat, Jimmy possesses remarkable intuitive gifts: with John providing an anchoring beat, he managed to follow every eccentric twist and turn and leap of Stuff's impetuous fiddling personality. As a stylist he softened the Tatum line to fit his elegant touch, so soft in its articulations that few recording engineers have been able to do it justice. Not until his 1950 recordings as Sarah Vaughan's accompanist did Jimmy really sound on records, although he did make some lovely sides for Wax Records, notably six of Noel Coward's tunes packaged as an album. Like most of the

first-rate pianists of the last quarter of a century, he also is an imaginative musician, fully capable of transforming keyboard ideas into band scores. Some of the finest of the records Steve Smith made for his own Hot Record Society label in the middle forties are the product of the Jones imagination, which fits both Tatumesque piano ideas and Ellington orchestral conceptions, and rarely fails in its fitting.

Touch and a mingling of traditions are also the defining elements of the pianists who followed Jess Stacy in his individual departure from the Hines hallmarks. The best example of Jess's individuality on records is that section of the long-playing record of the Benny Goodman 1938 concert devoted to his five "Sing, Sing, Sing" choruses. Here can be heard the curious mixture of Mozartian elegance and honky-tonk brashness that makes up the Stacy style. The trumpet-like phrasing comes from Hines, of course; the sweet, simple, and beautifully apt melodic variations from Stacy himself. A number of pianists, such as Dick Carey and Gene Schroeder, found themselves at ease in this pairing of piano styles. Two pianists in particular, Joe Bushkin and Mel Powell, found the style inspiring, and made much of the inspiration.

Joe is generally associated with the Dixieland musicians congregated around Eddie Condon, Pee Wee Russell, and Bobby Hackett at various times; actually, his most sizable performances were as a band pianist in his long associations, first with Bunny Berigan and then with Tommy Dorsey. In later years his galloping transformations of show tunes, with rhythm or string and rhythm accompaniment, showed him a far more adventurous pianist than any of his performances with the Condon gang had indicated he could be.

Mel Powell is a New York product, a prodigy of sorts, whose considerable talents were nurtured in city grammar and high schools. His precociousness was evidenced in his nursery school years, when he first began to play the piano. He was a good student in every way, under a private teacher at first and then later under the instruc-

tion of music teachers at high school, from which he graduated at the age of fourteen. He had his own band when he was twelve, the Dixieland Six, which actually found an engagement for itself; it played for six months at the Palais Royale in Nyack, New York. Still in his teens, Mel played with the musicians of his fancy, Dixielanders and Nicksie-landers, such as George Brunies, Jimmy McPartland, Zutty Singleton, Bobby Hackett, and Willie the Lion Smith, who administered further Dixieland discipline to the youngster. Mel's early style, an intricate lacework pattern threaded with pointed Dixie ornament and particular Stacy embroidery, changed some when he moved from the Muggsy Spanier band to Benny Goodman in 1940. With Benny he was not only a valuable member of the chamber units but also a fine soloist in big band numbers and an excellent arranger. He was a developing musician; with Raymond Scott's radio band and with Glenn Miller's Air Force behemoth he showed more and more versatility, more and more of the ability to play with jazzmen of broader scope than his first associates. After the war, when he made his own sides for Capitol, he enmeshed himself happily in small band arrangements with a texture more suggestive of Arnold Schoenberg than of Pee Wee Russell, Benny Goodman, or Jess Stacy.

Big bands were an aid to the development of Dodo Marmarosa, much as they had been for Joe Bushkin and Mel Powell, but the keyboard style Dodo developed was very different from theirs. Dodo, christened Michael in Pittsburgh in 1926, joined Johnny Scat Davis's orchestra, moved from it to the bands of Gene Krupa, Ted Fio Rito, Charlie Barnet, Tommy Dorsey, and Artie Shaw before settling down in Los Angeles in 1945. There he made a series of records with little bands led by other men and with his own trio for the short-lived Atomic label. All of them displayed a wide range of technique and a felicity of phrase, but his playing eventually settled down in bebop, never again to be revived—at least for public consumption—with the delicacy and variety that made his earlier work sparkle.

