The Jazz Link™

Volume III, Issue 23 May, 1990

Handsome Soul: A portrayal of Charles McPherson

Photo by Michael Oletta

Inside this issue:

• Page 12 ...
Kenny Burrell
on
Duke Ellington: Part II
by Jude Hibler

• Page 19...
Miles' Moves
by Hall T. Sprague

• Page 25...
Good-bye,
Divine Sarah
by a few of her musician friends

• Page 4...

Read about one of the great alto saxophone players...
Charles McPherson

by Bonnie Biggs

The Jazz Link

PUBLISHER/EDITOR
Ms. Jude Hibler

CONTRIBUTORS
Darlene J. Algood, Bonnie Biggs, Bob Boss, Leo Cates, Lou Curtiss, Helen Oakley Dance, Stanley Dance, Murray Davison, T. Fuller Dean, Bill Dendle, Leonard Feather, Mark E. Gallo, Robert Gordon, Jude Hibler, Bruce H. Klauber, Joel G. Klauber, Floyd Levin, John Lucas, Les McCann, Jim Merod, Tony (D) Sidotti, Hall Tripp Sprague, "T", Scott Yanow, Mike Wofford

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Grace Bell, Don Dean, Jane Eddy, Leonard Feather, Jude Hibler, Sabir Majeed, Michael Oletta, Mark Roberts, Tony (D) Sidotti

OFFICE SUPPORT
Bob Boss, Leo Cates, Jeff Hibler, Bev Lewis

PRINTER
Trident Offset

All material contained within *The Jazz Link* is copyright protected. No part or parts may be reprinted without written permission from the Publisher.

The Jazz Link is a monthly magazine. Editorial and executive offices are located at 9962Canright Way, San Diego, CA 92126. © Copyright 1990. All rights reserved.
For advertising, circulation/ subscriptions, or other information, call (619) 695-9604. Please enclose self-addressed stamped envelope with any inquiry or submission.

Features

Page 4 — **Charles McPherson**
by Bonnie Biggs

Page 12 — **Kenny Burrell on Duke Ellington: Part II**
by Jude Hibler

Page 25 — **Friends bid Sarah Vaughan adieu**
by Les McCann
by Mike Wofford

Departments

Performance Reviews

Page 19 — **Miles' Moves: Miles Davis**
by Hall T. Sprague

Page 21 — **Chick Corea**
by Hall T. Sprague

Page 24 — **Chick Corea: another perspective**
by Darlene J. Algood

Video Review

Page 22 — **"An Evening with Chuck Niles"**
by Bruce H. Klauber

New Book Release

Page 23 — ***World of Gene Krupa: Legendary Drummin' Man***
by Bruce H. Klauber

Jazz News

Page 26 — Dizzy Gillespie receives award from President George Bush
Page 27 — Swing Street: The Big Band of Chick Webb
by Murray Davison
Page 11 — Stranded! Bass players John Heard, Marshall Hawkins, John Patitucci talk about selected albums
by Bob Boss
Page 28 — San Diego Jazz Guide
Page 31 — Los Angeles Jazz Guide

• As *The Jazz Link* goes to press, we learned of the death of **Dexter Gordon.** Look for words about him in the June issue.

Charles McPherson: A profile of handsome soul

by Bonnie Biggs

Photo by Sabir Majeed

Alto man Charles McPherson

A giant lives among us. Sometimes we forget. We've had a healthy number of jazz greats visit our fair city recently. We forget, sometimes that one of the greatest lives right down the street.

I first heard alto saxophonist **Charles McPherson** at **Jimmy and Jeannie Cheatham's** Sunday Sheraton Jam Session in 1981. As a neophyte listener, I was taken with the sense of anticipation in the room when it was Charles' time to blow. **Ann Williams** and a handful of seasoned listeners had taken on my "aural" education as a personal project. They assured me that I would hear his greatness. They were right. There was a quality to his sound that was unlike anything I'd ever heard...a sound that struck me right in the solar plexus and sat there... gripping my gut beyond the final note. As I have grown to understand *why* his music is so unique and revered I have also come to love the man behind the horn. There are many sides to this man. There is the demanding, almost Mingus-like bandstand manner and the gentle, poetic life-lover who delights in conversing with animals - of any size.

