

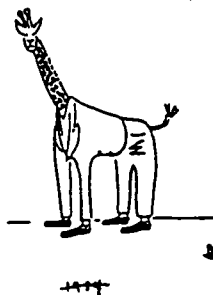
LADY in the Corner

~~Opposite Your Navel~~ ~~and Above Your Knees:~~ The Conversational and Otherwise Art of Jimmy Rowles

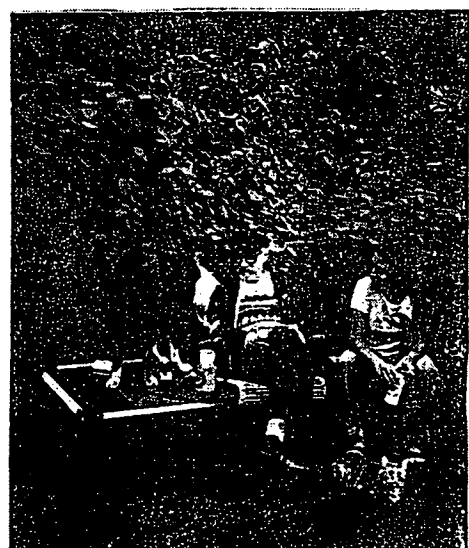
Memoirs of a jazz life

**Conversations with Jimmy Rowles, edited by Tad Hershorn
Illustrated by Jimmy Rowles**

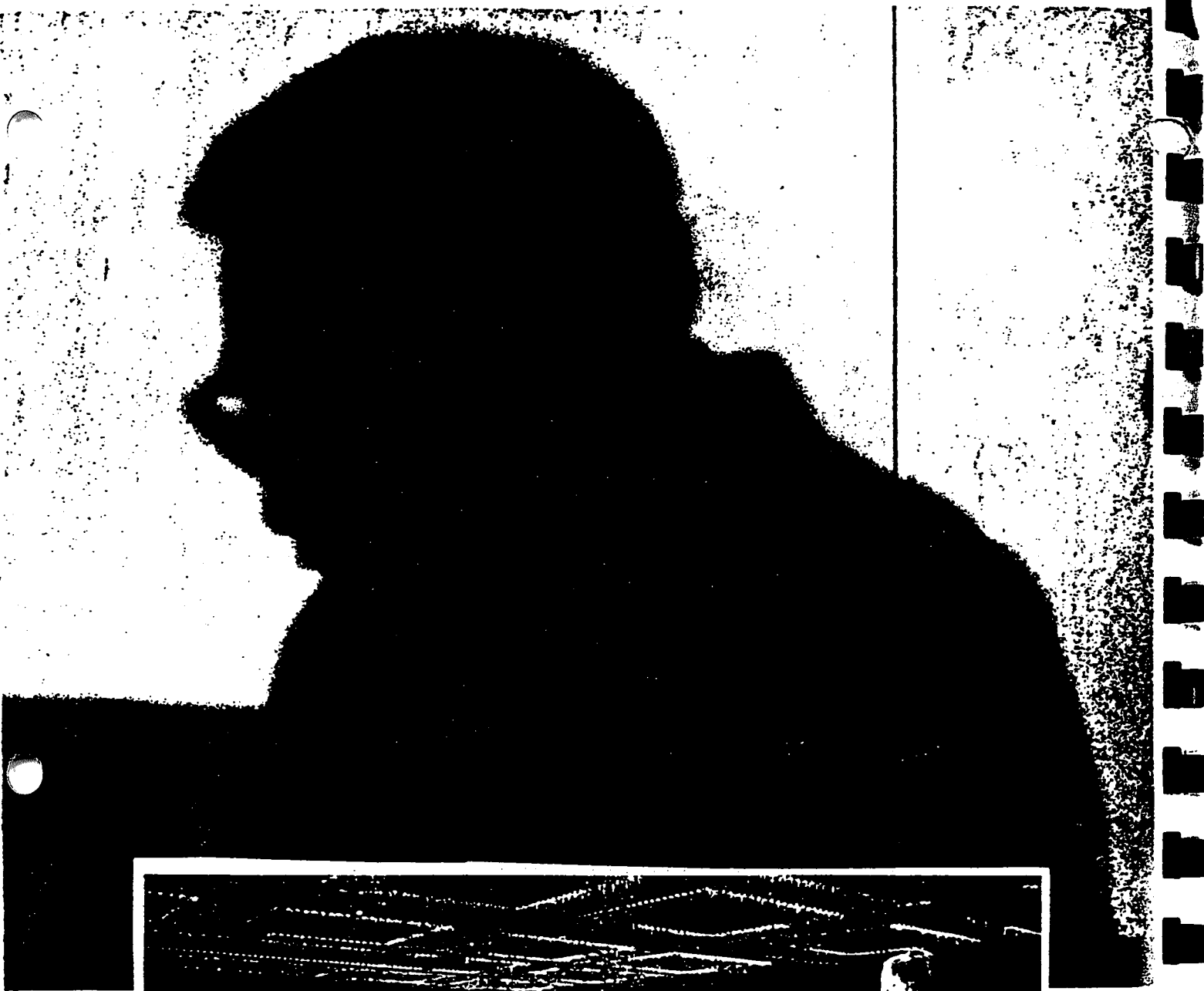
Foreword by Woody Herman



c. 1983 by Tad Hershorn and Jimmy Rowles







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"Thank God for my records. And I'm not talking about the ones I'm on. I'm talking about the ones I like."
Jimmy Rowles, November 1985

A DISCOGRAPHY of JIMMY ROWLES

Following is a partial discography of Jimmy Rowles based on the collection of Tad Hershorn (designated with *) and other catalogue listings of his recorded work:

1940s

- 1) *Enough Clothes for Three Days*. Recorded in 1941 or 1942 in Los Angeles. JR's and guitarist Barney Kessel's first recording.
- 2) Ben Webster: *Time/Life Giants of Jazz Series*. Features two selections recorded in 1943 in Los Angeles and features JR with Webster, Slim Gaillard and Slam Stewart.
- 3) Woody Herman Orchestra: *The Thundering Herd*. * CBS Records, **CBS 66-378** (3-record set). Eight tracks recorded 5/46 and 10/46 in Los Angeles and Chicago.
- 4) Woody Herman Orchestra: *Ebony Concerto*. * Columbia Masterworks, **7479M** (78 RPM). Composed and conducted by Igor Stravinsky. Recording made in Los Angeles in 1946.
- 5) Benny Goodman: *That Goodman Touch*. * Swaggie Records (Victoria, Australia), **S1380**. Three Benny Goodman-Jimmy Rowles duets recorded 5/47 in Hollywood (Capitol reissues).
- 6) Benny Goodman: *Classics in Jazz*. * Swaggie Records, **S1381**. Small-group recordings made 4, 5&6/47 in Hollywood featuring JR with Goodman, Red Norvo, Benny Carter and Red Callender.
- 7) Benny Goodman: *The Small Groups*. * Swaggie Records, **S1364**. Small-group recordings made 4 & 6/47.
- 8) *Cool California*. * Savoy Records, **SJL-2254**. Recorded 1/49 in Los Angeles and features JR with Georgie Auld and Billy Byers. A composite of West Coast recording artists.

1950s

- 9) *The Genius of Gerry Mulligan*. * PAUSA Jazz Origin Series, **PR-9010**. Recorded 7/52 in Hollywood and features JR with Mulligan and Chet Baker.
- 10) Peggy Lee: *Black Coffee*. * Decca Records, **DL-8358**. Recorded in Los Angeles in the Mid-50s with JR backing Lee with trumpeter Cootie Chesterfield, bassist Max Wayne and drummer Ed Shaughnessy.
- 11) Peggy Lee: *Dream Street*. * Decca Records, **DL-8411**. Recorded in Los Angeles in Mid- to Late-50s. Features JR and Lee with orchestra.
- 12) Benny Carter: *Jazz Giant*. * Contemporary Records, **S7555**. Recorded 7/55 in Los Angeles and features JR with Carter, Frank Rosolino and Ben Webster.
- 13) *A Day in the Life of Billie Holiday*. * Different Drummer Records, **DD-1003**. Recorded 8/22/55 in Hollywood with JR, Holiday and bassist Artie Shapiro. Rehearsal for *Stormy Blues* sessions.
- 14) Billie Holiday: *Songs and Conversations*. * Paramount Records, **PAS-6059**. Recorded 8/22/55 in Hollywood with JR, Holiday and bassist Artie Shapiro. Rehearsal for *Stormy Blues* sessions.

- 15) Billie Holiday: *Stormy Blues*. * Verve Records (reissue), **VE-2-2515**. Recorded 8/23-25/55 in Los Angeles and features JR with Holiday, Benny Carter, Harry Edison and Barney Kessel.
- 16) Billie Holiday: *All or Nothing at All*. * Verve Records (reissue), **VE-2-2529**. Recorded 8/18, 23-25/55 in Los Angeles with Holiday, Benny Carter, Ben Webster, Harry Edison and Barney Kessel.
- 17) Barney Kessel: *Music to Listen to Barney Kessel By*. * Contemporary Records, **S7521**. Recorded 10/56 in Los Angeles.
- 18) Herbie Mann: *Hi Flutin'*. * Premier Records, **PS-2001**. 1956+. JR with flutists Herbie Mann and Buddy Collette.
- 19) Billie Holiday: *Embraceable You*. * Verve Records (reissue), **817-357-1**. Recorded 1/57 in Los Angeles and features JR with Holiday, Ben Webster, Harry Edison and Barney Kessel.
- 20) Don Bagley: *Basically Bagley*. * Dot Records, **DLP-3070**. Recorded 7/57 in Hollywood with bassist Don Bagley and drummer Shelly Manne.
- 21) Barney Kessel: *Some Like It Hot*. * Contemporary Records (reissue), **OJC-168**. Recorded 3&4/59 in Los Angeles featuring JR with Kessel, Art Pepper and Shelly Manne.
- 22) Barney Kessel: *Let's Cook*. * Contemporary Records, **S7603**. Recorded 8/57 and features JR with Kessel, Ben Webster, Frank Rosolino and Shelly Manne.
- 23) Henry Mancini: *The Mancini Touch*. RCA Records, **LSP-2101**. Recorded 8/59 at RCA Victor's Music of the Center of the World in Hollywood.
- 24) Gerry Mulligan with Jimmy Witherspoon. * Joker Serie Everest, **SM 3279**. Recorded 12/2&9/59 at the Renaissance Club in Los Angeles and features JR with Mulligan, Witherspoon (vocals) and Ben Webster.
- 25) The Jimmy Rowles Septet: *Weather in a Jazz Vane*. Analex Records, **A-3007**. Recorded in 1959 in Los Angeles.
- 26) Bill Harris and Friends. * Fantasy Records, **3263**. Recorded in Los Angeles in the Late 50s and features JR with Harris, Ben Webster and Red Mitchell (bass).
- 27) The Jimmy Rowles Sextet: *Lets Get Acquainted with Jazz...For People who Hate Jazz*. * Tampa Records, **TP-8**. Recorded in the Late 50s in Los Angeles and features JR with Red Mitchell, Barney Kessel, Harold Land, Mel Lewis and Pete Candoli.
- 28) Hoagy Carmichael: *Hoagy Sings Carmichael*. * PAUSA Records, **9006**. Recorded in the Late 50s in Los Angeles. Arranged and conducted by Johnny Mandel and features JR with Carmichael (vocals), Harry Edison, and Art Pepper.
- 29) *TV Jazz Themes*. * Somerset Records, **SF-8800**. Recorded in the Late 50s in Los Angeles. Arranged and conducted by Skippy Martin.
- 30) Barney Kessel: *To Swing or Not to Swing*. Contemporary Records. Recorded in Mid-Late 50s in Los Angeles.
- 31) Anita O'Day: *An Evening with Anita O'Day*. * (English) Columbia Records, **33CX-10068**. Recorded in Los Angeles in the Late-50s. Features JR and O'Day with guitarist Tal Farlow, bassist Leroy Vinnegar and drummer Larry Bunker.

Leonard Feather's *Encyclopedia of Jazz* (1960) lists others of Jimmy Rowles' recordings from the 1950s including those made with Bob Brookmeyer (trombone), Buddy DeFranco (clarinet), Julie London and another Analex recording under his own name called *Jive at Five*.

1960s

- 32) The Jimmy Giuffre Four: *Ad Lib.** Verve Records, **M6V-8361**. Recorded around 1960 in Los Angeles and features JR with Giuffre (clarinet) and Red Mitchell.
- 33) *Ben Webster at the Renaissance.** Contemporary Records, **C-7646**. Recorded 10/60 "live" at the Renaissance Club in Los Angeles and issued for the first time in 1985 and features JR with Webster, Jim Hall (guitar) and Red Mitchell.
- 34) Mel Torme: *The Duke Ellington and Count Basie Songbooks.** Verve Records, **823-248-1**. Ellington recorded 12/60; Basie recorded 2/61. Both in Los Angeles. Arranged and conducted by Johnny Mandel.
- 35) Henry Mancini: *High Time*. RCA Records, **LPM-2314**. Recorded in 1960 in Hollywood.
- 36) Henry Mancini: *Breakfast at Tiffany's.** RCA Records, **LPM-2362**. Recorded in 1961 in Los Angeles. Film score composed and conducted by Mancini.
- 37) Henry Mancini: *Experiment in Terror.** RCA Records, **LSP-2442**. Recorded in 1962 in Hollywood. Film score composed and conducted by Mancini.
- 38) *Opening Blues* (originally *BBB and Company*).* Prestige Records, **MPP-2513**. Recorded 4/62 in Los Angeles and features JR with Ben Webster, Benny Carter, and Barney Bigard (clarinet).
- 39) Jimmy Rowles: *Kinda Groovy.** Capitol Records, **H831**. Recorded 10/62 in Hollywood. JR vocals and piano with Howard Roberts (guitar) and Shelly Manne.
- 40) *Laurindo Almeida and the Bossa Nova All-Stars.** Capitol Records, **T1759**. Recorded in 1962 in Hollywood and features JR with Almeida, Howard Roberts and Shelly Manne.
- 41) Henry Mancini: *The Pink Panther.** RCA Records, **LSP-2795**. Recorded in 1963 in Los Angeles. Film score composed and conducted by Mancini.
- 42) Henry Mancini: *Uniquely Mancini.** RCA Records, **LSP-2962**. Recorded 1963 in Hollywood. The big band sound of Henry Mancini.
- 43) Henry Mancini: *Charade*. RCA Records, **LSP-2755**. Recorded in 1963 in Hollywood. Film score composed and conducted by Mancini.
- 44) Henry Mancini: *Mancini '67.** RCA Records, **LPM-3694**. Recorded in 1967 in Hollywood. Arranged and conducted by Mancini.
- 45) Henry Mancini: *Two for the Road*. RCA Records, **LSP-3802**. Recorded in 1967 in Hollywood. Film score composed and conducted by Mancini.
- 46) The Fifth Dimension: *The Age of Aquarius.** Soul City Records, **SCS-92005**. Recorded 1969 in Hollywood. JR doing "Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In."
- 47) Skippy Martin and his orchestra: *8 Brass, 5 Sax, 4 Rhythm.** MGM Records, **E3743**. Recorded in the 60s in Los Angeles.

The Encyclopedia of Jazz in the '60s (Feather, 1966) said JR had performed on recordings of Billy May, Bill Holman, Neal Hefti, Judy Garland, Frank Sinatra and Nat "King" Cole.

1970s

- 48) *Proceedings of the Blue Angel Jazz Club: The Complete 1971 Pasadena Jazz Party.** **BAJC 510-511**. Recorded 1971 in Pasadena. and features JR with Joe Williams, Herb Ellis, Flip Phillips and Harry Edison.

- 49) Carmen McRae: *The Great American Songbook*. * Atlantic Records, **SD2-904**. Recorded in 1972 at Donte's in Los Angeles and features JR with McRae and Joe Pass. McRae sings two Rowles compositions.
- 50) Mundell Lowe: *California Guitar*. * Famous Door Records, **HL-102**. Recorded in 1972 in Los Angeles. Portion of album on tape.
- 51) Jimmy Rowles: *A Fleeting Moment*. * Jazz Chronicle Records, **JCS-401**. Recorded 1/74 in Los Angeles. Piano solo. Cover drawn by JR.
- 52) Zoot Sims: *Party*. * Choice Records, **CRS-1006**. Recorded 4/74 in New York featuring JR with tenor saxophonist Sims.
- 53) *The Special Magic of Jimmy Rowles*. * Halycon Records, **Hal-110**. Recorded in 1972 in New York with bassist Randy Gilder. Cover drawn by JR.
- 54) *Sarah Vaughan and the Jimmy Rowles Quintet*. * Mainstream Records, **Mainstream 404**. Recorded 1974. Vaughan sings two JR compositions.
- 55) Barney Kessel: *Barney Plays Kessel*. * Concord Records, **CJ-9**. Recorded 1975 in Hollywood.
- 56) Jimmy Rowles: *Paws That Refresh*. * Choice Records, **CRS-1023**, Recorded 3/76 in New York.
- 57) Jimmy Rowles: *Grand Paws*. * Choice Records, **CRS-1014**. Recorded 3/76 in New York.
- 58) Woody Herman: *The 40th Anniversary Concert*. * RCA Records, **B6L2-2203**. Recorded 11/20/76 at Carnegie Hall in New York featuring JR with Stan Getz, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn and Jimmy Giuffre.
- 59) Jimmy Rowles: *Music's the Only Thing that's on My Mind*. * Progressive Records, 7009. Recorded 12/76 in New York. **2-1981 GRAMMY AWARD NOMINATIONS** (Jazz solo and vocal).
- 60) Stephane Grapelli: *Uptown Dance*. * Columbia Records, **3545**. Recorded in 1976 in New York featuring JR with violinist Grapelli.
- 61) Al Cohn and Jimmy Rowles: *Heavy Love*. * Xanadu Records, **Xanadu 145**. Recorded 3/77 in New York. Duets with tenor saxophonist Cohn. **1978 GRAMMY AWARD NOMINEE**.
- 62) Sam Noto: *Notes to You*. * Xanadu Records, **Xanadu 144**. Recorded 5/77 in New York with trumpeter Noto.
- 63) *If I'm Lucky: Zoot Sims meets Jimmy Rowles*. * Pablo Records, **2310-803**. Recorded 10/77 in New York.
- 64) *I Remember Bebop*. * Columbia Records (Contemporary Masters Series), **35381**. Recorded 11/77 in New York featuring collection of piano solos by JR, John Lewis, Al Haig, Barry Harris, Walter Bishop Jr., Tommy Flanagan, Duke Jordan and Sadik Hakim.
- 65) Charles Mingus: *Three or Four Shades of Blue*. * Atlantic Records, **SD1700**. Recorded in 1977 in New York and features JR with bassist Mingus, Larry Coryell, George Coleman and John Scofield.
- 66) Stan Getz and Jimmy Rowles: *The Peacocks*. * Columbia Records, **34873**. Recorded in 1977 in New York and features JR with Getz, Jon Hendricks and Elvin Jones. **1978 GRAMMY AWARD NOMINEE**.
- 67) Jimmy Rowles: *We Could Make Such Beautiful Music Together*. * Xanadu Records, **Xanadu 157**. Recorded 4/78 in New York.

- 68) Benny Goodman: *Live at Carnegie Hall, The 40th Anniversary Concert*. * London Records, **2PS-918-19**. Recorded 1/78 in New York.
- 69) Buster Williams (bassist): *Heartbeat*. * Muse Records, **MR-5171**. Recorded 3/78 in New York and features Suzanne Klewan singing JR composition "Pygmy Lullaby."
- 70) Bob Brookmeyer: *Back Again*. * Sonet Records - Giants of Jazz Series, **SNTF-778**. Recorded 5/78 in New York and features JR with trombonist Brookmeyer, Thad Jones, George Mraz and Mel Lewis.
- 71) Jimmy Rowles: *Isfahan*. * Sonet Records, Giants of Jazz Series. **SNTF-790**. Recorded 5/78 in New York. Duets with George Mraz.
- 72) Jimmy Rowles: *Red 'N Me*. * All Life Records, **AL-002**. Recorded 7/78 in Paris with bassist Red Mitchell. Back cover drawn By JR.
- 73) Jimmy Rowles: *Shade and Light*. * Ahead Records, **33-751**, Recorded 7/78 in Paris with George Duvivier (bass).
- 74) *Jimmy Rowles on Tour*. Skarby International Records (Stockholm, Sweden), **S-10055**. Recorded 8/78.
- 75) Zoot Sims: *Warm Tenor*. * Pablo Records, **2310-831**. Recorded 9/78 in New York.
- 76) Carol Sloane: *Carol Sings*. Progressive Records, **7047**. Recorded 10/78 in New York and features arrangements and playing by JR.
- 77) *Illinois Jacquet in Swinging Sweden*. Skarby International Records, **SLP-000-001**. Recorded 1978 in Stockholm and features JR with George Duvivier, Joe Newman and Jacquet.
- 78) Jimmy Rowles and Ray Brown: *As Good as it Gets*. * Concord Records, **CJ-66**. Recorded 1978. Duets with JR and bassist Brown.
- 79) *Jimmy Witherspoon Sings the Blues*. * Jazzman Records, **JAZ-5013**. Recorded 7/79 and features JR with Witherspoon, Illinois Jacquet, James Moody and George Duvivier.
- 80) Sarah Vaughan: *Duke Ellington, Songbooks 1&2*. * Pablo Records, **2312-111** and **2312-116**. Recorded 8/79 in Hollywood and features JR with Joe Pass, J.J. Johnson and Zoot Sims.
- 81) *Passion Flower: Zoot Sims Plays Duke Ellington*. * Pablo Records, **2312-120**. Recorded 8&12/79 in Hollywood and 5/80 at R.C.A. Studios in New York and features JR with Sims, J.J. Johnson, Plas Johnson, Buddy Collette, Frank Wess and Shelly Manne.
- 82) Jimmy Rowles and Ray Brown: *Tasty*. * Concord Records, **CJ-122**. Recorded 10/79 in San Francisco. Duets with bassist Brown.
- 83) Zoot Sims: *The Swinger*. * Pablo Records, **2310-861**. Recorded 12/79 in New York.
- 84) Jimmy Rowles: *Scarab*. Musica Records, _____ Recorded in Late 70s in Paris, piano solo.
- 85) Jimmy Rowles: *Nature Boy*. Musica Records, _____ Recorded in Late 70s in Paris, piano solo.

1980s

- 86) *A Celebration of Duke Ellington*. * Pablo Records, **2312-119**. Recorded 5/80 in New York and features JR with Sarah Vaughan and Zoot Sims.
- 87) Jimmy Rowles and Joe Pass: *Checkmate*. * Pablo Records, **D2310-865**. Recorded 1/81 in Los Angeles and features duet performances with guitarist Pass.

88) Jimmy Rowles *Plays Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn*. * Columbia Records, EC-37639. Recorded 6/81 in New York. Piano solo. **1982 GRAMMY AWARD NOMINEE.**

89) Zoot Sims: *I Wish I Were Twins*. * Pablo Records, 2310-868. Recorded 7/81 in New York.

90) Pepper Adams: *Urban Dreams*. * Palo Alto Jazz Records, PA-8009. Recorded 9/81 in Englewood, N.J. featuring JR with baritone saxophonist Adams and George Mraz.

91) Ella Fitzgerald: *A Tribute to Duke Ellington*. * A National Public Radio *Jazz Alive* broadcast of a "live" concert from Grant Park in Chicago dating from 9/6/81. Billy Taylor, host. Features JR and Fitzgerald with bassist Keter Betts and drummer Bobby Durham.

92) Ella Fitzgerald: *The Best is Yet to Come*. * Pablo Records, 2312-138. Recorded 2/82 in Hollywood. Arranged and conducted by Nelson Riddle.

93) Bill Evans: *A Tribute*. * Palo Alto Jazz Records, PA-8028-2. Recorded 5/82 in Los Angeles. A tribute to the late pianist by his supposed favorites: JR, McCoy Tyner, Chick Corea, Teddy Wilson, George Shearing, Andy Laverne, Richie Beirach, John Lewis, Dave McKenna, Dave Frishberg, Warren Bernhardt, Danny Zeitlin, Herbie Hancock and Joanne Brackeen.

94) Zoot Sims: *Suddenly It's Spring*. * Pablo Records, 2310-898. Recorded 5/83 in New York.

95) Jimmy Rowles and Michael Hashim: *The Peacocks*. Stash Records, 227. Recorded 1983 in Los Angeles and features JR with alto saxophonist Hashim.

96) Stacy Rowles with Jimmy Rowles: *Tell It Like It Is*. * Concord Records, CJ-249. Recorded 3/84 in Hollywood with Leonard Feather producing. Features JR with daughter Stacy (trumpet and flugelhorn).

Ellington



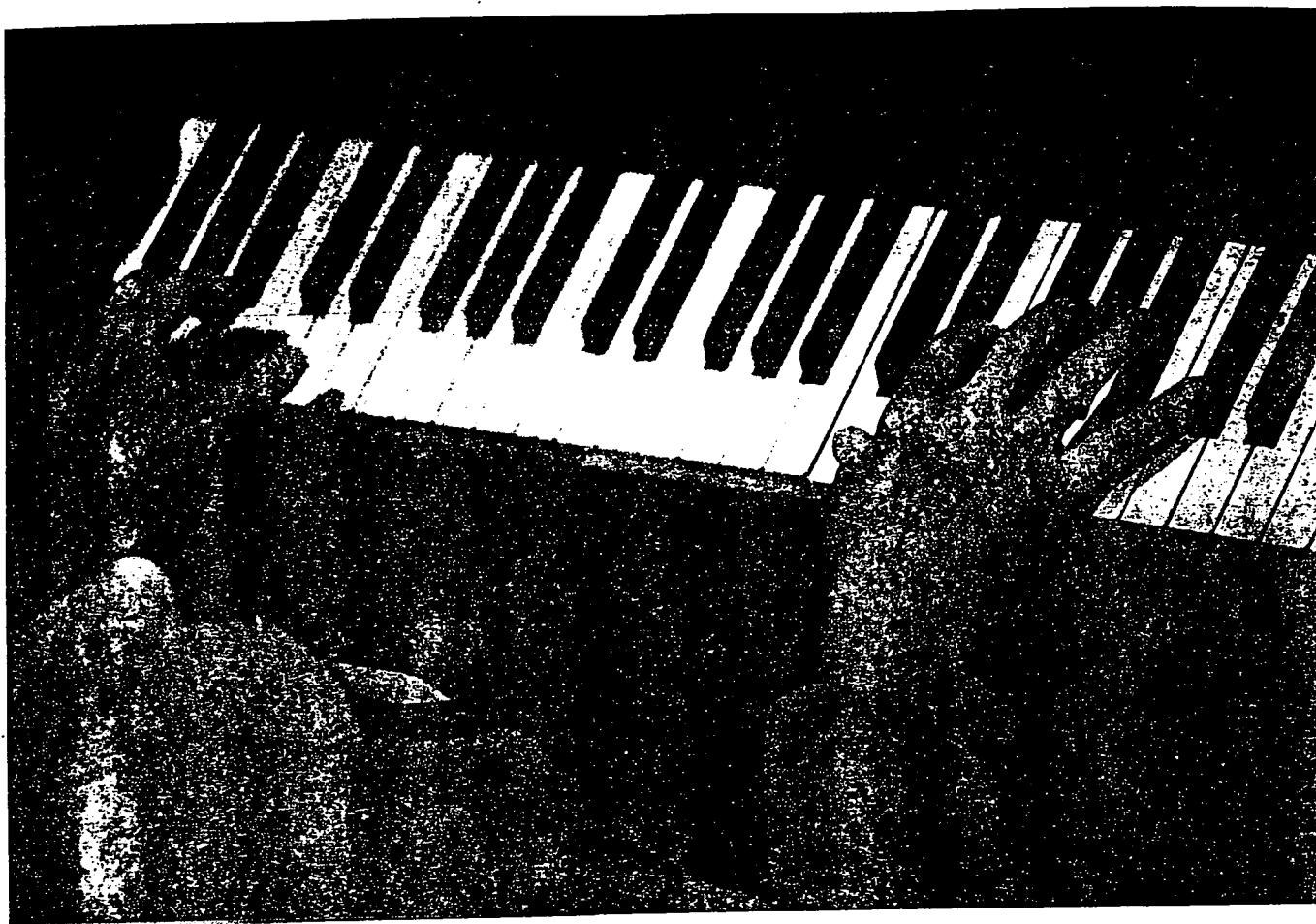


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Foreword by Woody Herman

I'm really delighted that two more of Jimmy Rowles' talents are going on display -- his sketches and his stories. Anyone who's hung out with James has heard some of the stories, but his artwork has been played a little too close to his vest.



Dallas, Tex. September 27, 1982

Jimmy's artwork at the piano has been there for folks to admire for a good long time, and thank the Lord, he's still going strong.

He was strong with our band, the one they named The First Herd, a few years back and he was an important voice in that bunch of swingers.

Jimmy joined us fresh from Benny Goodman, and I believe he liked the change. We were, I'll admit, a bit looser than what he had grown accustomed to. As he explains later on, "It was not like going to a private boy's school with a principal with a whip in his hand."

(Sometimes it's good to know what the guys are thinking.)

Jimmy was quite a dresser on our band -- a fancy man on the stand. I remember one pair of shoes he had that came to points, definitely what in those days we called "high-yellow type." They looked like runners.

