Mayakovsky, Cloud in Trousers:

p. 107: "...even frowning Apostle Peter/will want to step out in the ki-ka-pou."

endnote explains: "Ki-ka-pou: an exotic dance that was currently popular in Russian
tight clubs. It was apparently inspired by the American Kickapoo Indian medicine
dances which traveled about in Europe in the 1890's."
he met the one named Berneta. Genetic bingo took some years yet, but my existence was promised from the first time Charlie Doig and Berneta Ringer put a hand in the small of each other’s back and danced together in the hall at Ringling.
Or am I granted the most characteristic possible glimpse of my mother and my early self (of her sitting and reading to me by the hour, both of us kept quiet by the infinite song of pagewords)....
What was taking place in (my mother? me?) was something like an inward tuning, the wind-struck music of the bone harp that Robinson Jeffers has said we all ultimately are.
for Barbwire Jazz:

Brubeck's Paul Desmond story: a woman had jilted D for someone high in NY financial circles, and when B asked him, "Paul, how are you doing?" D responded: "This is the way the world ends, not with a whim but a banker."

--I'm about as square as a guy can be and still have feet under him rather than a loading pallet, but...
possible talk abt western lingo

--barbs on barbwire as musical notes; Jeffers' wind-struck music...
   (barbs themselves are riffed into lingo: "bobwire"; "nothing between here and the
   N Pole but a bobwire fence."

--jazz references: even the lofty Sontag quotes Ellington (clip in this file)
   --my use of Armstrong's "We all go do-re-mi..."
--Brubeck reference I read or heard somewhere: growing up on ranch in n. Calif.,
   the sound of tractor (maybe a John Deere "poppin' John"?), put a rhythm in him.
   Does he have an autobiog to check for this? Can he be contacted?

--DARE, inc. my own citations, some of which I made up ("fireshine")

--lingo file

--examples from my correspondence w/ westerners: homesteader letters

--power of the Chardon (?) diary Richard White uses in lecture, juxtaposing killing
   rats and epidemic among Indians.

--the necessary humor in bunkhouse (and barracks) talk

--example of trying to get a voice right: Monty-Susan-Wes
   --Jick: "We've pretty close to got it."
NPR, All Things Considered, March 8 '03:
in a "sound portrait" interview, Joseph Shabalala, leader of Ladysmith Black Mambazo, told of putting the throat-clearing/humming used on a farm to urge on an ox in plowing into the group's music; his city-born members asked where did he get that? It's a deeper trill, but of the same ilk as the prrr we used to call sheep when feeding cottoncake. (Does ours go back to Scotland?)
A Wild Criminal in a Wilder Australia

By JANET MASLIN

In a spectacular feat of literary ventriloquism, the Australian-born novelist Peter Carey invites the outlaw Ned Kelly to tell his story. He summons the rollicking, unschooled, hugely colorful voice of Australia’s best-known underdog for a bravura book-length performance.

Writing so convincingly in Ned’s argot that his own elegantly phrased acknowledgments at the end of “True History of the Kelly Gang” seem starkly incongruous, the Booker Prize-winning author of “Oscar and Lucinda” invests Ned’s account with all the makings of a swaggering adventure tale as well as a classic Western tragedy. The effect is triumphantly eclectic, as if Huck Finn and Shakespeare had joined forces to prettify the legend of Jesse James.

Ned Kelly, a figure of such rebel cachet that he was once played (excruciatingly) by Mick Jagger on screen, is riskily imagined by Mr. Carey as a misunderstood hero. No doubt “True Adventures of the Kelly Gang” would be a richer work if Ned were not forever finding himself innocently in possession of other people’s horses, or seeing his actions woefully misinterpreted by Australian authorities.

That said, Mr. Carey has still turned a hagiographer’s admiration for his outlaw subject into a vastly entertaining story in which the volatile, candid Ned has no trouble holding center stage, thanks to a great gift for gab and an unforgettably vivid manner of expressing himself.

On the eve of one of his many ill-fated encounters with Australian authorities, Ned invokes local fauna with typical panache: “I were a plump witchetty grub beneath the bark not knowing that the kookaburra exists unable to imagine that fierce beak or the punishment in that wild and angry eye.”

In a Hugh, unpretentious and devilishly artful narrative, one that liberates Mr. Carey from the stylistic convolutions of earlier work like “Jack Maggs,” Ned provides the makings of a sentimental tale. At heart, he is simply a boy who loves his mother, even if that mother happens to be a cokker. Boyish Ned describes, to great comic effect, the remarkable effect that Ellen Kelly had on numerous gentleman friends (“I didn’t understand how she could profit so well from laundry but knew better than to question her directly”) and how chagrined he felt when one of Ellen’s suitors managed to move in or father a child. “Angry bunions swollen veins it were a queer thing to see a stranger’s big flat feet sticking out the bottom of my mother’s blanket next morning,” he explains, “and to be honest I will confess I would much prefer that she invited no new husbands to her bed but seeing as I couldn’t have this wish I preferred old Harry Power.”

The fact that Ellen sells Ned to Harry as an apprentice, that Harry becomes the boy’s first partner in accidental crime and that Ellen then angrily demands a piece of the profits, does nothing to dim his filial devotion. “Harry robbed them both,” Ned recounts of one criminal episode, “apologizing as he done so with his little speech about how he were forced to crime I will not trouble you with it here.”

All this is being written by Ned for the benefit of a daughter he has never known but whose life he hopes to influence with tales of the injustices that her father suffered. Ned’s fierce Irish pride and his treatment at the hands of Australian Protestants give the book an angry backbone, a sense of his ultimate folk-hero stature and an idea of how he will eventually grow up to declare, “I am a widow’s son outlawed and must be obeyed.”

In providing Ned’s side of the various skirmishes that form the basis of his notoriety, and in drawing upon a post-bank-robery 5,300-word public statement of Kelly’s for some of the book’s lively syntax, Mr. Carey delves into the relative minutiae of police and journalistic accounts of Ned’s life. These particulars might threaten to eclipse the bigger picture if they were not rendered so atmospherically, complete with wombat sex and bear dances, cockatoo pie and roasting kangaroo. He describes two strangers as “hard looking fellows all dриed out and salted down for keeping.” Someone else is “as lazy as the dog that rests its head against the wheel to bark.” When his mother is arrested, Ned claims that “the police took her and the baby as easy as plucking mushrooms in a cow paddock.”

And when he falls in love with Mary Hearn, a sweetheart of Mr. Carey’s invention in an otherwise fact-based account, he does it with breathless, Joycean gusto. “She were a gazelle although I never saw a gazelle she were a foal I carried her around the kitchen 1/2 drunk in happiness she had that dear Irish smell of homemade soap & ashes in her hair I loved her so well her.”

“True History of the Kelly Gang,” in which Ned uses the word “adjectival” to replace his ruder thoughts (“O you adjectival worm”) and describes such engaging oddities as outlawed in blackface and dresses, is already controversial for its wholehearted, even maudlin embrace of the Kelly legend. (Peter Ryan, the English-born police commissioner of New South Wales, has described Australia’s enduring Kellymania as “the black heart of nothingness that sits at the heart of the Australian character.”)

But this rip-snorting Western novel rises far above such considerations and works on its own great merits as a seamlessly imagined coming-of-age story set in wild country and wilder times. Though Ned Kelly died in 1880 just before his 26th birthday, he could not be more furiously alive.
CONCERTS

Concert series subscriptions are available.

January 6-8
Lyrics & Lyricists: Over the Rainbow
Lerner & Loewe & Lane & Strouse, $40

January 11
Ned Rorem Hosts
John Harbison & Michael Hersch, $25

January 13
Chamber Music in America: 2001
Mendelssohn Quartet,
The Fry Street Quartet, $25

January 16
Chamber Music at the Y
Juilliard Quartet, $30

January 20
The Music & Letters of Liszt
Alan Walker, Vanessa Dylyn,
Graham Roebuck, Valerie Tryon, $25

January 21
The Singer's Art
Stephanie Blythe, Warren Jones, $25

January 25
Jazz Piano at the Y
Barbara Carroll, Sir Roland Hanna, Dick
Hyman, Renee Rosnes, Peter Washington,
Billy Drummond, $30

January 27
Ned Rorem Hosts
Ned Rorem & Augusta Read Thomas, $25

January 31
Distinguished Artists
Zoltán Kocsis, $25/$18

February 3
International Quartets
Pražák String Quartet
Harold and Maedell Dixon, $25

February 4
Liszt: Impressionistic & Literary Poetic
Alan Walker, Janina Fialkowska,
Janie Weber, $25