His acute sense of beauty pervades his music and his way of being with the world. His beautiful wife, Lynn, once commented to me that even butterflies love Charles. They have always followed him. Wherever he is. All you have to do is listen to the way he sounds the "C" in the final "stay" of "My Funny Valentine". You will join the butterflies.

EARLY MUSICAL EXPERIENCES

Bonnie Biggs for *The Jazz Link* **(TJL)**
Charles McPherson (CM)

CM: I'll start with Joplin, Mo. A little town right in the Ozarks. It would be the southwest corner of Missouri where Missouri, Oklahoma and Arkansas meet. This town was kind of a small town. This was during the 40s...I was born in 1939. My first memory of music was of the bands that would come and play in this park in Joplin. These bands probably were from the general area like Kansas City. Big Bands. Then there would be dances in this one big park in Joplin. The bands would play in the evening in the summertime. There would be a dance and real festive kind of atmosphere. This was probably mid-40s. The thing that attracted me were the gold shiny instruments and the sound. I liked the way the instruments looked. I knew that I liked music then.

As I look back at it now, because then it was just music - no categories, it was probably Kansas City swing. I liked the way the horns looked and sounded, especially the saxophone. Then there were pianos in my mom's friend's homes. I think if I had had a piano at 5 or 6, I would have been playing the piano. Whenever we would go to these people's homes I would go to the piano and play. Of course, all kids do that. Any kid in the world will go to the piano. I liked it, though. There was something special about a piano.

Life in Joplin just continued on until 1948 when I was about nine I moved to Detroit. At that point, it's odd how circumstances are, on the street that I lived in Detroit, (pianist) **Barry Harris** lived right around the corner two minutes away and within walking distance. So did (trumpeter) **Lonnie Hillyer**, who has passed on, but turned out to be a good friend. I met him when I was 9-years-old. He turned out to be a great

STEREO UNLIMITED

Select Audio Components

. . . for the discriminating listener. If you love music . . . and you are serious about reproducing it in your home . . .we think you will like our approach.

. . . Largest classical record selection in San Diego county!

Audio Components
Video Components
Complete Systems
Installation

Apogee	Ariston	Audio Pro	B & K	Barco
Celestion	Conrad Johnson	Electron Kinetics	Eminent Technology	Fosgate
Grado	Kimber	Krell	Lexicon	Luxman
Magnum	NAD	P.S. Audio	PSB	Sheffield
Sota	Stax	Syndex	Systemdek	Vandersteen

3191 Sports Arena Blvd. (Scandia Plaza) San Diego

(619) 223-8151

but turned out to be a good friend. I met him when I was 9-years-old. He turned out to be a great trumpet player.

There was a club called the Blue Bird, which at that time was the hippest local club in town. It was a neighborhood bar. The musicians would be coming thru from New York, if they were working in Detroit, when they finished their gigs they would always come to the Blue Bird because the Blue Bird had the greatest local musicians in town working there - that would be the house band.

TJL: ...and there were a lot of great local musicians.

CM: Oh yeah! The house band would be people like **Elvin Jones, Thad Jones, Pepper Adams** on baritone saxophone, **Tommy Flanagan** or Barry Harris on piano. These were the local guys. Then there were a bunch of guys the world has never heard of that were from Detroit that played great, maybe as good as Tommy or Barry, but they never went to New York and became known. But Detroit in the 40s and even, from what I hear, during the 30s, was a great town for music. A lot of good musicians. It (Detroit) was part of the circuit. Musicians came from New York, and they would go due west. They would go from New York then New Jersey then Philly and then somewhere maybe in Pennsylvania, other than Philly, and then Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and Colorado, Kansas City, California and work their way back.

TJL: Did you meet Barry when you were real young.

CM: No. I didn't meet Barry until I was about 15. I'm in Detroit and I'm 9-years-old but I didn't really get into music until I was about 12.

This friend of mine, Lonnie, who lived right up the street, we were pretty much the same age and would play together. There was a little music thing happening between us. We would sing songs and this was unusual because most kids at that age are not into singing songs. But there was this movie. I'll never forget this.

A movie with **Susan Hayward** called, "I Want to Live," about a woman who was on death row... a very controversial movie as to whether or not she committed the crime. This was a movie and there was a tune in the movie called "My Foolish Heart." The tune is a standard.