He did some sketches of the shoes my father used to make for me and had some funny little asides about each pair.

He's also one of the most knowledgeable tunesmiths around -- he knows really great, obscure tunes. One he hipped us on was a Henry Mancini-Johnny Mercer collaboration, "Phone Call to the Past," a lovely thing that we're hoping to do sometime. And then there are those marvelous numbers of Jimmy's "The Ballad of Thelonious Monk" and the one about the sensuous lion, to name

two. They show off his keen humor and wit.

You'll enjoy this one as a bit of our own special kind of Americana and because it's the product of one of the beautiful guys in our business and a long-time good friend.

Woody Herman

Chapter 1: Phone Call to the Past

The reason why I took up the piano in the first place was because I like to play the piano. Music. And I didn't want to go through all the scales, the thirds, Bach and Beethoven and all of that. I just wanted to sit down and play. Like a real crazy song. Learn it, study it and play it. Be able to play it. And play it right.

Before that, my ambition was to be a great tennis player. When I was 10 years old growing up in Spokane, Washington, my step-father bought a house across the street from a park with a tennis court. There was a guy over there who was a pretty good tennis player. He showed me how to serve, and the first thing you know I had a hell of a serve. Tennis came naturally to me. We even used to shovel snow off the court during the winter and play tennis with our mittens on. But that ambition was not to pan out.

My mother encouraged me in music when I was young. She used to play the piano herself. In fact, I'd have my tennis racket in my hand and she would be playing the piano. I would sit and listen to her and then I would go out and play tennis. She taught me a lot of tunes, like "Was It a Dream?" She played all kinds of old tunes that people don't know today. She knew them.

She also played the classical guitar and she was a bitch at that, too! My mother could really play. She used to play a thing called "Sunday in Mexico" that had movements in it. I

asked Laurendo Almeida to play "Sunday in Mexico" one time and he never heard of it.

Music, my mother loved music. She was very flexible. Like if I put on Maurice Ravel, she loved that. If I put on Lee Morgan, she loved that. She liked to listen to Wayne Shorter.

My mother loved John Coltrane. One time, she waited 45 minutes to hear Coltrane, sometime in the '60s. It was at Shelly Manne's club in Los Angeles and she was in her 80s. I had to take her across the street and buy her a drink so she could stand up. We got her in the club. When Coltrane came out of the men's room during one intermission, I grabbed him and brought him over to the table. He sat down and lit up a cigar. He and my mother spent the whole intermission together. That was rare for Coltrane. They were just sort of talking soft. He had a relative in Spokane that he had never seen. Then he went up and played all alone.

I also had one teacher that was really good. He wasn't a jazz musician. He was actually a 'stride' player, but he was good on the basics. His name is Norm Thuie. He taught me how to throw the left hand where you really stretch out and use the left hand. He made me go through the whole cycle of chords. It took me about a year of practicing that stuff every day so that I could play my chords.

After that, Norm gave me a piece of sheet music. He said, "Okay now, do what I told you. You know the inversion. You see a B natural and a B diminished, you know exactly what to do. So

go ahead. Let's see you do it." And I started that way. Slow. I kept going.

If it had not been for Norm Thuie, I would never have learned anything about how to use my left hand or anything like that, unless I might have picked it off of records later. It was easier for me because he taught me. Norm is still up there in Washington State. Fishing. He's retired. I sent him an album recently. I did a solo album over in Paris. He called me up. He was real thrilled. "You devil you."

I knew that I wanted to be a professional musician for sure then I heard Teddy Wilson back in about 1936 when I was a student at Gonzaga University. That damn Indian made me listen to Teddy Wilson. Don Brown, a full-blooded Blackfoot Indian. He was one hell of a musician, I tell you. I don't know where he learned it. He certainly didn't learn it on the reservation. Donald James Brown. They sent him on scholarship to Gonzaga and he used to write for the pep band. He played tenor saxophone and he was one of the most fantastic musicians I have ever known. Ben Webster used to love him. He came to California and met Ben, and Ben heard him play.

Don and I were real tight. Maybe that's what's wrong with me. He made us blood brothers one time. He cut me on the arm, and we sat there for a half-hour, cut to cut.

"Now we are brothers," he said. "Yeh, swell! Where's the bandage?"

At that time, I was working for my step-father at the rug

department at a Spokane department store and Don walked in and asked him if he could borrow me for a minute. He took me down to the record department and made me listen to the Benny Goodman Trio. I hadn't even heard Benny Goodman's band at that time. When I heard Teddy Wilson...the first four bars...it changed my whole life.

if it hadn't been for you



Teddy Wilson

I started buying Teddy's records and playing them with my little wind-up phonograph. And slowing them down and learning how to play his solos.

When I first met Teddy Wilson, I almost kissed him. I was going to kiss him. But then I started thinking, "People will talk." No, I had a pretty good time with him. We're pretty good friends now. I got his picture on the wall and he's got mine. I sent him one. I don't get to see Teddy very much but when I do, it's always nice. If it hadn't been for Teddy Wilson, I'd have never played the piano. I would have kept on with that tennis racket and probably been a real bum too. I am a bum. Hallelujah!

Before that, Guy Lombardo was my band. I quit buying Lombardo records. I still respected him because I learned so many songs that a lot of people never heard of. I used to listen to him long-distance. In fact, I called his pianist that I used to adore. His name is Freddy Kreitzer. I called him from New York one time down in Florida. He's retired. He didn't believe it. I talked to him for a few minutes. I even liked the way Carmen sang. A lot of people said he sounded like a faggot; I didn't. I liked him.

I met my wife, Dorothy, about this time. I met her when she moved up in the neighborhood in Spokane when I was about 17 years old. I owe her a lot of credit. She told me then, "You can't improve here in Spokane. You're never going to be able to do anything up here. This is a desert." If it hadn't been for her, I would never have had the nerve to face my old man and tell him I was going to leave Spokane and come to California.

Dorothy knows about tunes that nobody's ever heard of. Tommy Flanagan's old lady is like that too. A lot of times when I couldn't remember the middle part or something, she would help me. When I would be playing, I would say, "Now which chord do you like the best--this way, or do you like it that way?" Whichever way she liked is the one I used. She had a good ear. Dorothy used to be a great dancer, too.

We were married in 1941 after I had gone to Los Angeles. We've been married 41 years. In the music business, that's a long time, especially when you're married to a freak. Most of the marriages dissolve very quickly. Ours has worked because of her, I guess. I'm not what you would call a prize.

Marshall Royal, who was with the Les Hite Band at the time, was the first musician who ever told me to leave Spokane. I got the guts to go backstage and play for him. I was practicing my Teddy Wilson stuff and he told me to get out of there.

I told my father I was going to enroll at the University of Washington in Seattle. I enrolled, but I didn't ever go to class. I went right on down to Jackson Street, which was the "Harlem of Seattle". Black musicians, that's all there were. Jackson Street was a great big long street. They had a lot of after-hours places. Lots of good musicians, like Quincy Jones, came out of there. That was the first time I ever played behind a singer. There was one piano player that was a pimp. He had about six chicks working for him. The minute he would see me come in, he'd make me play the piano for him so he could check on his gals.

I was working with black people all the way. I think that was unusual. "Corky" Corcoran was from Takoma. I met him on Jackson Street. I met him a lot up there before he went with Harry James. He was younger. Corky was only about 14 years old at the time and he could play like a demon. "Tonight I'll play like Charlie Barnet. Tonight I'll play like Lester Young. Tonight I'll play like so-and-so." And then Harry James became his guardian. His folks let Harry James take him out on the road; that's why Corky was with him for so long. I liked Corky. Nice cat. And he adored Ben Webster. That was his man.

I met Ben Webster when the Ellington Band was in Takoma about 1938. I heard the band "live" right after Ben had joined and after Jimmy Blanton had joined. I had been listening to Ben on the Teddy Wilson records and other records he made with Bob Howard. The first time I heard Duke Ellington was when some friend of mine in Seattle, a guitar player, played a record for me. I didn't care for it much because Ben Webster wasn't in the band. I wasn't ready for it yet.

When I first saw Duke Ellington, his orchestra was hitting the peak. It was before he recorded "Cottontail". He was playing it, though.

That night, I went up and introduced myself to Ben. The first thing he said to me was, "How do you do? Which way to the shithouse?" So I pointed out the men's room to him. He came back and we started talking. Ben and I played together that night in Takoma. Then I met him in Seattle, where they went from

Takoma for two weeks. That was the first time the band had played out west.

I skipped two weeks of school to hang out and play with him. I played with Jimmy Blanton. We played every night. I did know that Jimmy Blanton was a revolutionary because I never heard anybody play a stand-up bass the way he did. Nobody in Spokane, Washington played a bass like that. I'd never heard anything like that in my life! Even the guys in the band



Ben Webster

couldn't believe him because he played so differently. Instead of playing four notes at the same time, he was all over it. He used to lift the music over with his feet. Duke put him right out in front of the band, featured him, loved him.

After hours, Blanton would go around with his shirt collar open, all covered with sweat and he developed tuberculosis when they were performing "Jump for Joy" in California. Los Angeles. He was doing an awful lot of coughing and losing weight. They sent him to a doctor. The doctor sent him to Monrovia, a rest-nursing home. All alone. They were rest home cottages. He had nothing. All he had was a picture of Ben Webster on his dresser. And he went. It's a weird thing, but I think Jimmy Blanton died of loneliness. He was a sweetheart. I saw him about a week before he died. I took Ben out to the Monrovia place. He was almost gone then. They were trying to feed him. He was only 21.

Ben was in Chicago when Jimmy Blanton died. Ben almost tore Chicago up. 'Cause Ben loved that "Bear". You could hear them practicing. Ben would be up there on one floor and Blanton would be down there on another level.

You'd hear Ben say, "Can you hear me up there, Bear?" "Yeh, I can hear you down there, Frog."

As for Duke Ellington, I was always too much in awe of him to become intimate. In fact, I was afraid of Duke. I wasn't afraid of his music; I was afraid of him. I don't know why. The first time I saw him, I just looked at him and thought I was

looking at God. I never did get a chance to hang out with Duke. I never got a chance to hang out with Jimmie Lunceford. He was supposed to be a very nice gentleman. I was just a little punk; I didn't want to bother him. And he always had something to do. Always. He was a paradox.

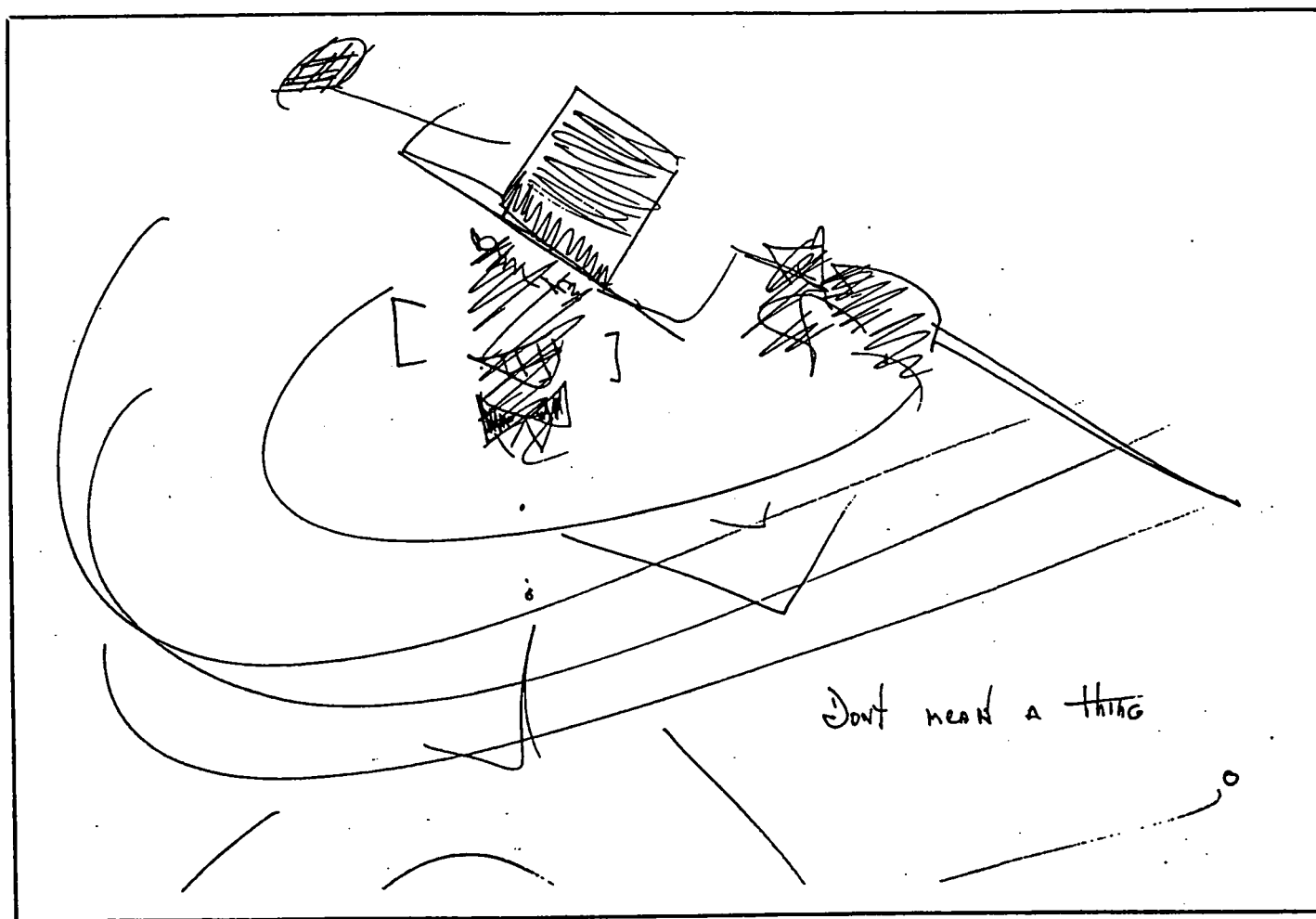
Duke was a very hard man to get close to. I never gave Duke any adulation or any complimentary 'pom-pom-pom, poom-poom-poom'. But Duke knew I loved him though. I used to say 'hello' to Duke. He'd shake hands with me and call me by name.

Right after I met Ben Webster and Jimmy Blanton and Duke for the first time, they came out to California and recorded "Cottontail" and they did "Flamingo", which I think was the first arrangement Duke assigned Billy Strayhorn. Now there's something I'd like to say. Anybody that wants to argue with me can argue. Because Billy Strayhorn told it to me in the street in Seattle when I first met him. Billy was jerking sodas in a drugstore. I believe it was in Pittsburgh and he loved Duke Ellington. He had written this tune called "Something to Live For". He wrote the arrangement and took it to Duke and the band played it. Duke loved it and said, "I'm going to send for you."

He kept waiting for Duke to call him and he finally got mad. He took a train to New York because Duke was playing at a theater there. He walked in backstage with a suitcase. Duke looked at him and said, "I was just going to call you." Which you know damn well is some of that 'Fancy Dan' Duke Ellington bullshit. He had it, boy. He really had it!

It wasn't until years later that Billy wrote "Lush Life". I hate to hear people say that it was "Lush Life" that got Billy Strayhorn his job with Duke Ellington because it wasn't. It was "Something to Live For". He and Strayhorn were so close that he could write four bars and send it to Strayhorn and Strayhorn would keep it up and it would sound like the same thing. Their minds were one. And that's no shit!

Billy Strayhorn's music. He never wrote a tune that I



didn't like. Whenever I play "Lotus Blossom", I'm all through for the night. It's plaintive and very pretty. I won't play any more after that. That's "Goodnight, nurse."

Duke Ellington's band was like a family. When they were going on the air, and say the first trumpet player was mad, he wouldn't make the broadcast. He'd stay at the bar. It would still sound like Duke Ellington without the first trumpet. Exactly. Duke wouldn't say a word. They'd get ready to go on the air, and all that would be there would be Harry Carney, maybe the guitar player and Duke. They'd start the broadcast. Duke would start playing, Carney would start playing and then, one by one, the band would start filing in. There was absolutely no discipline at all.

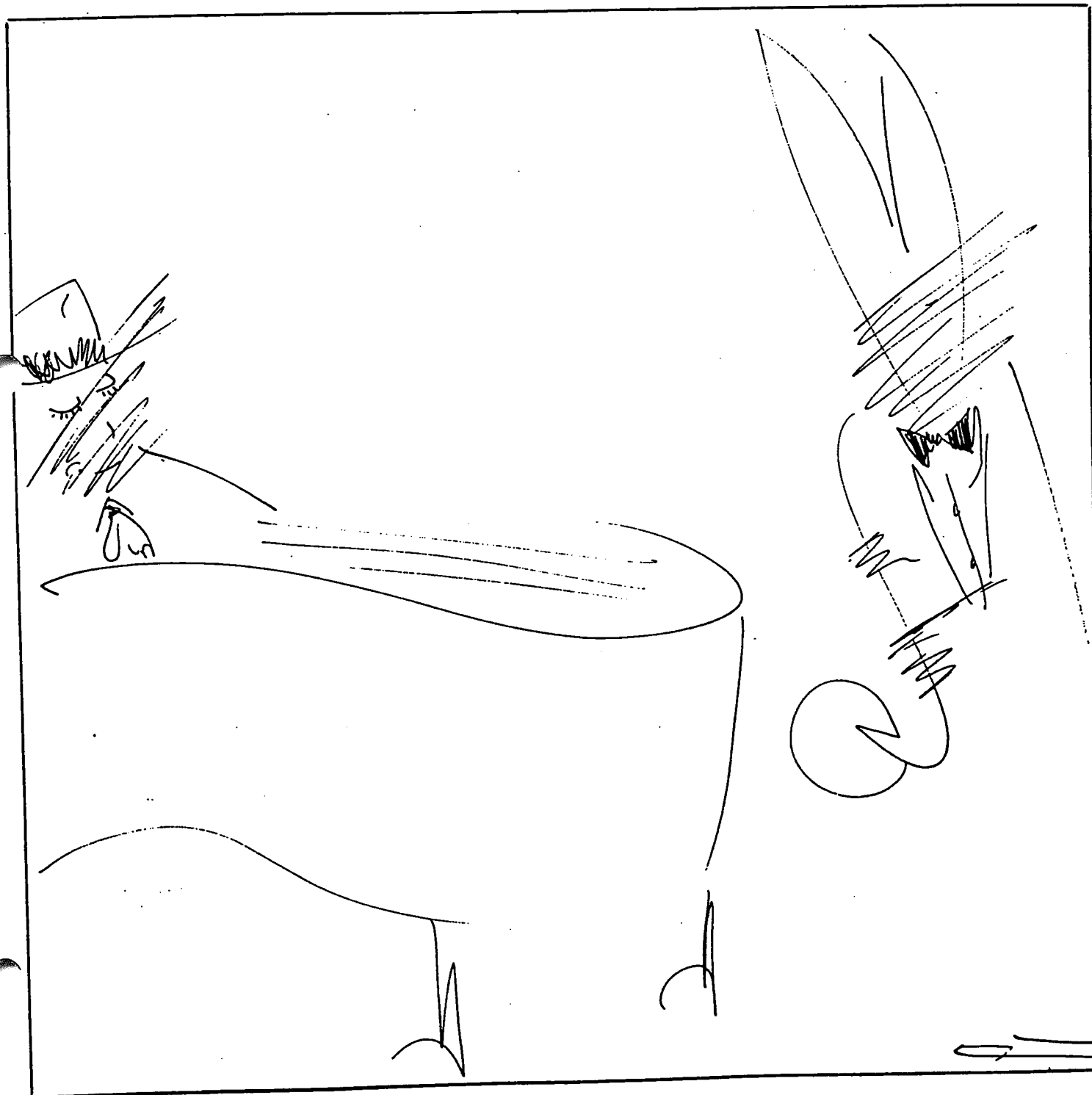
Billy Smith told me a funny thing about Duke. This I love. They were playing Birdland. Johnny Hodges had left to do something on his own, so Duke had hired Billy Smith to play lead alto. I always called Willie Smith "Billy" because all the guys in the Lunceford band called him that.

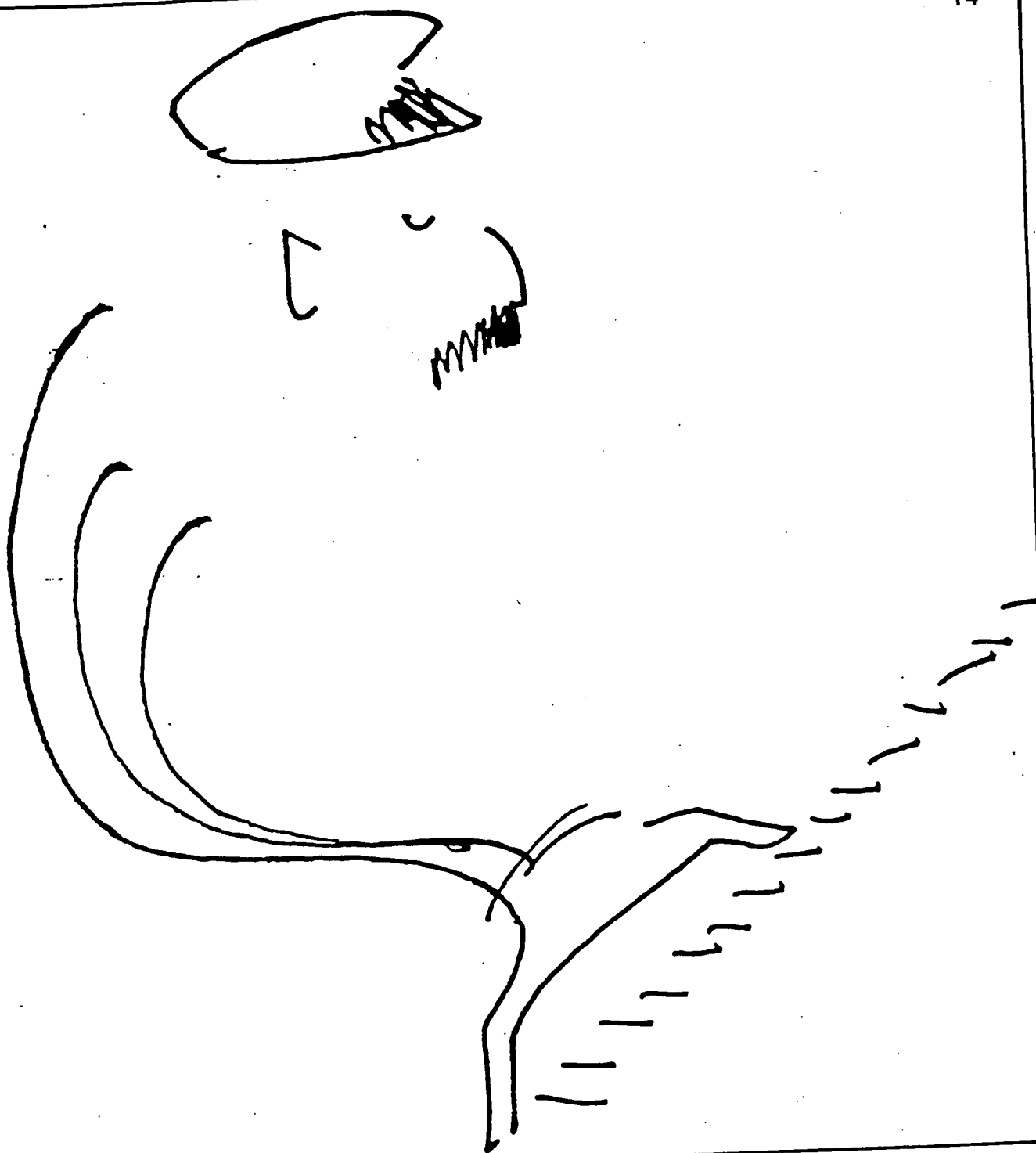
One time the third alto disappeared and was gone for about a week. Finally he showed up one night in uniform. Duke didn't say anything; he didn't say a word. Duke was up in front to conduct and he didn't even look at him. About halfway through the evening, he turned around and was getting ready to give a downbeat. He looked at this cat and said, "Who are you?"

Duke was always busy stealing things from what guys were playing so he could jot them down and write a tune, see. He used to do that. He could hear a guy play something and take a pencil and scribble a little thing. The next night there would be an arrangement of that thing the guy played. That's why Johnny

Hodges used to do that thing, rubbing his fingers, to signal 'money'.

Like this one time when he let a girl singer sit in and she sang "Once in a While". Duke was doing a favor for somebody; he had something in mind. This girl was singing "Once in a While".





Nothing's going on except the piano, bass and drums. So Hodges starts playing a background on the second phrase, and pretty soon the whole saxophone section was playing it. Duke was over there writing it down, see. All he had to do was write a middle part

and he had another song. To hell with the girl singer, whoever she was. He had "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart". He wrote a tremendous middle part. Beautiful. That was Duke. Slick, slick! When he heard something, Duke might even leave the bandstand and go back to the dressing room and sit down and write a whole goddam arrangement of the thing. Right there. Of course.

I learned a lot about accompanying singers from listening to Duke and Count Basie. They were the first pianists I ever saw who weren't always at the piano pounding away with the rhythm and beating their feet and all that bullshit. I used to stand by Duke and watch him. I watched his concentration, and when he wouldn't play. They would let the band play and they didn't need the piano. Piano can get in the way, very definitely.

I learned it but it took me a long time. When I did studio work, they always wanted the piano playing. Fill, fill, fill, fill, fill. Play behind this, play behind that. The first sixteen bars were nothing but rhythm section you're supposed to fill. I used to say to myself, "Why do I have to keep playing all the time? Why can't we just let it go like the big boys do?" I just kept easing off until I just HATED to play unless I was playing something real simple. All covering up with the piano does to me is destroy the vocalist. There's so much goddam shit going on. It's enough when the band comes in. Let the band come in!

You listen to Duke Ellington's and Count Basie's records. You are not going to hear all that 'tinkle, tinkle little star'.

You're not going to hear shit! Maybe you'll hear a clink or a note somewhere down on the bottom. You're not going to hear an overbearing piano accompaniment. Even if it's just a piano and a voice, it's the same damn thing.

I always loved the way Duke Ellington played and I resented the write-ups that he would get about being a "sloppy" pianist. I resented it very much because I thought that the way he played the piano was absolutely perfect for what was going on. Duke Ellington was an excellent stride pianist.

Duke



Chapter 2: The Startled Doe

I went to Los Angeles in the fall of 1940. I had about \$10 by the time I got there. I got a ride to L.A. with some people from Washington State who were headed there. I had about \$25 when I left Spokane.

I thought Los Angeles was beautiful, except that I didn't have any money and I wasn't working. I used to walk everywhere. I don't know how I did it, but I found a boarding house near Vermont and Santa Monica. Musicians lived there. They charged me about \$8 per week for room and board. That's where I met some of my best friends. They had a piano there that I used to practice on.

Every night I used to walk down to Vine Street and try to sit in. I'd walk all the way over to Hollywood and then I'd walk home. The conductor on the streetcar, he got to know me, boy. He used to wake me up. "Wake up. Wake up. Get up! See you tomorrow." Same thing in Seattle. Yeh, I would go up to Watts and sit in with the black fellas. That's where I met Leo Watson, Slim Gaillard and Slam Stewart and all those guys.

The first job I had was with a big band led by Bob Dade. He changed his name and moved back East and became an agent or something like that. I played a few jobs where I got \$5, all non-union. I was ready for anything. I had to do something.

I was playing solo piano at Tiny Ellington's Latin Quarter on the corner of Seventh and Vine when I met Art Tatum in 1940. I

guess I was a little sensitive because there was no business, but Tiny liked the way I played. I played alone on a pedestal at a grand piano. One night when I was up there playing, I heard the door open and then close. I couldn't see anything. I got a funny feeling, a real funny feeling, like all of a sudden a ghost had come into the house or something. I quit playing and got off the bandstand real quick. I went over to the bar and sat down.

Tiny called me over and introduced me to Art Tatum, who was working down the street at a place called the 331 Club. I knew about Art. I had his records. I'd never seen him as he had never been to Los Angeles since I had been there. I don't remember what our conversation was about. He had to get back to work.

I took my wife down and we listened to him play, and watched him. Well, I couldn't believe that. It didn't even look like he was playing half the time. And he knew every song in the world. Everything from "Little Boy, You've Had a Busy Day" to "Mighty Lak a Rose"! He could play anything. He was liable to play anything! Somebody would say "Melancholy Baby"? Sure, he'd play it. Play the shit out of it. Charlie Parker liked "Melancholy Baby". "Melancholy Baby" was my mother's favorite song. I still like it, verse and all.

Later, the guy that owned the 331 Club wanted me to play intermission piano for Art Tatum! And I wouldn't play. I'd go sit and wait for the bus. Art would force me to come in and play. And I'd play for maybe five minutes, then I'd leave. I got to know Art after I went to work in the 331 with Slim

it. And he had about 15 double shots sitting in front of him across this upright piano and a quart of beer on top. He kept playing and would reach up with one hand and grab this drink and knock it off; pick up with the other hand and play something else and reach up and grab the beer. He never dropped a stitch. That happened to be the night he first played with Slam Stewart when Art decided to form his trio.

Later, when I was working at Billy Berg's with Red Norvo and Bobby Tucker was playing piano for Billie Holiday, we'd have an hour off. So Tucker and I would go down and hear Art, who was playing down the street on Sixth Street. Either Tucker had a car or I did, because we were hanging out with Art every night during this period. Every night we'd meet him.