February 7
Chamber Music at the Y
Guarnieri Quartet, $30

February 10 NEW
Cabaret Uptown
David Friedman & Alix Korey, $35

February 10-12
Lyrics & Lyricists: Over the Rainbow
Julie Styne, $40

February 11
Music for the Whole Family: Musical Bugs
Jeffrey Siegel, $10

February 14
Keyboard Conversations® with Jeffrey Siegel
Romance—Italian Style, $25

February 17
Project America: All's Fair in Love & War
Oscar Brand, Christine Lavin, $25

February 18
Ned Rorem Hosts
Christopher Rouse & Michael Hersch

February 18
Music for the Whole Family
Kevin Roth, $10

February 24
Liszt: Composative, Virtuosic &
Alan Walker, Steven Mayer,
Marc-André Hamelin, $25

February 28
Tokyo String Quartet
Last But Not Least, $30

March 3
Music for the Whole Family:
Kid's Night Out with David
and the Big Bear Band, $10

March 4
Music of the Jewish Spirit: Putin
Regina Resnik, Margaret Kaufman,
The Kinor Ensemble, New Y
Singers, $25

March 7
Young Europe—Norway
Henning Kragenput, Helge R

March 8
Distinguished Artists
Lynn Harrell, Victor Ascencio

March 13
The Singer's Art
Nathan Gunn, Julie Gunn, $25
The Country and the City, Raymond Williams

pp. 225-7, on orthographic simulation in dialogue; 226, Hardy decided against much of it because it reduces persons to types.
The Country and the City, Raymond Williams

pp. 243-246, James Joyce's changing the shape of language

p. 245: "...the most deeply known human community is language itself."

" " : "The greatness of Ulysses is this community of speech."

my note: Joyce's slanginess in quoted passages on these pages could be used in "Barbwire Jazz" talk.
The Country and the City, Raymond Williams: "A Problem of Perspective," pp. 9-12, has his sequence of when rural England supposedly changed, back and back to Eden.
lingo small filebox, used during Prairie:

--Montana Lingo
--cussing
--jokes
--drinking
possible talk about western lingo/2

--trying to get voice right: "Ay" parenthesis for Ninian and Lucas
--"Fit of Pa'rick" in RFair

--file folder(s) w/ my notes for talking to classes about writing
--Sea Runners examples, inc. Jrn1 of Verbal Abuse
Directions: Write, Read, Rewrite. Repeat Steps 2 and 3 as Needed.

By SUSAN SONTAG

Reading novels seems to me such a normal activity, while writing them is such an odd thing to do... At least so I think until I remind myself how firmly the two are related. (No armor of generalities here. Just a few remarks.)

First, because to write is to practice, with particular intensity and attentiveness, the art of reading. You write in order to read what you've written and see if it's okay and, since of course it never is, to rewrite it—once, twice, as many times as it takes to get it to be something you can bear to reread. You are your own first, maybe severest, reader. "To write is to sit in judgment on oneself," has been inscribed on the flyleaf of one of his books. Hard to imagine writing without rereading.

But is what you've written straight off never all right? Yes, sometimes even better than all right. And that only suggests, to this novelist at any rate, that with a closer look, or voicing aloud—that is, another reading—it might be better still. I'm not saying that the writer has to fret and sweat to produce something good.

"What is written without effort is in general read without pleasure," one writer said, and the maxim seems as remote from contemporary taste as its author. Surely, much that is written without effort gives a great deal of pleasure.

No, the question is not the judgment of readers who may well prefer a writer's more spontaneous, less elaborated work—but a sentiment of writers, whose professionalism is satisfaction. You think, "If I can get it to this point the first go around, without too much struggle, couldn't it be better still?"

And though the rewriting—and the re-reading—sound like effort, they are actually the most pleasurable parts of writing. Sometimes the only pleasurable parts. Setting out to write, if you have the idea of "literature" in your head, is formidable, intimidating. A plunge in an icy lake. Then comes the warm part: when you already have something to work with, upgrade, edit. Let's say it's a mess. But you have a chance to fix it. You try to be clearer. Or deeper. Or more eloquent. Or more eccentric. You try to be true to a world. You want the book to be more spacious, more authoritative. You want to winch yourself up from yourself. You want to winch the book out of your ballyhoo. As the statue is enthoned in the block of marble, the novel is inside your head. You try to liberate it. You try to get this wretched stuff on the page closer to what you think your book should be—what you know, in your spasms of elation, it can be. You read the sentences over and over. Is this the book I'm writing? Is this all?

Or let's say it's going well; for it does go well, sometimes. (If it didn't, some of the time, you'd go crazy.) There you are, and even if you are the slowest of scribes and the worst of touch typists, a trail of words is getting laid down, and you want to keep going; and then you reread it. Perhaps you don't dare to be satisfied, but at the same time you like what you've written. You find yourself taking pleasure—a reader's pleas-

Continued on Page B2

Let the Good Tidings Roll
With Rockin' and Stompin'

By ANN POWERS

Midway through the first performance of Handel's "Messiah" on Friday at the Bottom Line, Jane Siberry laughed. This singer had paused to catch her breath during one of the oratorio's many grace-note-laden passages, but instead of hiding her vocal imperfection, she chuckled and rolled her eyes at the challenging phrase. The crowd applauded, all smiles.

This warm moment typified "The Downtown Messiah," the easygoing pageant that is becoming a holiday staple at this popular club. Richard Barone, the event's director, has stated the desire to keep Handel's sacred cow alive through respectful modernization. He has done so by forcing in cutting-edge sounds than by letting his vibrant cast show off its humanity through this treasured work.

The arrangements by Peter Kiesewalter, who also played piano and clarinet, cleverly balanced traditionalism with pop renewal. The 30-voice chorus, directed by Margaret Dorn, followed an orthodox path through Handel's ornate harmonies. But the orchestra, which included a four-piece string section, a trumpeter, an electric bassist and a drummer, expanded the dynamics to encompass jazz, gospel, rock and even a dash of country. And when each soloist stepped forward, this "Messiah" bent to his or her vision, not just of the Bible story but of the art of singing itself.

After a lovely a cappella turn by the Accidentals, Vernon Reid and Gordon Chambers took the "Messiah" somewhere Handel had never imagined. Churned out a funky riff, Mr. Reid used his guitar to connect the Baroque to the blues. Mr. Chambers had some fun leading the audience members in a gospel-style sing-along. He

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Mel Gibson  Helen Hunt

"WE'RE TALKING OSCAR WATCH...YOU BET. IT HAS 'WINNER' WRITTEN ALL OVER IT. WOMEN IS THE NAUGHTY-AND-NICE ROMANTIC COMEDY WE'VE BEEN MISSING ALL YEAR.
And Mel Gibson, this megawatt charm, has never been funnier, looser or sexier...A terrible cost...keeps the laughs coming." -Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

"A LAUGH-OUT-LOUD celebration of the sexes! Gibson & Hunt light up the screen with TRACY-HEPBURN CHEMISTRY." -Bob S. ADA, UPN-TV

"...WILL MOST DEFINITELY BE WHAT WOMEN (AND MEN, TOO) WANT FROM A HOLIDAY MOVIE." -Susan Sieden, LOS ANGELES DAILY NEWS

"THE MOST ENTERTAINING MOVIE OF THE SEASON. Mel Gibson gives the most assured and appealing performance of his career. Hunt matches Gibson scene for scene." -Christopher Kelly, BOSTON STAR-TELEGRAM

"THE SMARTEST, FUNNIEST AND MOST ROMANTIC COMEDY OF THE YEAR." -Mark Salem, GLOBE-TV

"Mel Gibson reaches new heights of comic cleverness...TUNA! FEisty...AND FULL OF LIFE." -Bob Shmotkin, CBS

"Mel Gibson & Helen Hunt light up the screen! **** ONE'S A WINNER!" -RT Zweck, TV Guide

"TWO THUMBS UP!" -DEBRA STEVENSON AND THE MOVIE

What Women Want

NOW PLAYING AT THEATRES EVERYWHERE

Writers on Writing

Continued From Page B1

ure — in what's there on the page.

Writing is finally a series of permissions you give yourself to be expressive in certain ways. To invent. To leap. To fly. To fail. To find your own characteristic way of narrating and insisting; that is, to find your own inner freedom. To be strict without being too self-excoriating. Not stopping too often to reedit. Allowing yourself, when you dare to think it's going well (or not too badly), simply to keep rolling along. No waiting for inspiration's above.