Nat Cole, who made his reputation as one of jazz's kings and as an intimate conversational singer, developed rapidly from an able nightclub entertainer and all-around keyboard handyman to a distinguished musical personality who left a firm imprint upon the Hines tradition and upon all pianists after him who were a part of it. His early background included the usual run of one-night and more extended engagements with other bands and his own in Chicago, where his family moved from Montgomery, Alabama, after he was born. Later he toured with the vaudeville unit of the *Shuffle Along* company, and remained in Los Angeles when the revue broke up there. In the movie town he developed a small following, which increased considerably when he organized his trio with Oscar Moore as his guitarist and Wesley Prince as his bass player. Later changes considerably modified the sound of the trio; but in its most important years, Nat's facile fingering and ready thinking combined with Oscar's technically able and richly intuitive guitar to create the best music with which King Cole was ever associated and the peak of his pianistic achievement.

Just as commercial success later narrowed the musical range of Erroll Garner and Johnny Guarnieri, Nat's winning of public esteem constricted his playing and removed him from serious consideration as a jazz artist. The same process gradually debilitated the taste and musicianship of Eddie Heywood, whose broken-chord revitalization of "Begin the Beguine" and other standard tunes ultimately succumbed to inflexible routine in order to maintain an audience—but not before a few delightful records had been made and the charm of Vic Dickenson's lazy, growly trombone had been felt.

Alongside the lure of commercial success, one must place the damaging effect of eclecticism on several jazz musicians. Johnny Guarnieri's consummate ease as a pianist in every known jazz style was first his making and then his undoing as a serious musician. After his preliminary engagements with high school bands, George Hall's orchestra, and Mike Riley's small band, he alter-

nated between Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw for three years, from 1939 to 1942. He played expert piano with both men and later with Jimmy Dorsey, Raymond Scott, and his own trios and small bands; he also played intriguing harpsichord with Artie Shaw's Gramercy 5. He played too well. Johnny's spectacular lack of a musical personality ultimately made him perhaps the best of radio studio pianists; but he lost that individual improvisatory spirit which not only identifies but distinguishes jazz musicians. The decline of young André Previn, from a brilliant executor of Tatumesque and Cole-ish jazz piano at seventeen to a motion-picture virtuoso as arranger, conductor, and pianist at twenty-one, follows a similar pattern. This German-born musician, splendidly trained in Berlin and Los Angeles by his father and others, is both a heartening and disheartening example of what jazz can do to and for a musician. His cocktail piano records for Victor insinuate jazz; they sparkle both because of the remnants of André's early style and because of an undeniable musical wit and wisdom that will always be present in his playing; they are also dulled by a superficial eclecticism that represents nothing more than a concession to record-company and motion-picture standards, with only occasional and subtle reminders of the talent thus conceded. Eclecticism, however, does not necessarily represent decline and fall in jazz; in the music of Mary Lou Williams it has always meant an unparalleled receptivity to new ideas and a captivating catholicity of taste.

Mary Lou Williams started to play the piano professionally at six and she's never stopped since. In the course of her long, intensely active career she has rolled up a record, on and off records, which deserves that much-abused adjective "unique." For Mary has played a vital creative role in each of the three major eras of jazz since its New Orlean beginnings, so important a part indeed that one can almost calculate the quality and the effect of those eras by her contributions to them.

Mary Lou Winn grew up with jazz. "People had to hold me on their laps so I could reach the piano at church

affairs and family parties. I would play for an hour and then rest and then come back and play some more." Born in Pittsburgh, she had several private teachers, who taught her the discipline of keyboard performance and the tradition of its literature. Then, at Westinghouse High School, she was taught by the same Mrs. Alexander who soon afterward imparted so much feeling for music and skill in communicating that feeling to Billy Strayhorn and Erroll Garner. In Pittsburgh Mary played the usual number of gigs, listening attentively to Earl Hines' piano when she could, developing under that influence and with the experience of those one-night seats a style very much her own. By 1925 she was ready for a vacation try at the Orpheum circuit, the big vaudeville wheel. She joined up with the Syncopaters of John Williams, whom she later married, accompanying Seymour and Jeanette, the only colored act on the Orpheum boards. Off and on she played with that act until 1928, touring the East and Midwest, getting a thorough schooling in show business. At the tag end of the twenties her saxophonist husband joined Andy Kirk, and she moved with him.