This one night, we went in there and Tucker was feeling pretty good. He'd had a couple of drinks. I remember him going in this night with a raincoat and hat on. So Art comes over -- we called him over. He never knew you were there unless you called for him. He couldn't see past his nose. We got him over to the bar and bought him a couple of drinks. Then Tucker started kidding with him, "What's the name of that town you're from? Cleveland?"

And Art would say in that gruff voice, "No, Toledo."

We'd talk on a little bit, bullshit. And finally Tucker would do it again. "Say, Art, what's the name of that town you're from? Cleveland?"

"No, Toledo!" After about three of them, Tatum put his drink down on the bar, leaned over to Tucker, pulled his shoulder over

and said, "I heard it thunder a long time before you did."

And with that, Art walked over to the piano, sat down and started playing "Aunt Hagar's Blues" in some godawful key like F-sharp minor. Tucker got so mad that he took off his raincoat and stepped on it, stamped on it. He took his hat off and stamped on that. I just sat there and laughed. Art was over



PLAY THAT AGAIN, ART, PLEASE?

there just rippin' the living Jesus out of this tune. I had to get Tucker out of there because everybody was ready to throw us out of the joint. Nobody knew where it all came from, you know? Tucker will remember that.

Art Tatum had sort of a cult: they came to listen to a genius. A lot of people who had never heard him were astounded when they did hear him. There was not a sound when he played. If anybody made any noise like the tinkle of a glass, you'd hear somebody say, "Shhhh!" He drew picture people, producers, actors.

You could search the world and you wouldn't be able to find anybody that could play the piano like that. Nobody. Things came so easy for Art Tatum that I actually think he wondered why people struggled so much. It's like Charlie Parker because Charlie's music was so complicated when it came out, he literally scared people to death. To Art, it was just him. When a person is like that, they can't understand why things that other people want to learn are so difficult to grasp.

There was a girl I knew about this time named Clair Fisher, who later married Rex Stewart. Clair used to pick me up in her car. She had money. I didn't have any money at all. She took me to see Slim Gaillard and Slam Stewart at the Swanee Inn. They got me up there and I played with them. Eventually, they offered me a job because the owner of the night club, Herb Rose, liked the way I played. He had been wanting to make a trio out of Slim and Slam. Then Billy Berg hired Slim and Slam along with Lee and Lester Young at the Capri club on Pico and La Cienega. I never

saw Berg before or heard of the Capri. I guess he was just opening it.

Lester Young and I played for the first time together at the Capri. We had a band with Slim and Slam and Lee and Lester Young. On the same bill were Leo Watson, Teddy Bunn and the Spirits of Rhythm, Joe Turner singing the blues, and Marie Bryant. It was a pretty wild little place. Business was very good and the music was all jazz. It was just marvelous. Teddy Bunn, oh boy, how he could play the guitar. Marie Bryant danced. She was tough. I worked at the Capri for about a year. Suddenly Billy lost his entertainment license.

One day when we came to work, there was a jukebox in the middle of the floor. I would rather not say what happened because it's a secret. I thought it was all over, but about a week later I got a call from Billy Berg. He actually gave me a raise. He had bought the Trouville Club.

This was about the time the war started, right after the war started. I was only about 22 and the only white guy in the whole outfit. It was the craziest job I ever played. I saw all kinds of things. That's where I met Billie Holiday.

The Capri had been a pretty big place with small tables and a long bar. It wasn't anything special. But the Trouville was elaborately decorated. You walked in these two great big doors and through the long, hanging drapes. The showroom was decked out with zebra all over the walls and drapes. It was ridiculous. It was one of those kinds of places. Indescribable. It was a jitterbug joint. All these Hollywood people were in.

George Raft dancing around with Betty Grable, this and that. John Carradine used to come in. Carradine was doing a show around the corner, and he used to come into the Trouville with



George Raft

his cape on and have a couple of nightcaps. I met a lot of actors.

At the Trouville, I played with Lee and Lester Young, which was a five- or six-piece band. We had "Bumps" Myers, a tenor player, who tried to keep up with Lester. Forget it. No way. We had Red Callendar on bass and Paul Campbell from St. Louis, a little trumpet player who used to play with Basie. And Louis Gonzalez, a full-blooded Mexican, but he didn't show up for about another year. And me, the little English-Irish, uh, Blackfoot. Billy switched things around. He had Slim and Slam playing alone together.

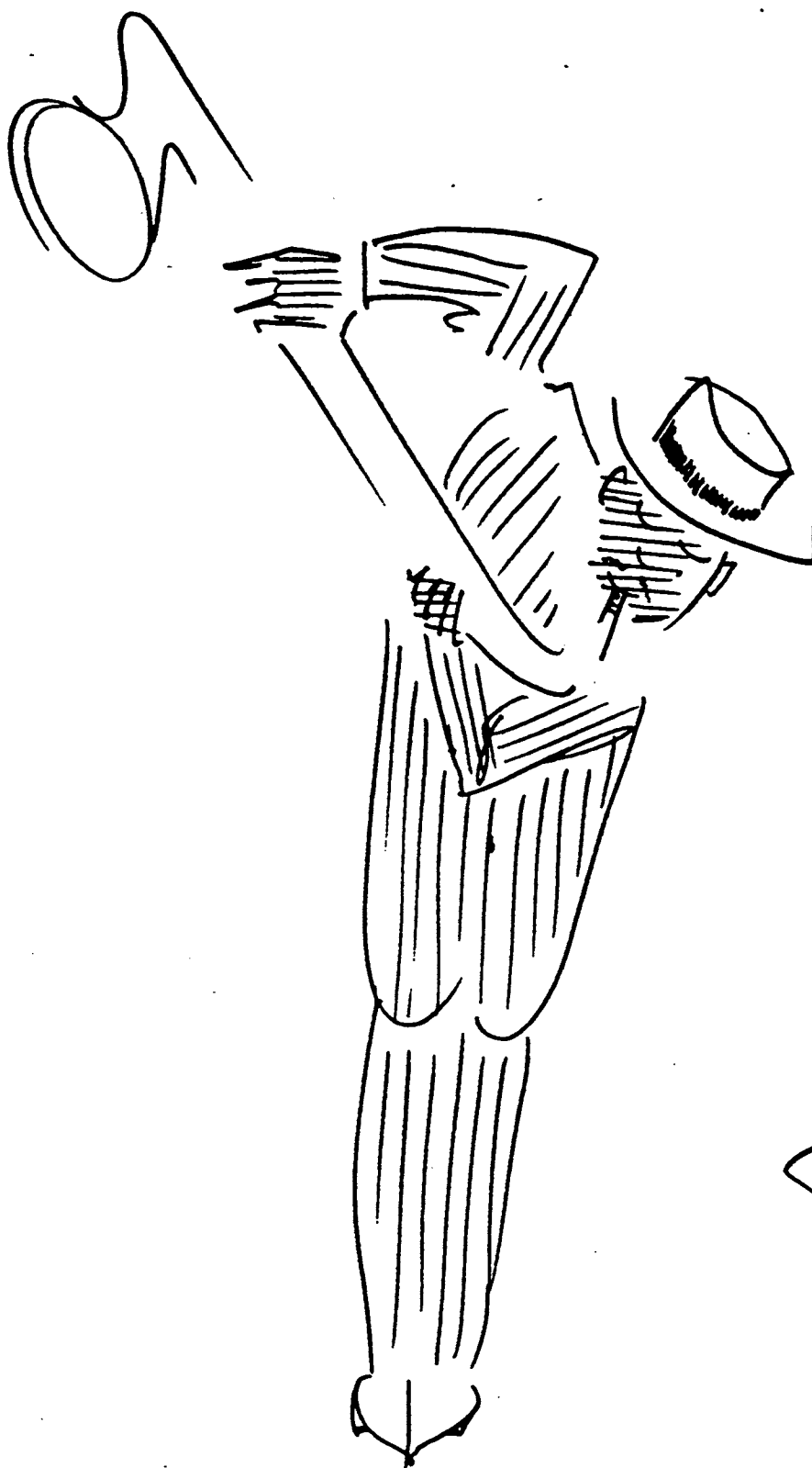
The "Smith-Jones" records were the first I had ever heard of Lester Young. They literally scared me to death. I couldn't believe it because I'd never heard anybody play like that. I was still in Seattle, around '36. I also remember a record by Count Basie called "Time Out". It is one of the best solos he ever put down. And "Dark Rapture". Helen Humes sang it and Lester was on it.

Billy Berg, what a beautiful cat he was! In his office, he kept a box of whiskey. All kinds. Mainly Old Shenley, bottled in bond. 100 proof. For Prez. Because Prez had mainly half-pints with him. The half-pints used to last him as long as it takes to blink your eye. He used to have three tumbler-sized glasses of bourbon during intermission. And there were a lot of intermissions because there were so many acts.

We had all this entertainment! I mean, my God, how much

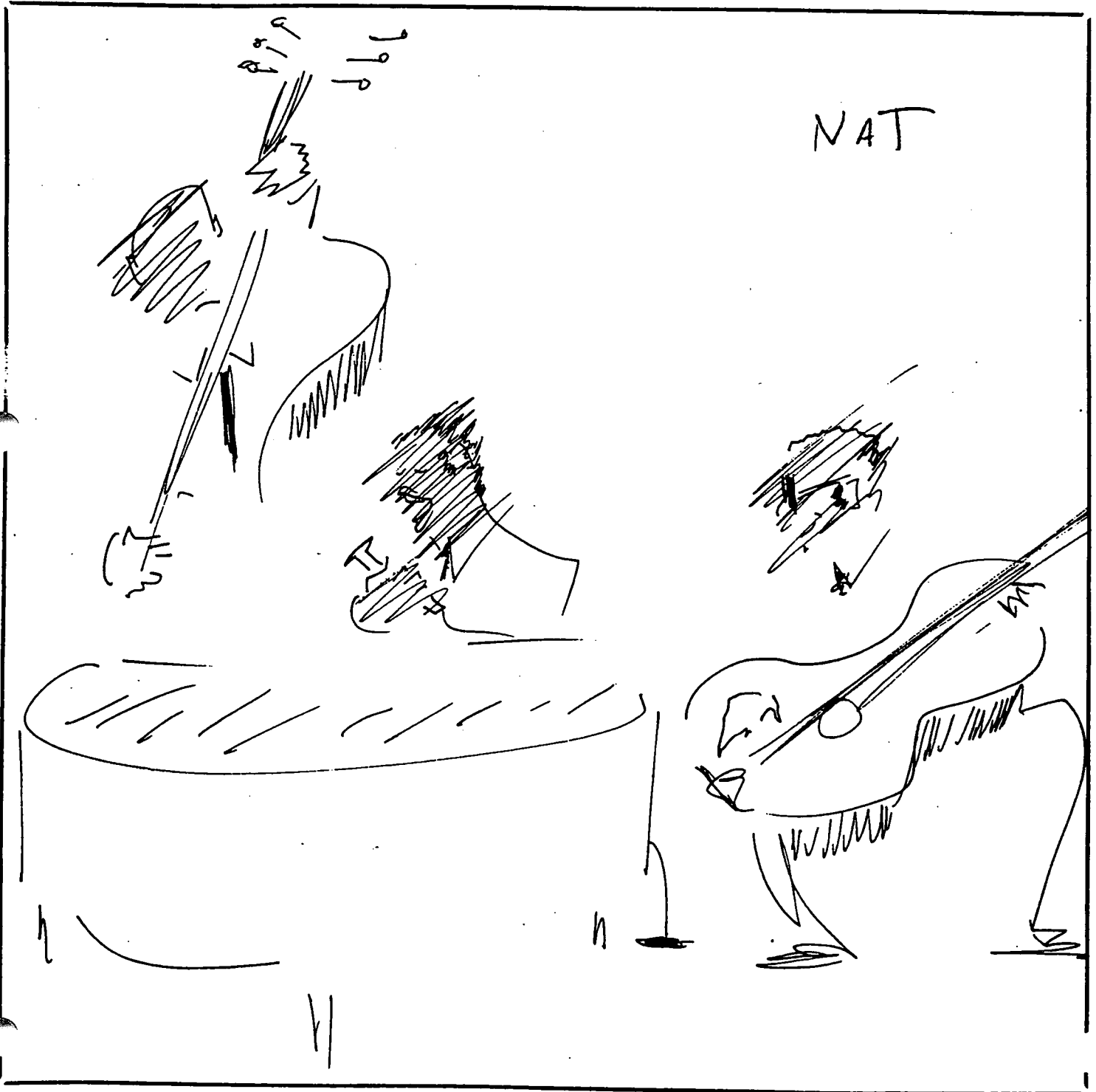
entertainment can you have in one night! We had Joe Turner singing the blues. Marie Bryant danced. That was the beginning. Then Barney Bigard, who had quit Ellington for a while, showed up. About this time "Jump for Joy" (Ellington) came to California and had Ben Webster and Jimmy Blanton in the band. Every now and then Wynone Harris would show. Nat Cole and his trio played a lot. Jesus! When you watched Marie Bryant dance across that dance floor by herself, shaking that rear end of hers, and those legs and all that! I mean, Holy Jesus, it was frightening! And she loved Ray Nance. That was her boy. And when Duke Ellington came to town...BOOM! Anyway, that's the way things happen. Men and women.

They would have these Sunday afternoon jam sessions. Whenever there would be bands in town, Lunceford, Basie or Ellington, it was a roaring joint. It was ferocious. The place was full. Here we are at the Trouville with Lester Young. And a lot of guys didn't care too much for Lester Young because he didn't play from the Hawkins school. They'd come to the club with blood in their eyes to wipe Lester Young out. Anytime anybody used to come out and try to wipe him out with their saxophone, he'd end up wiping them out. He was always ten miles ahead of Don Byas and all those guys. He used to blow out Joe Thomas, Illinois Jacquet and Ben Webster. He blew Willie Smith out. He blew them all out, anybody that showed up. Lester would sit over in the corner and drink his straight whiskey and wait his turn. I saw it happen more than once.



Prez.

I remember one time sitting at a table with Lady Day and my wife, Dorothy. They were playing "Bugle Call Rag" and Nat Cole was at the piano. There was a big break before you play your solo, and everybody always played some crazy, freaky thing as a



break. Lester was sitting up there on the riser listening, saying to himself, "That's nice, that's nice." When it was his turn, Prez got up there and all of a sudden started playing "Bye-Bye Blackbird" as a break with that fake fingering of his. He tore it up and then he got into "Bugle Call Rag". He wouldn't quit, and he just closed that joint down. There was nothing left when he got through.

I remember how Prez liked to play certain tunes. He loved to play "Tis Autumn". He loved "Mandy is Two". He used to like ballads. Like Ben. Ben loved ballads. Don Byas liked ballads, and the same way with Hawkins. Lester Young was a natural sideman. In Lester's band, we had set routines in our library. Lee would call the tunes and set all the tempos. Whatever Lee said, he'd do. We all did. Lester wasn't a leader. Then Lee would rush the daylights out of them. He was not a good drummer. I hate to say it. Everyone I know would agree with me. He just couldn't hold a tempo. It would just get away from him. Whooooop! You think you're on a roller coaster.

I never heard Prez say one bad word about anybody, their playing or their personality. Do you know what he used to say when he'd get mad? When he really got upset, he'd use three letters, L.M.O. Lick me off.

There should be a Lester Young Dictionary because his talk was all mixed up. It was very hard to understand unless you knew what he was talking about. You had better not be around the corner, you had to be there or you couldn't understand a word.

It was all English! Everything was all mixed up with Slim Baillard too. Aw, the way Slim talked. "Mmmm...fall out here...get your boots laced up...because everything's groovy." Slim's language was so completely off the wall. He used to mix everything up with "lagingee, wagingee, bom-bom-bom." He'd call you "Lagingee". He'd call me "Ragingee" - Rowles. Everything was mixed up already by the time Lester got hold of it and mixed it up with his code.

Lester was a magnificent person. Absolutely unique! Jesus Christ, some of the things he used to say used to absolutely astound me! "Could we go back to the George Washington?" Do you know what that means? The bridge of a song.

"It's 2 o'clock." That's what Lester used to say. We're on the stand and Lester would turn around to me at the end of the piano. Right there. (Pointing). "Startled Doe, 2 o'clock." So I look over at 2 o'clock and there's this chick with great big eyes. She used to come in all the time and dance because she liked the band. She was a jitterbug. We were friends with them, but as far as mingling with them and dating their chicks, no. That was one of his best ones.

All women were "hats" to Lester Young. H-A-T-s. I'd bring a girlfriend in the club as a guest. While you're working. Sitting at the table.

And here would come "Bubba" walking by. We never called him "Prez". He had nieces and nephews that lived there that called him "Uncle Bubba", so that's what we called him.

"Hey, Bubba, vien aqui."

"Yes. How are you, Mr. gray boy?"

"I'd like you to meet, uh...care for a taste? I'd like you to meet Florence."

You got yourself a sharp looking chick so he'd be very gentlemanly and sit down. He'd get the waitress to bring him a nice straight bourbon. Lester's looking at her with those hooded eyes of his. He'd kind of smile a little bit, look up and say, "I see you're wearing a new hat."

"Yes." (nods)

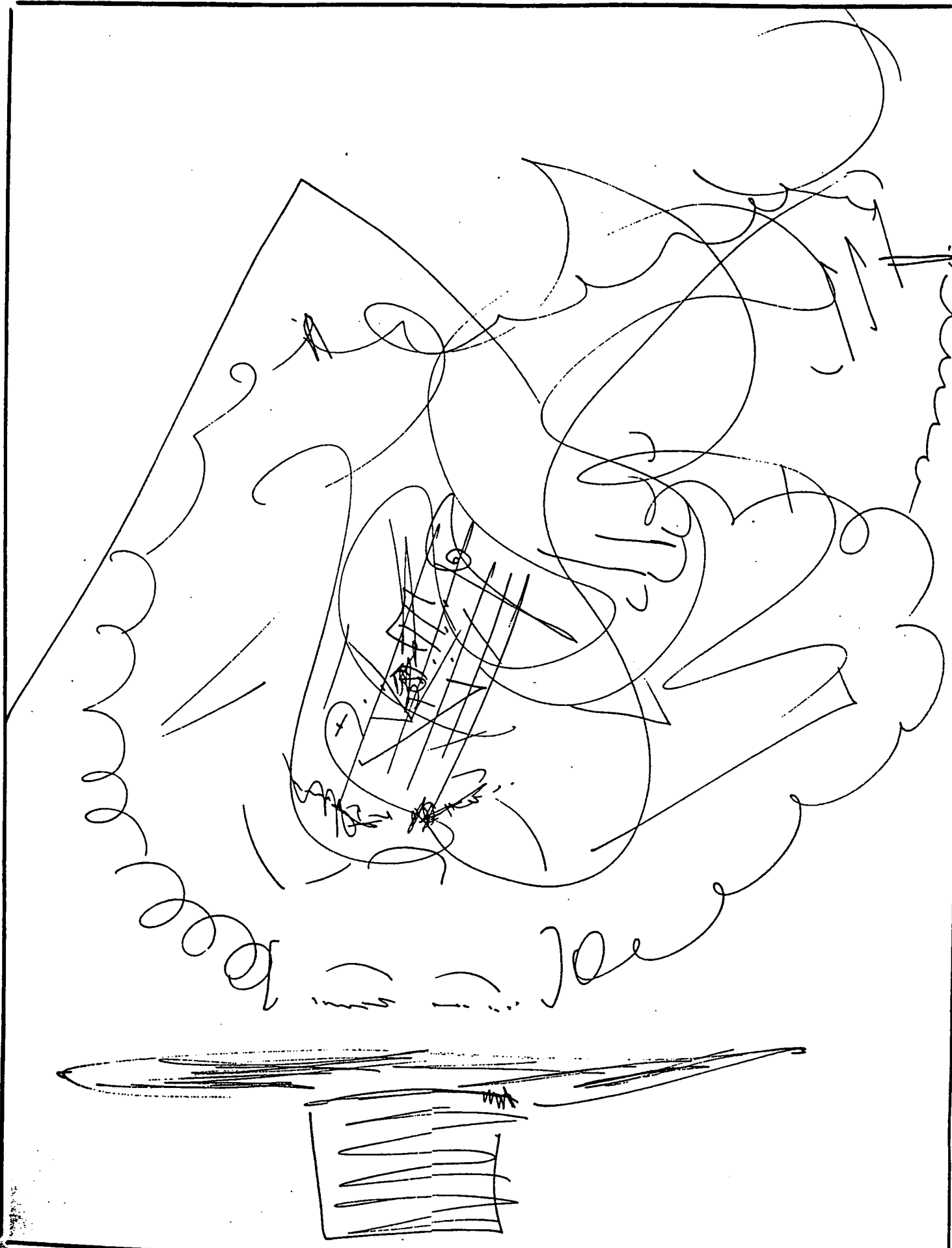
"Tried it on yet?"

(Nods)

"Homburg? Skull cap? Mexican Hat Dance? Big eyes."

Here we are talking about the size of the chick's pussy right in front of her. And she'd be sitting there with a big smile on her face. "Gee, this is Lester Young." And all he's doing is talking about between her legs. Ooooh...funny man. Then he'd say, "How's the 1-4-3?" That's a blow job. "All the way to Watts? Hmmm. Catalina?" Did you really like it? When he said "Catalina", that meant he really liked it. Then he'd get up, excuse himself and say, "Nice to meet you." And he'd saunter off.

Lester was the first one that told me the story about "Straighten Up and Fly Right." The story about the buzzard that flew the monkey up there. You see, the buzzard ate the monkey. The monkey has his head sticking out of the buzzard's rear end.





Way up in the sky. The buzzard is talking to the monkey, "You be a good boy and I'll put you down easy."

And the monkey said, "You wouldn't shit me know, would you?"

Lester told me that story when we were down being measured for uniforms. We were in there with a couple of the other guys, Red Callendar and "Bumps" Myers. He touched me and said, "Step in my office," which meant "Let's take a walk." He took me down the street to some bar and bought me a drink. Then he told me the story and just laughed like hell. I didn't know whether it was funny or not. It took me a couple of days to figure out how funny it was.

Billie Holiday loved to have Lester play behind her. When I first started listening to the Teddy Wilson records with Billie, the first tenor player was Chu Berry. Then when Chu was either out of town or not available, they'd use Ben Webster, who was on a lot of those first records. Then all of a sudden Basie came to New York and she heard Lester Young. Then when Billie made records with Teddy, it was Lester, Buck Clayton and Jo Jones.

About this time, we suddenly get the message from Billy Berg that Billie Holiday is coming out to work with us and sing with our band. Well, I couldn't believe that, Jesus Christ! Here I was making \$50. a week and all of a sudden Billie Holiday shows up. Whatever she was doing, she quit and out she came. Everybody figured out that Lester and Billie had a hot thing, which was not true at all.

She was a pistol, boy! God, I used to laugh at her all the time. Sometimes Billie would be running around backstage with no clothes or something crazy like that. I saw every inch of her. She hated to wear clothes. Nobody paid any attention. If anybody made a wrong move, she'd slug 'em, unless it was someone she really had eyes for. She would run around with nothing on but a pair of high-heel shoes and a drink in her hand. I used to look at her and just laugh. 'Cause she looked good. She was nut-brown and beautiful. I had never seen anything like that in my life.

Billie would look at me and say, "You little old thing. You're just a baby." Then she'd laugh. But she always called for me. "What's that little cat's name? I want that little cat." She couldn't remember my name half the time. She used to call me "Ro". R-O. That's all she could remember.

Norman was coming around then. Granz. He was there every night. The Trouville is where he got his ideas. That's before he became THE Norman Granz. If he was flush, he didn't show it. Tennis shoes and a pair of old dungarees or something like that.

It wasn't until I was in the Army that he started with the jam sessions around L.A. Pretty soon he had about four jam sessions on during the week and I was stationed at Santa Anita, so I was actually living in my home there in L.A. special Forces. Norman was paying me an extra 40 bucks a week playing those things for him. They shipped us out and the next thing I saw some record, "Jazz at the Philharmonic". He'd gotten a whole

bunch of them together. Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker and the rest of them. He started a record company and started recording everybody.

Norman is a pretty smart man. Just to think of that idea was pretty good. The idea of packaging that yourself, charging admission, filling up the Shrine Auditorium, collecting the gate, paying the musicians and winding up with a nice little profit is a pretty slick idea.

And it mushroomed into trips around the world. Norman's attitude opened up the minds of an awful lot of people who had previously never seen black and white musicians play together. It has never been a problem among musicians themselves until the 'angry boys' showed up the last few years. I think they are wrong, and most of my black friends think they're wrong. All they do is go around with their seething anger. A lot of them have come around and forgotten it. I don't think about it myself.

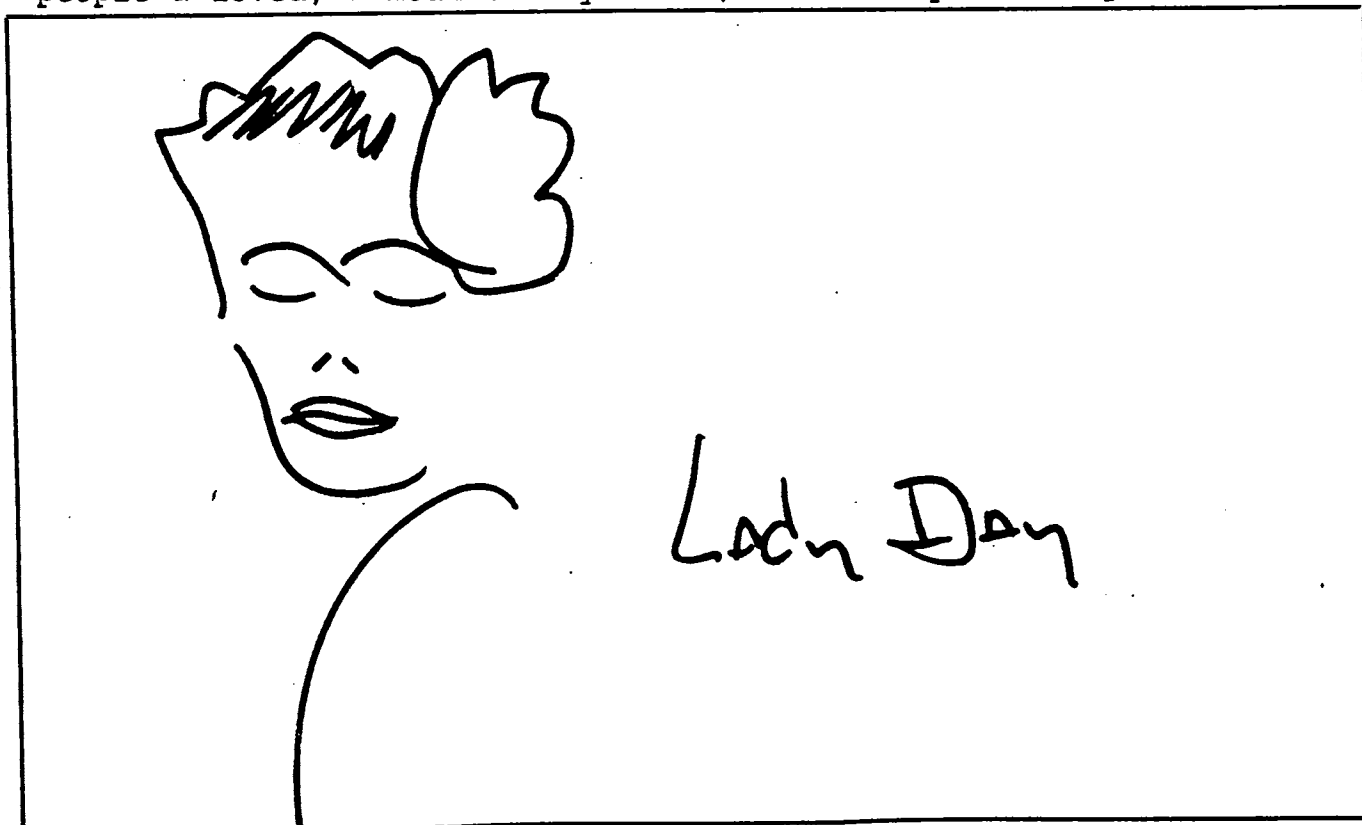
By 1942, Ben Webster had spread my name across the country. Ben did so much for me. Ben told me he was going to get me a job with Benny Goodman at the end of '42 because Benny had had a falling out with Mel Powell. He told Jimmy Maxwell to tell Goodman to get the little piano player that was playing with Lester Young out on the coast. One night when I was playing with Lee and Lester and Lady Day, a waitress came up and said there was a guy that wanted to talk to me. It was Freddy Goodman, Benny's brother. He wanted to hire me that night. I said, "No,

no...Teddy Wilson, Mel Powell, all that stuff. Let me play for Benny and we'll see what happens." Well, he came out..bang, bang, bang. I auditioned for Benny Goodman with a friend of mine, a drummer, who wound up at San Quentin for ten years for one stick of pot. I got the job.

I went to the Hotel New York, my first time in New York, with the Benny Goodman Orchestra. I was supposed to have gone to Cafe Society on 52nd Street downtown with Prez. But I was getting more bread with Goodman. Poor Clyde Hart. There was no piano music. There wasn't a piece of piano music in the whole library Lester took to New York with him. Clyde had to learn it all by ear. Clyde Hart, hell of a piano player.