Blind writers can never reread what they dictate. Perhaps this matters less for poets, who often do most of their writing in their head before setting anything down on paper. (Poets live by the ear much more than prose writers do.) And not being able to see doesn't mean that they can't make revisions. Don't we imagine that Milton's daughters, at the end of each day of the dictation of "Paradise Lost," read it all back to their father aloud and then took down his corrections? But prose writers, who work in a lumberyard of words, can't hold it all in their heads. They need to see what they've written. Even those writers who seem most forthcoming, prolific, must feel this. (Thus Sartre announced, when he went blind, that his years and his blindness are over.) Think of portly, venerable Henry James pacing up and down in a room in Lambs House composing "The Golden Bowl" aloud to his secretary. Learning to live with the difficulty of imagining how James's late prose could have been dictated at all, much less to the racket made by a Remington typewriter circa 1890, don't we imagine that James reread what had been typed and was lavish with his corrections? When I became, again, a cancer patient two years ago and had to break off work on the nearly finished "In America," a kind friend in Los Angeles, knowing my despair and fear that now I'd never finish it, offered to take a leave from his job and come to New York and stay with me as long as needed, to take down my dictation of the rest of the novel. True, the first eight chapters were done (that is, rewritten and reread many times), and I'd begun the next-to-last chapter, and I did feel I had the arc of those last two chapters entirely in my head. And yet, and yet, I had to refuse his touching, generous offer. It wasn't just that I was already too befuddled by a drastic chemo cocktail and lots of painkillers to remember what I was planning to write. I had to be able to see what I wrote, not just hear it. I had to be able to reread.

Reading usually precedes writing. And the impulse to write is almost always fired by reading. Reading, the love of reading, is what makes you dream of becoming a writer. And long after you've become a writer, reading books others write — and rereading the beloved books of the past — constitutes an irresistible distraction from writing. Distraction. Consolation. Torment. And, yes, inspiration.

Of course, not all writers will admit this. Remember once saying something to V. S. Naipaul about a 19th-century English novel I loved, a very well-known novel that I assumed he, like everyone I knew who cared for literature, admired as I did. But no, he hadn't read it, he said, and seeing the shadow of surprise on my face, added sternly, "Susan, I'm a writer, not a reader.

Many writers who are no longer young claim, for various reasons, to read very little, indeed, to find reading and writing in some sense incommingible. Perhaps, for some writers, they are. It's not for me to judge. If the reason is anxiety about being influenced, then this seems to me a vain, shallow worry. If the reason is lack of time — there are only so many hours in the day, and those spent reading are evidently subtracted from those in which one could be writing — then this is an asceticism to which I don't aspire.

Losing yourself in a book, the old phrase, is not an idle fantasy but an addictive, model reality. Virginia Woolf famously said in a letter, "Sometimes I think heaven must be one continuous unexhausted reading." Surely the heavenly part is that — again, Woolf's words — "the state of reading is the complete elimination of the ego." Unfortunately, we never do lose the ego, any more than we can step over our own feet. But that disembodied rapture, reading, is transcendent enough to make us feel egoless.

Like reading, rapturous reading, writing fiction — inhabiting other selves — feels like losing yourself, too.

Everybody likes to think now that writing is just a form of self-regard. Also called self-expression. As we're no longer supposed to be capable of authentically altruistic feelings, we're not supposed to be capable of writing about anyone but ourselves. But that's not true. William Trevor speaks of the boldness of the nonautobiographical imagination. Why wouldn't you write to escape yourself as much as you might write to express yourself? It's far more interesting to write about others.

Needless to say, I lend bits of myself to all my characters. When, in "In America," my immi- grants from Poland reach Southern California — they're just outside the village of Anaheim — in 1876, stroll out into the desert and succumb to a terrifying, transforming vision of emptiness, I was surely drawing on my own memory of child- hood walks into the desert of southern Arizona — outside what was then a small town, Tucson — in the 1940's. In the first draft of that chapter, there were no saguaros in the Southern California desert. By the third draft I had taken the saguaros out, reluctantly. (Alas, there aren't any saguaros west of Colorado River.)

What I write about is other than me. As what I write is smarter than I am. Because I can rewrite it. My books know what I once knew, futilely, incompletely. And getting the best words on the page does not seem any easier, even after so many years of writing. On the contrary.

Here is the great difference between reading and writing. Reading is a vocation, a skill, at which, with practice, you are bound to become more expert. What you accumulate as a writer are mostly uncertainties and anxieties.

All these feelings of inadequacy on the part of the writer — this writer, anyway — are predicated on the conviction that literature matters. Matters is surely too pale a word. That there are books that are 'necessary,' that is, books that, while reading them, you know you'll reread. Maybe more than once. Is there a greater privilege than to have a consciousness expanded by, filled with, pointed to literature?

Book of wisdom, exemplar of mental playfulness, dilator of sympathies, faithful recorder of a real world (not just the communion inside one head), servant of history, advocate of contrary and defiant emotions...a novel that feels necessary can be, should be, most of these things. As for whether there will continue to be readers who share this high notion of fiction, well, "there's no future to that question," as Duke Ellington replied when asked why he was to be found playing morning programs at the Apollo. Best just to keep rowing along.
BY TERRY TEACHOUT

COMPUTERS speak in many different voices, but the one coming out of the PC on Ben Primmack's desk is like no other—almost the most jaded of Web surfers. Low, slurred, and operate in a quite dour way:

"I've been meaning to meet Miles for the first time in St. James when he was in town, or Miles Davis, the subject of our milesdavis.com, an interactive Web site designed by Mr. Primmack that opened for public viewing two weeks ago. Milesdavis.com is one of the first sites devoted to the legendary trumpeter—there are at least 50 others—but it is the only officially sanctioned site, meaning that it has been authorized by Davis's estate. In addition to the voice of Parker, it contains numerous audio and video clips of Davis, interviews with musicians who knew him, and an elaborate multimedia biography written by Mr. Davis, which will be updated in the 12 monthly installments. Visitors can also purchase Davis's music by Davis and books about him, which is the whole point of the exercise. A sleuthing Web site by the Jazz Central Station (www.jazzcentralstation.com), by far the most ambitious of the many jazz-related sites currently accessible on the World Wide Web. Jazz is big—very big—in the Web, so the Jazz Central Station may be the most important person to Jazz on Line (www.jazzline.com) and All About Jazz (www.allaboutjazz.com) are among the 300 odd Web sites devoted to jazz, the number of which is growing daily. Many of these sites are difficult to locate on search engines, but if you know where to look, you can find evidence from serious scholarship in four-tiered biographies of jazz would want to know who played bass on Bill Evans's 1973 recording of "Punkt?" A quick visit to the Bill Evans Jazz Resource (www.bill-evans.de) reveals that it was Ron Carter. Looking for nuggets in PubMed? According to Jazz Club Worldwide (www.jazz-clubs-worldwide.com), there are 210

Some jazz sites are commercial in nature: Jazz Central Station, for example, is part of the Music Boulevard Network, a group of genre-specific music channels linked to an online retail "store" (www.musicaddicted.com) that offers more than 200,000 CDs for sale and offers daily music, jazz record labels now have their own preformatted sites and many jazz griff graphics and thus time-consuming to access with a normally equipped compter.

There are 300 odd Web sites devoted to jazz, and the number is growing daily. So much for the music's image of being tradition-bound.

Jazz Spots on the Web

JAZZ is big on the Internet; some 300 jazz-related Web sites have been noted. Here are 10 sites worth visiting.

JAZZ CENTRAL STATION

http://www.jazzcentralstation.com/

A one-stop shop for jazz fans: bulletin boards, news and reviews, a discograph, biographies, audio clips, a retail CD store, and much more.

FANTASY RECORDS

http://www.fantasy jazz.com/

Information on new Fantasy jazz releases (including biographies and liner notes for selected artists), plus a CD catalog.

DESIGN: Clear and to the point

SPRINT: Fast, especially for a record label site

HIGHLIGHT: Quick access to complete track listings for all Fantasy CD's.

JAZZ SPOTLIGHTS

http://www.jazzspotlights.com/

This is a celebration of the jazz world with music, stories, and reviews.

DESIGN: Weighted, but makes sense once you get used to it.

SPRINT: Fast, effective.

HIGHLIGHT: Highlights a live jazz show on this jazz-related site.

JAZZ WORLDWIDE

http://www.jazzworldwide.com

Information about clubs in more than 40 countries, from Argentina to the United States.

DESIGN: No nonsense

SPRINT: Very fast

HIGHLIGHT: Links to club Web sites and E-mail addresses.

JAZZ CORNER

http://www.jazzcorner.com

A commercial service providing home pages for more than 60 "independent" jazz musicians, including Ben Allison, Jonine Bronson, Robin Dickerson, Dave Holland, Kenny King, and Renée Rosner. All pages are designed to attract attention: biographies, interviews, sound bites, photographs, and radio addresses.

DESIGN: Garish but effective

SPRINT: Fast

HIGHLIGHT: Ideal for computer-saturated musicians interested in using the Web as a promotional tool.

BENNY CARTER WEBSITE

http://www.benny.com

The story of the master alto saxophonist-trumpeter-composer, as told by the Carter. Edward and Laurence Berger.

DESIGN: A model of clarity

SPRINT: Average

HIGHLIGHT: Great art, including period pictures and original 78 records.