Mary was with Andy Kirk from 1929 to 1942. She says, "I don't know too much about those years. I was too happy to remember." Fortunately that band got around, and its records got further, so its memorable moments are well preserved, particularly those important moments presided over by Mary Lou Williams. She didn't actually join the band until 1931, but while she served Andy as part-time pianist, chauffeur, and arranger she also recorded with him. Her delicate melodic ideas and driving bass can be heard in the first versions of "Cloudy" and "Froggy Bottom" made by the band, in "Mary's Idea" and "Mess-a-Stomp," and in her first piano solos, made in Chicago in December 1930, "Night Life" and "Drag 'Em." Then there is a six-year hiatus during which the band did not record. But Andy was very active in Kansas City in the late Hoover and early Roosevelt years, and Mary was well on her way to a countrywide reputation.

"Jack Teagarden and Paul Whiteman used to drop

down to hear me. Glen Gray's musicians never seem
to miss us when they were in town and then, like so many
others, made something of a point of getting me to play
for them and with them. And what they heard was very
different from what you might expect. I know all about
'Kansas City Jazz,' but we didn't play the blues. And
Pete Johnson didn't play boogie! Yes, we played them
occasionally, but things like the boogie were for very late
at night. Musicians would get a kick out of Pete's flashy
boogie then, and we used to roll off some of it as a gag
but it wasn't our staple. The things I liked, and played,
were things like 'Walkin' and Swingin'' and 'Ghost of a
Love.' I liked to experiment, of course. But the blues
were the easiest for people to hear, and the boogie caught
on, and when we came to record for Decca in thirty-six
John Hammond asked us to do those things and so we
did more than our share of them."

On Decca the band developed a popular reputation
with such extravagances as "Until the Real Thing Comes
Along," chortled in coloratura style by Pha Terrell, but
musicians and youngsters around the country, responding
to the product that was then labeled "swing," listened
more carefully to Dick Wilson's tenor and Ted Donnelly's trombone and most attentively to "The Lady Who
Swings the Band," as one of the Kirk instrumentals was
appropriately called. Mary continued to play and write
for Andy right through the big swing years, turning out
such intriguing items as "A Mellow Bit of Rhythm,"
which Red Norvo's band helped make famous; the charming "What's Your Story, Morning Glory," which she also
arranged for Jimmie Lunceford, to his morning, noon, and
evening glory; and "Little Joe from Chicago," which
tacked a story to a boogie line and made "eight-to-the-
bar" music as well as monotony.

Boogie woogie stayed very close to Mary after she left
the band. As she explains, "Once you get known as a
boogie player, you've got to play boogie, boogie all the
time." And so she did, at Cafe Society Downtown and
Uptown in New York, at night clubs stretched across the

country, at concerts and on record sessions. Happily for
sanity, she didn't stick to the same tremolos, the same
tidal figures, the same raw routines she had temporarily
enlivened for Benny Goodman in "Roll 'Em" and for
Andy Kirk in "Little Joe" and "Froggy Bottom." She
experimented. She kept moving.

"You can freshen anything. There's no reason to play
anything—including Dixie—the way they've been playing
it." Mary says this and proves it with her composing
arranging and playing. Listen to her 1936 piano
parody, "Corny Rhythm," a take-off so gentle many
listeners thought she was playing straight. Listen to her
1944 "You Know, Baby"—on Asch, with Bill Coleman
and Al Hall—a witty variation on love songs, that suffered only from inadequate recording. Or listen to what
happens to "Star Dust" through two twelve-inch sides
of polished and pert writing and playing (by Mary, Vic
Dickenson, Dick Vance, Don Byas, Claude Green, and
rhythm) made around the same time. Perhaps you heard
her dramatic evocation of the signs of the zodiac in the
mix of woodwinds, jazz horns, and rhythm which was
the centerpiece of her 1945 Town Hall concert, or her
two albums of piano performances of the same music.
Maybe you heard seventy men of the New York Philharmonic Symphony swing—really swing—their way
through three parts of this suite at Carnegie in 1946. In
1946 Mary also invested the drab lines of boogie woogie
and the unswinging accents of waltz time with brilliance
in her "Waltz Boogie." And then there is "Oobladee," a
fairy tale in flatted fifths, which is Mary Lou Williams'
latching freshening of bop.