That early period in my life was sure fun. It was probably, as far as being entertaining, loving to play and loving to see people I loved, I mean really loved, the best part of my life.



Chapter 3: The Ray, The Herd and the Wearing of the Green

I went back with the Benny Goodman Orchestra to New York City during my honeymoon. We ended up at the Hotel New Yorker, my first time in New York.

I learned the Goodman book practically by ear. I knew a lot of the arrangements from records. I couldn't read music very well. It was very difficult for me. There was a big floor show we had to play and I memorized the whole thing. There were people in Goodman's bands who gave me an awful lot of respect because I had been playing with Lester Young. Especially the tenor players. We used to ride the bus and on the train back to New York, everyone wanted to know about Lester Young and Billie Holiday. This is about the same time that Louis Bellson came with the band. That's where I met him. And Conrad Gozzo came in. Benny kept moving trumpet players over. As soon as they got to the end, they were out!

Benny treated me good for a while. When I went to work for Benny Goodman, he was suffering from something I got later. Sciatica. Now I know what he was going through. It's a constant pain. I did not know that he had that. He would sit up there on that stool and not be able to sit still. He was evil. Evil.

Benny was giving me some shit, boy. He was giving me what they call "the ray", staring at me. When he did finally start

getting on me, I had quit drinking. I had been doing a lot of drinking when I was with Lee and Lester, trying to keep up with



those guys and Billie Holiday. I wanted to be one of the boys. I could handle it. When I went to work for Benny Goodman, I had quit everything.

After about two weeks of this staring, I began to get nervous that he was going to fire me. Hymie Schertzer cornered me one day when we were taking a break or something and said, "If I were you, I'd start looking around for another job. Just a tip. Benny's been talking to Jess Stacy."

"Thank you."

We finally had it out one night. I really lost my temper and slammed Benny down on the piano chair. I almost went into a Joe Louis number on him. It was over the staring at me. I had never worked for a big-time band leader, but I had never been treated that way by anybody before. Even my step-father never laid a hand on me. I wasn't cocky. I was just mad!

I started going up to this joint on 8th Avenue called "Larry's" and began hanging out with the guys from Woody Herman's band. All of a sudden, the manager of Woody's band came up and said, "You know the piano player's leaving? Want the gig?" I wanted any gig. I wanted out! I was ready to go with Hal McIntire. Glad I didn't. I went down to the Paramount Theater the next morning and finalized the deal with Woody and gave my two weeks' notice to Benny Goodman.

Then I really started fucking around on the piano with Benny. I started playing like Bob Zurke and Jess Stacy and anybody else I could think of to drive him crazy. I would play

through Benny's solos. Anything I could think of. I started pulling my glasses down like this and stared right back at him. I had had it with him, and he was scared of me. He wouldn't even look at me. I had a beautiful two weeks before I went with Woody.

After Woody's First Herd had broken up and I was back in California, who the shit do you think I got a phone call from? Benny Goodman. He wanted me to do a radio show with him on the coast. While he was there, we cut some trio records together. I remember we did three tunes, "Up a Lazy River", "Benny's Boogie", and "Mean to Me". I never heard the records. He never said a word about our past fighting.

I remember a record date around then, 1947, where Stan Kenton and Benny Goodman sang a duet together. "The Happy Blues". Charlie Shavers and Benny Carter were also at that date. My mother was there. She got a big kick out of that. Charlie Shavers would waltz over to his trumpet case and whip out his little jug and take a nip.

Benny Goodman would say, "You can't do that."

And Charlie would say, "I just did."

Benny said, "I guess I'm not the leader here," and Charlie said, "Nope, you're not the leader here."

Benny's cheap. He won't pay. Benny will take you all the way to Mississippi and make you pay your own motel bill. The Ramada Inn or some shit like that. He's got a big penthouse up there, and the only way he can get anyone to come up and even say

'hello' is to call and invite them. The loneliest man. What's that tune? "He ain't got rhythm, no one's with him. The loneliest man in town."



He's a beautiful guy though. I think he's one of the most amusing with all his idiosyncracies and differences in personality. I really do like him. I love him. I always have a

good time when I'm with Benny Goodman. I even like to watch him pick his nose. I don't care what he does. He's a good guy. He doesn't mean to be a bad guy. He's just Benny Goodman!

I called him up on the phone and told him I loved him after his 40th Anniversary Concert at Carnegie Hall when he let me play just one tune. Benny falls in and out of love with musicians constantly. If he's in love with you, he'll use you. Then he gets tired and falls out of love with you. Then you don't hear from him for awhile. Two or three years go by and all of a sudden, "Hey, boom!", and you're back in. He wants you again. That's the way people work with him. At that point, he rediscovered me.

I don't think they will let him do another concert there after that one. Benny wound up putting his feet up on Lionel Hampton's vibraphone. Oh Jesus, he was really something that night. The concert was an embarrassment to Benny Goodman and nobody else. I was backstage most of the time. They had three piano players: Mary Lou Williams, John Bunch and me. He got Mary Lou up there and all she was supposed to do was play "Roll 'Em" because she wrote it. Bunch had been playing with him and all of a sudden Benny gets the 'hots' for me, see?

We were rehearsing and I was playing everything. I was playing with the big band and the small group. I was doing everything. During rehearsal this chick comes up and asked, "Did you ask Benny about money?"

I said, "Give me the rundown." She gave me the rundown. So much for rehearsal, so much for this and so much for that. And

recordings. All financial. She said, "Is that all right with you?"

I said, "Well, everything's all right, except that I'll take double scale for recording." That didn't sit just right. She headed straight for the Old Man. We were taking an intermission. I told John Bunch right there, "Bunch, you had better start loosening your fingers 'cause you're going to work. I just aced myself out of this thing."

And, sure enough, that's what happened. Benny changed his mind right in the middle of this damned concert and decided to use Mary Lou Williams for everything. He practically worked her to death. She was wringing wet every time she came back. Benny cut me out and I was all through. I just played one tune with Jack Sheldon where he sang the blues. I played "I Love a Piano", two pianos. John Bunch and me.

I just sat backstage the rest of the time with my uniform on, collecting scale. I kept going out the back door and walking down to hear Ellis Larkins at the Carnegie Tavern. Every time I went out the back door, this black guy, who was a little queeny, said, "Where are you going?"

I said, "Well, I'm going up to the corner to listen to Ellis. Benny says he don't need me. He's using Mary Lou. What the hell do you want me to do? Sit back here and count my fingers? Fuck you!" So I went up to listen to Ellis. Have a nice week. Come back. Shit! I had a ball that night. I even tried to steal the uniform jacket. It was a nice red one. No,

no, no, no, no, no, no, no. The guy came down to the apartment the next morning and picked it up.

Benny just crossed me off the list because I asked for double-scale. That was a big joke all over. I thought that was great so I called him up the next day. I said, "Benny, I don't care about all the stories about you or anything. I thought that thing you pulled on me last night, keeping me off the stand, was one of the greatest things you've ever done." I said, "They might say you're crazy and everything else, but I love you and I'm proud of you. So there you go!"

You know, he sent me a key ring. He sent me a gold key ring inscribed, "With love from B.G.". Special delivery.

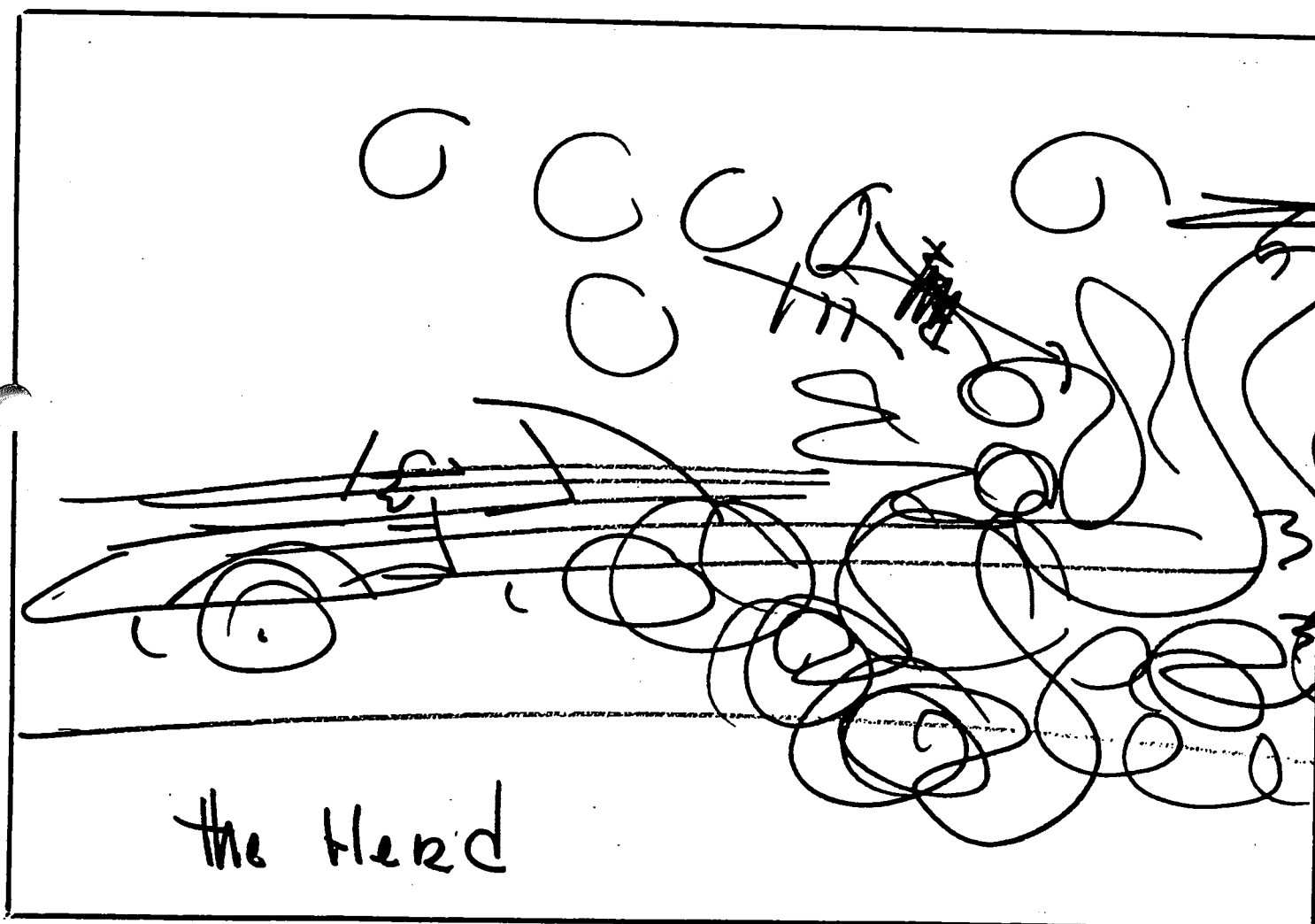
Benny Goodman's a very strange man. If you saw him walking down the street in New York, you'd think he'd never been there before.

Going from Benny Goodman to Woody Herman overnight like I did was like jumping out of frying pan into a beautiful swimming pool! Woody Herman was cool. He formed a loose band and concentrated on jazz music. Woody was a whole lot easier to work for than Benny Goodman. It was not like going to a private boy's school with a principal with a whip in his hand. Woody was just one of the boys.

When I went to work with Woody's band at the Paramount Theater in New York at the end of 1942, we played about eight shows a day. We got started real early, about 8:00 in the morning sometimes. They'd be lined up all around the block. It

was a real early start.

Woody Herman practically let anybody do what they wanted to do. If you were warmed up, he'd let you go. I remember we played two nights in Kansas City. One night was for the white people. The next night was for the black people. The second night was absolutely impossible! It was too much to remember. They just loved Woody's band. They called out things for us to



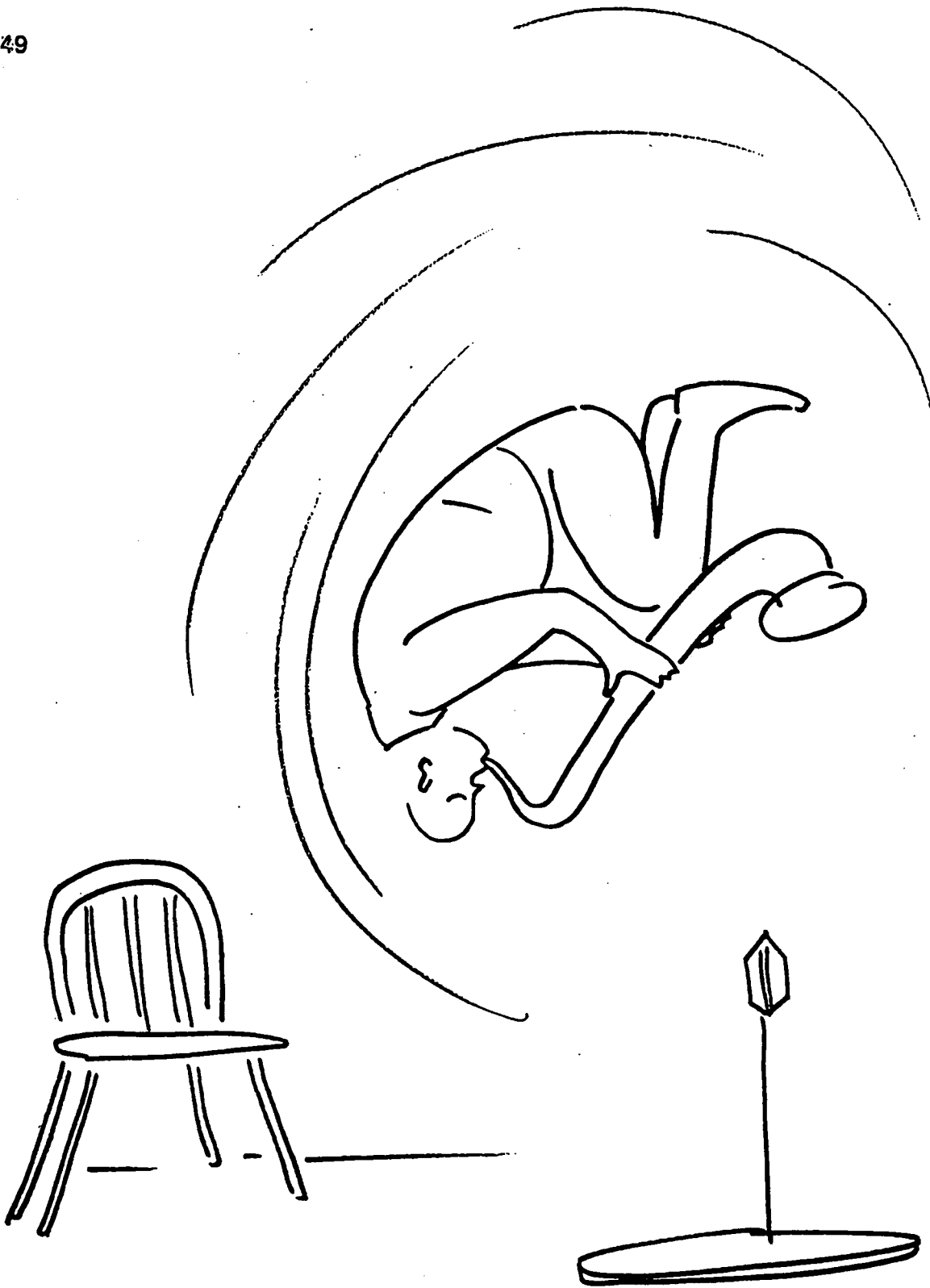
play. Goodman would ignore the audience more. He'd pick out what he wanted to play and we would play it. This was different, completely.

There was a lot of bebop in Herman's band. Some Ellington, and there was also some Count Basie. It was what you might call 'modern'. Stan Kenton's music was also modern, but his was more of a concert band. It did not concentrate on 'swing'. Woody Herman's band was always swinging. Kenton's music did not concentrate on 'swing' in comparison to Woody's. Woody was starting to change his style when I joined that band. He was changing it from the band that played the old-fashioned style. He hired Dizzy Gillespie to write a couple of arrangements. Dave Matthews was hired to write some Ellington-type stuff.

I remember the first record I ever made with that last band. It was called "Surrender" with a vocal group. It was a ballad.

Woody's favorite clarinet player was Barney Bigard. Herman couldn't touch either Benny Goodman or Artie Shaw technically, though. Style-wise, I don't know where Benny Goodman came from. I think he came from Mars. I think he ought to go back. In fact, I think he's about halfway back there now. I'll take Artie Shaw or Buddy DeFranco.

I worked for Woody Herman during '42-'43. And again when I came out of the Army in '46. Woody called me to go back to work for him the day I was discharged. It was funny. I'd been in the Skinnay Ennis Band, Special Service Forces. Ennis used to be the drummer for Hal Kemp. There had been a lot of changes in the band. When I came back in '46, he had the big stars like Bill Harris, Flip Phillips, Chubby Jackson and Don Lamond. I came out



A

FLIP Phillips

of that piss-ass band I had been playing with in Salt Lake City during the war, and it was quite a change. The band also featured Sonny Berman, Pete Candoli, Billy Bauer and Sam Morowitz. I had to adjust. His book was all different. There were a lot of things for which there was no piano part to, and a lot of music that we didn't have any music to, 'head stuff'.

Chuck Peterson was a trumpet player in the band and I roomed with Chuck. And pretty damn smart himself. He made the famous record of "Well, Git It" with Tommy Dorsey. He played all the high notes and Ziggy Elman got all the credit. Chuck Peterson was a workhorse and he could really play. And he was very, very smart. He knew opera, he knew symphony. He knew! That's why I roomed with him.

Whenever Ralph Burns would write an arrangement, we would rehearse it just to make sure the notes and then, slowly but surely, every time we played it, something else would be added. Sonny Berman was in there and had great imagination. He would dream up extra things for the trumpets to do and other guys would add things. The next time Ralph heard it, he hardly recognized it, but he loved it. There was an awful lot of extra, original stuff that got worked in.

I remember working with Igor Stravinsky on his "Ebony Concerto" with the Herman band in '46. That was great! We rehearsed down at the Santa Monica Ballroom. Igor conducted. The "Ebony Concerto" had three movements. Then we recorded it in Los Angeles. I was still in the Army when it premiered earlier at

Carnegie Hall. We went on tour after that and tried to get Igor to go with us but Igor wouldn't go. So he sent a student of his. Berman and some of the boys got him stoned one night when he was supposed to conduct. He used to conduct with a pencil. He walked on stage and all he did was drop his pencil for the downbeat and stand there listening to the band. We played the whole damned thing and he just stood there and watched. He was



so stoned he couldn't move. He also travelled on the bus. For this tour, we also had some girl from New York who played the harp. That was some bus trip. We went through Texas and played

theaters. Then we started on a one-nighter type of thing.

I got fed up with that iron-lung, riding around in that bus, boy. When the band disbanded, I came back to California and said, "No more of that stuff for me!"

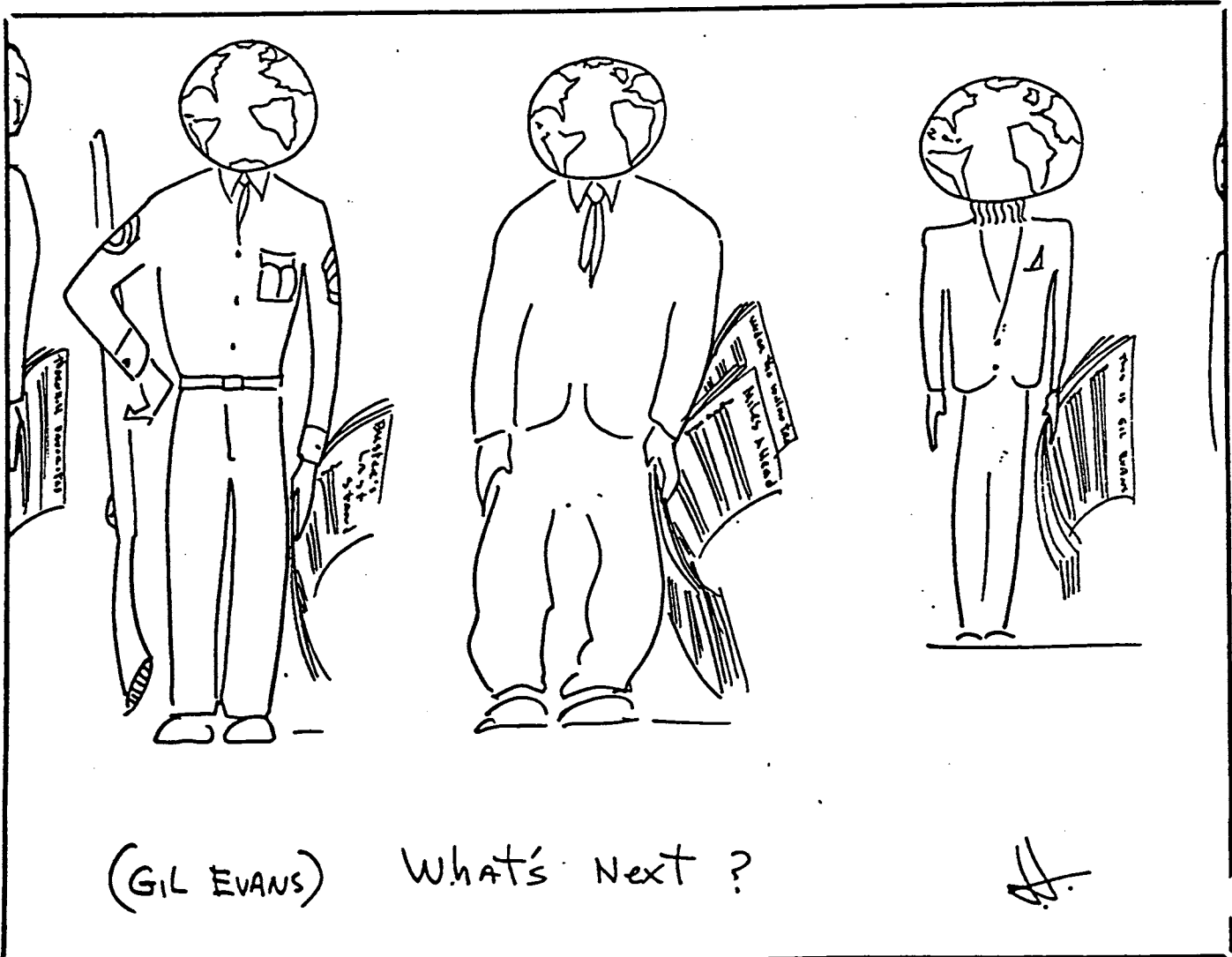
Woody Herman was great to work for. I worked for him even after I left. Like when Jack Paar left "The Tonight Show", they moved the show out to NBC and I was on the staff. They were trying out new hosts, one of whom was Joey Bishop. It lasted about a month and they got Woody to front the band. He wouldn't wear the earphones to talk to the people upstairs, like the director. Woody made me wear them. Then I would tell him what was going on, he would give the downbeats and we'd play. I never heard anybody say one bad thing about Woody Herman. Like they always called him, "The Road Father".

Me, I was the worst soldier you ever saw in your life. I used to dodge and duck. I went to the infirmary every morning and finally got "non-combat". They almost let me out but they didn't. At least I didn't do anything but wear the suit.

I was in the Army with Gil Evans, who is one of the tightest friends I ever had. Gil Evans is a mental giant. He's like the Encyclopedia Britannica. Gil Evans is a complete genius, and I'm not only talking about music. He is four or five geniuses rolled into one. All I know is that he knows the answer to everything. If you ask Gil Evans about anything, the answer is always the right answer. I don't give a damn if it's about a petticoat or the prices at Sears-Roebuck. I'm talking about a guy who is a

genius about getting out of a hotel maybe. Or talking to a mechanic and not knowing anything about a car, and still convincing the mechanic he was wrong.

Gil is the kind of guy that can go down to the Huntington-Hartford Hotel and sip tea with the old ladies in the afternoon and really enjoy himself. He would talk to them and they would talk to him. "Good gracious, Mr. Evans, aren't you nice!" And he'd say, "Oh, yes, yes." Then he'd come home and



feed his great dane, "Zenith", out of a helmet liner. He finally gave me the great dane, and I had to feed the great dane. We gave it away. That great dane with claustrophobia in my small house!

As an arranger, you can't top Gil Evans. He's the greatest. He made Miles Davis. If it weren't for Gil Evans, Miles Davis would still be pumping around those joints.

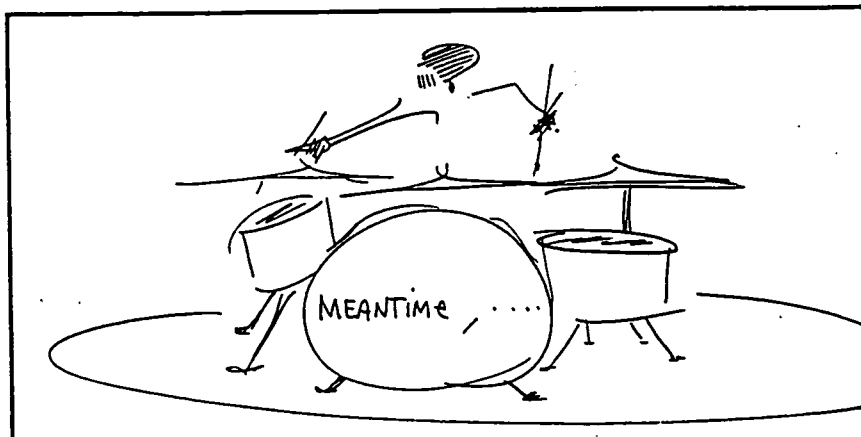
When we were in the Army, Gil was so loose. Gil had four stripes and never wore them. Everybody else was so uptight and nobody could understand it. Do you know what I saw Gil Evans do one night? We were in Camp Lee, Virginia. The physically fit out of the whole Skinnay Ennis Band were there. They divided us up and sent us to Camp Lee. We're ready for combat? They're going to send us to the Battle of the Bulge, which meant shit to me! Gil had a bottle of wine and some cheese. He was walking around eating cheese and drinking wine. We were all telling him, "We got to get out of the Army. The Battle of the Bulge. Oh God, they're going to send us over there and blow our legs off and all that bullshit."

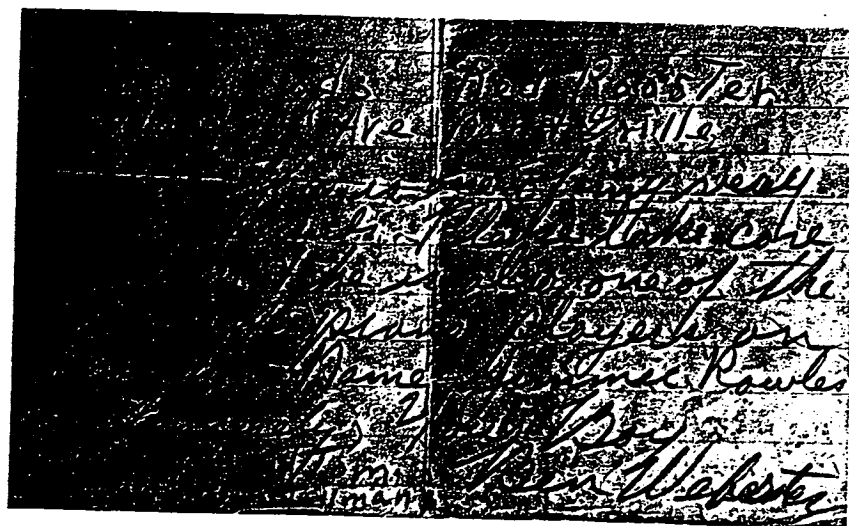
Gil laughed. "That's where we belong. We belong in the Army. What are you guys so scared of? I can get out of the Army tomorrow if I really wanted to. Very simple. I feel like I belong in the Army. This is a war. We're fighting Germany and Japan. And I believe I should put in my time. Of course, I don't feel like going into combat. I don't want to fight anybody. Passive resistance, that's the only way to get out of the Army."

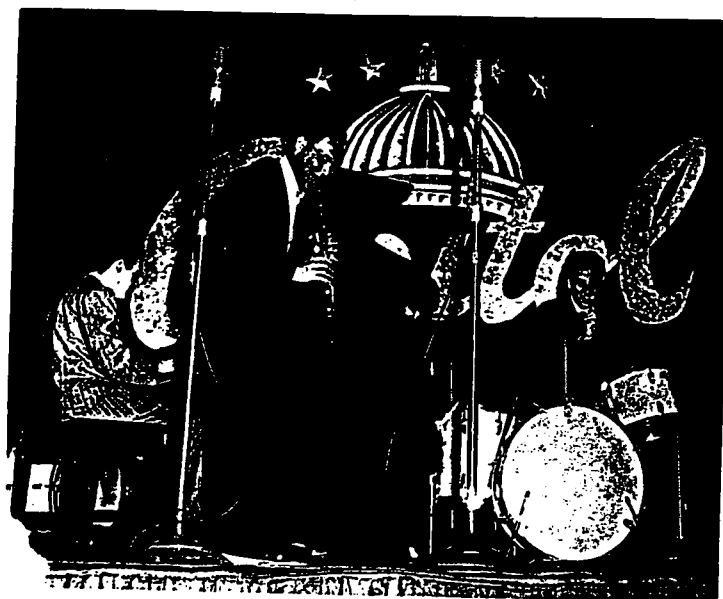
"What's passive resistance?" we asked.

