

The PROVINCE
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THE BIG QUESTION IN A BIG WEEK

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I attended a benefit in support of the cliff-hanging rock operation that is Fourth Avenue's Village Bistro last Monday night and was amazed at, among other things, the large number and wide variety of people that the club's welfare attracted and whose contributions will undoubtedly play a large part in its survival.

Obviously, despite the often repetitive nature of rock idiom music and the fact that each of the groups appearing at the benefit has been overexposed as far as Vancouver audiences go, this music continues to draw.

Nor is the new music the strictly commercially-oriented tin pan alley stuff that is being consumed because of mass radio exposure.

The material that the underground groups are playing today is vastly different from the "I love you baby" punch line common to all rock tunes from time immemorial, and it is not to be confused with the type of rhythmic banality that is played 24 hours a day on pop AM radio.

This is music for the young intellectual; small "i" and uncommitted, unorganized and decidedly not categorized. The licks are simple requiring few charts, albeit a considerable amount of soul from the better players.

The basis of the songs is the blue roots which have not fundamentally changed in a hundred years, with the possible exception of the sophisticated electronic gear that each group is equipped with.

The arrangements are virtually non-existent and when another instrument other than the guitar or the organ stereotype takes the solo stage, the crowd quivers with excitement, wondering what will be said and hoping that it has not been said before.

What I have been leading up to with these miscellaneous observations of a local, no-nonsense pop concert is the question that I ended that particular review with last Tuesday morning.

Who or what will come to the aid of the sadly neglected and rapidly degenerating jazz art in Vancouver?

In order for an art form to communicate and survive, it must have recipients for the vibrations it chooses to give off.

Looking around the jazz scene as it appears locally, I must admit that there are all too few people even interested in listening, let alone supporting the form.

For the older people jazz has become too hip, too much a realm of the intellectual and the deep thinker about the many things which range between philosophy and music. Thus, exit the former flappers and their Dixieland entourage, probably in favor of some nostalgic honky tonk den.

What then has become of the former beats, the staunch supporters of the be-bop and cool jazz eras. As Ginsberg says they too have gone their separate ways, some to die, others to conform and still others to become the balding sages of the new breed of the long-haired hip.

Finally, the young. Is there any interest among those who must be included if any new blood is to find its way into the art and to keep it on a progressive footing?

It must unfortunately be conceded that the young have found another type of music to express what they feel. Thus, the only possible future I see for a continuing jazz listener is some sort of compromise with the younger and hopefully more liberal generation.

To a serious musician, jazz has many things to offer both from a theoretical and performing point of view. There is much to be done in rock to save it from repeating itself to death.

Rhythm changes are as yet as rare as hens teeth while the use of more imaginative instrumental colorings would greatly enhance the blossoming upsurge of poetry in the lyrics.

In this direction there have already been movements such as the new rock group Blood, Sweat and Tears, who combine the heavy 4/4 R&B thing with some very boss horn accents and arrangements.

Locally, guitarist Henry Young is one of the few who refuses to hide his head in the sand. Henry has not been heard too much outside of young jazz circles as yet, but I am personally looking forward to the time when he can share a stage with another top rock group and thereby allow a meaningful rapport between the old and the new to happen.

Meanwhile, for jazz and modern music fans whatever the genre, the next week looks like an exciting one. First, is the return to Vancouver of pianist Dave Brubeck and renowned tenor sax man Gerry Mulligan in a joint concert at the Pacific Coliseum on Thursday.

This will be one of the few concert jazz programs lined up in Vancouver in many a long month, so be sure to take it in.

Three days earlier sees the entre of Lionel Hampton et al into the club confines of Isy's.

Judging from the successes of Erroll Garner and Jimmy Smith earlier this year, the gig should be a lively one. Hampton stays until the 29th.

Finally the PNE Gardens play host tonight to one of the original blues revival bands; Paul Butterfield. We have been fortunate in Vancouver to hear the old blues, then those old blues electrified, supplemented by local versions of both.

Butterfield, however, is considered to be the man of contemporary blues. He should need no encouragement to sell out.