For some reason Lonnie and I knew that this was a gorgeous tune. We had seen the movie because Saturday is movie time. It doesn't make any difference what the movie is, you just go to the movies on Saturday. Anyway, Lonnie and myself would get together and then sing the tune. It was a nice tune harmonically. It was sophisticated and the lyrics were nice. But that was the only indication that there was a certain affinity with music at that early of an age. At about 12, intermediate school, is when I started playing a musical instrument. From that point on, everything was in line to play music.

TJL: Was it a saxophone first?

CM: No. First it was a flugelhorn. I wanted to play the saxophone but there was no saxophone available. The only thing available was a flugel horn, which is like a trumpet. After about a year, I got my first instrument from my mother. She bought me an instrument... the saxophone.

I started playing saxophone at age 13 in the school band. From that point on, that's when things started happening. At that time I had heard about **Johnny Hodges** and certain saxophone players because now I am interested in saxophone players and the saxophone.

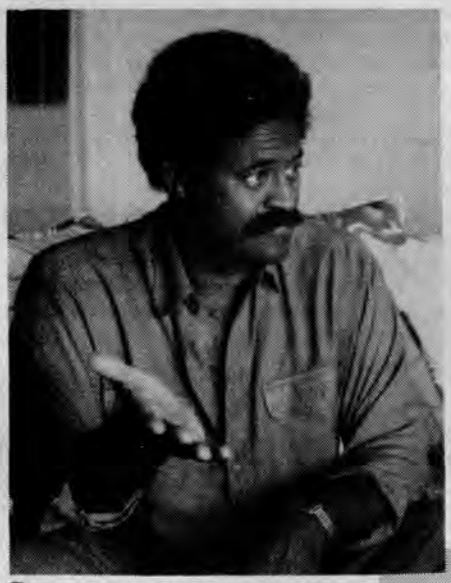
CHECKING OUT BIRD FOR THE FIRST TIME

TJL: You had heard of Johnny Hodges and the band he played in, **Duke Ellington**, or had you heard their music?

CM: I heard their records and there were books that you could go to a music store and get that would have Johnny

Charles Mc Pherson

(cont. from Page 5)



Photos by Michael Oletta

Hodges' solos. It was good, and I learned from that. It was fun. Then I'll never forget, there was a little hipster that was in one of the classes who was one year older than me, which was a big deal back then.

So he said, "Johnny Hodges, that's good, but have you heard of **Charlie Parker?**" I said, "No". He says, "Well, man, you have to check him out." I said, "Ok."

Then sure enough there was this little store where they sold candy. It was like a soda fountain store with a jukebox. 1950. In 1950 there were these little neighborhood places where they sold candy and food. It would be like a 7/11 store of today except that there would be a jukebox.

Anyway, Charlie Parker was on the jukebox. When I saw this, I remembered I'd heard about Charlie Parker from this hipster. I said here's my chance to hear this Charlie Parker person. So I put a nickle in the jukebox, and it was Charlie Parker playing "Tico, Tico." It was a series record that he made for Verve and the whole series was entitled "South of the Border," dealing with Latin music. It was Bird playing and when I heard it it was amazing because immediately I knew that for some reason this was the feeling for me, this is the way you should do it. I knew nothing about the technicalities of music. I knew nothing. This is what I've been hearing all of my life - and my life was what...15 years? I thought, oh so this is the way you should phrase. It made perfect sense to me. This is the way you should do it and I was about 14-years-old. What did I know? I thought I knew.

TJL: Well, you did. You had a natural knowing.

CM: Now I'm humble. I know enough to be humble to say I don't know if that was right or not but this is what I felt. Oh my goodness this is how you should phrase. Anyway I knew this was it. So from that point on, I started checking Bird out.

I started getting into what was considered modern jazz, and there were other guys my age that played instruments who were into this also. So of course we started to know each other, and we started having little sessions. Some of these people were people like **Roy Brooks** and **Lewis Hayes**, who is a drummer who ended up working with **Horace Silver** and a bunch of other people: **Oscar Peterson**.

When I got into music all of a sudden this bar that was down the street started to have importance for my life. Some of these people that I liked worked down there and they were playing that kind of music right down the street. I started going to listen to musicians. And, of course, Barry lived around the corner. At about 15...some kind of way we met him. I think Lonnie and myself played at a little session, a Sunday afternoon session, at this club.