PURE DESMOND

http://www.desmond.com

Everything you always wanted to know about Paul Desmond, the wryly sophisticated alto saxophonist of the Dave Brubeck Quartet, courtesy of Desmond's alma mater Paul Cadiff. Definitely a fan's site, but useful nonetheless.

DESIGN: Somewhat haphazard

SPRINT: Slow

HIGHLIGHT: "Desmond Ephemeris"

Jazz Spots on the Web

But jazz on the Web is just as often the work of individuals willing to pay the modest price of maintaining a site (a couple of hundred dollars). So far, it takes in them for the privilege of paying public tribute to their favorite artists. To be sure, the coverage is spotty and arbitrary: a recent search turned up no site devoted to Count Basie and no Gillette Gillespie, two of any jazz aficionado's top 10. But there is a site for Count Basie and no Gillette Gillespie, two of any jazz aficionado's top 10.

The site can also be used effectively in a research tool. Few sites, including the Benny Carter Web Site (www.benny.com), have been designed by notable scholars, who have tried to make their sites not only conventionally published work, a scholarly discussion of their own materials. Miles Ahead, one of the best of the unofficial Miles Davis sites (www.wasup.net/miles/miles ahead.html), can tell you in a matter of seconds when, where, and how many times Davis recorded with a particular side-

The ubiquity of jazz-related Web sites may come as a surprise to those who see jazz as a tradition-bound music chiefly appealing to middle-aged fans. In fact, the jazz audience, whose listeners tend to be better educated than the average CD buyer, has turned out to be full of the kind of people who refer to "early adopters"—including countless younger musicians who have been surfing the Web for much of their lives, many of whom are now eBaying their own sites as a means of inexpensive self-promotion.

Kendrick Shanks, a prodigy of Shirley Horn, markets her own singing and her debut CD, "Afterglow" (Mapleshade), through a Web-based home page (www.speakeasy.org/w Jazz/spk.html),

"I've only got a very basic page, with some sound clips from my CD," Ms. Shank says, "but I still get between 200 and 400 hits a month. At my gigs, I always invite people to sign up for my mailing list—both e-mail and E-mail—and I announce my gigs by E-mail. I get a lot of E-mail from Web surfers, and I hear from DJ's, who want me to send them the CD for airplay. Not long ago, I was contacted by a Web jazz magazine in France, which interviewed me for one of their issues.

Self-promoting likely to become one of the Web's most popular jazz-related

Continued on Page 41
As Modern and Swanky as All Those Swells

BY ART SPIEGELMAN

WASHINGTON CARTOONISTS have often been, um, caricatured by the lay public as semiliterate louts whose art training consisted of doodling nasty pictures in notebook margins during high school. This is indeed how I honored my own craft as a cartoonist, but the dismissive attitude toward cartoons has left me feeling insecure about where my discipline is perceived in the hierarchy of the arts.

A walk through the National Portrait Gallery’s current exhibition in Washington, “Celebrity Caricature in America,” offers overwhelming reassurance that at least one branch of my stunted family tree gracefully reached the celestial heights of the so-called high arts.

The 129 drawings, paintings, and artifacts on view through Aug. 23 trace the rise of a new, formally playful approach to caricature that flowered in the years between the two world wars. These images are not in the tradition of Daumier’s or Nast’s scathing 19th-century visual indictments of the corrupt and powerful, but offer a light, almost judgment-free abstract portrayal born in response to that new 20th-century creation, the celebrity.

Celebrity, a notion that came into being through movies, theater, radio, and mass-media magazines, is fame levied at least as much on personality as actual achievement. This show shines with luminaries like Babe Ruth, Will Rogers and Josephine Baker. Bottle-gobblers, strip-teasers and even politicians could enter this new pantheon of the caricatured if they were colorful enough.

The exhibition includes enticing side-show attractions like a flagpole silk dress worn by a pattern made of Hollywood stars, a reconstruction of a Sardi’s banquette complete with framed original caricatures of Broadway celebrities and actual screenings of vintage films in which Mickey Mouse and other animated creations frolic with caricatured stars. All of this attests to the fadeability of this phenomenon, and the exhibitor’s curator, Wendy Wick Reaves, admirably pursues the sociological and historical implications of all. More important, by returning repeatedly to a handful of significant artists who are especially well represented here, she calls attention to an overlooked tribe of modernists.

I realize that it would be safer to categorize these caricaturists as sophisticated clowns or, at most, popularizers of modern art. One might be seduced into nostalgia by the sounds of George Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter and Noel Coward that literally accompany the show. It would be a mistake.

As the show has done, I conjure up the glamorous world of Manhattan’s cabaret society, the white-tie-and-tails crowd of the rich and talented who are the subjects of many of these images, but it also provides an important clue to the art on display. Gershwin’s jazz symphony is the perfect musical analogue to the complex interaction between “high” and “low” forms that resulted in modernism and inspired this new, stripped-to-its-essentials approach to portraiture.

A small black-and-white drawing for The New York World by William Auerbach-Levy reduces Gershwin to a disembodied profile cut off at the neck, virtually suspended from the enormous earring that clipped in his mouth at a jaunty angle. There is a mysterious Far Eastern solemnity to this spare drawing that is emphasized by the total absence of even an eye-ball and only partly undercut by that gaudy earring. Caricaturists are often noted as transcendent, but these caricaturists applied their skills as icon makers, carving totemic symbols of the new secular gods adored by the mass media. They portrayed the celebrity’s persona, not the person’s inner self, and they did it with the precision of a corporate or gallery in New York. The whole painting seems to be a direct illustration of the quote by Coward: “It’s all a question of masks, really, brittle painted masks. We all wear them as a form of protection; modern life forces us to. We must have some means of shielding our timid, shrinking souls from the glare of civilization.”

A more reticent reductionism is at work in Auerbach-Levy’s. His was Giacometti of caricature, and one can feel the heavy lifting involved in stripping the drawing down to its essentials. Al Frueh, whose theater caricatures were regularly showcased in The New Yorker from its beginnings in 1925 until his death in 1946, is another pioneer minimalist well represented in the gallery. His streamlined lines are as plotted as America.
Jazz Discovers The Web

Continued From Page 41

applications, especially when hand- held — the amount of traffic that could not be managed effectively — increases to the point at which re- quests from the Internet and from World Wide Web are no longer able to be attracted to the attention of users. In addition, the number of users may have been affected by the idea of starting their own "digital library" to be used only by themselves and with which they were never before able to find a simple and effective way of distrib- ute their product. Digital the time this information was first available for public consumption, and they were immediately available on the recording and set them directly to Web services, a significant number of people were first to offer particular significance for music-making, something currently re- garded as somewhat of a byproduct. However, it was clearly going to be able to cut the compilation of the data and release it quickly, and "go straight to the listeners."

Such applications are not a pipe...

The Internet offers everything from serious scholarship to heartfeetlts posted by avid fans.

dream of quirky-eyed computer geeks or the high tech company of San Central East Coast — are ad- vertised in magazines such as Wired. As the pieces of the puzzle are put together, more computer people and people with models need enough to make digital music. They are involved in making music, and even have more than mere craft the surface of the "tech" factor, she added, "I see nothing about encouraging people to use it on a regular basis, but I have been in contact with them..."

for now, the dream of the Web remains the promise of early adopt- ers like Mr. Dharma, who feel that they have more than mere craft the surface of the "tech" factor, she added, "I see nothing about encouraging people to use it on a regular basis, but I have been in contact with them..."
in Art

Gambetta delivered anti-frugitive discourses, being transformed into the laureate of the Parisian bourgeoisie. His voice, as loud and clear as the ears of Daniel Buren to help alleviate the problem of noise in the city's parks. In Paris, Buren's ad

For the New York-based German artist, Anselm Kiefer, building that is nearly foreign with him, in that there is in his work, there is an effort to portray what the New York-based German artist, Anselm Kiefer, a building that is nearly foreign with him, in that there is in his work, there is an effort to portray what the New York-based German artist, Anselm Kiefer, a building that is nearly foreign with him, in that there is in his work, there is an effort to portray what the New York-based German artist, Anselm Kiefer, a building that is nearly foreign with him, in that there is in his work, there is an effort to portray what the New York-based German artist, Anselm Kiefer, a building that is nearly foreign with him, in that there is in his work, there is an effort to portray what the New York-based German artist, Anselm Kiefer, a building that is nearly foreign with him, in that there is in his work, there is an effort to portray what the New York-based German artist, Anselm Kiefer, a 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The Grande Dame Of Jazz, but Don’t Tell Her That

By TERRY TEACHOUT

EVEN if the only noteworthy thing Marian McPartland had done in her long life was play jazz piano outstandingly well, she would still be deserving of the all-star concert being given in honor of her birthday on Saturday at Town Hall. But Ms. McPartland, who was born in Windsor, England, 80 years ago Friday, is far more than just a pianist. She is also a strikingly individual composer, an excellent writer, the host of one of the longest-running jazz programs in the history of network radio and, as if all that weren’t enough for one lifetime, the widow of Jimmy McPartland, the tough-talking cornet player from Chicago who replaced Bix Beiderbecke in the Wolverines when his wife-to-be was only 6 years old.