He said, "Well, passive resistance is when you just can't do something. Like when the officer says salute, speak in the second or third person. They say, 'Private Rowles, you didn't salute.' And you have to have the guts to stand there and look a triple captain or colonel and say, 'Private Rowles told me that he cannot salute.'"

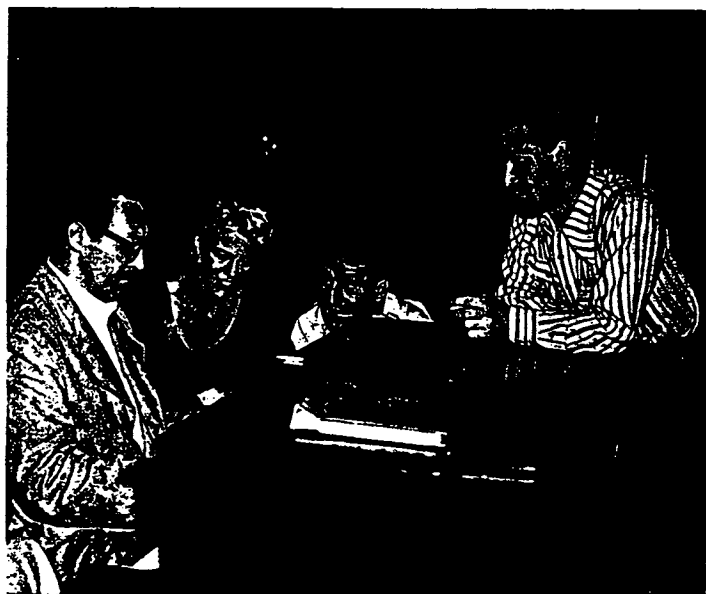
We had a great big guy in the band named Evan Vale, a strong guy. A French horn player. We were in the restroom where all the toilets were. You know the Army, they don't have tops on the toilets. Some of the guys were restless by what Gil was saying. Gil just kept on eating his cheese and drinking his wine. Finally, Evan Vale got up, turned around and yanked the toilet out of the cement. He threw it down over in the corner. The whole bowl! Out of the cement! That is how rough it got. All Gil did was laugh. "That was pretty good," he said. "I wonder what the captain is going to say about this in the morning." That's all I remember about that night. The next morning, the captain came in and there's this toilet out of the cement with all the cords and the wires and all that bullshit. He said, "Who did this?" Of course, nobody would admit to it. Gil was sleeping like nothing had happened.

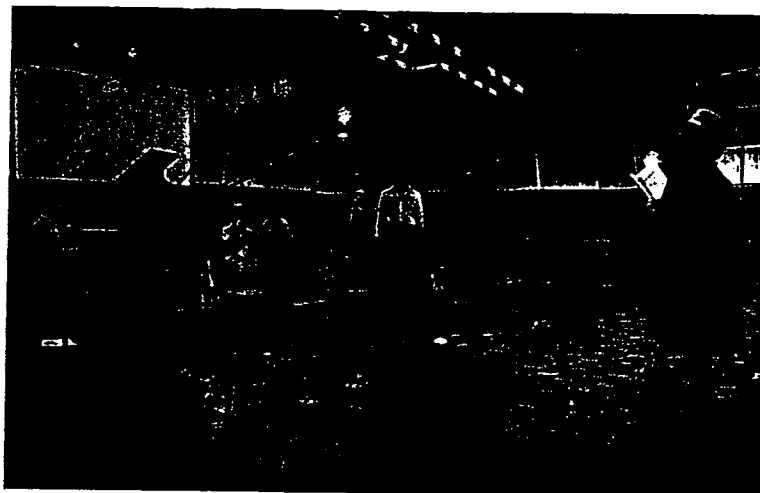






A scene from the 20th Century-Fox Production
"WINTER TIME"



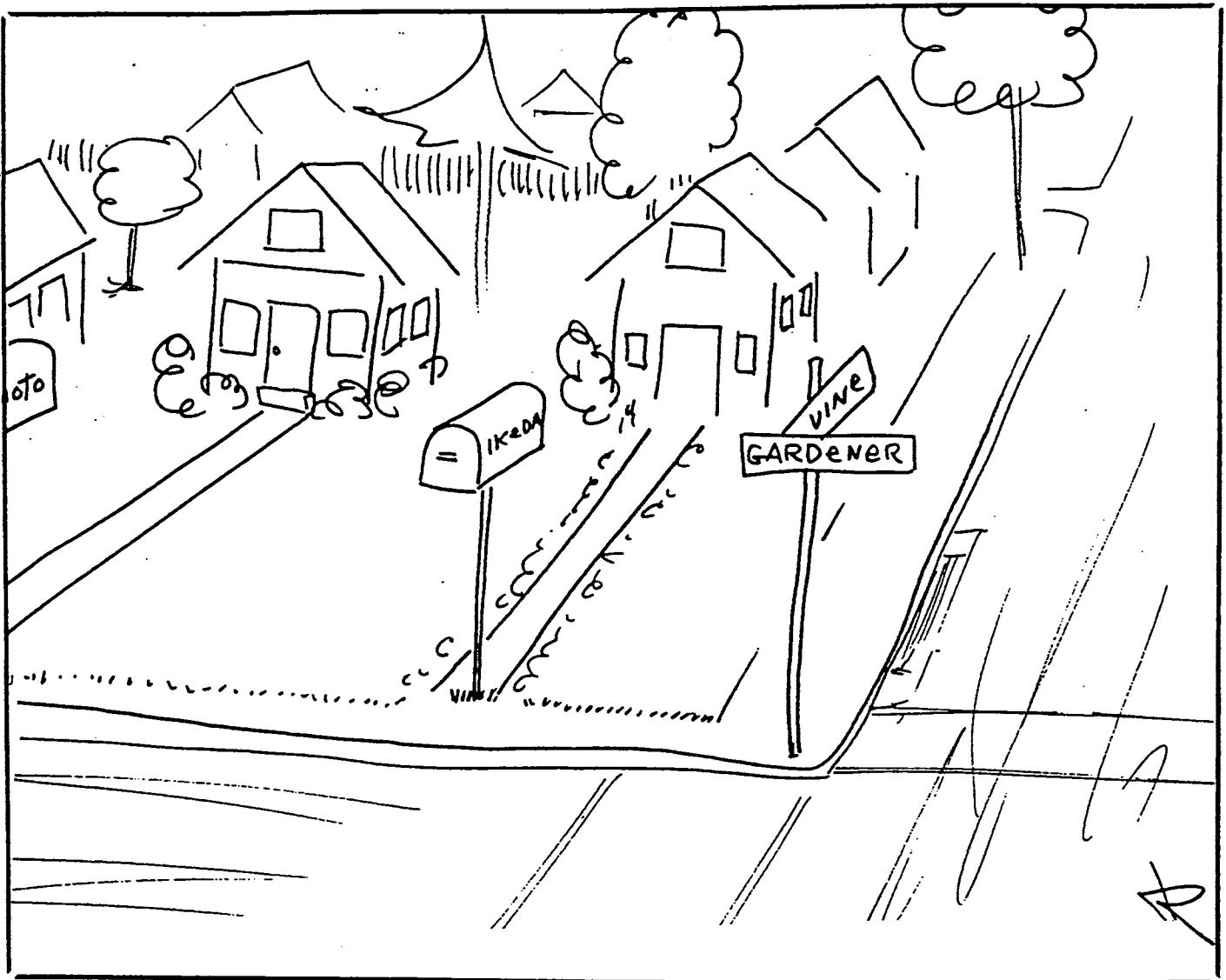


Chapter 4: Pavin' California

The war changed the whole music scene in Los Angeles! They brought all these guys down here and trained them to be Marines. They had their time off and they all came to Los Angeles, the palm trees and the warmth. The sun. All the guys that had been through here on the way to Guadalcanal and the South Pacific decided to come back here because they had been here and they loved the weather. They brought their families and they all moved in. They turned this goddam place into a hick town! It's nothing but a bunch of small places with signs that call it something else. Tarzana, Brentwood, Sherman Oaks, Studio City. Boom, boom! Hollywood! What in the hell is Hollywood? Hollywood is just the name of an area. There's nothing there.

The Los Angeles I knew turned into a bunch of cars with a bunch of people that were from the Midwest mainly. And the East. The people were scared to go to New York. There was nothing there for them so they came to California. They were coming to California at about 30,000 a day at one time. You figure it out. All those people buying all those tract homes. No trees. Nothing! They fucked up the whole town and so now the town is the way it is.

I've watched the whole scene in Los Angeles change from the time I came down here in 1940 when it was beautiful and it was



really Hollywood. I mean, they had the Hollywood Hotel. They had the Garden of Allah. I watched them tear down the Garden of Allah and put up a savings and loan. They used to have the Strip with Ciro's and The Mocambo. I worked with Dick Stabile at Ciro's for about a year.

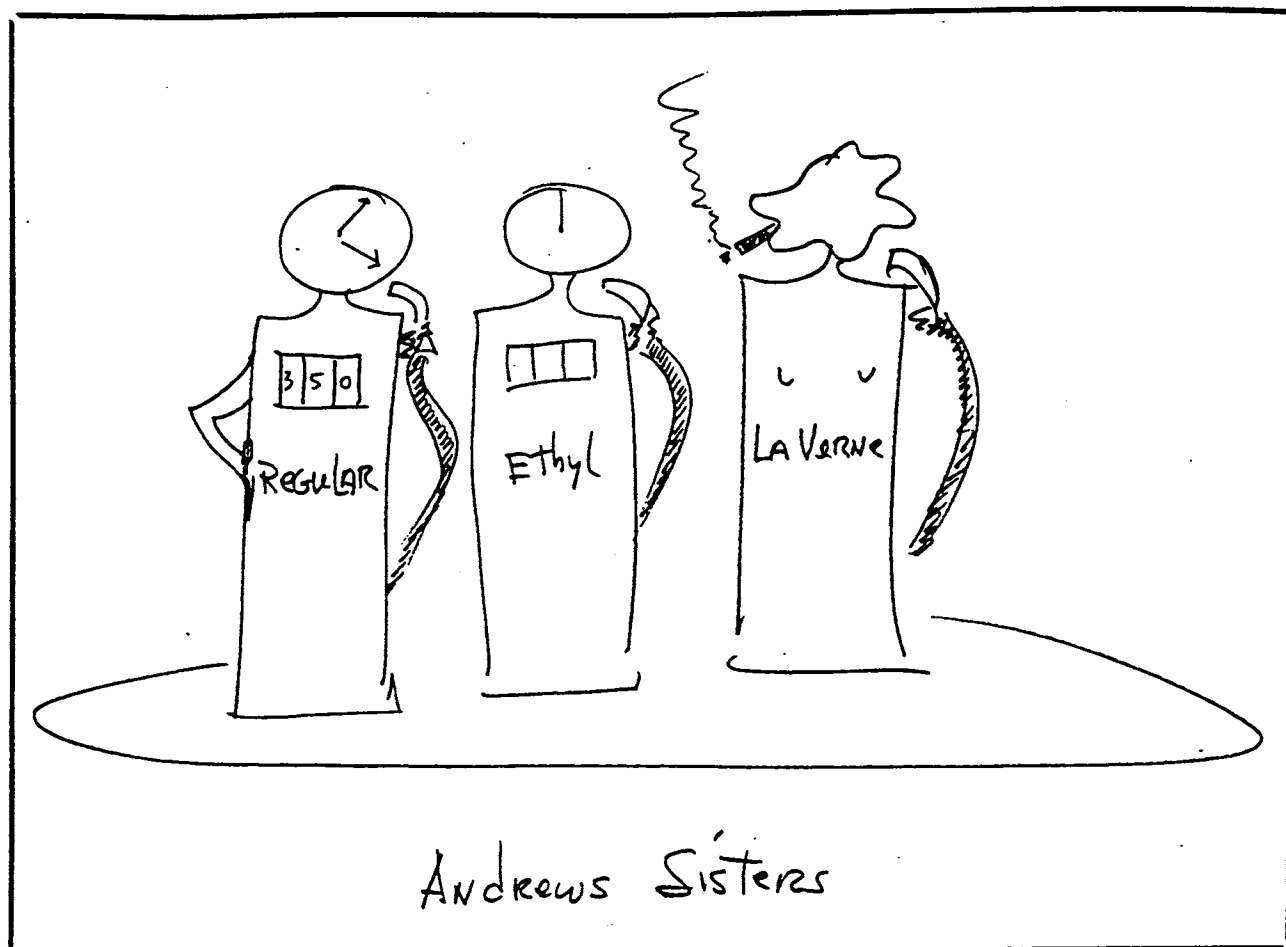
The music was jazz before the war. But as far as jazz music was concerned, they didn't want to hear any jazz. They were mostly from Nebraska, Oklahoma, this, that, Buffalo, all that.

All they wanted was noise. When they cleaned out Haight Ashbury in San Francisco, they all moved up to the Strip and they took over the Strip. And they ruined the Strip. All the clubs folded. When I first came down here, I could walk around Watts at 5:00 in the morning. And I did. I was down there every night. You think I would go near that joint now?



During the late '40s, I did a radio show called "Club 15" with Jerry Gray out of Los Angeles. Gray was the band leader and the star of the show was Bob Crosby. It was a 5-day-a-week, 15-minute national broadcast for Campbell Soup. We'd work in the afternoon and be through by dinner time, so if you had something else to do at night, you could do it. Our music tended toward the Glenn Miller side, mainly background for singers. Margaret Whiting, the Andrews Sisters, and Dick Haymes. The girl who played violin so well, Giselle McKenzie, was on the show for a while. And Evelyn Knight and the Modernaires.

At one point, I tried to get Chet Baker into Jerry Gray's band. Chet used to come to my house when he was just a little kid. Before anybody else had heard of him, he was coming to my house every day. Chet was so natural, it was unbelievable. And play, Good God! I took him to a joint where they had these Monday night jam sessions. I thought, "I should take him out there and



scare some of those guys to death." And he did. They had never heard of him. Holy God. Then I think Gerry Mulligan got hold of him.

Jerry Gray didn't have enough brains to realize he had a genius sitting there. Chet didn't know what the crosses and zeros were above the notes, where you're supposed to go "boo-wah, boo-wah", Glen Miller-style. He got confused. Everybody in the band was dragged because Gray didn't hire Chet Baker.

Chet was on the tour I made with Charlie Parker back in the early '50s. It was a two-week trip up the coast of Canada, up to Vancouver and back. We were with the Dave Brubeck Quartet or

whatever he had, Shelly Manne, Carson Smith and Chet. On the way back, we stopped at customs and filled out all our forms and went through all the questions. We all did except for Charlie Parker. They guy who was running the whole thing said, "Parker doesn't feel very good. He's still on the bus. He can't get off the bus."

So the Mountie said, "Well, I'll get him." He went out and pretty soon here he comes with Charlie Parker. When he got to the office, Parker spotted the Mountie's Bull Durham tobacco and rolling papers lying on the desk. Bird insisted the Mountie give them to him. He took just one paper and laid it down on the desk, poured some tobacco on it, wet his fingers and rolled a perfect Camel. He sort of slapped his hand over the paper and came up with a perfect Camel! I thought the Mountie was going to faint.

One night during that tour, Chet jumped up and started playing the baritone sax--played the hell out of it. Then Bird tried to play Chet's trumpet. That was the night I told Bird to put his hand in his own pocket and get his own bread out. He was buying about six packs of cigarettes and he turned to me and said, "Take care of this." I said, "Take care of it yourself. You're the one with the bread."

Bird was spoiled, but he was a champ. He was bored. Every time he went in somewhere he heard himself. That wasn't really too much fun. Nobody could challenge Charlie Parker. He'd wipe

them out quick. Bird could handle anything, but he was spoiled because people idolized him too much. Just because Bird got in trouble; it was the 'in' thing to get in trouble. That's why a lot of people got into the narcotic thing: because Bird did. He



just went his own way and wandered around New York, but every place he went in he heard himself. They were all memorizing his solos, trying to play like him. He couldn't get away from himself. It must have been terrifying. That's why Parker stayed 'out'; because he couldn't go in and hear anybody who was himself. That's a drag.

Charlie Parker had a different interpretation of how to play tunes, chordwise. He would play all those beautiful, fast passages, but when you slow them down and play them, they are gorgeous. But they went by so fast that it was difficult to comprehend what in the world he was doing. His technique was so facile and his technique was so stupendous...he was unbelievable. Bird learned a lot of phrases and new things from Lester Young. I think he learned about playing pretty phrases, and maybe sound. The Prez influence was there all right. You hear little things here and there, but Charlie Parker was his own man.

When I worked with him on that tour we got along. I was younger then, so he didn't wear me out on the stand. I don't know what I'd feel like right now. Boy, he really put you through it. He carried on a bit too strong for me. I couldn't keep up with him. But Bird was a genius. In a very hard way.

I also worked with Peggy Lee for a few years in here, from about '50 to '55. I first worked with her when I was with Benny Goodman way, way back in 1942. Peggy is a very good musician and composer. I went to Vegas with her on a trip and she talked me

into going to New York with her. I would quit and then I'd come back; then I'd quit and I'd come back.

One of Peggy's problems...we all have problems, let me add...is being a little possessive. She wants somebody around all the time. She hates to be alone. Peggy used to get people over to rehearse, and you would be lucky to get away before dawn. I finally had to draw the line. I would say something like, "Look, I gotta be out of here by 9 o'clock. It's 9 o'clock, I'll see you later." Business is business. What the hell. I'm a terrible businessman. The worst! I need about six people to guide me around and about 12 to keep me out of trouble.

Peggy calls me "Stretch"; that's her nickname for me. She can be with a thousand people, but all I have to do is pick up the telephone and say Stretch is on the line and she'll be on that phone right then. I have worked with her on and off since then. If somebody gets sick, I play for her. She and I are buddies. I think she is great.

Billie Holiday was around a lot then too. When Billie was in town, we were practically inseparable. I used to take her home and tuck her in bed when Louis McKay was out of town. Take her to the Chinese restaurant. Drive her home. Play for her. Play jobs with her. Make records with her. All kinds of shit. I've seen her in action when she was really mad. And I'm sure glad she never got mad at me that way.



One night she called for me. "Jimmy, Jimmy. I need you. You got to take me home and put me to bed. But first we got to go to the Chinese joint." The joint on Sunset and Vine. Laurel Canyon. She got mad in there one night. Aw, she really raised hell. She saw a black waiter go into the kitchen. "This ain't no Chinese restaurant. Ain't a Chinaman that would let a black cat in his kitchen." Billie started screaming. I had a hell of a time getting her out of there. It was funny. She was tough, boy. She could fight. She wasn't hard for me to handle.

Billie used to call me up in the daytime and say, "Now, Jimmy, come pick me up. I want to see Dorothy and Gary." She wanted to see my son. So, I'd have to get in the car and drive all the way down to where she was to get her, and drag her all the way out to the house. She taught all those swear words to Gary. I used to beg her on the way out, "Please take it easy with the language." "Well, the little motherfucker's got to learn that shit from somewhere. Might as well learn it from the hoss's mouth." Billie would walk into the house and hug my old lady and say, "Where is that little motherfucker?" Gary would come jumping up there. He was only about eight years old.

One afternoon, Billie and I got together to pick the tunes and keys for a recording session we were doing for Norman Granz the next day. I picked her up at the hotel in Hollywood. And, of course, she had her problems getting started. Billie knocked off a pint of gin or something before we could even get out of the

room. And by the time we finally did get out, she was feeling pretty good. We went downstairs to the piano off the lobby, which was in such horrible shape that we couldn't use it. So she said, "Let's go into the bar and have a drink."

I didn't take her home because I didn't want the children to hear the language. When Billie got warmed up, especially when she had been drinking, you never heard anything like it. I kept thinking and thinking, and we got more and more loaded. Finally, I thought of Artie Shapiro, bass player, because he lived right in Hollywood and had a piano. That I knew. Artie knew her from New York so I called him up.

He said, "Sure, bring her over." We went over there and on the way we picked up some more booze. Then we proceeded to fool around. We were drinking and I was trying to suggest tunes to her. I was having a heck of a time trying to pin her down on anything. But it was the way she was talking and everything was so funny.

Of course, when she started swinging the way she was feeling, she picked some pretty tough keys. Instead of the key of F, she would pick six flats. Or she would put it up half a tone. Billie was just being devilish. Like "Prelude to a Kiss" was in B-natural and stuff like that. I had to sit down and write these things down because I knew if I had tried to trick her, she would come back and say, "Now wait a minute. I don't see no six sharps." Or something like that. When we rehearsed "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone", that was in G-flat.

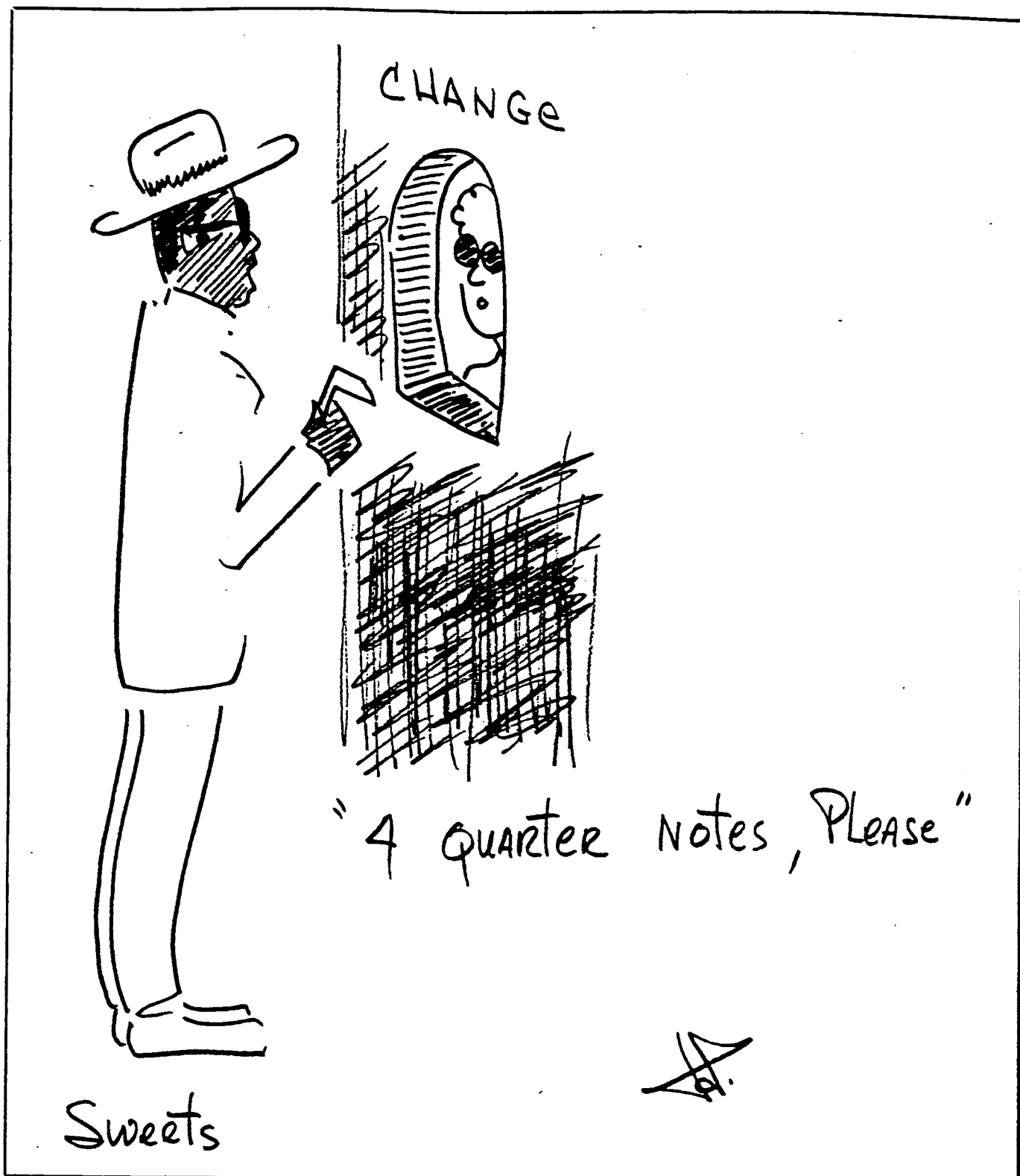
The next time I went to work for her, sure enough "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone" was in F. She couldn't get anyone to play it for her in G-flat.

On "I Don't Want to Cry Anymore", she insisted on some crazy ending that day. I knew she would change her mind when we recorded it. I knew her that well. The ending she suggested just happened to be at the spur of the moment and it really didn't fit at all. I had a big list of songs I wanted to try, and Billie had a list. She didn't have much of a list. We were going to do "So Rare", but we didn't get to it.

Neither of us knew that Artie had turned on his tape recorder and had a whole hour of us on tape. They edited most of it out and released it on record. I've got the whole thing somewhere. I've seen a sleeve on that thing saying that that was a studio session. That's a bunch of crap! It was just the three of us there. We were comfortable. I'm ashamed of it. We were too loaded. I was actually mad when the damned thing was released. I didn't make any money on it either. That thing is all over the world. There are people in Japan, all over Europe, Norway, Finland and wherever the hell I've been. They all have a copy of that album. They keep the record home and bring the sleeve with marking pens. Make me sign it. I started thinking how many copies that thing has sold and how I got taken to the cleaners for it. But there is nothing I can do about it, except to avoid it.

I last saw Billie on the last record date we did together for Norman back in 1956 at Capital Records. That's where we recorded it. I was just the piano player. I wasn't a big star like the Big Three: Benny Carter, Barney Kessel and "Sweets" Edison. You know something? "Sweets" can play behind a singer. He knows just what to do. He and I have something really special between us. Oh, we used to have some conversations on the phone. I'd say, "You black-ass sunuvabitch, you're supposed to be over here mowing the lawn." He used to call me "Blackheart". Sweets and I got a thing, a real thing. I know him like a book. You know what he said one day? We walked into the musician's union one day and there were all these girls behind the counter where you pick up checks and all that stuff. He looked at this one chick and he said, "That bitch ain't got enough meat on her ass to put a chin on Andy Gump!" Sound like Sweets?

And Benny Carter, he's a master! You don't mess with him! There's a statement about him that he always laughed when I remind him of it. Ben Webster used to say it. "He can bake a cake as light as a feather and whip the average man." When Benny Carter was younger and got warmed up, he'd start blinking those eyes real fast, and it was time to get out of the way. He was the only guy I ever knew in my whole life that could tell Ben Webster to go in the corner and sit down and stay there until he told him to get out. Ben Webster would act up something terrible; Ben Webster was like a bull in a China shop. I would do anything for Ben, but I never ordered him around. Ben didn't



give a shit for nothing when he was loaded. He'd jump off the bandstand and start dancing with someone.

I got him out of a few scrapes. "Don't fight now or I'll

call Benny Carter!" Benny Carter would just point his finger and say, "Go sit down." And Ben would sit down like a little kid in school.

Benny Carter is a class player. He's the king! If you want to play "Lush Life" in F-sharp or any key, you don't fool Benny Carter. He can hold his own against anybody, even if he hasn't played his horn for six months. Benny Carter is one of the best musicians that anybody could ever know. He is also one of the most perfect gentlemen that could ever be. Smooth, suave, debonair. Take all the words that Maurice Chevalier used and they'll be enough to cover Mr. B.C.

I had also done a lot of recording with Barney Kessel. Barney Kessel, Red Callendar and I made our first record together, the first time any of us had recorded. It was just before they had that bid strike in the early '40s when they stopped recording. The record was called "Bring Enough Clothes for Three Days". That was when they were drafting guys.

Get us all in a studio with Billie Holiday. Some fun. Billie was very thin, very bony, very drawn. She was there though. We recorded for an afternoon. Her voice was a little weak. Soon after that, she went to New York and made a marvelous record with Ray Ellis. ("Lady in Satin" - Columbia)

Norman was in the booth running the date, telling everybody to fill in at such and such a place. "Now you take a solo. Now you guys solo." And there was Billie talking all the time. "I don't want to have an alto behind there. I want Ben to play behind there." Then all of a sudden, she would say, "Norman, why

can't I sing 'I Never Had a Chance'?" She always wanted to record "I Never Had a Chance". She never did. Billie never had a chance. Norman didn't like it, and when he don't like something, he don't like it.

Lady Day had class. I saw her one night in the '40s slam the top of the keyboard down. Bobby Tucker barely got his fingers out of the way in time. She could be mean; she could be evil; she could be tough. But she had class. It's hard to define. But whatever it is, she had it!

Billie Holiday was my sister. I loved her. Also, I think I learned more about women from Billie Holiday. I didn't learn much. I'm pretty naive.

I did a lot of movie and television work in Los Angeles for about 25 or 30 years. It's a weird game, a very weird game. You never know what you're going to do when you walk in that studio. Never! Sometimes you walk in there expecting the worst and it's the easiest. Then the next time you go in there expecting there to be nothing to it, and it's rough. Like you go in to do "Lassie" with Ivan Scott. Talk about mean! I mean you better be on your toes. You never know. You do a simple jingle and you got two bars that are impossible, but you got to do them.

Sometimes they would use us on camera. That's's called "source music". Very seldom do you get filmed. Usually when you see people playing piano in films, they are using a piano that doesn't make any noise. They play and they are all over the place. They look like they're playing, but they really aren't.