At that particular time, **Miles Davis** was in Detroit living there for maybe a couple years. We're talking about 1956 or something like that 1957 anyway mid-50s. Miles was there and at that point in time was going through a crisis in his life, he was definitely into drugs, and he was saying, "I am tired of this. I've got to stop". Actually I think he may have stopped using drugs in Detroit. This particular geographic spot was the place he got it all together.

But at this time, Miles for me, was this older man, this musician who worked with Charlie Parker, who was like a hero figure. Probably Miles at that time was 26 or 27-years-old. He lived in Detroit and worked at this club, the Blue Bird, quite often and other places around the city. That was my Detroit musical background.

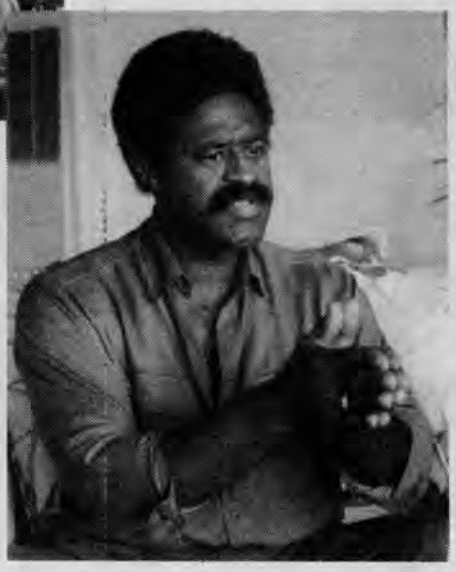
TJL: And you met Barry around that time ?

CM: Well, what happened was that since Barry lived right around the corner from me and the club, I met him because we played in the club...we sat in. On Sunday afternoon.

TJL: They would let kids who were not 21 play?

CM: No, not necessarily. What brought that about was Miles Davis was using my friend, Lonnie Hillyer's horn. For whatever reason, Miles didn't have one or whatever.

Lonnie's mother, Mrs. Hillyer, said, "Ok, Miles, you can use Lonnie's horn but you must bring it back every night. After you get through work, bring it back." Lonnie's mother knew that these musicians had these drug problems and would be subject to pawning their horns. So she was that sophisticated to say Ok yeah you can use it but you gotta bring it back, and he did. Miles brought the horn back everyday or every evening. I will say that about Miles. He always brought the horn back. He was never disrespectful or in anyway manipulative because we were young.



TJL: I was going to ask you how he was with the young musicians. Was he supportive of you?

CM: Yes, I would have to say he was. Because there was a Sunday afternoon session, a matinee, that would happen at

this particular club and he would let us sit in. Now at this particular time we were 14 or 15-years-old. We couldn't play. So they tolerated us. We could play the melodies of certain tunes but we could not improvise well at all. It was tolerated and we did it one or two Sundays. Then I met Barry... in that kind of situation.

At 15 I started studying with Barry. Barry would say Ok, you got some talent but you need to learn your scales and you need to know about chords and theory and harmony. If you come over every now and then I'll show you these things. So I did. I think he took us under his wing because our interest in the music was so strong. Everyone else our age was into the dowop thing.

At this particular time, Barry was like a teacher in that he was into formalizing certain approaches to teaching people this and that. He was trying to figure out the best way to show someone something. So he was into verbalizing every abstract and intricate kind of musical nuance.

TJL: ...and you were receptive.

CM: We were receptive so we learned. By the time I was 17 or 18-years-old, I was actually playing gigs for the high school prom and around Detroit. By twenty I was playing in clubs. You had to be twenty-one to play in clubs but I could put mascara on my mustache.

By the time I was 21, I was able to play with Barry. I moved to New York when I was about 21.

Everyone knew that after you learned a certain amount of stuff in your home town you go to New York.

TJL: When did you decide that you had what it took?

CM: It's a funny thing about that. The more you know the more you find out you don't know. So in a funny kind of way knowledge can be a humbling situation. That's what sort of happened with me at every plateau if you want to call it that. I've always realized that now I know what I didn't know five years ago. But then all that did for me was to serve to show that oh that's just the tip of the iceberg. So you never really get to a point where you're real smug about whatever. I know what I can do, and I realize that some people can't do that. But that doesn't really serve as a thing that really makes me smug because I realize that there is a lot more to the iceberg so I really can't be comfortable about that and the fact that I might be better than some other Joe Blow. It is not a consolation at all. It's meaningless. It doesn't make any difference at all.