She doesn't stop because she can't. In Pittsburgh, in
1948, an eighty-year-old man who runs a sixty-voice mixed
choir asked her to write for his group. "Do something
like that 'Blue Skies' you arranged for Duke," he suggested. Mary got together with Milt Orent, with whom
she wrote "Oobladee," and came up with a nine-minute
spiritual, "Elijah and the Juniper Tree," setting the words

of a New York poet, Monty Carr, to music that employs modern changes and suggests bop in its texture.

"I was trained to play with everyone and to play everything. I grew up around older musicians and I listened to a lot and I learned. I listened to how a pianist pushed, like Count Basie, and I pushed. I broadened, I moved, I experimented. That's what I've always taught the kids who come to me. You've got to keep going. There's only one reason, really, to stop. That's to take account, to get new sounds, to get the sounds you're not hearing. Today"—this was in 1949—"Lennie's about the only original pianist around, Lennie [Tristano] and Bud Powell; you've got to credit Bud. While the other boys are playing the same runs, the same bop phrases, you've got to play something fresh and new, even if the form is old. And if the form is too old, you've got to find new forms. It's difficult for a creative artist to live; there are all kinds of obstacles. But as long as you keep your music in its scope, fresh in its ideas, and experimental, you'll make it."

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Chapter 19

FIGURES OF TRANSITION

The structure of modern jazz is not the product of one man or a number of men. It is much more an evolution of forms, sometimes orderly, sometimes disorderly, away from the first catch-as-catch-can attempts of New Orleans musicians, the boisterous phrases of swing, and the intervening music, which was never any one style but was certainly closest to Dixieland. While no single musician or group created modern jazz—although it did evolve from its antecedents—the impact of a few men upon their contemporaries and successors in the decade following the swing period was so strong that, in the jazz sense of the word, it can be said that they "made" modern jazz.

Lester Young, Roy Eldridge, Jimmy Blanton, and Charlie Christian, along with a few lesser figures, can be held accountable, in some such order, for the jazz called modern. It used to be called "progressive," a word which has more philosophical and political significance than musical and isn't very much more precise in those contexts than it is in jazz. The music will, I suppose, continue to be called modern or new, and considerable use of the adjective "cool" will continue to be made to describe the efforts of modern and new jazz musicians; for cool their music surely is insofar as it is relaxed, organized in its lines, and shaped by a soft and consistent sound. And yet the four men who made modern jazz, from whom, in one way or another, most of what is cool derives, are

characterized in their playing by an enormous drive, by an unmistakable push and vigor, by qualities that define what used to be called "hot" in jazz.

The epitome of coolness among these distinguished ancestors of modern jazz is Lester Young. But Lester is also a summary example of driving, vigorous tenor saxophone. It is a point not to forget in evaluating the size of his contribution. It is clear that the tone of his instrument was very different from that of other tenormen, though there was perhaps a suggestion of it in the work of a Kansas City contemporary who played the same horn —Dick Wilson of the Andy Kirk band. No one, however, until Lester came along, believed that the sound of the tenor could be other than thick, swollen with vibrato and phrased for plushness—the sound, in sum, of Coleman Hawkins. Lester changed all that. His tone was attenuated, compounded of leanly inflected notes, with a minimum of the furry vibration associated with Hawk and his hordes of followers. His phrases were longer than the traditional riff; when at a loss for fresh ideas, he would extend his statements by hanging on to one or two notes in a kind of auto-horn honk that gave his solos a quality of cohesion; his lines hung together, even if suspended precariously from a single note. And how they swung!

It is not entirely true, as the legend of Lester Young seems to insist, that all of his solos with the Count Basie band after 1936, or with various pick-up groups recording under Teddy Wilson and Billie Holiday, remain fresh and stimulating today. Some of his work was as stale and stiff as his competitors', some of it as dulled by riffs, some of it as imitative of Hawkins and as inept as the poorest of the imitations. But the earmarks of the bright style did emerge in Basie's "Taxi War Dance" and "Twelfth Street Rag," in his own "Lester Leaps In," made with a small Basie group, and the coupled "Dickie's Dream." His inventive use of ballad materials is apparent in "You Can Depend on Me" and "I Never Knew"; and even more of the style, which has been used to such engaging effect on ballads by Stan Getz, Allen Eager, Sonny Stitt,

Brew Moore, Herb Stewart, and Zoot Sims (to mention just a few of the school), can be heard on "Jive at Five." A brief nod in the direction of the clarinet on "Texas Shuffle" and a Kansas City Six date for Commodore indicate that this neglected instrument might have been as richly adapted to cool jazz as the tenor if Lester had been more inclined to follow its humors.