Confronted with a list of her achievements, Ms. McPartland, a small, delicate-looking woman with sharp eyes and a strong chin, is apt to make some noises and change the subject. “She’s never had an ego problem,” says Bill Crow, who played bass in her trio 40 years ago and will be rejoining her at Town Hall, together with the drummer Joe Morello, another McPartland alum. “She always had a wonderful ear and a harmonic imagination, and it’s gotten better and better. But you wouldn’t know it from talking to her.”

Ms. McPartland’s soft-spoken demeanor is easy to misread. You don’t expect to hear so seemingly genteel a lady swearing — albeit decorously — or telling you with unmistakable relish about the high-flying bassist and drummer she once employed who spent half their spare time smoking marijuana and the other half trying to get her to join them (to no avail, she claims). “She has a beguiling presence, a rare mixture of elegance and impishness,” says the jazz historian James Macer, a longtime friend. “And both are reflected in her music, in her cool command of cabaret invention and sudden bursts of pure fun.”

The one thing she will admit to being proud of is “Piano Jazz,” her interview series on National Public Radio, though she characteristically gives her guests the credit for its success. “We’ve been on the air 15 years now,” she says, “and though I haven’t exactly counted, I suppose we’ve had close to 400 guests. Very few repeaters. I’d usually rather find somebody new. I never get tired of listening to them. Often I catch myself thinking of how lucky I am to be sitting in a studio with some guy I really idolize, like Oscar Peterson. I learn a lot, even from the ones who aren’t big talkers. Teddy Wilson, for example, wasn’t known to be verbose, but I think he felt at ease on the show, and became quite expansive.”

Missing from this otherwise accurate description of “Piano Jazz” is the pivotal role played by Ms. McPartland herself, who serves as a combination of oral historian, inspiring duet partner and, when necessary, resident therapist for nervous guests. “Marian came to hear Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers in Los Angeles in 1989,” recalls the pianist Benny Green, another longtime fan who performs at her birthday concert. “She took my phone number and asked if I’d do the show someday. Well, she called a couple of weeks later: someone had bowed out at the last minute, and was I available? Now I’d never done any kind of radio interview, let alone something as important as ‘Piano Jazz,’ and on the way to the studio I was suddenly hit by a ton of stage fright. But as soon as I entered the studio, she put me at ease, she made me feel like I was supposed to be there, put all the weightiness of the occasion out of the way, allowed us to have a good time together.”

Ms. McPartland’s inclination to draw back and let others shine may make her the perfect host, but it has also stood in the way of her winning the recognition as a composer that she unquestionably deserves. Her songs have been recorded by the likes of Tony Bennett, Peggy Lee and Sarah Vaughan, yet when praised for the poise and subtlety of her graceful melodies as “Ambiance” and “Twilight World,” she deflects the compliment. “I never had all that much faith in myself as a composer,” she says. “I’ve never pushed my tunes on lyricists, or on other musicians. And I never wanted to play only my own things, either, the way some people do, though I now play a few of them more often than I used to. They’ve been tested now, and so I don’t feel like changing them.”

It is hard not to wonder whether Ms. McPartland’s modesty about her accomplishments arises in part from the fact that she is a woman who has made her way in what for a very long time was almost exclusively a man’s world. This difference stands in surprising contrast to the bright clarity of her piano playing, which grows more harmonically adventurous with each passing year. “I’ve become a lot more — reckless, maybe,” she says. “I’m getting to the point where I can smash down a chord and not...
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Jazz's Grande Dame

Continued Page 14

know what it's going to be, and make it work. And though I might love singing with a band or orchestra at that I will do. But here on stage, it is not necessarily that, but it is more a matter of the out-going part of it. For one moment I feel that the song is among the best and most creative parts of the show. Perhaps because the place is a ballroom, and it's been a long year, on which she plays 24 or more concerts, and is directly accompanied by the enquirer according to my knowledge. But here, it has been a long year of a deeply creative process, and it's been the basis of a lifetime's musical work.

Muriel, which began in 1944 when they met on a U.S. 1 float in the style of which the facade of Muriel's studio is made, has been called "a very lucky woman," and "a real lady." She's known for her ability to make her audience feel welcome, and for her dedication to her music. But what has Muriel done since that time? She's continued to tour and record, and has recently released a new album. In her new autobiography, she talks about her past, her family, and her love for music. She's also written about how she learned to play the piano as a child, and how that helped her through difficult times. Muriel's new book is a must-read for fans of her music, and for anyone interested in the world of jazz.
In recent projects he has collaborated with various artists, including the American painter Mark Rothko. However, recent springs and summers have been rather gloomy in this part of the world, which has meant that meeting high-profile musicians has been rather difficult. Yet, he has simply taken them from where they're needed most: the stage. So, Gershwin and the Opening of the Opera "Porgy and Bess" is the result of a double act, as it's a delightful glimpse of what Gershwin has been putting together from the recording of his long-standing band. Part members, including his group Cuban orchestra (Miguel) Ángel Diaz. But it's "Gershwin," a tremendous big band work about the seven days of creation, that provides most of the inspiration.

"Gershwin" is played by a group called the Council of Ministers, including a string section and a battery of percussion; we haven't heard music of this kind before from Mr. Gershwin. In this sense, the music aside from the orchestration of the large band, the rhythmic style is quite striking. However, from the aspect of the main melody, we admired the style. This is a typical composition from the perspective of the traditional band, with some of the tragic, folksy, and dramatic qualities of many Strauss's music.

JOHNNY RUSH "TALKS TO MY HEART" Waterhouse Size

Back in the 1960s, when rock had transformed country music and independent labels were taking wild chances with a hard-boiled, unchained, and unregimented American style, Johnny Rush came into his own. His early records, particularly his 1968 hit "Elma" and his 1969 album "The Delta Blues Man," were critically acclaimed. Rush's music was often described as a blend of country, blues, and soul, and his lyrics were known for their soulful and heartfelt storytelling.

But Rush, from Texas, never had a high-profile career. A voice often described as the soul of the southern soul, he struggled to break into the mainstream despite his talent. His music has been described as a blend of country, blues, and soul, and his lyrics were known for their soulful and heartfelt storytelling.

"Talk to My Heart," his first record with distribution in the south, got a lot of radio airplay in the early 1970s. His second album, "Elma," was released in 1973 and was a critical success, but his third album, "San Antonio," was not as well-received, and his fourth album, "The Delta Blues Man," was not as well-received as his earlier work.

"Claud's down staten island" shadows down the way. His partner's back and his partner's heart. He knows it. He can't let his partner suffer. It's "Claud's down staten island" shadows that brings him flaccid and winter imagery to the song. The character of "Claud's down staten island" is a tragic and heartwarming story of a man who is brought to life in the winter, and his songs bring to life the winter's imagery and the seasons of his life.
Miles Davis's Mid-60's Quintet Reverberates Inside Jazz's Head

By Peter Watrous

MILES DAVIS'S second great quintet — Wayne Shorter on saxophone, Herbie Hancock on piano, Ron Carter on bass and Tony Williams on drums — left behind four of the more perfect albums in acoustic jazz history. The records — "Miles Smiles," "E.S.P.," "So What," and "Nefertiti" — brought jazz to an extraordinary level of interaction, changing the parameters for group improvisation. Then in 1967, everything changed: Davis and the group started playing with electronic instruments and pop textures, and the albums receded into history, albeit beautiful history.

At the time, the achievements of those four albums were overshadowed by music that was more extreme. The music of John Coltrane and Ornette Coleman and even Davis's own subsequent electric music grabbed more attention. There was little indication that the four quintet albums would become some of the most influential recordings in jazz. But they are now acknowledged as masterpieces, the paradigm for the great jazz revolution of the 1960's led by the Marsalis brothers. And for completely different reasons, they have become extremely influential with young jazz musicians in the 90's as well.

The albums have just been repackaged and reissued by Columbia Records as the six-CD boxed set "Miles Davis Quintet, 1965-67." The set is the third installment in a series devoted to the music of Davis (who died in 1991), with at least seven planned. Future boxes, for example, include a three-CD set given over to a single album, "In a Silent Way." The series is one of the most ambitious release programs in jazz.