TJL: I'll never forget a comment that **Mike Wofford** made between sets one night. He said that he hadn't even begun to understand the piano. It didn't make sense to me until years later when I began studying piano and discovered how bottomless music is. But I guess that's sort of what you are saying.

CM: Yes, because after awhile you are not talking about a medium you're talking about yourself. Basically, I think what Mike means is that at some point you might be able to master the medium through which you are working. Once that happens its like mastering yourself. That's the real one. And that's a lifelong thing.

THE UNSUNG HEROES

TJL: I find that musicians think more about self mastery and have such a profound respect for their medium.

CM: That is one thing that I want to talk about. There are a lot of different branches of art. To me, the hero of the 20th century is the jazz musician...the art hero. Most people say no...it's the actors **Meryl Streep, Gene Hackman**. The real hero is the jazz musician. The media and world at large never really recognizes who they are and what they do [jazz musicians]. Everybody makes more money and gets more exposure .

TJL: Why did you think that is?

CM: It's for the same reason that theater doesn't get the same attention as Hollywood does. It's the same thing. We know what it is. We could spend time saying why don't people like Shakespeare as much as Judy Blume. Of course, we know what that is. Not to say that Judy Blume doesn't have some message that is important.

TJL: But it appeals to mass taste.

CM: If we are dealing with intelligent people that look at the arts and at what's happening in the world we know why a picture is worth a thousand words or whatever. Nevertheless, I'm just saying that the musician and the jazz musician in particular, is overlooked, and he is really an artistic hero that never gets the money, the attention or the press. Of course some people do, but in general they [jazz musicians] are not considered important. Whereas motion pictures and the people that are into that, of course, get the attention. That's not to say that there are not a bunch of actors that don't make money and that are starving to death...I know that there are. The relative importance of what they contribute and what the musician contributes and how much importance is put on what is contributed for the jazz musician is considered unimportant.

And basically "the" jazz musician is the one. Their creative ideas are the things that really make the whole music industry work. I mean, in other words, **Michael Jackson** will get credit because he's got on white socks and this hairdo and he's bouncing, dancing and singing but **Quincy Jones** is really the cat .

Because Quincy Jones can sit down and write an arrangement for four-hundred pieces.

We Specialize.

If you see it on the bandstand, we sell it, service it and teach it.

Top Quality Brass, Woodwind, Strings and Percussion. Call and talk to us about how you can get started or upgrade your current setup.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY MUSIC EXCHANGE

985-102 Escondido Avenue, Vista, CA 92083, USA

Call **(619) 630-7451**

Charles McPherson

(cont. from Page 7)

How many guys can do that? I can name ten million guys who may be able to dance or sing a song. But how many people can sit down and write an orchestration? And Quincy Jones is a jazz musician, he knows about Charlie Parker. He was on the scene with some of that stuff. He is influenced by Charlie Parker.

Charlie Parker is one of his heroes. When you are listening to a Michael Jackson record, little does the world know that these strings and this orchestra is written by a man who is probably writing a whole phrase that Charlie Parker played in 1948, behind Michael Jackson. No one knows that. No one gives a damn but people like me know - and other musicians know. I am saying they are the unseen, unsung heroes in the musical artistic world. There is never enough said about what jazz musicians do and the importance of their contributions. We deal with music and music is a very powerful force on a conscious and subliminal level. It affects your moods and emotions. But anyway getting back to me I started moving to New York in early 1959-60.

MINGUS

When I moved to New York I think I made a record with Barry called "Newer than New" with Riverside. It might have been my first record - it was probably in the early 60s - '62 or '63. Actually before that, I made a record with (bassist **Charles) Mingus** that might have been more likee '61.

TJL: How did you make the connection with Mingus? How did that happen?

CM: I was in New York and there was a coffeehouse in the Village called the Cafe Wah. They had afternoon sessions at this particular time. They would have folk singing then they would have jazz . **Bob Dylan** would be across the street at another coffeehouse. Maybe **Bill Cosby** would be somewhere else. This was the scene in the Village at that time. And of course, we would be having these sessions. Mingus came by this place because he had heard that **Lonnie Hillyer** and I would be at this session. He was looking for a trumpet player and a saxophone player because **Eric Dolphy**, who was working with him at the time, was going to quit the band and he needed some other guys. **Yusef Lateef** told Mingus that there were two young guys in town and that they had some talent and would probably be able to play his music. .