It is fitting that this man, unanimously if unofficially elected president of their numbers by modern tenormen (hence his nickname—"Pres"), should have succeeded Coleman Hawkins in the Fletcher Henderson band when Hawk left for Europe in 1934. The qualities that secured Pres's election were not readily apparent, however, until he joined Count Basie in 1936 and came east with him. When the New Orleans-born musician (1909) cut all his early ties—which included, besides Henderson, some time with King Oliver and Andy Kirk—lifted his horn high in the air, and began to *make* modern jazz. It took some years for musicians to spot that horn, raised inches over Pres's head; when they did, right after the Second World War, the panic was on to push vibrato aside, pick up his licks, and produce his sound. After 1945 everybody who was tenor-sax anybody was blowing Lester and getting an audience—except Lester, whose several small bands lived and died in comparative obscurity. But during 1950 it was thought proper—even, one might say, hip—to listen to Lester directly, and he began to catch on a little more as a live figure, still persuasive, still cool, still driving, whatever the limitations of his harmonic and melodic imagination. He is, after all, the Pres.

A similar distinction belongs to Roy Eldridge, but the acknowledgment is less easily forthcoming from young musicians. It is generally understood that Dizzy Gillespie derives from Roy. Most musicians with ears to hear and records to play can distinguish the large change Roy effected on his chosen horn. But while Dizzy moved from Roy's sound to his own, younger trumpeters have been content to borrow from Dizzy directly or simply to carry over Charlie Parker's or Lester's lines to their instruments.

The results have not always been salutary. There is al
ways a loss, by definition, when a large step in the histor
of an art is forgotten or, when remembered, avoided. Th
consequences in this case have been grievous: bop tru
pet was bop all right; it was not always trumpet, and ne
trumpeters, now that bop is fading as an organized ex
pression, simply are not appearing.

Of the three men who fashioned, in their separate way
the jazz trumpet as we know it—Louis Armstrong, Ro
Eldridge, and Dizzy Gillespie—Roy is the key figure,
think. He marks the transition from New Orleans to bo
under his tutelage the trumpet emerged from a blu
bondage and a tonal servitude; as a result of his pe
formances the instrument was extended in range ar
color and agility. Without Roy, Dizzy would have be
impossible and the brass section of the jazz band wou
never have achieved that full, glowing, vibrant life it h
been known to have upon exultant occasion. With th
diminutive figure so aptly dubbed "Little Jazz" by th
master of nomenclature, Toby Hardwick, jazz was giv
an additional dimension and the trumpet was brought
maturity.

In a profession that writes off performers almost
quickly as baseball retires its pitchers, Roy Eldridge h
been around a long time. He was born in 1911 and
has been playing professionally for close to a quarter
a century. He's been heard with little kid bands arou
his native Pittsburgh, with a carnival show, with Hor
Henderson, the Chocolate Dandies, Speed Webb, C
Scott, Elmer Snowden, Charlie Johnson, McKinney's C
ton Pickers, Teddy Hill, Fletcher Henderson, Gene Kru
Artie Shaw, and his own bands, large and small, Americ
and recently French. From a peppery little musician w
played everything "up," as fast as possible, he develo
into a trumpeter who could—and can—do anything a
body else can do on his horn and a number of thi
nobody else would think of attempting. From the first n
that one can remember hearing Roy blow, there has b
that astonishing sound. He describes it best himself.

"I tell you what I love about the trumpet. I love to hear a note cracking. A real snap. It's like a whip when it happens. It hits hard and it's really clean, round and cracked."