Many times, I'd go to Fox Studios, a lot of studios, and they'd have a singer that was already recorded with another piano player. They'd have two tracks. They'd cut the piano out and I would have to play behind and follow the singer. Sometimes that's tough. Other times, I would dub in the music of someone at the keyboard. I would watch his hands and play things that looked like what he was doing. If his hand would go up here, I'd have to do something appropriate.

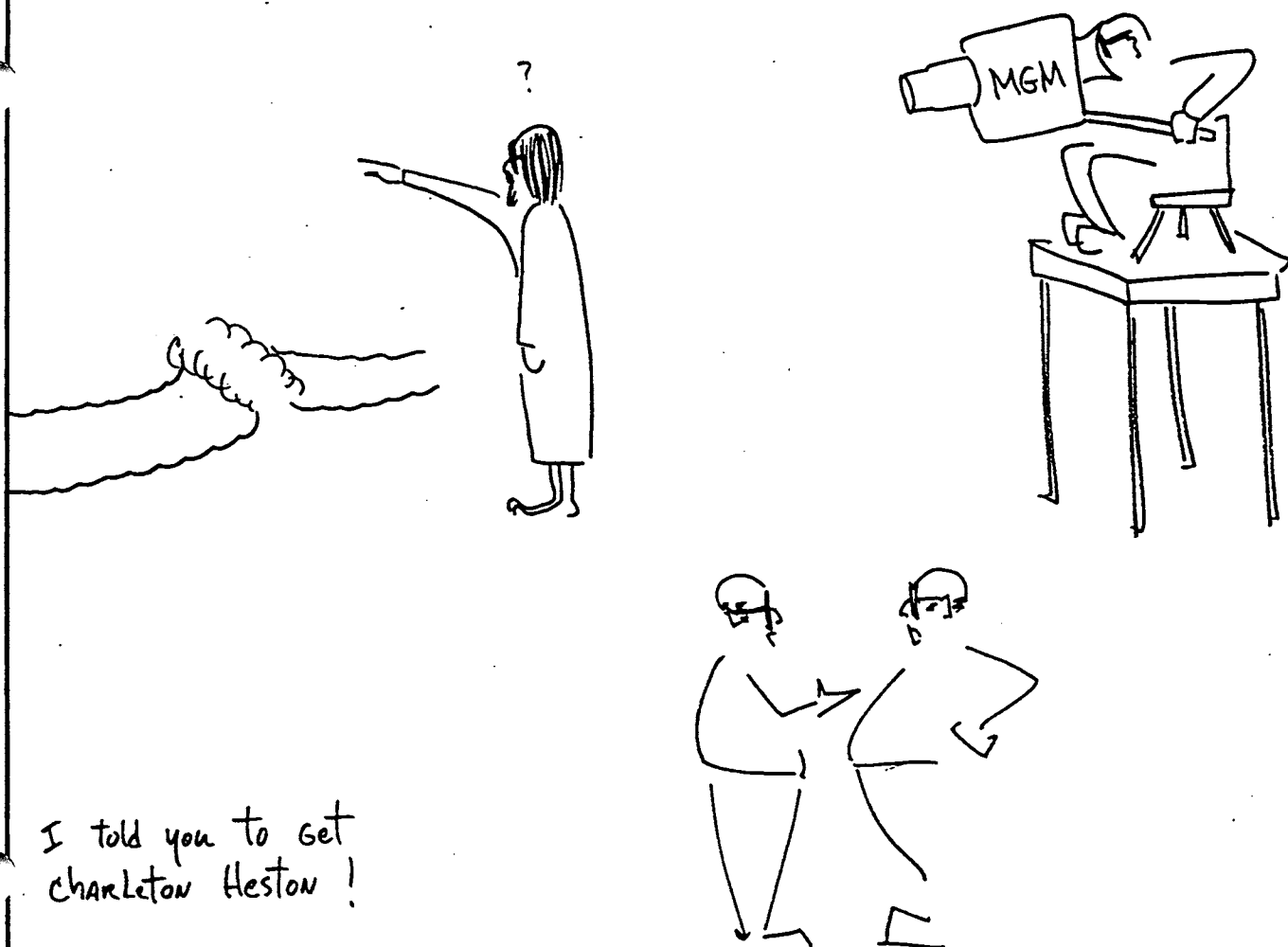
When I couldn't play it, I would complain, "What in the world are you trying to do? Kill me? You know good and well I can't play this shit." And Arthur Morton, an arranger at Fox, would say, "Well, you're helping me buy my new Porsche. I played it real slow and it was easy."

I said, "Yeh, but I gotta play it FAST!"

"That's your problem, not mine."

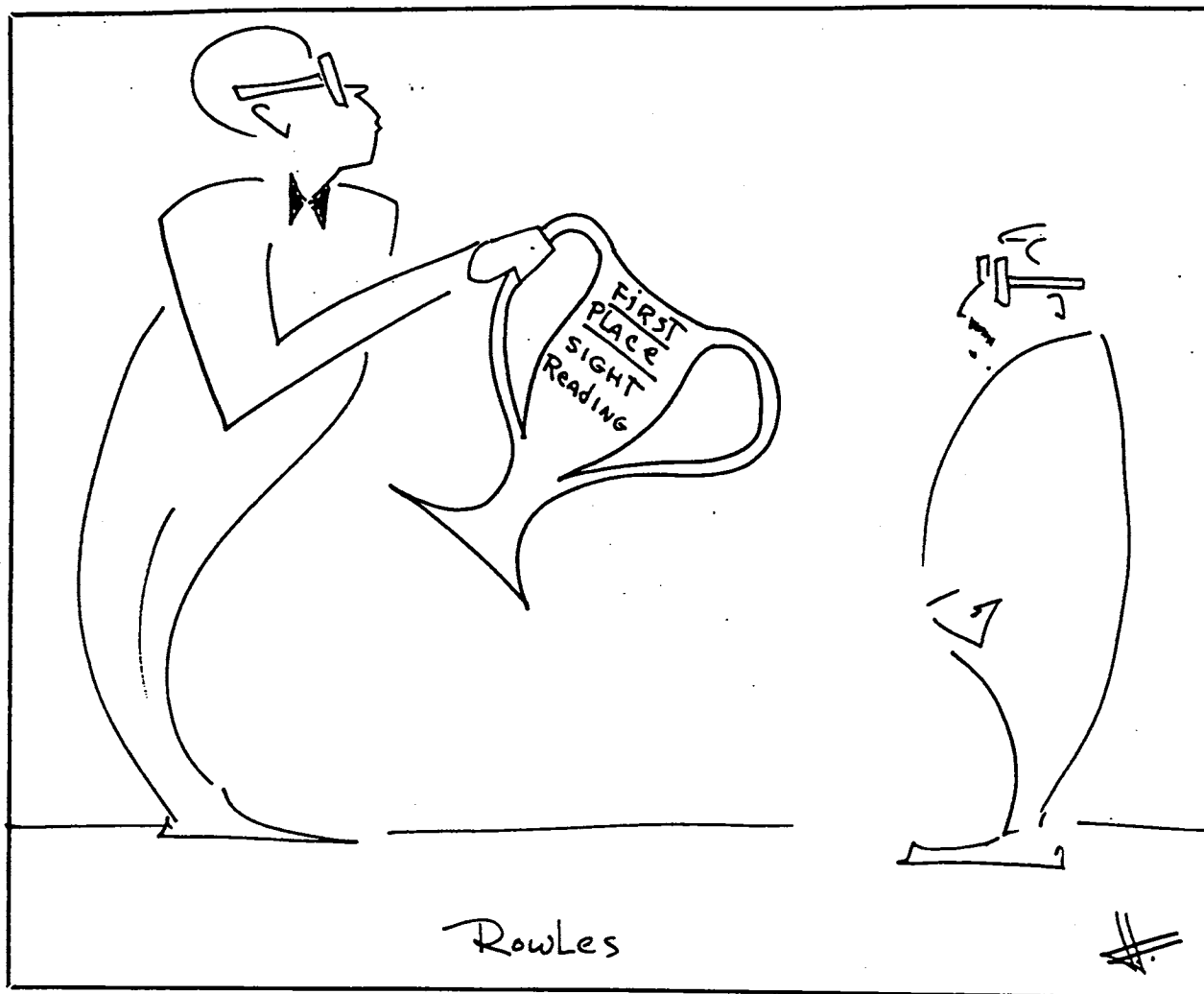
One day, they might set a whole page of trill in front of me and I'd invent some way to play it. I used to do it my way. Sometimes I'd play some things on sight and say afterward, "How in the hell did I ever do that? I can't do that. I couldn't do it again. I hope they take this one because if I have to do it again, I'll blow it."

I don't consider myself a studio man, though I can read and all that. A lot of what studios write is for technical pianists like Urban Thielman. Urban Thielman was the staff pianist at Twentieth Century fox for about 20 years. He is one of my big



heroes. And he can play anything! He could also play what you might call tunes. Cover the entire ground. He doesn't consider himself a jazz pianist, but as a pianist, he was par excellence. He used to give me tips. He helped me so much. I owe Urban Thielman this building! When it was too tough for me, he would come over and play it for me. He was the contractor then. He could play anything there was. You just ask for Urban and you got it.

They had this thing out at Fox one time. I wasn't there then. Heifitz was out there and he had his own accompanist.



Alfred Newman was conducting. Heifitz' accompanist kept goofing. Finally, Alfred went 'click' with the stick and said, "Take ten." He walked over to Urban and said, "Urban, I want you to play this." "Okay, Pappy." So Urban went over to the piano and sat down. He didn't even touch the piano. He just looked at it. Alfred looked down at him and said, "Ready?" "Yep." Urban did it right off the bat. One take. That's Urban.

I went in there one morning. They said he was out there at 8 o'clock in the morning. That was a little stand-up piano stacked with a great big bunch of music that looked like someone

had shaken a paint brush on it. It looked like an appaloosa's ass. It said 'piano solo'. I took one look at it and laughed. It's 8 o'clock in the morning and you expect me to start with this! Arthur Morton walked up and said, "Don't worry about a thing. Urban did it in one take." It was a piano loose up and down the hills of San Francisco and it was about six pages long.

That's Urban Thielman. Nobody knows about Urban Thielman. Urban Thielman could tell you about the sex life of an African butterfly. Boy, could he lay it down! I love him. He gave me one of the best pieces of advice I have ever been offered. One day, Urban came over to the piano and sat down by me. I'd been working at Fox for about a year and I was starting to feel my oats. This was about '54. I was starting to think I was a studio musician, which I'm not. Whatever studio work I got through was because the people that hired me wanted me for what I could do. I was feeling my oats, all right. "I'm 'in'. I'm one of the five- or six-hundred."

I'd called for Urban. He came over and played something Earl Hagen had written. I couldn't play it. It was too hard. He was over on the phone. He hung up the phone, came over and looked at it. He said, "Sometimes these guys that don't play the piano stay up all night trying to write hard things for the piano. This is one of them. This is a bitch.

"But there's one thing you've got to remember. No matter how you finger it, as long as you get it out, don't worry about

your fingering. I don't care if you do it with your elbows. Get it out. But I have to do this one. I know damn well you can't play this one."

Of course, he ripped it off. When we got through, he said, "Jimmy, I want to tell you something. It's a tragedy, but there are many outstanding young musicians that play very, very well at what they do. They get a lot of work and get to taking themselves too seriously, believing it. Whatever you do, don't do that."

My ego went down like a balloon that somebody put a pin in. Then I really started to play studio music.

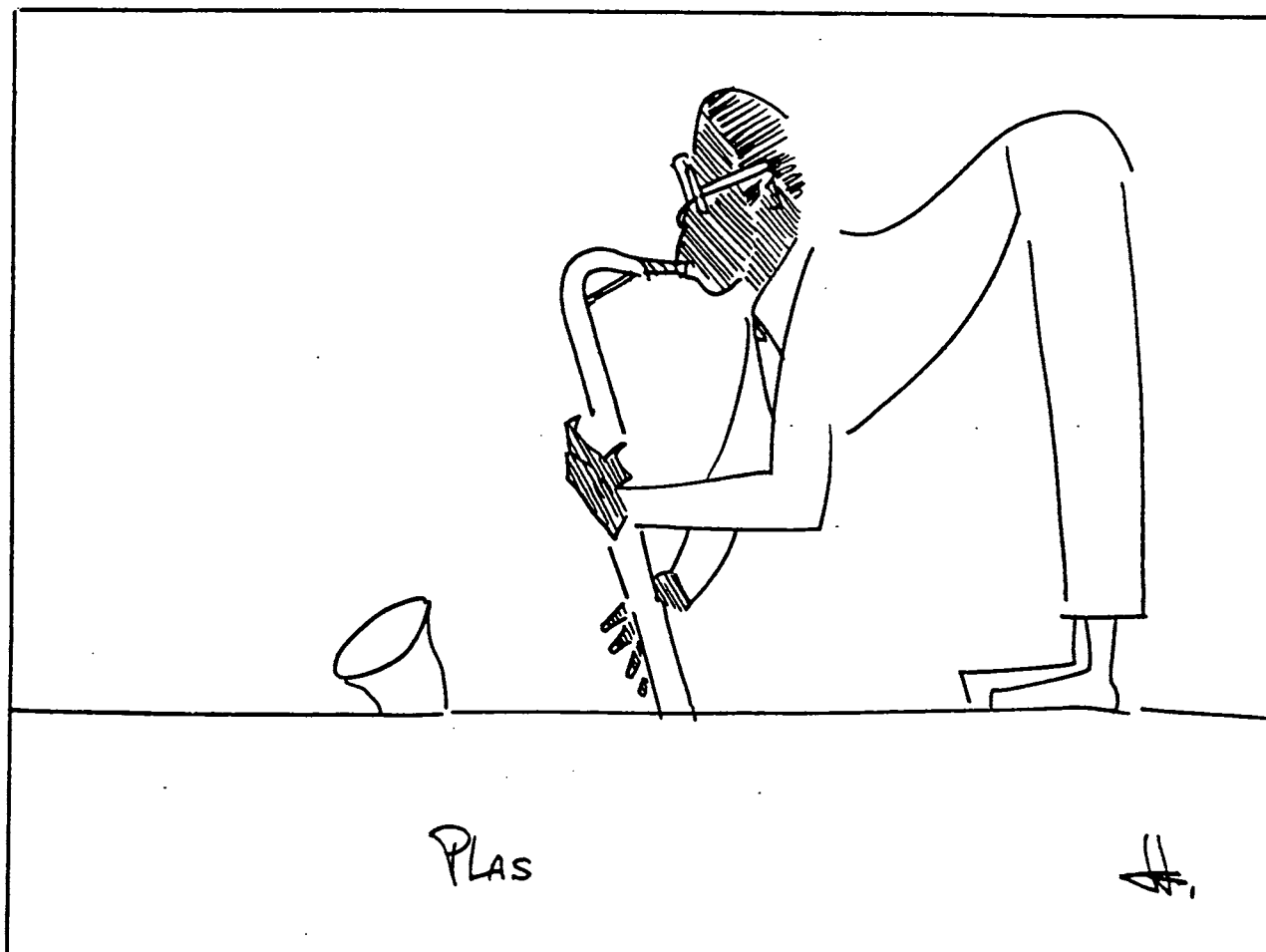
I was with Henry Mancini for 17 years, from 1958 to 1974. I already had a lot of studio experience when I went to work for him. Johnny Williams played "Peter Gunn" the first year it was on television. Then they gave him a show called "Checkmate" to oversee. And I took over his place with Mancini. Johnny liked the way I played and he used me all the way through "Checkmate". After he took over that show and left Mancini, Johnny never played for Mancini again.

I liked everything Henry Mancini ever wrote. His forte is 'pretty music' - ballads. He was very soft and never lost his temper. Everything he did was good. "Pink Panther". I like "Moon River", "The Days of Wine and Roses", "Soldier in the Rain", "Mr. Lucky".

Hank Mancini was steady bread when he worked. Hank doesn't

work too much. He does concerts. We would make a picture and then we'd make an album of the picture. Then maybe a month later, we'd do the Shrine Auditorium. I had one piano I always used when I was with him. He even went so far as to put my initials "JR" on the bottom note. Whenever he would call to do a record or do a concert date, he would have them send that piano and make sure it was tuned and voiced. The last time I saw Hank, he said there was always a chair for me.

I'm a silly guy. The attitude of Mancini's orchestra used to disappoint me because nobody would ever applaud good work. Like the first time I ever heard "Baby Elephant Walk". Plas Johnson was playing tenor saxophone. I was playing an electric kind of like a calliope with a keyboard. Ray Sherman and I

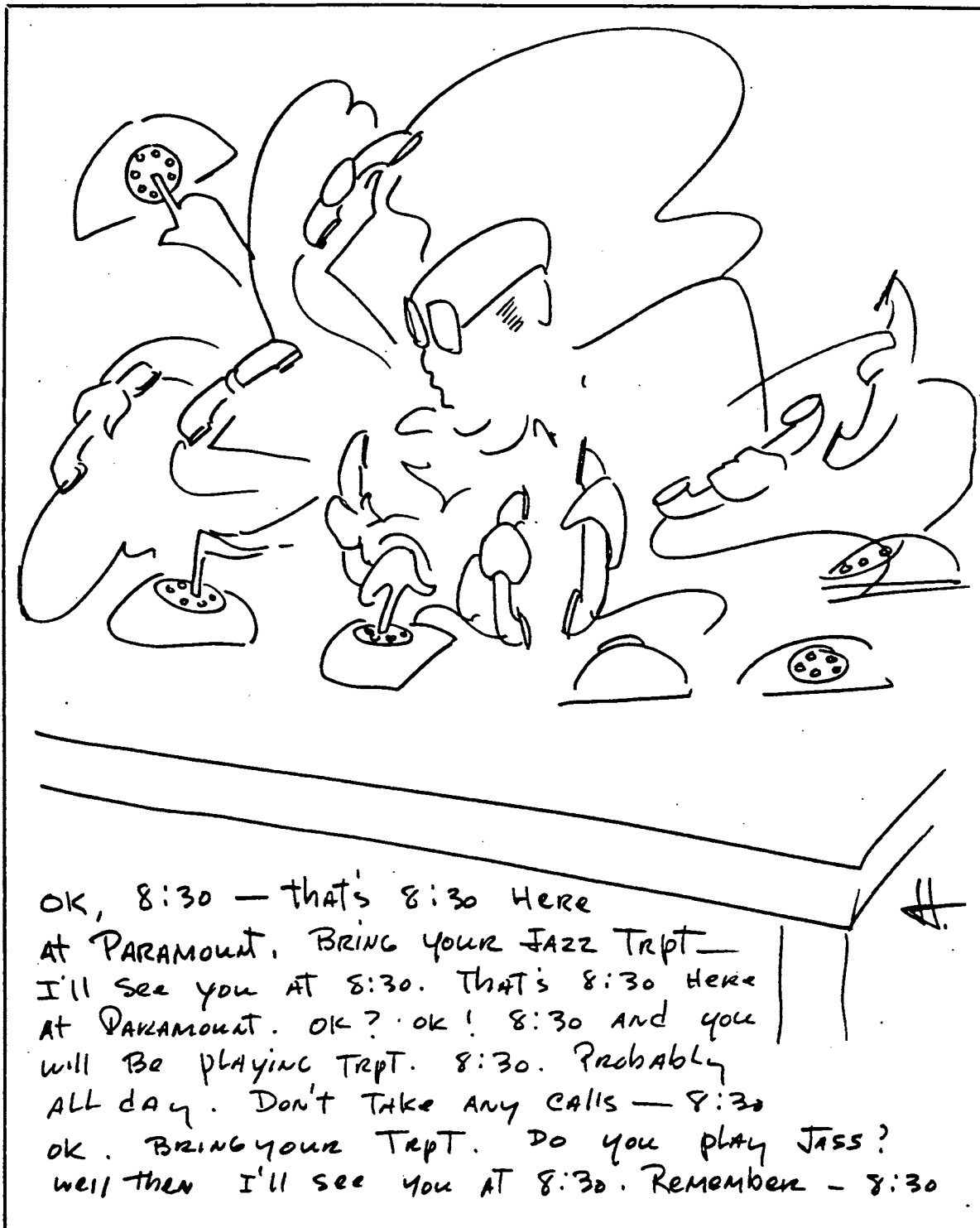


played, he played piano and I played this thing. I used to call Plas, and still do, "Earth" because he plays from the depth. And all these great tenor saxophone players would sit there after Plas had just laid down the law. No response. That kind of attitude is what disillusioned me about studio work in Los Angeles.

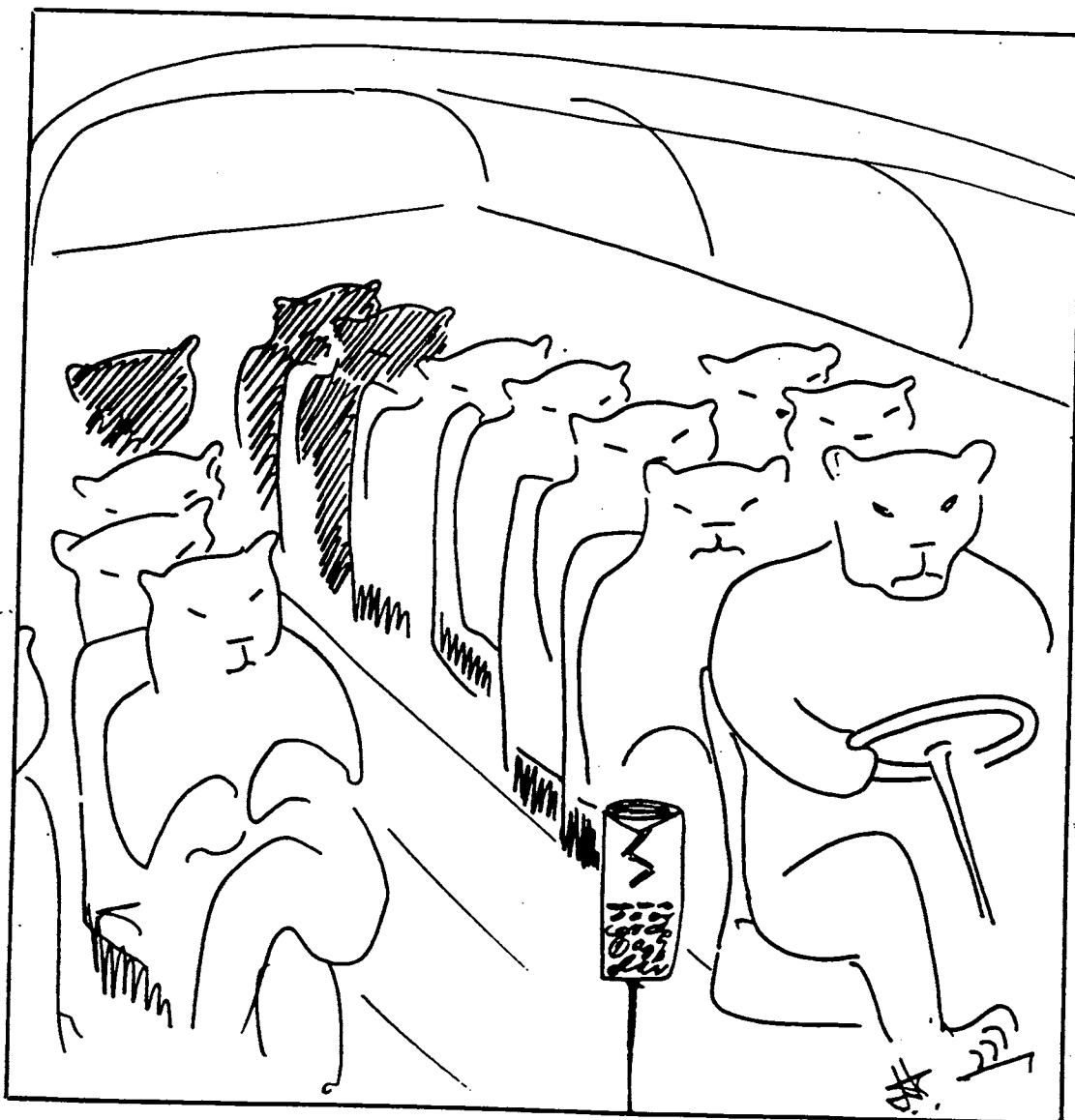
Working studio jobs has a tendency to drive you buggy because it involves so much pressure. I had to start early in the morning. It isn't exactly Christmas when you have to go out to Fox Studios and start playing music you've never seen before 8:30 in the morning. And you're not supposed to make any mistakes. But I was "hot" as they might say. I was one of the "hot boys". As it turned out, everything I made went into the house, orthodontists, bills, and the swimming pool. I went through all that. The only thing I had that I loved was my Porsche. Outside of that, the work was grueling.

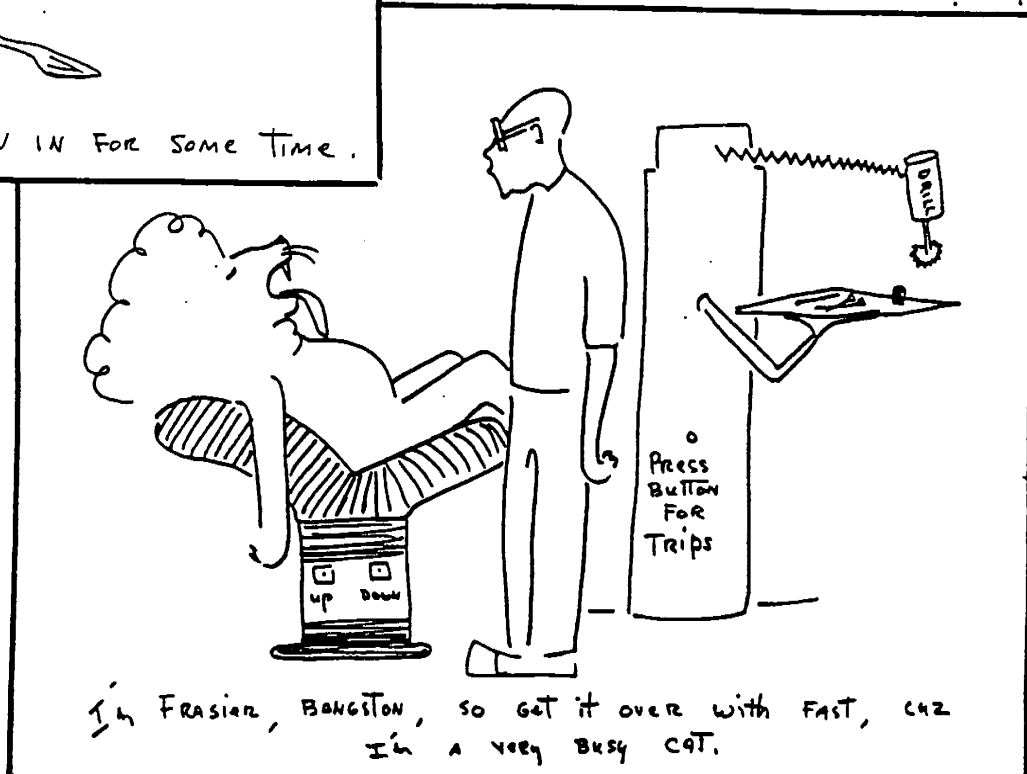
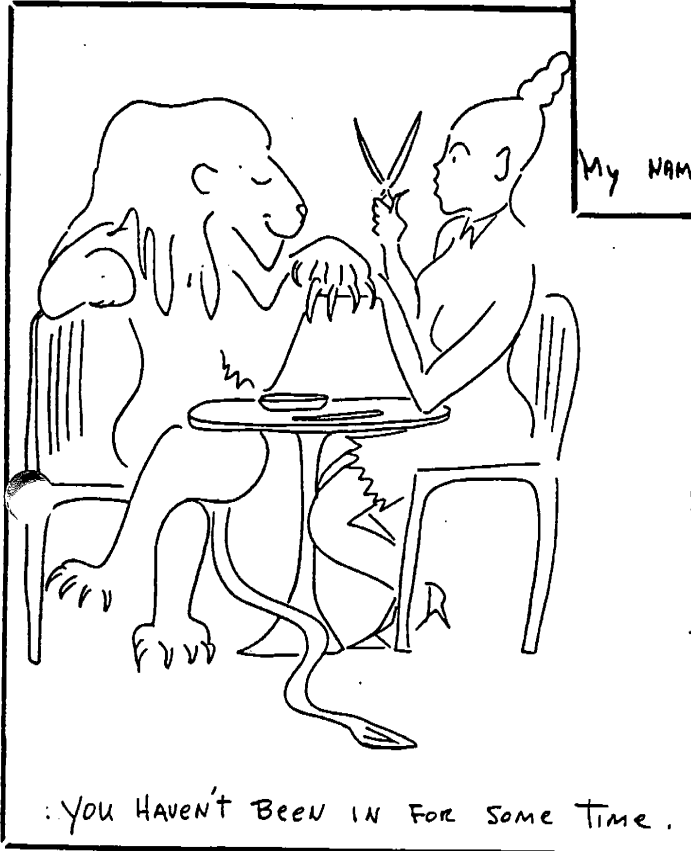
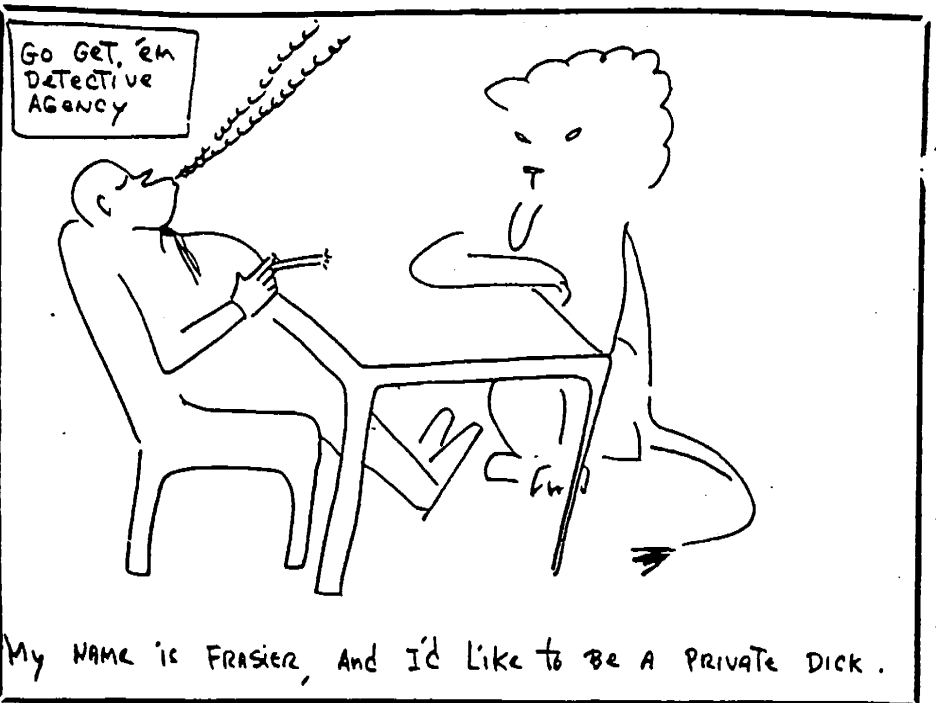
It was always unfair to my kids when I was doing studio work because I was always so wrapped up in music. I'd be gone all day and when I'd come home, I'd be grouchy. I wouldn't want to do anything. I get the 'guilts' because I was spending all my time trying to learn how to play. Listening to records. Staying up late. Going to work early. This and that. Playing jazz jobs wherever I could. That's not the way to be a father. I think it's unfair. If a guy decides to be a dedicated player and unless he's got a wife who can really devote all her time to the children, he shouldn't have any. And I'm lucky none of mine

ended up on LSD. I cautioned them very strongly. I know an awful lot of musicians whose lives are split because of their profession.