TJL: Did he come up and introduce himself?

CM: No, he was there and he just came up and played with us. He liked us and said why don't you come by this club I'll be working there tonight and we auditioned and went to some rehearsals and then we played some gigs. The first gig we played was this place in the Village. I think the man owed Mingus a couple thousand dollars.

Something was wrong. He didn't get paid at the end of the night and he proceeded to tear the piano up with his bare hands. He reached inside the piano and started ripping the strings so you heard pluck, pluck pluck. This was the first night on the gig...I'm 20-years-old and my friend was like 20, 21.

When we saw that, we looked at each other and said you know we just auditioned for this gig and we got the job and this is what he is doing right now...he is tearing the piano up. Should we be celebrating this? Should we be happy that we got the job ?

TJL: At this point, Mingus was a name in New York. So you had some appreciation. Prior to the piano incident you knew who he was.

CM: We knew who he was and that this was a name band

Call the recognized source for quality entertainment in San Diego ...

BRADY & ASSOCIATES

TALENT AGENCY

(619) 270-3000

A Fully Licensed and Bonded Talent Agency

within the jazz world. This was a famous man and this was an important stepping stone. His music was interesting and challenging. But this guy weighed 300 pounds. He was about 38-years-old and we were 20 and this guy was tearing up the piano! But anyway I worked with him for about twelve years off and on.

It was sporadic, off and on, and in between, I would work with other people. Then eventually I started recording my own records in the mid 60s.

TJL: Was that a big step or was it a natural evolution for you to do that.

CM: It was natural. This is how it works. You serve an apprenticeship for a few years with some established, probably older person and you work and you learn and you build up a certain reputation then at some point you branch off into your own situation. Then someone else comes through your band and does the same thing. So after working with Mingus for awhile I started working with my own groups and recording under my own name.

TJL: You have recorded some wonderful albums over the years. Do you have a personal favorite?

CM: "Siku ya bibi" (day of the lady), which is an album dedicated to **Billie Holiday**, on Mainstream and probably came out in the mid 70s. It was considered a good album. "From This Moment On" was on Prestige...maybe a little earlier than that. That I consider a good album. The last record I did, which was maybe 5 or 6 years ago called "The Prophet," was an interesting album. It's not like I like everything that I have ever done in my life. I don't think I've ever really made a bad record and there are some records that I like better than other records. But I would say that the Billie Holiday record might be pound for pound the best record that I made. Just because of the tunes

THE BIG SOUND

TJL: Your giant sound is legendary. You mentioned that in hearing Bird you realized that was the way it should sound and that's the way you should play saxophone. But how was it you came about getting your own unique, full-bodied sound?

CM: It's not really metaphysical or anything inhuman. First of all you must have the concept of that's what you want. Secondly, you go about executing that which you want. So you first must hear it and then you must bring it about. Now its not like when I play I'm trying to be big or loud or strong or any of that. Its not a deliberate or conscious situation. All it is is just a nuance of personality. It's not as deliberate as one might think. It more natural. It's a matter of when some people get ready to sing they sing in a small voice and some people sing the same note or make the same statement and for some reason its bigger. Some of it might be physics as much as philosophy. So for me, my attitude about sound first of all is to have a sound that has the full range of emotionality in other words to be as soft and gentle as well as strong and loud and all points in between. Quite often when you are playing in clubs you have to have the ability to project. You have to know how to do that.

MAKING THE MOVIE *BIRD*

TJL: I had the opportunity at the National Association of Jazz Educators' Conference, to hear you talk on a panel which consisted of people involved in the making of **Clint Eastwood's** movie, *Bird*. **Leonard Feather** was on the panel along with **Jon Faddis, Red Rodney** and **Lennie Niehaus.** It was a fascinating discussion.

CM: Lennie Niehaus contacted me. He was the musical director of the movie. He had heard several musicians tell him that Charles McPherson would be an excellent choice to play on the sound track of this movie because of his style. So he contacted me and wanted me to send him a tape of some recent musical situations and I did. I sent him a tape that we did at the Vanguard which involved some New York musicians, and he liked it and said great, "You're the guy. This is the money. Come here at this date and time."

TJL: Did you know up front what it was you were going to play or did you just hit it cold?