Roy is very much aware of the quality of the trumpet which is its own. "When I first came to New York," he says, "I had to play everything fast and double fast. I couldn't stand still. Like a lot of youngsters today, all my ballads had to be double time. I was fresh. I was full of ideas. Augmented chords. Ninths. The cats used to listen to me. 'Well,' they'd say, 'he's nice, but he don't say nothing!' Consequently I didn't work." There were other things he did. "I was playing fine saxophone on the trumpet. Trying to hold notes longer than they should be held, trying to get a sound which I couldn't and shouldn't get. When I discovered that the trumpet has a sound all its own, and a way of playing all its own, then I began to play."

It's not strange that Roy reached for saxophone lines when he picked up his trumpet. "The two men who have been my favorites ever since I began playing music are Benny Carter and Coleman Hawkins. They really inspired me. I'd listen to them and be stunned, man. I didn't know the right names for anything at first, but I knew what knocked me out. They'd do eight bars and then play what I called a 'turn-around.' Eight and 'turn-around.' Changes, man. I dug." Thus Roy praises these master saxophonists' creative modulations and imaginative alteration of chords and melodies.

Louis too, of course, played his vital part. "I went up to the Lafayette Theatre to try and discover what he was doing. I sat through one show, and nothing happened. I figured this couldn't be it. I sat through another. Then Louis started to build, chorus after chorus; he came to a real climax, an organized climax, right, clean, clear. Man, I stood up with the rest of them. I could see why people were digging him."

What was it about Louis? "It was feeling. It's always

feeling when it's right. It's also building, giving your solo shape, going somewhere."

The feeling Roy looks for doesn't occur more than four or five times a year in his own playing, he insists. "When it's there, nothing matters. Range, speed, sound—they just come. It's nothing I use; I can be cold sober. From somewhere, it comes." He describes an intuitive process, in which everything he has ever learned spills over into his music, finding structure and meaning. "Afterward I sit up in my room and try to figure it out. I know I haven't cleaned by horn, but the sound was 'gone'! I know my lip isn't in that good shape, but I made an altissimo C as big and fat as the C two octaves lower. It just doesn't figure." Afterward he is usually sick. "One night recently in Chicago they pushed me up against a bunch of young boppers. Well, maybe I was lucky; I was blowing; it was one of those nights. I got home, and the next day I had pneumonia."

Roy likes much that he has heard of modern jazz. "Man, I don't put anything down that anybody's trying. Naturally I dig Charlie Parker—he's blowing. And I certainly like the long lines when they come off. Chu Berry used to play like that—sometimes two choruses at a stretch. He had a way of breathing in rhythm so he could carry himself all the way without interruption."

He's interested in the possibility of free improvisation. "Clyde Hart and I made a record like that once. We decided in front that there'd be no regular chords, we'd announce no keys, stick to no progressions. Only once I fell into a minor key; the rest was free, just blowing. And, man, it felt good."

But with most of his records, "I just don't seem to make it. I'm not sure I ever made a good record. Usually the tunes are bad, or everybody's in a hurry. Yeah, there is one, anyway. I like the 'Rockin' Chair' I made with Gene. I didn't know what I'd played until Ben Webster played it for me on the Coast. I didn't even know who it was. When I heard the introduction I thought it was Louis. I can truthfully say that I played what I wanted to

play on that record. And maybe, too, on the 'Embraceable You' I made with a studio band. Some of the other things —you know. 'After You've Gone' was made to make people applaud. There were some other moments here and there and maybe we got a little bit of the sound of the band I had at the Deuces in Chicago in 1937. 'Heckler's Hop,' maybe; 'Florida Stomp.' That was a crazy band. The most flexible. There was nothing those cats couldn't do. And you never knew what they were coming up with. We could be doing 'Limehouse Blues' way up in tempo, look at the clock, and do a direct segue into the theme."

Those of us who heard Roy and his brother Joe and Scoops Carey on altos, John Collins on guitar, Teddy Cole on piano, Truck Parham on bass, Zutty Singleton on drums in that band, remember very well the suppleness and authority with which it played. It makes us starry-eyed about the mythical Golden Age of jazz when we listen to those Vocalions, even those of us with the most resolute of modern tastes. Perhaps there's a reason and a connection, or maybe a direct sequence of styles and ideas. Roy Eldridge, after all, represents taste and skill, and those are not ephemeral values that fade with the passing of a style, an era, or a movement in jazz. His career reaches into a past that produce jazzmen of solid stature. He came up at a time when it was not possible to achieve full-fledged fame at twenty and extinction at twenty-two. It is true that he played in comparative obscurity for several years, trying unsuccessfully to succeed with his own big band, playing a year with Gene Krupa, during which he received star billing but didn't actually get to play as much as his talents or the billing deserved. Then, in the spring of 1950, he journeyed to Paris to receive the first proper appreciation of his music since his early days with Krupa and Shaw. Paris was Roy's home for a year—almost, it seemed to him, a permanent home; but the standards of music and musicians were not high enough, so in the spring of 1951 Roy came home again to lock horns in battles of music with