The quintet albums became templates in the 60's in part because Columbia shrewdly kept them in print, just in time for the CD explosion and the growing interest in all things American, including jazz. But more important was the music itself. Heavy with the moody and introspective atmosphere of the group's main composer, Mr. Shorter, it was ideal for students who were interested in leaving the complexities of harmony and form. And unlike more expressionistic groups in the introspective harmonies of seminal recordings are helping to inspire succeeding generations.

the 1960's, the quintet manipulated rhythm and time with a sense of swing. By the time the 1960's rolled around, students were hearing something else in the music beyond its compositional structures. They were enthralled by the band's fluid collective improvisations, in particular the way the rhythm section worked. Much of that percussive sound was generated by the drumming of Tony Williams (who died in 1987). All over these recordings, Williams instigated interaction at a level that had not previously existed in jazz.

On the first track the band ever recorded, "E.S.P." from 1965, Williams's ride cymbal doubles the time of the melody and drives the band so ferociously that Davis has no chance to relax during his solo. Williams provides a context for the solos, orchestrating the background by concentrating on one texture at a time from his kit, changing the weight of his tumult. Tenor, the wonder Max Roach once remarked, takes care of itself, and a good musician always carries it around in his head, without the need to mark it off time. And Williams plays that way, willing to slow down tempos or speed them up, slowly or abruptly. His inventions are an act of bravery, and the glory of the music comes from the group's ability to move along with Williams. He hears everything, and his responses are an ongoing conversation to the action that surrounds him.

That interactive brilliance is found to a greater degree on the first installment in the series devoted to the music of Davis (who died in 1991), with at least seven planned. Future boxes, for example, include a three-CD set given over to a single album, "In a Silent Way." The series is one of the most ambitious release programs in jazz.

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On the first track the band ever recorded, "E.S.P." from 1965, Williams's ride cymbal doubles the time of the melody and drives the band so ferociously that Davis has no chance to relax during his solo. Williams provides a context for the solos, orchestrating the background by concentrating on one texture at a time from his kit, changing the weight of his tumult. Tenor, the wonder Max Roach once remarked, takes care of itself, and a good musician always carries it around in his head, without the need to mark it off time. And Williams plays that way, willing to slow down tempos or speed them up, slowly or abruptly. His inventions are an act of bravery, and the glory of the music comes from the group's ability to move along with Williams. He hears everything, and his responses are an ongoing conversation to the action that surrounds him.

That interactive brilliance is found to a greater degree on the first installment in the series devoted to the music of Davis (who died in 1991), with at least seven planned. Future boxes, for example, include a three-CD set given over to a single album, "In a Silent Way." The series is one of the most ambitious release programs in jazz.
MIDEAST TALKS Muppet stars, above — Dafi, an Israeli monster, left; Hanem, a Palestinian monster, and Karim, a Palestinian rooster — with Hussean Abu Aisha, who plays Adel.

bewildered-looking young puppets. (American "Sesame Street" Muppets like Bert and Ernie would appear in dubbed segments from American episodes.)

Meetings with the Palestinian team were always accompanied by a virtual rhythm section of ringing cellular phones. The scarcity of telephone lines in the West Bank has made cellular phones as necessary as pitas bread, and no self-respecting Palestinian with a good job was ever without one. So essential are these phones, in fact, that last spring after our executive producer, Danud Kantah, was released from a Palestinian prison for broadcasting meetings of the Palestinian Legislative Council, our show's producer, George Khoul, was asked if Danud had been tortured in prison. George was quoted as saying, "Yes, they took away his cell phone."

Our script review meetings always began in English, mostly for my benefit, then quickly reverted to Arabic whenever anybody felt strongly about anything, which was just about all of the time. The topics of these scripts — embroidery, fishing, Jerusalem — reflected the everyday aspects of their culture that Palestinians wanted the world to see. For them, "Sesame Street" was a chance to counter the stereotypes they had seen on television for decades: images of Arabs as camel riders, thieves and terrorists.

Involvement in the "Sesame Street" project did not come without a price for the Palestinians on the team. They were often subjected to severe criticism from other Palestinians for what was seen as a form of "normalization" with the Israelis. So why did they agree to work on the show? I asked our animation producer, Aymaan Bardawi, this question one night over drinks. "I am doing it for my children," Aymaan said, "so they will not hate the Israelis." This was quite a statement, given that Aymaan had once been "interrogated" by the Israelis, a process that included, he said, the crushing of his testicles.

The Israeli "Sesame Street" team was based in Ramat Aviv, an upscale Tel Aviv suburb. It was, without a doubt, the most heavily armored television studio I had ever been in. In addition to the three guards at the gate with automatic weapons, another guard was permanently stationed outside the studio where the Palestinian team was taping. I don't know if this was standard policy or if the Palestinian puppets just looked particularly dangerous.

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Working on a joint Israeli-Palestinian "Sesame Street" teaches an American producer about hopes for peace and the next generation.

There were difficult meetings, especially those in which we discussed the crossover segments. Disagreements usually centered on how and why the puppets would visit one another. The Palestinians felt that the Israeli puppets needed a clear reason for their trips to the Palestinian street, so as not to be confounded with Israeli settlers who were just popping by for tea. Furthermore, they wanted the puppets to be, at first, somewhat fearful of one another. As one of the Palestinian writers, Sami-Ali Kilani, said, "These segments should exist in a place between hope and reality."

The Israelis, on the other hand, wanted everyone to become instant friends and happy neighbors, a position that I found quite paradoxical given that the Israeli team had visited the Palestinian offices only once and had done so with an armed security guard in tow. In the end, a compromise of the crossovers was reached: the puppets, after a short, nervous introduction, became as friendly as Arfaat and Rabih on the White House lawn.

Once in the studio, the two teams mingled cautiously and the atmosphere was not unlike a high school before anyone has started dancing. Furt-
All That You-Know-What

Without even trying, Gary Giddins has written an important history of jazz.

VISIONS OF JAZZ
The First Century.
By Gary Giddins.
600 pp. New York: Oxford University Press. $35.

By Alfred Appel Jr.

The publication of “Visions of Jazz: The First Century” is a major event because Gary Giddins is our best jazz critic. This enormous book contains 78 essays, many of which originally appeared in different form in the Village Voice. “Need I add,” he rhetorically asks in his acknowledgments, “that at no time in this work’s long gestation was it conceived as a conventional critique or history?” He insists, pretty clearly at the outset, that he has failed to discuss several important musicians. As it turns out, “Visions of Jazz” is the finest unconventional history of jazz ever written—a brilliant, indispensable book, comprehensive enough given the certainty that a total history of jazz at this point, the century mark, invites a shallow inclusiveness.

Invariably, Giddins writes out of admiration and love. (His characterization of the estimable pianist Tommy Flanagan holds true, and him as well: “a deep lyricism that eschewed sentimentality.”) The traps and temptations of such a tack are obvious, but his temperament seems to insulate him against blind enthusiasm. The essays do indeed cover jazz’s first century, ranging from W. C. Handy to Cassandra Wilson. Giddins writes at some length about each subject, his essays falling into two types: a life-and-works retrospective survey of an older or deceased musician, or a less ambitious review of performances and recent recordings. Divided into eight parts, the book is roughly chronological, though Giddins is too wise to hold to any strict time line. Initially since his history of jazz is the story of the most talented performers, their recordings the subject of the closest musical scrutiny, his book’s index of songs and selected albums runs to 20 pages.

Giddins’s opening section, “Precursors,” begins with an essay on Bert Williams and Al Jolson, two blackface comedians. Purists and progressives alike may find this puzzling, but that reinforces Giddins’s point: jazz has to be understood in the context of its origins as popular entertainment, 19th-century minstrelsy in particular. Louis Armstrong, one of the heroes of “Visions of Jazz,” is a case in point. Many racially sensitive people still see Armstrong as an Uncle Tom, a buffoon, rather than as the daring, signifying minstrel-trickster who deconstructed white European idioms and dispatched the racism of demeaning of-time songs like “Shine” and “Carry Me Back to Old Virgini” — a great man, really, and Giddins writes about him superbly, as he did in his “Satchmo” (1988).

The opening section also includes the ragtime-to-screags saga of Irving Berlin, the Tin Pan Alley story incar- nate: songs that at first tapped into black sources, then came to life independently, and, like George Gershwin’s, would become part of American culture. The almost-forgotten singer and actress Ethel Waters is presented as no less a pivotal figure in the evolution of American song than Bing Crosby and Armstrong — a versatile crossover artist who could bring perfect intonation and articulation to vernacular material, influencing black and white singers alike.