CM: No he gave me an idea of what would have to happen. I would be playing the melody of certain tunes. On certain things, I would actually play a solo and then there would be certain background situations that would require music for certain scenes and I would play. So it was interesting to see how that is done technically. Another interesting aspect of it was that all of this served to show me how brilliant Charlie Parker was at such an early age. Because I had never put

Charles McPherson

(cont. from Page 9)

Charlie Parker to the scrutiny that I actually had to do for this movie. I hadn't done that kind of scrutinizing of Charlie Parker since I was eighteen or nineteen years old. Now at that age you are in your formative musical years and you are learning and using certain people as prototypes. Then there's a point when you say thank you Charlie Parker, I got it now and I'm doing my own thing. This movie forced me to check him out again for what had to be done for this movie. My powers of observation and perception are quite different than they were when I was 18 or 19 so now I am viewing Bird for what he was and what he did from a 48-year-old mentality, as opposed to an 18-year-old mentality. This was really an education. It just served to show how brilliant this guy really was when he was 23-years-old. It was a humbling experience.

CHECKING OUT BIRD - IN PERSON

TJL: You did get to hear Bird in Detroit but you didn't elaborate. How old were you?
CM: When I first heard Bird I was about 15 or 16. It was at a huge dance hall. It wasn't a club situation. He was supposed to be there three days but he didn't show the first day. He was there Saturday and Sunday. He didn't show Friday for whatever reason. I'll never forget the feeling in that particular room. Everyone knew that Bird was apt not to show. This was all part of hearing Charlie Parker...the anticipation of whether he was going to show at all.

It was all a part of the event and what made it fun. It might be masochistic in some sort of way. You pay your money, and spend your time and comb your hair and do everything to go to this geographical spot where this is supposed to happen and then you wonder if this going to happen. But that was all part of the Charlie Parker mystique. Will he show will he not show and if he does what kind of shape will he be in, will he be ripped or brilliant? He did not show the first night.

For whatever reason I didn't go Friday. Saturday I did go. A room full of people on pins and needles ...nobody knows. All of a sudden someone says, "He's here! Charlie Parker is here!" Well, let me tell you. There were hundreds of people that just moved from one part of the room to where he was supposed to be. We saw these throngs of people rushing in, this wave of humanity and I'm one of them. I run over there and I make my way and all of a sudden there he is.

Here is this man with this blue suit with his horn. That's him it's Charlie Parker. The first surprise to me was that he wasn't short. I had seen pictures of him and I thought that he was a short, fat man. Well, he wasn't a short, fat man. He was medium, on the verge of being a tall, fat man. He had his horn and people are jamming around him and he hits a lick-kind of warms up. His warm up was incredible. He just did a little series of little runs up and down the horn that was incredible. After that he ended up on the bandstand and he proceeded to play the rest of the gig. A lot of things impressed me; but first of all the look, even at that early age, I was aware that the look on this guy's face was different than other people. I got the feeling that this guy was real, real intelligent. You could see it. You could see it coming out of his eyes. There was a very bored look on his face. But the boredom was based on his intelligence, actually. He was bored because he was too smart. I could tell that this guy was bored because he knew what everybody was going to say. He had seen it all before.

He was a guy stuck on planet earth during this time period and he's not supposed to be here. The way he walked through a crowd, his physical grace in walking was different than other people. This guy was different. He played great and sounded beautiful. I followed him around and talked to him and asked him questions. He never was rude. He was always pretty gracious. Every little idiot question I would ask him he would answer. Still, he was above it all. He was doing two things at once...actually giving me the dignity of answering every idiot question I asked but at the same time I could tell that he wasn't really taking me seriously. The only time that he became perturbed with me was when he was getting ready to light a cigarette and he didn't have any matches and I said I do. I have some matches. Then I couldn't produce the match fast enough. He said well do you or do you not. I finally got it together. That's the only time he was less than gracious but it really hurt my feelings. When I look back on it I have an understanding of that particular incident and this is because he was a man of rhythm. He was also a man of NOW. After checking out his biography and what people say, he was a guy of the moment. I watched him light his cigarette. For most people the lighting and smoking of a cigarette is maybe a five or six, seven point move.