Dizzy Gillespie at Birdland in New York and to try once again. His taste and skill have not diminished; his time is just as good as it ever was, and some of us sometimes think it was the best; his sound is unimpaired, and those who think it is untouched on trumpet are not so few; his position remains big, perhaps beyond dispute. He has never lost sight or sound of the character of his instrument. Through all the years since 1928 Roy Eldridge has been a brassman with a fondness and a talent for the drama, the passion, and the power which only the trumpet can bring to jazz. Like all the other masters of this music, he has always struggled to get ahead, to make musical as well as economic progress. When bebop came along, Roy was frightened; he found it difficult to understand and didn't see a place for himself in the new music. But after a certain amount of scuffling, a series of disappointing trips with his own band and others, a year abroad, and a return to the United States, he was confident again. He could hear his contribution in other men's playing as well as his own. He had a raft of fresh ideas, nurtured through the bad years and the fine times in Paris. Roy knew once again that the general and the personal struggles were worth making.

Harry Edison, with Count Basie in Lester Young's day and still with him in bebop's, was too shy, too little concerned with his own personal advancement, to battle for his ideas. But all with an ear to hear recognized the advance in trumpet made with his perky triplets, his witty melodic variations and subtle changes of chord structure.

Jimmy Blanton's musical battle was for a line, any line, that could be called his instrument's own. The bass was a thumper when he took over; he left it a jumper. Actually the Blanton battle was a pushover. Duke Ellington, when he heard Jimmy playing with Fate Marable's band in St. Louis, was immediately convinced. Bass players all over America were won with a couple of measures of "Jack the Bear" and "Ko-Ko" and "Sepia Serenade," when they heard the tone and the authority and the beat of the best bassman jazz has ever known. A few of them were

fortunate enough to get copies of his duets with Duke, the "Blues," "Plucked Again," "Pitter Panther Patter," "Sophisticated Lady," "Body and Soul," and "Mr. J. B. Blues," all now long out of print. On those exhilarating sides Jimmy demonstrated in 1939 and 1940 that the big violin was, like its small relative, a melodic instrument, that its melodic lines joined those of the brass and reeds in jazz as snugly and imaginatively as a guitar's and that its rhythmic figures did not have to be limited to so many syncopated beats a bar. Jimmy died of tuberculosis in 1942 in a California sanatorium, having accomplished in the last four of his twenty-three years what few musicians manage in a lifetime. He brought his instrument to maturity, gave it a solo position in jazz, and went much of the way toward revolutionizing the rhythmic patterns which, unchanging, gave every indication of constricting and eventually killing jazz.

It was not only changes in bass playing and writing and thinking that Jimmy Blanton effected in his brief career in the big jazz time. When Jimmy joined Duke in St. Louis in 1939 the Ellington band had lost some of its spirit. It was still making lovely records; there were still occasional experimental scores forthcoming from Duke, such as the 1937 exercise in dynamics and the structure of the blues, "Crescendo and Diminuendo in Blue"; the small units of the band, led by Barney Bigard, Johnny Hodges, Rex Stewart, and Cootie Williams, had been making charming records and continued to make them until 1941. There was still melodic imagination in songs written to order, such as the downtown Cotton Club Revue pieces, "I Let a Song Go out of My Heart" and "If You Were in My Place"; there were all the swinging vehicles for soloists, such as Lawrence Brown's "Rose of the Rio Grande" and Rex Stewart's "Boy Meets Horn"; Ivy Anderson was as good as ever as she plied the amusing but poignant phrases of "A Lonely Co-ed" and the mood, one of screaming through tears, of "Killin' Myself." In spite of all these happy circumstances, the full measure of the Ellington band's resources at the beginning of World War