I was very much under pressure during that time. I didn't have Zoot's problem of wandering around New York trying to find work during the '60s. I paid a different kind of dues. I paid California dues. I just got to the point where I wanted to jump out of a window. So when I got the chance to get out of Los Angeles and go to New York in 1973, I went. Dorothy was unhappy about that, but she said 'go'.





Chapter 5: The Sensuous Lion

I first met Johnny Mercer in the late '50s when I went to work for Henry Mancini at Paramount Studios. Mercer's imagination was incredible and he could come up with a lyric in no time. He was very complex, a very gentle person. Quick on the draw.

He used to send me Christmas cards that were all in verse. Johnny always used to call me "Charlie" because I reminded him of someone he knew named Charlie.

He and I collaborated on a few songs over the years, about six in all. One tune we composed together was called "Baby, Don't Quit Now". Another was "Little Ingenue". Johnny made a recording of "Ingenue" in London that I've only heard once. I don't have it. And there's another one that no one's ever heard yet called "Pavin' California". Then there's "Gaellic Waltz". Johnny used to call it "Gaellic". Everyone seems to love it.

We wrote one tune he dedicated to his mother called "My Mother's Love". The lyrics are beautiful. It was my melody and his lyrics. To me, it was just a melody until he took it and wrote the lyrics. He made it into a song. I played "My Mother's Love" at a tribute to Johnny in New York in 1976 shortly after he died. My mother had died the night before. I didn't sing the words. I don't even remember doing the show. I still can't talk about that.

In 1973, I wrote a song with him called "Frasier, The Sensuous Lion". Frasier was a lion out at Lion Country Safari near Los Angeles. He'd been in a Mexican zoo in a cage for about 80 years or so. He was about the same age as a 90-year old man and had never been laid in his whole life.

He was just a mangy old sonuvabitch and they stuck him with a bunch of females. Frasier was a mean old bastard, but the females liked him. Those females didn't know what to think of him. He was just sitting around with his tongue hanging out and roaring and growling at all of them. Two females propped him up because he could hardly walk. One of the vets had stuck Frasier with all kinds of needles, everything he could think of -- and he came to life.

I can hear Frasier saying to himself, "I'll be a sonuvabitch. I'm going to fuck one of these bitches. I don't know when I'm going to do it, but I'm going to do it."

First thing you know, one of the females comes into heat and Frasier is right on her, boy. Ten times a day. Next one...next one...next one. He was doing them all. Goddam cubs started showing up everywhere. Every one of them was pregnant. He got about 60 cubs and when he died, there were about eight lionesses pregnant. Every time they would bring in a young lion, the lionesses would beat the shit out of the young one and kick his ass out. "We want HIM! We don't want you. Fuck you. You don't know what you're doing. He knows how to do it!"

They showed Frasier on television. It was absolutely

unbelievable. I gathered all the pictures, the newspaper articles, etc., and gave it to Johnny Mercer. I said, "We got a song here, man. You promise me you will read this shit before you go to sleep tonight."

He called me about two days later and said, "Charlie, you better get your ass out here. Frasier's on paper."

That summer of '73, I was invited to be a part of a tribute to Art Tatum set during the Newport Jazz Festival at Carnegie Hall. The concert was called "So-Lo Piano". That was a new thing for me. I was especially nervous because it was Carnegie Hall. Here I am a California boy. I'd never gone to a place like Carnegie before and played solo piano. I prepared for that show for about two or three months, though I didn't make up my mind about what I was going to play until the day before. As it was a tribute to Art, I wanted to play tunes that I knew Art loved.

I had to play for 20 minutes, alone in a show that featured nine other piano players. I had looked forward to getting acquainted with Willie "The Lion" Smith, but he died before the concert. He was supposed to be in the show. I met him way, way back as Ben Webster introduced me to him on the street one time. He was one of Duke's favorites.

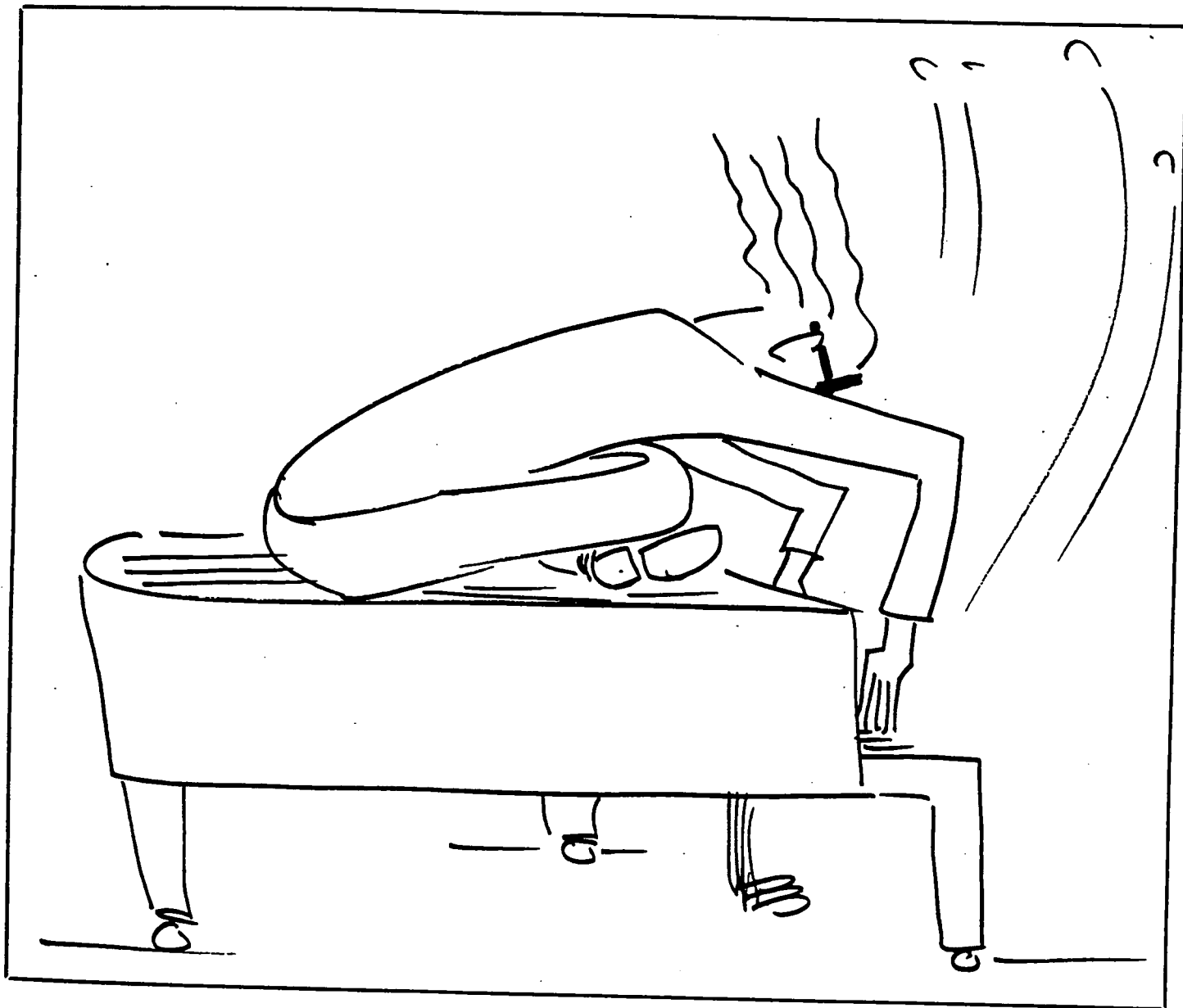
It was all mixed up, so I was really working on it. The Wellington Hotel in New York had a piano and I worked it out there. I remember just before I went on stage, Carmen McRae was back stage and she read me off something terrible. "If you don't play good, I'm going to kill you!" I just went out there and

played. I guess I did all right because Whitney Bailliet (The New Yorker) wrote up a good article. That was quite a compliment to be compared to Ellis Larkins. Solo piano, look out! I don't think anyone can cut him. George Shearing is pretty great. As a matter of fact, I'd rather hear him alone than with a group because of what he does. It's like comparing Art Tatum...Art was a soloist. You put Art with a group, well, he didn't know how to play with a group. He played too much piano. Art couldn't keep his fingers still. He was all over the piano all the time so he was out of place with a group.

I don't remember what I played. I wound up with "Liza" and I remember also playing "Emmaline" because I knew Art liked that. I played early in the concert and as soon as I got through, I had to run over to Michael's Pub and play with a trio. I worked there about a week. I went back to California and the guy called me to go to work at the Cookery. I went to the Cookery and started hanging out at Bradley's. Bradley wanted me to move back to New York, so I moved there. I stayed there five years.

New York was a different type of thing. The difference between the East and West coasts musically is like one great big wall! It's like the wall between East and West Germany almost. New York musicians are all very, very interested in jazz. Sometimes when I'd play, I would look up and there might be four piano players in the audience who were listening and who were watching. And all four of them could blow you out! All four can

play, and I mean play! Roland Hanna might be sitting over here. You got Hank Jones if he's around. And Ellis Larkins might be sitting over there. Take a song like "Some Other Spring". You ask the average person around Los Angeles to play "Some Other



Spring", and they don't know "Some Other Spring". In New York, you ask someone to play "Some Other Spring", they all know "Some Other Spring". It's part of the deal. It's music, music, music, music! There's a pulse they have in New York. In Los Angeles,

they're all worried about hours.

I don't know if it's possible in Los Angeles to find a room like Ellis Larkins has at the Carnegie Tavern in New York, where you sit and play what you want to play, and it's quiet. And when you get through, they give you a little applause and you walk over and you have a little Couvasier or a beer. Or you don't have anything. You stay, you keep yourself together, and you play. They appreciate it. They come and they listen. There's an awful lot of rowdiness too, but you have to put up with that wherever you go. In Los Angeles, you're lucky to get two nights somewhere. I think it's because there are so many musicians who are available and who like to play. And there are so many cheap people that have the clubs that won't pay.

In New York, players will stay up 'til noon on the piano just fooling around on one song. I've done it many times at Bradley's. I'd walk out of there sometimes and it would be high noon. Sure, we'd sit there and bullshit. One guy would play and then another. That's the way I do it. Bang, bang. It's all music. I like that. Bradley. I love Bradley. He runs a loose club, but if anyone puts his hand on the piano, he's right there. He won't let anybody touch that piano. That piano was left to him by Paul Desmond, with the provision that Bradley put it in the club. It was a brand new Baldwin. Paul was a close friend of mine and he used to come down to the club every night. He hated that little piano I had to play and he put it in his will that his piano would go to Bradley, providing that it went

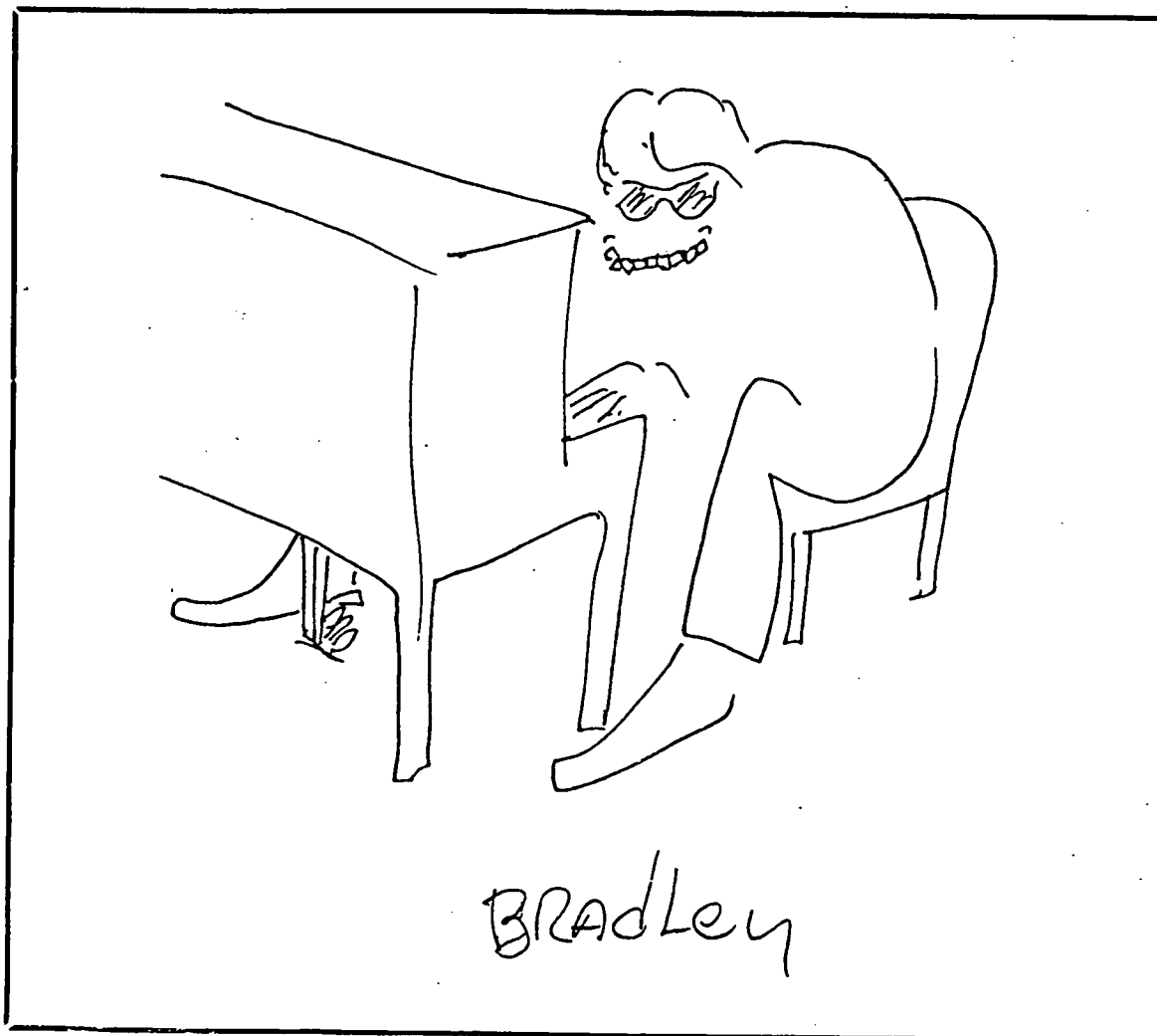
Quiet, Please



ELLIS

in the club. Nobody knew he was sick until the last six months.

The best thing about this move, was that I was again playing the way I liked to play. Songs! Tunes! I was playing with people I like to play with. Don't worry about some guy with a stick.



No practicing, no more of this 'under the gun' stuff. It's no wonder I didn't get cancer of the 'Vegas Nerve' after all those years on the West Coast.

As far as the people I liked to play with, I'd have to start with the bass players. I brought my bass library with me from Los Angeles, so the bass man could follow where I was going.

Jesus, it was great to be playing at a place like Bradley's or Knickerbocker's with a good bass player like Michael Moore. Michael Moore, incidentally, is one of my favorite bass players. George Mraz, he's a virtuoso. I call him "Bounce". He's a very, very close friend. Buster Williams. Rufus Reid. Major Holley - "Mule". Mule's like Slam Stewart in the way he bows his bass, but he's a lot different. He's got a wild sense of humor. He's crazy. He used to call me "Brainscan" because he thought I was



Geo Shearing

A.

crazy.

When I got to New York and started coming into Bradley's to play, Charles Mingus liked the way I played and used to come in every night and have dinner. The first time I ever played with him was in California sometime in the '40s. I got Mingus his job with Red Norvo. Mingus was hard to get along with. Could be. I never had any trouble with Mingus. We were pals. I never had a bad word with him. I guess I'm one of the few. From what I heard, he knocked a few teeth out. If he liked you, he liked you. If he didn't like you or didn't know you, he was miserable. He wouldn't talk to you.

After he had been coming in for awhile, Mingus put me right in the middle of an album he was making with his band. "Four Shades of Blue" or something like that. "You're the one who can do what I want right here," he said. So he hired me and I went down and played a solo piece.

I got to know a lot of piano players I thought I'd never get a chance to know, a lot of great piano players. Larry Willis, who plays like Bud Powell. Dick Hyman. Tommy Flanagan, he's like a brother to me. Cedar Walton. John Hicks. Randy Weston. Jackie Byard. I got to know Ellis Larkins real well. I used to play a certain trick on Ellis Larkins just to get him to come up and play. His favorite tune was, has always been, "I Want a Little Girl", and he liked to play it in A-flat. So when he was around, I would always play it in some other key. Then I'd play it and I'd make some mistakes on purpose, see. I'd smile at him. His

old lady, Chrystal, would be sitting beside him. She knew what I was doing.

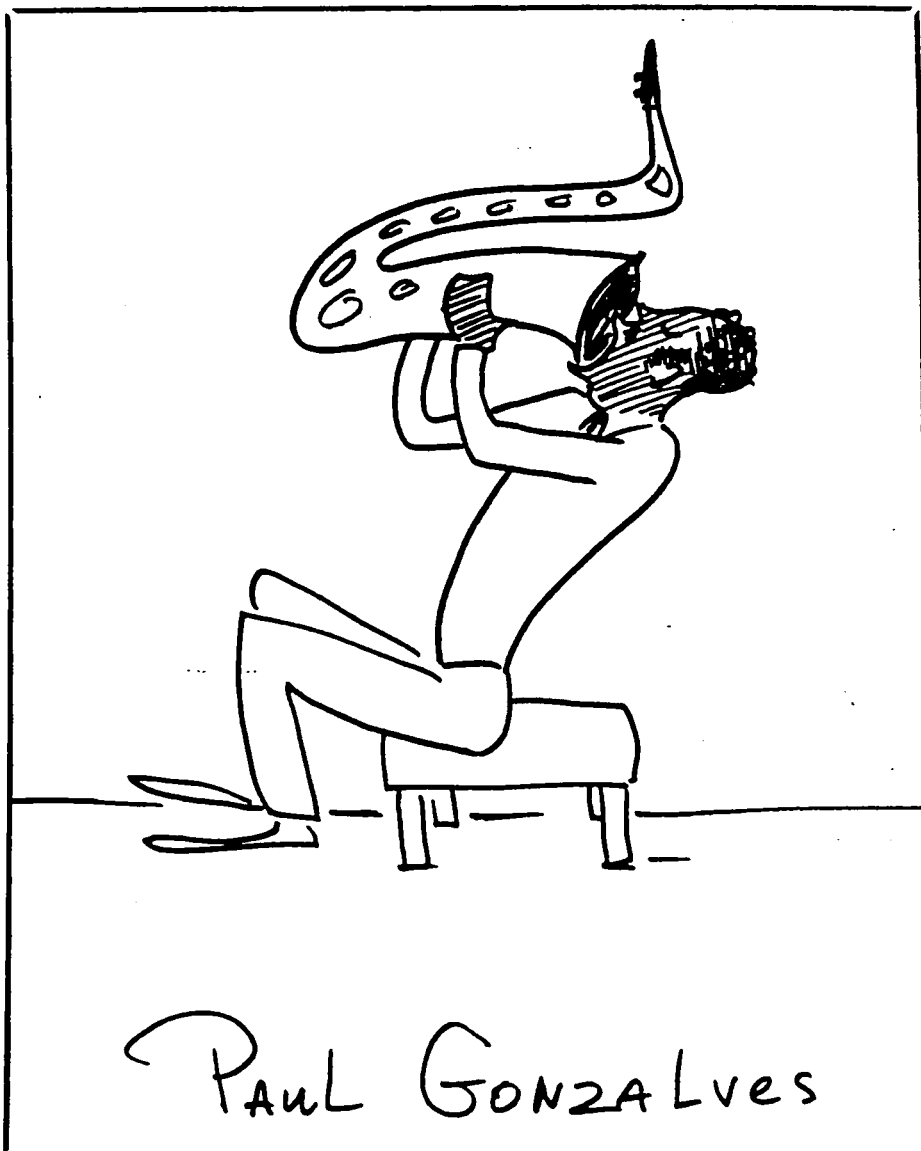
Ellis would finally get mad and he'd come up and say, "Motherfucker, get off there! I'll show you! You're in the wrong key to begin with." And boom, boom, boom. He'd tear me all up and then I'd get up and say, "Well, why don't you show me?" Then I'd go and sit down in the corner, order a drink and listen to Ellis Larkins play for an hour. He finally got wise. Ellis is a bitch. He's got that touch.

All the tenor players like Junior Cook and George Coleman. Jesus, look out for George Coleman. I also got to playing with Al Cohn and Zoot Sims a lot. I played with Scott Hamilton. He's really wonderful. Scott's a paradox because he's so young and he plays the old stuff. He goes after Ben Webster and Coleman Hawkins. You don't have many young guys doing that.

Paul Gonzalves, the great tenor player from the Duke Ellington orchestra, used to live down the street from me at the Edison Hotel. I think he is one of the most underrated jazz musicians, not necessarily a jazz musician. Just a musician. Paul was a very sensuous player like Johnny Hodges was a sensuous player. Lester Young was not that sensual in the sense of the 'bedroom' technique that Johnny Hodges had. With Johnny Hodges, you think of black silk sheets when you give him the right piece of material. Just give him something pretty. Paul was that way.

I got to know Paul very well. He was a very sentimental,

very soft, very sweet man. "Old Mex". Mex. I think Paul was Cuban. He used to take his salary and send it home to his family. It would leave him with about ten bucks. He never had any bread. I used to carry him home on my shoulders when he would drink too much. Paul would call me up in the morning. He'd say, "This is Mex". I'd say, "What time is it?" "Five minutes to 12." "Well, the bar opens at 12 o'clock. Get your clothes on and I'll meet you down there." Then I'd take him across the street and try to make him eat. It was kind of a tough job. He died on an airplane going to London. I felt bad.



And I played with Sam Jones, Elvin Jones, Joe LaBarbera, Ruby Braff, Warren Vache" and Art Farmer. I also did a couple of gigs with Thad Jones and Mel Lewis, taking Roland Hanna's place. It was one of the best big bands I ever played with in my life, absolutely. Thad was the leader; he stood in front. He was very loose. He'd dream things up, wave guys in and out, bring in different things, then, all of a sudden, cut everybody out and cut to me. It was like something I'd never done before. Boy, he had some hellish cats in that band. There was a tenor player, Billy Harper. Whew! And he sat right by the piano. That's where I met George Mraz.

I loved the musicianship. Very difficult. Not really difficult, not really over my head. But challenging when they were played right as that band played them. Mel Lewis is a very lovable guy. I love Mel and think Mel is one of the greatest trumpet players I ever played with. That band was and still is perfect for Mel Lewis. Thad Jones was the right leader. I heard the band not long ago in New York. It's still a marvelous band. They've got Bob Brookmeyer writing for them. A lot more advanced, different.

Ben Webster died about this time. Ben was like a father to me. I spent a week in Copenhagen with Ben and he died about a week after I left. I hadn't seen him in about 12 years, but we had corresponded by telephone and by letter. I went to New York with Carmen McRae and she gave me some days off and I went to Copenhagen and surprised Ben. That was the first time I'd ever been to Europe. Ben immediately made his wife put a sheet on the

davenport so I would have a place to sleep. Then she left to see her mother and I stayed with Ben.

She came back the day I left and all I remember is that Ben was in bad shape at the last. I didn't think Ben was going to go. He'd been drinking too much. The doctor was on his way over when I left. The doctor scared the living daylights out of him. Ben went down to Amsterdam to play a concert. They threw a party for him and got him drunk. He had a stroke that night and died the next day. I think he also had a massive heart attack.

He went to Europe in the first place because he was sort of ostracized in Los Angeles. He used to raise a lot of hell. They '86'd him all over, which means they wouldn't hire him. He'd get drunk and throw his arms across the bar knocking 20 glasses off and stuff like that. Ben was a big man. He was a bull in a China shop, except with people he loved. In one of my wallets, I still have things signed "S.H. Webster". "S.H.", that's the nickname we had for each other. 'Cause we used to play golf together all the time. "Where are you?" "I'm over here in the Shit House."

After Ben left L.A., he went to New York and he did the same thing there. Then he had an opportunity to go to Europe. They got him real blasted for the trip to Europe because he hated to fly. They got him to Copenhagen and he stayed there. His move surprised me in a way. I didn't know how in the hell they got him out of the country. I don't know how they got him to Japan with Norman Granz. They must have put him on the plane on a

stretcher. He was scared of boats. That's why he was afraid to come home. He wanted to come home. He was always calling New York. Calling Milt Hinton. He was lonesome.

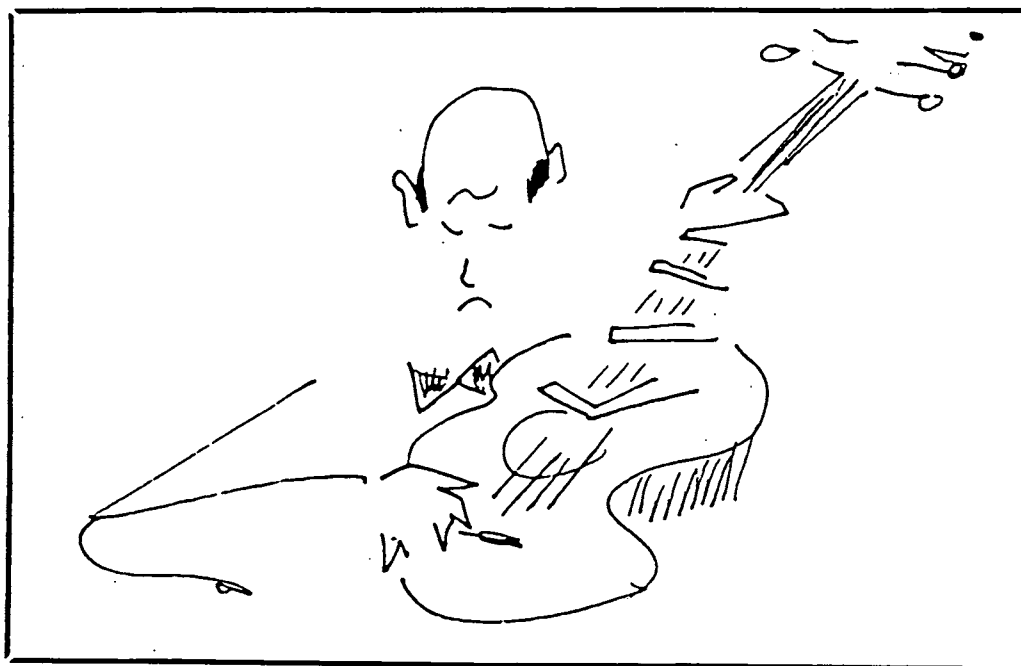
Ben never learned to speak the way they do in Copenhagen. That language, Danish, he never learned all that shit. They put up with him over there because they loved the way he played. Ben used to do an awful lot of travelling because he had to make a living... and he died.