For him it was like a three move process. This is what I checked out from watching him. He looked like a magician. He would roll a cigarette with one hand. He was like a slight of hand cat. That was one of his side hobbies - card tricks and coins disappearing up his sleeve. It was like the quickest point from point A to point B. So when I watched him walk across the room, the way he weaved through people was that way, the way he grabbed his horn was like that. So with the cigarette incident, I simply screwed up his rhythm. It really irritated him! Before that, I asked him all kinds of questions and it didn't bother him; but the minute I messed his rhythm up he had no tolerance for that.

FROM THIS MOMENT ON

TJL: I've known you about ten years now. You look and sound better than ever. Married life agrees with you, but what else has contributed to your recent "glow"?
CM: My wife, **Lynn**, is a beautiful woman that loves me and cares for me and has a certain value system and a certain philosophy of how life is to be lived. There is a certain compatibility, a certain point of agreement that we have with each other that we can come to terms with so I'm sure that has something to do with it. I want to have fun and I want to live life and all of that but I realize that you can only do certain things and only so much of certain things in order to maintain your health physically, mentally, and emotionally. There is a certain balance in life that one must have and so I am in touch with trying to adhere to what that is. There is a way to live life where you can have fun.

You can exercise your own right as a human being on the planet and still not interfere with other people's rights. Maintain a certain balance. I'm for learning how to do that which is the real meaning of civilization. The real meaning of being civilized is doing whatever you want to do and not letting whatever that is overflow into what someone else might want to do. Then to be healthy. I am concerned about being healthy physically, mentally, emotionally, according to my yardstick. Then I'm always concerned that my yard stick is OK. I realize everybody is living life according to their yardstick. The point is if your yardstick is interfering with someone else's yardstick. So just trying to adhere to that might possibly make one look OK, feel OK, and maybe be OK!
TJL: You're doing it all. You must know that you are a mentor figure to a lot of musicians in the San Diego area by virtue of the fact that you live here. You don't teach formally. You don't teach. That's a choice that I know you have made. I also know that in my own personal life, my husband, who is a musician, says that you have taught him more about music than any bass teacher he has ever had. That is an inadvertent sort of teaching ability that you have which in some ways is what I think Barry did.

But you don't let people come and pay you money to teach. You do that with younger musicians or people that you care about. How do you convey that? You were talking

about how Barry thought about those things. Is it a conscious process for you or is it an organic process when you hang out with musicians to teach them?

CM: It's probably both. Some of it is a conscious situation I'm sure. All you can do is, in some sort of way, convey your ideology to people. You can be very specific or you can be general about it. I will try to do that. I will try to convey a certain aesthetic musical ideology to someone in a general or a specific way depending on the circumstance. But I will always preface it and say well this is my subjective opinion about this or that. See I'm not smug enough to say this is absolute ...I will say this is my opinion. I'm not trying to teach necessarily. I don't consider myself a teacher.

TJL: I know you don't. I also know and you know it's sort of an oral tradition and that is the way you pass on the knowledge. I think you are very good at it but I think its an inadvertent role on your part. It just sort of happens.

TJL: Where are you going next with music? What's happening now. Do you have tours coming up ?

CM: Yeah, I have tours coming up but basically for me the whole name of the game is trying to get the best out of yourself whenever you want it. There is this constant challenge of dealing with the medium through which you are expressing yourself. After you get to the point where you master the medium that you are dealing with, then it is not even about that anymore. It's about you. How to get the best out of yourself whenever you want it. So it's all personality in some way. You can't remove the human element from whatever it is you are dealing with. Music is an obstacle to a certain extent and the medium that I'm dealing with-the saxophone and music-is a certain kind of obstacle, but you can get past that where you can master all of that but the last thing you really have to master is yourself. Learning how to operate at at least 95% of yourself when you want to.

You push the button and there you are because at some point you will master the camera, you will master the saxophone, you will master writing. Fine. These things are finite in what they are. But your "self" is not really necessarily finite and so it's a matter of mastering your moves and being in control of yourself and being able to get the most out of yourself when you want to. If everybody could operate at 95 or 100% of themselves, everyone would be able to produce great things. Not just me-anybody. The point is being able to have that kind of facility and that's basically the name of the game...how to get the most out of yourself whatever it is. It doesn't make any difference what it is. Δ

Footnote: Charles can be heard in the play that celebrates the life of Billie Holiday,. "Lady Day at the Emerson Bar & Grill," which is playing at the Old Globe Theatre in Balboa Park in San Diego and runs through June l0. For further information call (619) 239-2255.