The second section, “A New Music,” discusses the classic figures, from Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver and Duke Ellington to Coleman Hawkins, Chick Webb and Fats Waller. Giddins violates chronology sensibly enough by grouping sui generis instrumentalists, like Art Tatum, John Coltrane, Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman. This sequence of names suggests that he has an unusual wide range of musical interests and open-ended curiosity — unusual because jazz critics, like everyone else, often settle on a favorite period or handful of musicians. Not surprisingly, Giddins’s ears are open to post-modernists like Henry Threadgill, Don Pullen, David Murray, Joe Lovano and, in the final essay, Don Byron, the black jazzman who plays Webern and Jewish klezmer music. When Giddins considers the way another black musician, Dexter Gordon, the first great bebop tenor saxophonist, weaves musical quotations from other songs into his improvisations, he is describing the pan- racial, multicultural and even utopian essence of so-called modern jazz: “They fold into his solos like spectral glimpses of an alternative universe in which all of Tin Pan Alley is one infinite song.”

The section titled “A Modern Music” addresses be-bop mainly, though an essay about the parodic Spike Jones fits in nicely, if loosely. Giddins does not push the importance of parody in jazz and modernism (a pairing explicit throughout “Visions of Jazz”), especially the wit of be-bop quotations of pop songs reflected by the likes of Gordon and Charlie Parker, comparable as they are to the ahaviour of literary modernism. The frequent use of the words “modern” and “post-modern” throughout “Visions of Jazz” seems to assume that readers share a definition and understanding of these widely applied terms, which isn’t necessarily so. Brief, working definitions would help us all, and Giddins almost supplies one himself in his discussion of Armstrong’s singing: “Implicit in the liberties Armstrong took, and in the rise of jazz itself, is the assumption that musicians are superior to the songs they perform — a radical stance by classical principles, where a performance is evaluated by its fidelity to the text. In jazz, performance is the text.” This sounds exactly right, and is one step away from a comparison with collage. A majestic Armstrong transformation of a stupid song (like “Sweethearts on Parade”) is analogous to the modernist art of collage, assemblage and the metal and raw wood sculpture of Picasso.

Vernacular, or demotic, modernism is the feat of creating more out of less, or almost nothing at all; Giddins explains this art of musical rescue and reassembly through singers of genius, in his exposition of Billie Holiday’s version of “A Sailboat in the Moonlight” (a 1937 Guy Lombardo hit) and Sarah Vaughan’s “Thinking of You” (a winner for Eddie Fisher and Don Cherry in 1950). “Make it new,” Ezra Pound urged in 1914, and these jazz modernists do so by reviving triate lyrics and melodies. “Tain’t what you do, it’s the way you do it,” as Trummy Young sang with Jimmie Lunceford’s band in 1939.

Ellington is different from suchcollagists because he composed his own material. Ironically, serious discussion of Ellington is now vexed by the promotion of him as the greatest American or 20th-century composer, classical music included. It is therefore good to remember, in this prestige-conscious and very politicized time, that Ellington’s reputation was enhanced as early as 1927 by highbrow praise of his miniatures alone, recordings that are, at most, three minutes long. Ellington’s reputation, Giddins contends, does not depend on his extended compositions. Ellington’s music, he concludes, is “Shakespearean in its reach, wisdom and generosity” — an uncharacteristically Miltonic chord. This said, Giddins can still ignore Ellington’s current status as an unassailable classic. His perusal of Ellington’s ambitious “Black, Brown and Beige” (1943-44) finds the “Black” section overlong and “The Blues” strangely “un-Ellingtonian” and eclectic, with its echoes of Debussy. He calls the very verbal “Second Sacred Concert” (1968) “outright proselytizing”: “Some of the choral sections are reminiscent of school pageants.” In the current jazz orthodoxy, this is apostasy, but such frank appraisal instead of hagiography only makes Giddins more credible and persuasive. When he turns to the most esteemed Ellington orchestra, the so-called Blanton-Webster band of 1940-42, he discovers that its most fa-
The author recalls her mother, who lavished much attention on her fashion career and little on her children.

MOMMY DRESSING
A Love Story, After a Fashion.
By Lois Gould.

By Margo Jefferson

Take a woman whose mother died giving birth to her, whose stepmother cared not a whit for her and who so dreaded bearing children that she had three abortions and would have had more if her father had not declared on his deathbed that since God had spared her life she could no longer flout His will (There was also a husband determined to keep getting her pregnant.)

Then take this woman’s daughter, the second of the two children she bore unwillingly. That daughter was confined to her room as if to servant’s quarters for long periods of time, rarely spoken to except in passing, left in the care of sometimes grosslyhulshhly cruell nannies and viewed largely as an object of questionable aesthetic worth. (‘Don’t perspire in this dress. I never perspire. Why must you?’ her mother complained regularly. ‘Is that a pimple?’ ‘Why do you let your hair frizz up?’)

Who would not sympathize with the child? Compared with their parents, children are always helpless and innocent. But what is so extraordinary about Lois Gould’s memoir, “Mommy Dressing: A Love Story, After a Fashion,” is that she, the child in question, makes us feel the helplessness, the awful emotional ignorance and deprivation that made her mother who she was, as a parent and as a woman.

Gould’s mother was Jo Copeland, a successful and glamorous fashion designer whose clothes were worn with pride by the young Pauline Trigère once saw her whirling across a dance floor in Paris and asked who she was. She is a young fashion designer, Trigère’s companion answered. “Real?” Trigère exclaimed. “Then that’s what I want to be.” During World War II, when Paris was off limits and fabrics were rationed like food, American designers had to turn deprivation into inspiration. Separates and sportswear flourished; clothes started to display less fuss and more wit. Gould writes, “Jo Copeland would create the classic tailored daytime ensemble that could turn into a sparkling dinner dress with the flick of a collarless jacket.” And she would always be considered one whose ready-to-wear designs were of couture quality.

She wore her own clothes wonderfully, and she was never without admirers, scyphons or escorts. Unfortunately, her daughter was expected to be just as worshipful and undemanding. She should have been content to stand quietly in her mother’s room, watching as she dressed.

Margo Jefferson is a cultural critic for The New York Times.

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FOR Jo Copeland, the great Cinderella of modern times was Wallis Warfield Simpson, who certainly never bought her own jewels. Copeland was one of a handful of designers asked to send the best of her collection to the royal hotel suite where the Duchess of Windsor visited New York. For weeks she carried the Duchess’s crested thank-you note around with her, displaying it to anyone who would look. "Until I saw how Jo’s mother died giving birth to her, I never understood why, for Jo, a great love story had to be one that didn’t end with babies, a home and family. Wasn’t that what ‘happily ever after’ meant? Yet to her, not having babies was literally life and death. How could I know it wasn’t just her vanity, her consummate self-absorption?"

Dispassionate compassion is a very moving quality, and it marks “Mommy Dressing” from beginning to end. It is also a hard-won quality when we enter that private, even claustrophobic, territory that mothers and children inhabit. Like other recent books I admire, Gould’s fuses this intimate material with social, national or political history, (I am thinking of Helen Epstein’s “Where She Came From,” Honor Moore’s “White Blackbird,” Wendy Gimbel’s “Havana Dreams” and Beth Kephart’s “Slant of Sun.”) The result is to free, not burden, the narrator’s voice. The memoir’s future depends on this new kind of “I,” one as fluid and potent as “Once upon a time.”
mous recordings have been analyzed so often that, lest he become a bore, he must discuss the seemingly marginal disks long overlooked by writers. His close attention to "I Don't Know What Kind of Blues I've Got," "Jumpin' Punkins" and "John Hardy's Wife" unveils them as small new masterpieces, reinforcing the composer's greatness and also our sense that his extended works do not have to be deemed better than (say) Aaron Copland's for Ellington to remain "beyond category," to use the highest praise Ellington himself could bestow. Ellington's phrase should allow us to step fairly around the problematic tag "greatest."

The section "A Popular Music" covers the swing era (1935-45), extraordinary as a period when popular music was highly musical as well as popular — a time when the likes of Berlin, Gershwin, Cole Porter and Jerome Kern were composing for Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers movies. Giddins writes not altogether uncritical celebrations of Ella Fitzgerald, Frank Sinatra, Jimmie Lunceford, Roy Eldridge, Count Basie, Lester Young, Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw. He can flatter say that "Goodman, like Elvis 20 years later, adapted black music for white tastes. He toned it down, cleaned it up" — and that's that. Giddins is not going to dwell, as cultural critics inevitably do, on Goodman as yet another white poacher and prospector on the vast African-American mother lode. He simply won't let the race issue obscure the clarinetist's great musicianship.

The essay on Count Basie and Lester Young gives almost equal time to Young, the star tenor saxophone soloist of Basie's 1936-40 band and one of jazz's supreme improvisers. Giddins argues against the long-prevailing opinion that Young's talent was diminished after 1945 because of his traumatic Army court-martial and stay in a detention barracks (hence the title of his subsequent record, "D.B. Blues"). By pinpointing shifts in Young's style in pre-Army recordings from 1943, he shows that Young's postwar style had evolved naturally as a choice of expression. Only the jazz initiate may appreciate the rationality of this point and how it defines Giddins's independence and immense value as a critic. Giddins pays proper due to the Basie-Young classics of the 30's, but again goes against received opinion by praising Basie's post-1950 bands, which are often denigrated as cold, impersonal swing machines. They "kept the game alive," says Giddins, who reminds us that the swing era did not entirely die around 1945 but persisted in the glorious post-1950 music of other enduring swing-era figures like Ellington, Sinatra, Fitzgerald, Artie Shaw briefly (his 1954 small group) and the less well-known Jimmy Rushing.

Giddins opens his heart when discussing singers. Rushing, he writes of a great reissue, "Rushing Lullabies," sings a certain blues "at a slow, bleeding tempo." Of the first recordings of Billie Holiday and Lester Young, he writes how "Holiday's voice and Young's tenor entwined like ivy around the trellises of 'This Year's Kisses' and 'I Must Have That Man.'" A magnum opus that could serve as a textbook, "Visions of Jazz" sorely needs a discography. Because Giddins's retrospective surveys are rarely specific about an artist's best available recordings, a relative newcomer to jazz needs some shopping advice. However, Giddins has brilliantly edited a compact disk as a companion to the book. Also titled "Visions of Jazz," and issued by Blue Note Records, the CD contains 38 selections programmed along lines traced by the book, with surprising, delightful twists, including its very generous running time of 151 minutes.

The CD includes certain well-known recordings by Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell, and Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, because they are discussed in detail in the book. But Giddins also seems to assume that his readers already own many of the most famous recordings of artists like Armstrong, Ellington and Basie, and therefore omits anthology chestnuts. His listeners are instead treated to relatively uncelebrated masterpieces like Coleman Hawkins's rapturous "Out of Nowhere" (1937); Bobby Hackett's stately, heart-stopping "Pennies From Heaven" (1945); Lester Young's almost defiant "D.B. Blues" (1945); Ellington's deliberate and tender piano trio rendition of "Passion Flower" (1953); and Sinatra's lulling "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams" (1954), probably selected because Sinatra lets three jazz soloists loose as in no other session from the tightly arranged 50's. Giddins is unfailingly fresh in his selections. Instead of drawing on music by Jelly Roll Morton to accompany the essay about him, he slips in Art Hodes's obscure 1945 version of Morton's "Mr. Jelly Lord." The book's Irving Berlin essay is complemented by the totally unexpected appearance on CD of Kay Starr splendidly singing "You're Just in Love" — retrieved from a long-out-of-print 1960 LP. This is inspired archeology.

Inspiring, too, is the return of another 50's singer, Rosemary Clooney. One of Giddins's final and finest essays in "Visions of Jazz" is devoted to Clooney's winning story, and it is a story — years of despair and obscurity followed by recovery as a person and as an improved performer and recording artist. Giddins reviews her more recent work for the Concord Jazz label, singing out the CD's titled "For the Duration" (1991), where the accompaniment of the tenor saxophonist Scott Hamilton and the cornetist Warren Vaché recalls the Billie Holiday-Teddy Wilson sessions of the 30's; "Girl Singer" (1982); and "Do You Miss New York?" (1983). Giddins has "big ears," as jazz musicians used to say, and his jazz vision, his tireless listening habits, are in the public interest. If you follow up on his Rosemary Clooney recommendations, Gary Giddins will simply bring you pleasure and joy. Who could ask for anything more?
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Am I being too fussy because I want to know the correct time? I don't think so. That 8:05 commuter train leaves without me if I oversleep. The school bus leaves without the kids. The meetings, the TV shows, the movies, the ball games...they all start without us if we're late. And I'd want to know the right time even if I didn't have appointments. I just like to be precise. But how do you know the RIGHT time?

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You can add up to two more, and continuously monitor conditions all throughout your property. There's even an automatic memory of highest and lowest temperatures!
There was a time when some purist jazz critics caustically maintained that there was no such phenomenon as a jazz singer. Jazz was only and wholly music of instrumental improvisers. Louis Armstrong's singing was a mere novelty, they said.

Teenager though I was, I knew those critics were ignorant of the roots of jazz—field hollers, work songs, jubilees and the blues singers in juke joints and on streets.

And later, there was one overwhelming performance by masterful jazz singers that I have since cited to the few who still question the jazz legitimacy of the voice. It was after hours at Minton's in Harlem when a cutting contest (as jazz players called a musical duel) took place between Ella Fitzgerald and Sarah Vaughan.

For well over an hour, their voices became especially supple, multicolored horns, and they swung with deeply flowing, turning, soaring rhythms. I've been present at many cutting sessions between horn players, but these singers could have equaled them all. Sarah Vaughan, with her range and penetratively sensuous sound, finally vanquished Ella Fitzgerald.

I thought of that stunning joust while listening to "The Jazz Singers," a 5-CD set issued by the Smithsonian Collection/Polymedia (1-800-863-9943 to order). This array of the highly diversified art of jazz singing illustrates the counsel of jazz drummer Kenny Washington: "Remember, folks, as serious as it may be at times, if it ain't fun, it ain't jazz."

The impresario of this overdue historical illumination of the vocal dimensions of jazz is Robert O'Meally, Zora Neale Hurston professor of literature at Columbia University. While a few of his selections are not jazz, no matter what he says—Gloria Lynne, Nancy Wilson, Marvin Gaye—the rest make this an indispensable collection that ranges from 1919-94. And his notes reveal resourceful research, some of which may surprise even old jazz hands.

There are classic recordings by Louis Armstrong, Billie Holiday, Jimmy Rushing, Bessie Smith, Ivie Anderson (Duke Ellington's most vivid and swinging vocalist), Mildred Bailey, Sarah Vaughan, Dinah Washington and Bing Crosby with the Mills Brothers.

I have been telling skeptics for years that Bing Crosby, when he chose to, was a jazz singer of grace, wit and infectious swing as this collaboration with the Mills Brothers, "My Honey's Lovin' Arms," clearly shows. If you transcribe what Crosby does here and then have a trumpet play it, the result is unmistakable jazz.

The most intriguing and ominously evocative singing is a 1929 version of "West End Blues" by Eva Taylor, who is unknown to most jazz reference books. She worked in traveling shows and in the Broadway musical "Shuffle Along." Her controlled bitter sensuality has a haunting, murderous aura as she savors the destruction of her faithless lover.

Anybody can place Louis Armstrong and Billie Holiday in a tribute to jazz singers, but Prof. O'Meally merits credit for bringing Eva Taylor out of the mists of the past.

Also among Prof. O'Meally's rarities is a 1970 rehearsal by Ben Webster with a studio band in Copenhagen. Webster was never less than definite as a tenor saxophonist and here too he shapes these Danish musicians into an understanding of jazz phrasing and jazz time with relentless clarity. Webster sings some of the parts, scats through other lines, and the very cadences of his spoken instructions are those of his instrumental improvisations.

He teaches the players, as Prof. O'Meally writes, "not to play too many notes or hit certain notes too exactly or too softly and smoothly." And, to make a particular phrase inescapably real to them, he tells them to play it like "I'm tired ... like the last breath in life."

I used to collect bootleg recordings of imperious Toscanini rehearsals, and except for the difference in genre, the rough but intensely musical directions of the maestros were not dissimilar.

Throughout the collection, Prof. O'Meally goes beyond appreciations to an understanding of certain singers' complexities of career and desire. For example, he puts the underrated and often misunderstood Ethel Waters in realistic context. Early on, she was a vaudevillian ("Sweet Mama Stringbean") and then a blues singer who influenced Billie Holiday, among other jazz vocalists. An actress on stage and screen, she never lost, as a singer, the ability to sound as if she had lived each song.

"She was," Prof. O'Meally says, "a cultural mongrel, an omni-American who worked the highly charged borders of these various forms that are, we should recall, also mongrelized, (neither black nor white alone but black-and-white in the American grain)."

To this admirer of Mildred Bailey, one of the most softly compelling of all jazz singers, Prof. O'Meally brings fascinating new information: "Her mother, who was part Indian, routinely took her to the Coeur d'Alene Reservation (near Spokane), where the family had moved and would often run through Indian rites and songs with her at home."

Bailey was another omni-American, crediting those Indian rites with "straightening out the clinkers" in her soprano "because you have to sing a lot of notes."

Another largely overlooked performer whose presence resounds again in this collection is Oran "Hot Lips" Page, a dramatic trumpet player and an even more impressive singer.

At the Savoy in Boston, as pure a jazz club as there ever was, musicians would come by after they finished their gigs elsewhere in town. Around midnight, there on the stand was Page. He sang the blues for over an hour without repeating a single lyric. It was like an anthology of innumerable black lifelines all told with such immediacy by his rough but poignant voice that the waitresses stopped in their tracks and the customers forgot they were thirsty.

Page later picked up his horn, but it was his singing that has stayed with me all these years.
Machine, Less Green

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