Back East I started making records like crazy. I didn't know what in the hell was going on. I did a lot of records in Europe. I don't even have copies of some of the records I made over there. I even got to sing on some of them. That was funny. I got a bang out of it when people would come up and ask me to sing because I really like to sing. I don't consider myself a good singer, but I like to sing. As long as the audience likes it and my singing doesn't bother them, if they don't throw me out of the joint, I'll sing. I made a lot of records where I got to sing a lot of tunes.

Stan Getz and I played a couple of times together and we also did that record "The Peacocks". I also did some records with Zoot Sims. Zoot and I were always tight, but before I moved to New York, we never saw each other. We were set to do an album for Norman Granz at Pablo, so I started fattening up Zoot's library with different songs. Every time I thought of a song, I'd just write it out for Zoot and make him play it.

That kept him from playing the same songs all the time.

Zoot was even nominated for a Grammy for "Warm Tenor" (Pablo). The first record date I did with Zoot was for Gerry McDonald, the one who does "Choice" Records. The next one we did was the first one for Norman. I also did another one for Norman with Joe Pass. Just the two of us. That was a ball. He and I got on like thieves. We just sat down, picked out a song and played. We have a way of watching each other, grinning at each other. I think one of the tunes we played was "So Rare". Another one was

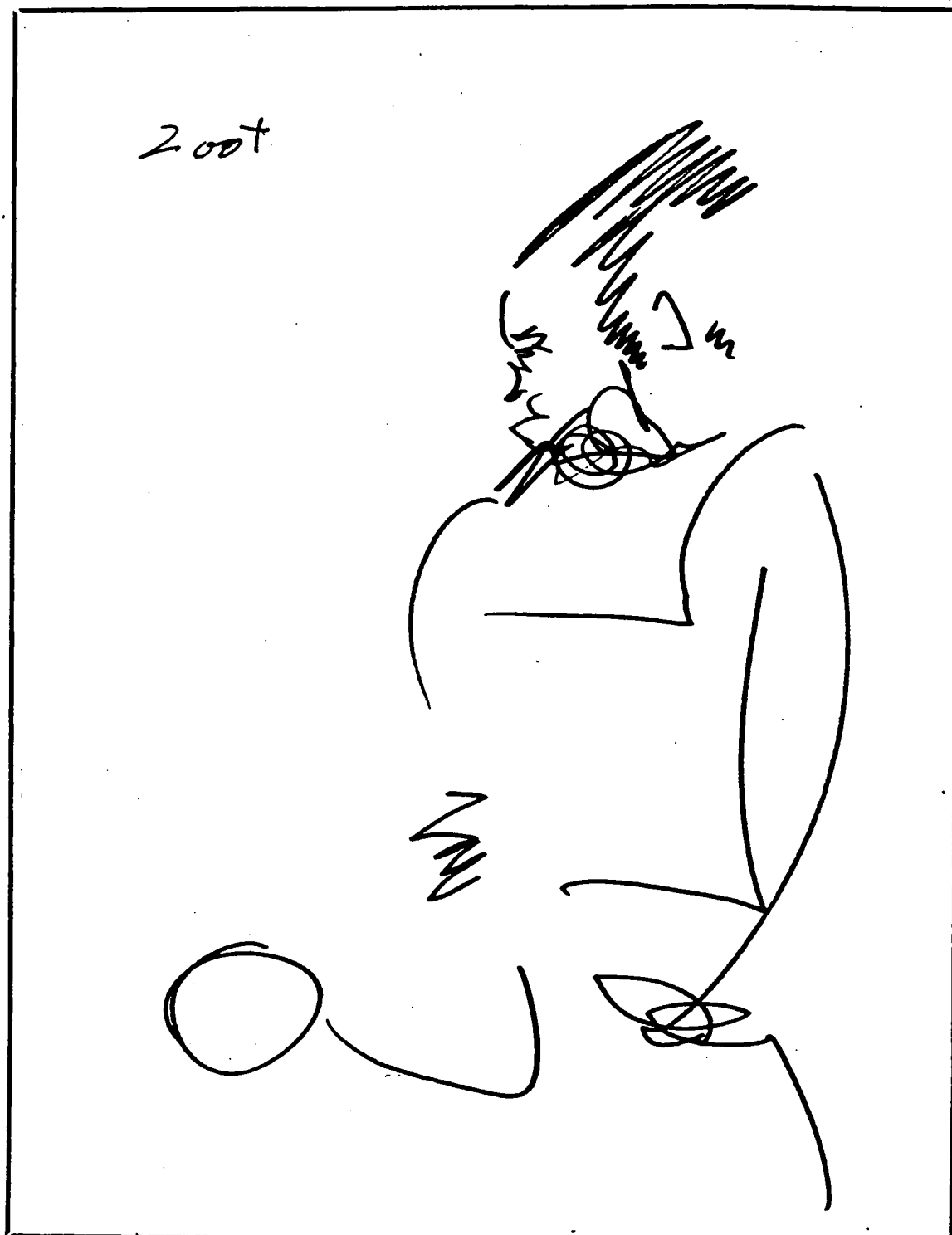


"Marquita". That was Joe's idea. Good song, an old one. He's an exquisite chord man, but he can also fiddle. He's like a rattlesnake on that thing. Tremendous musician.

Norman Granz called me way, way back about going to work for Ella Fitzgerald but I was tied up on the coast. He called me again to go to work with her in the summer of 1980 for a month's tour of Europe. It happened that I had some time off so I went.

After that, he called me back and said she wanted me to stay.

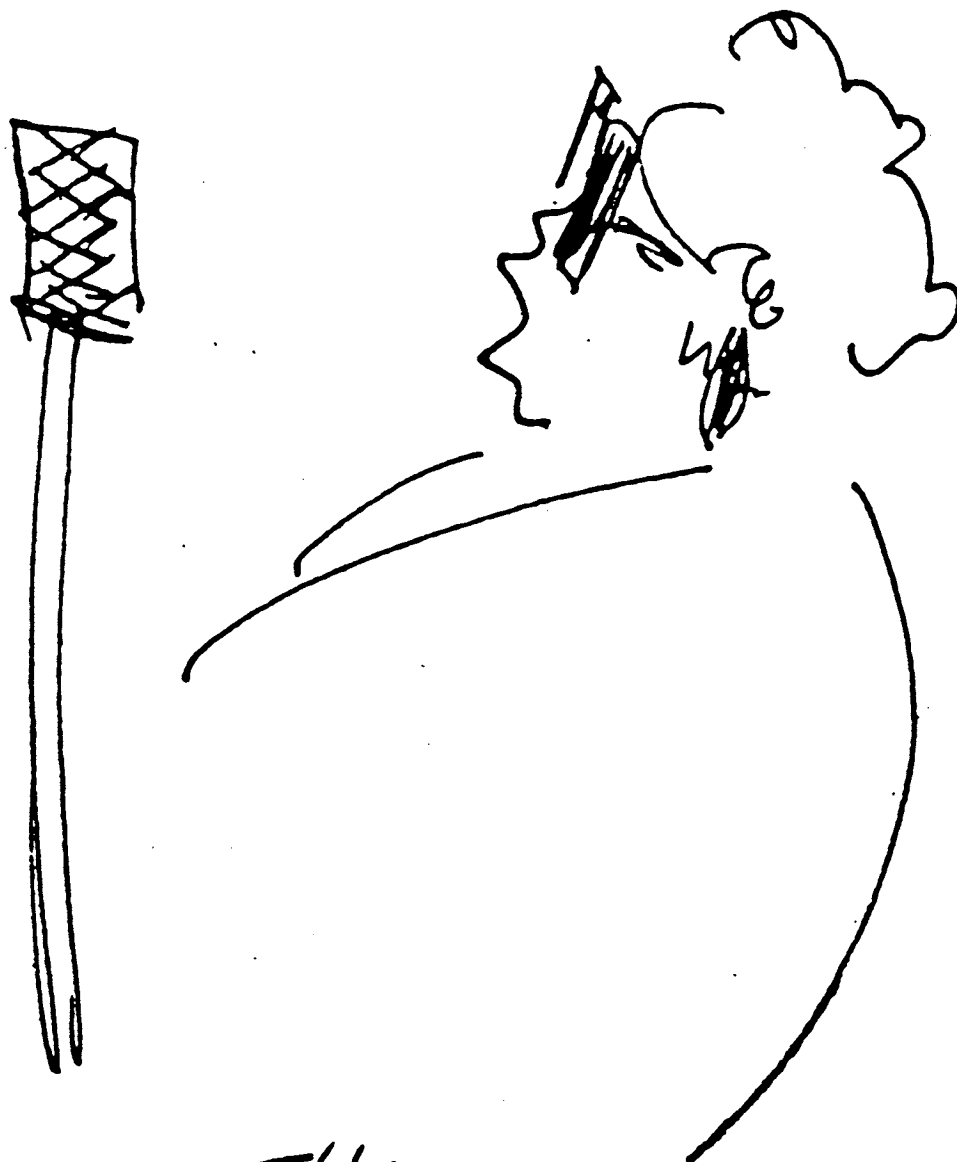
I think Ella Fitzgerald is a tremendous natural musician. She's ace-high as far as I'm concerned. And she has exquisite taste, I think. Ella doesn't get too cute. She doesn't try to



overdue it. Ella does what she can do and she does it perfectly. In my estimation, she's singing as well if not a little better than she used to sing. Ella has more depth and more feeling the older she gets. I don't think she'll ever quit. I think Ella will probably take a vanishing pill some night in the middle of a tune. Ella has a lot of energy. She doesn't have any bad habits. She likes to eat. That's about it. Ella works hard and she worked us hard too. You don't fool around when you're working for her. She wants you to know what you're doing and, naturally, she expects you to take care of business.

As a singer, Ella is full of surprises, but they're not the kind that throw you into left field. I got to where I could anticipate pretty well what she would do, that is once we got into the song. I never knew what song she was going to call. You know, if she turned around and called some tune, I'd say, "Okay, let's do it." In rehearsal, we would take a song and work out a little thing on it, and then I'd scribble it down so I wouldn't forget it. Ella's mind, she's constantly thinking about tunes. Ella's got a lot of ideas. Ella is really the head member of a quartet. If the feeling's not there, there's no quartet.

Ella sticks closely to her arrangements. Say, for example, Ella has an arrangement of "Tisket-a-Tasket", she always sings it that way. I think it has to do with security and not worrying about what's going to happen next. A planned thing. I never had



ELLA

the chance to play the way I wanted to play unless it was after hours when I was usually too whipped and too beat to feel like playing. I remember one night in Dallas Ella was set to do her closer. She had two closers. One of them involved a tune called "Dream" and we had a thing worked out on that. The other closer was "I've Got a Crush on You". Instead of playing the beginning

of the verse on "I've Got a Crush on You", I gave her a C chord. It didn't work. We wound up playing it in D. Ella was mad. I told her on the elevator going up, "I gave it to you in the key we play it in. Jesus Christ, what do you want?" I should have played the entire beginning of the verse to remind her.

When I worked for Sarah Vaughan, she was likely to do anything. Good god, she was liable to start on a high C-sharp or some damn thing. You don't know what she's going to do. The funnier the chords, the crazier the chords, the better she liked it. You could play World War III behind Sarah Vaughan and she'll just laugh and love it.

You got to watch it with Ella. You don't get down with Ella like you do with other singers. Like saying, "I don't like that. That sounds like a piece of shit." You don't do that, no. Sarah is completely different. She's a cat! She just loves to celebrate. I don't mean go crazy. Sarah loves to have a ball. You can say anything as long as you remain a gentleman. You don't have to worry about swearing. Peggy was that way. Carmen's that way. Language is not as precious as it used to be in today's idioms. People use words that used to be considered profane. They just fly out of people's mouths now.

When I was working for Ella, you wouldn't hear me say "shit" unless I was completely out of my noodle. Nothing, boy, play it straight. Because Ella is a very religious woman. She never swears. She can if she wants to. I've heard her go a couple of times when she was really mad. Usually Ella is like a saint as

far as getting down. You don't get down with Ella like you do the others. It's a difference in personality.

I think it took Ella a little time to get used to me because of the way Paul Smith, the guy who played for her before me, played. Paul is what you might call a 'busy' player. Not that that's not good. I imagine that Tommy Flanagan and I had a similar approach to accompanying Ella because I think we think more alike than we do like Paul. And Paul's a hell of a piano player. I think Tommy is one of the best accompanists. He's peerless. When Basie plays for her, he don't play nothing. He just tinkles.

I can't play behind a singer and just keep noodling around all the time. I think it's too distracting to the audience to hear this constant tinkling on the piano, fast runs and all that stuff. I like to play like an orchestra with little frills here and there at appropriate times. Not constantly. In comparison to the way I was playing with Billie Holiday, my style has changed an awful lot through the years. I play much fuller.

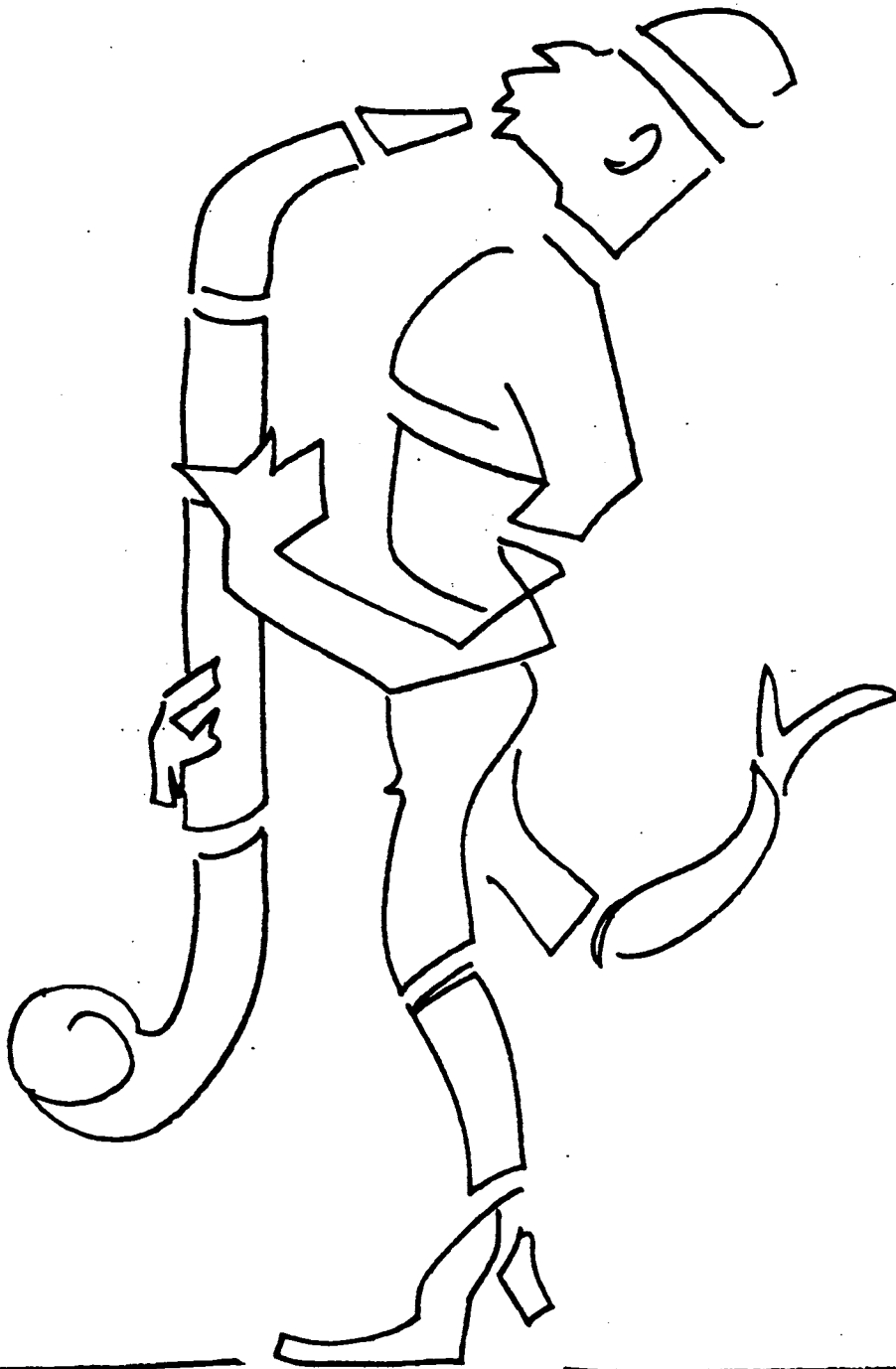
It takes years to get where you think you are right. It takes time. So I would play a certain way for one singer because he or she liked it. There might be another singer who doesn't care for that full stuff. He might want more of a softer, tinkly-type thing. So you do that, whatever they want. In other words, they're the star. You're supposed to make them look good. Your job is to provide a carpet for them.

There was a guy in Vegas that told me... he was a very smart musician. I was playing with Peggy Lee at the time. I went to the bar with him after the show. I asked him, "Well, what did you think of the show?" He said, "It was a great show, except for one thing. I didn't know whether to listen to you or her."

Time is the most important thing, and Ella has such perfect time. When you have someone like that, then you don't push the time or drag the time. I think one of the hardest things for a young musician to learn is to stay relaxed. That is, to loosen the back of the neck muscles where all the tension begins. Another thing is dragging the tempo on ballads, especially when they get into double time. They almost always end up playing a ballad half as fast as when they started it. If you got off the tempo, Ella would turn around and put her hand up and make some motion with her hand. If she wanted the tempo up a little higher, you can see it. Sarah Vaughan, all she will do is turn around and look at you--sadly. That means there was something wrong. Peggy Lee used to always stand by the piano. when she wanted something, if she wanted a little more edge on the tempo, I knew it. I got to where I knew her like a book.

I've played for a lot of singers who will skip a beat or something else that will throw you off. I've got to go with them. That's no fun at all. Then there are other singers that will sing a verse different every time. You never knew where they would be at the verse. The first time they sing it, they

will rush right through it. Then they will sing it and stop at a certain place. You really got to watch it. I remember one time I was playing a television show honoring the big contributors to



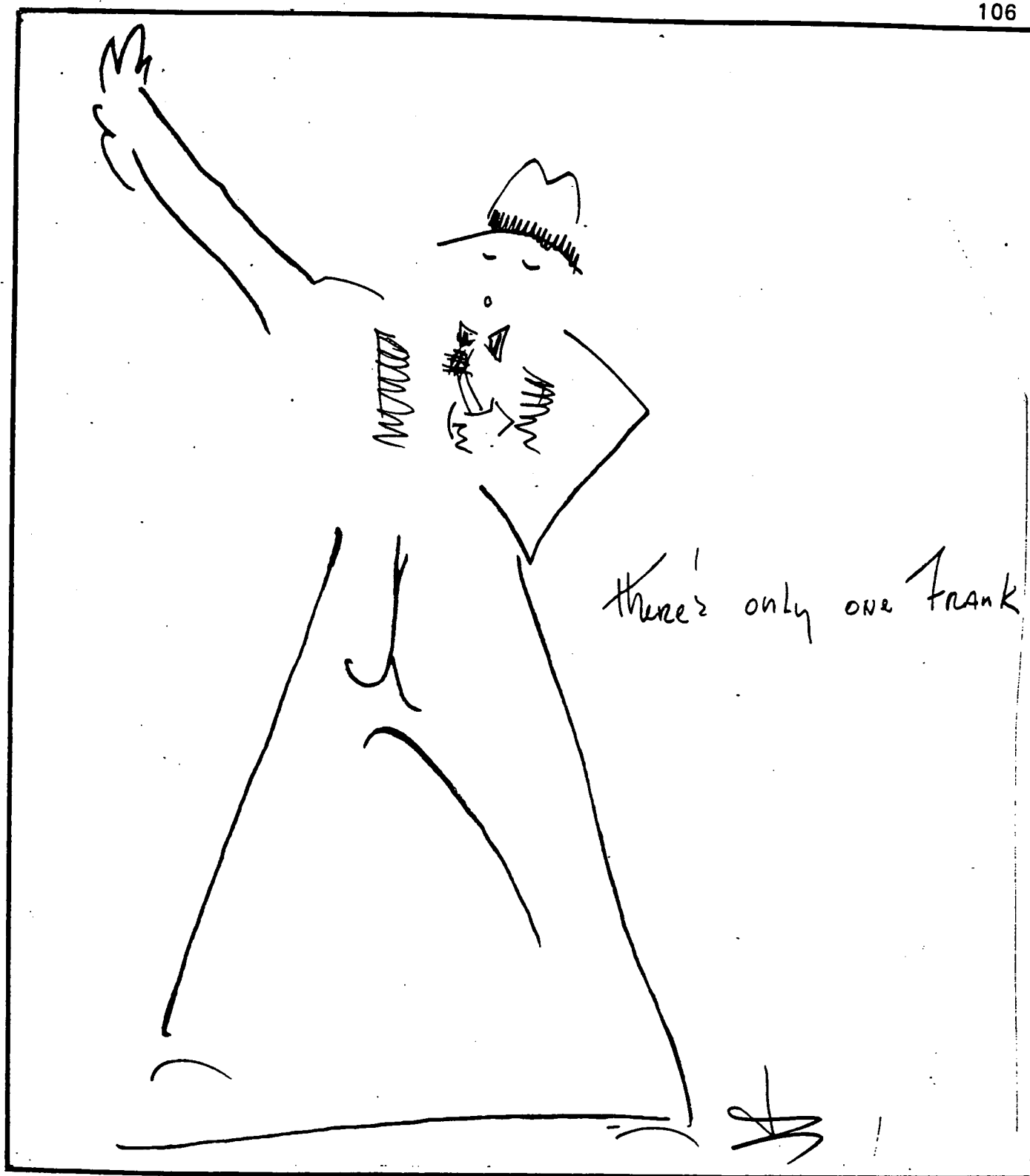
Stan Who

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television. Fred Astaire was there, and this and that. And they had Danny Kaye. He was going to sing. We ran down that verse 15 times, and he never did sing it the same way twice. I had a hell of a time with him. By the time we got through playing that tune, I hated him. I kept thinking, "You sonuvabitch, why don't you sing it and get it over with? What are you trying to do, make a fool out of me?" I was ready to call him. "Look, mother, why don't you play it? You're the one that's doing it. I'm just trying to follow you. Make sense." I know a lot of them like that. Edie Gorme is very unpredictable. Some of them don't know what they're doing. Tempo's wrong, tempo's wrong. Half of it is based on insecurity.

I got good training in singers from the very beginning. Without a doubt, Billie Holiday had a big influence on me. Billie taught me how to interpret and ability to read a lyric without distorting the melody, but sort of. She always knew the melody, but she would interpret the melody the way she felt the lyrics should be told. Billie Holiday was a storyteller. "A Sunbonnet Blue" was one of my favorites. Also "What a Little Moonlight Can Do". "Ooooh, ooooh, ooooh, what a moonlight can do to you." What a tune!

I always enjoyed playing for Anita O'Day. Anita O'Day is a musician, a swinging, perfect-time jazz musician. She's liable to do anything. Anita is an improviser. If she played a horn, she would play like Dexter Gordon. She's one of those. She knows what she's doing. She used to come down where I was playing in



New York and I would make her sing. I even put her in a song about a tennis player - "Jam Face". I had a young Manx. He was putting on a show for me one time and he made me think of Rod Laver flying around the court. Anita O'Day popped in there somewhere. She loved that.

I think Mel Torme is one of the finest male singers that I've ever heard. Mel is a true musician. He really knows where he's at. You don't fool Mel. He likes pretty chords and you can play some nice piano. He appreciates good songs. Mel's a good leader and a good arranger and knows how to put things together. And Mel likes the way I sing. Yes. How 'bout that! In fact, he made a record of one of the tunes I did with Johnny Mercer, "Morning Star". Sarah Vaughan and I recorded that together.

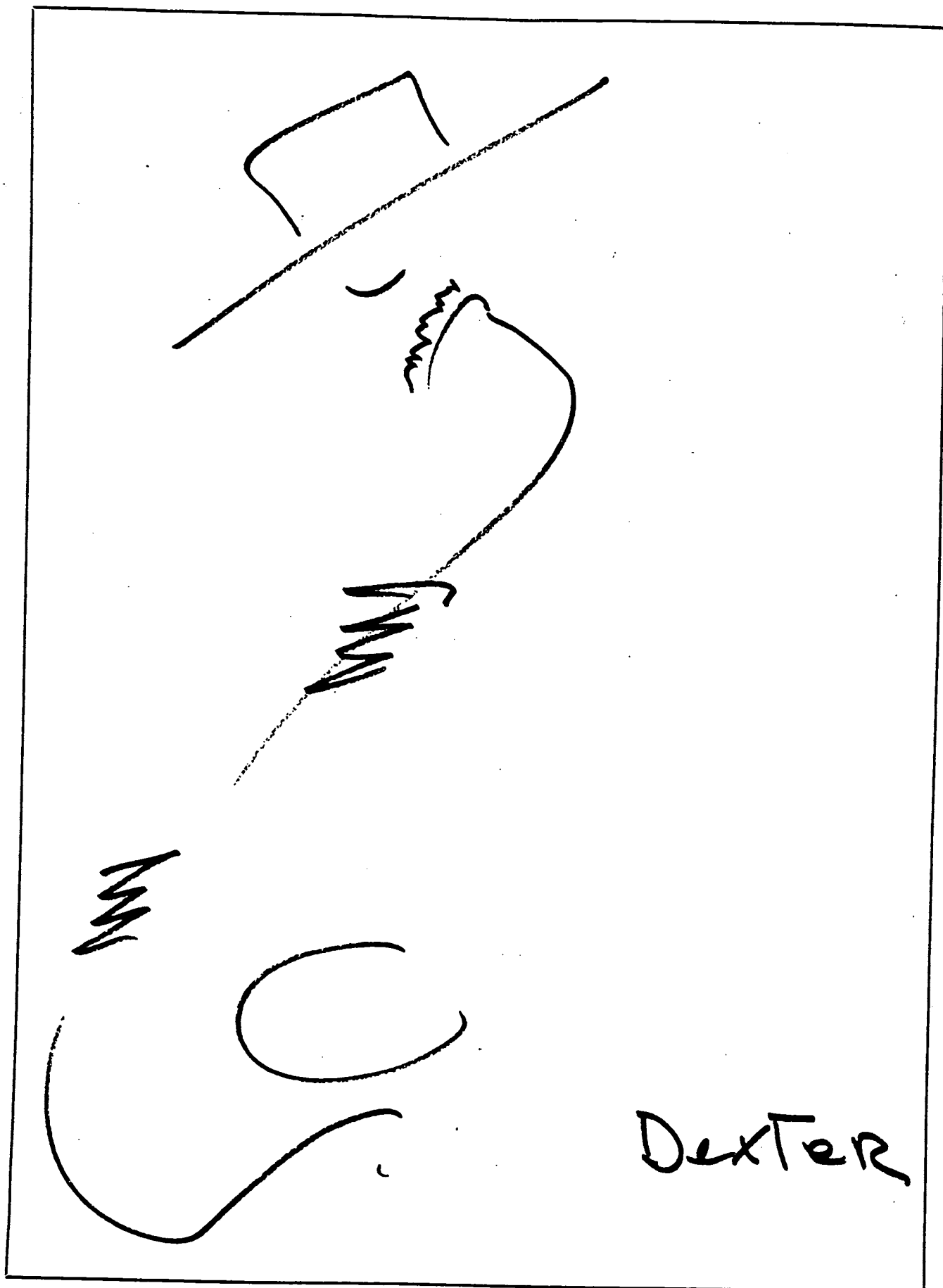
I played piano for Judy Garland's television show when Mel Torme was the musical director. She wasn't difficult with the orchestra. She was difficult with the people that were trying to get her to come out and do her numbers. Judy had a little tent out in the hallway and she was drinking that Rhine wine. She was staying pretty out. Once they got her out there, she'd do it. Judy Garland was a great singer. She was capable of singing a tune that would make the average singer cry and couldn't finish. Me being a terrible singer, if I were doing a tune that really touched me, and I wanted to be able to finish, I would think of Judy and it would save me. There are certain tunes where the lyrics make you feel like crying and you have to forget about your own personal feeling and get through it. She could do it. I don't know how she could do it.

Frank Sinatra has that thing too. I never worked with Frank Sinatra on a regular basis, but I've played with him on shows and things. The Academy Awards. I made a couple of records with him through the years. Frank's beautiful, easy to work with. All

you have to do is play the right chords, that's all, and don't mess up. Frank just wants everything to come off right so he can get it over with and get the hell out of there. That's what I think.

Frank is very sentimental. He's got a heart as big as this room. If I were in trouble, I mean serious trouble, like if the doctor told me I had cancer or some damn thing, and I called Frank, Frank would help me. You never hear any good things about Frank. All they do is write the things that are bad, like when he slugs somebody. Well, he had a reason for it! Maybe he was loaded. He likes to celebrate! He likes to have fun. I know what it's like to have fun.

Frank came to see me two or three times when I was playing in New York and he brought his whole bunch with him. He came because he wanted to come and say 'hello'. And I consider that to be a great compliment! If Frank wanted me to do something, I'd do it for him. He came up to Fat Tuesdays in New York one night and I was playing with Zoot. He showed up with the whole gang. They gave him a great big table. I didn't even know he was there. We played. When we got off, he got up from the table and put his arms around me. I introduced him to Michael Moore, and he took Mike Moore and me upstairs after the gig and we stayed up 'til dawn. And all we did was bullshit. There was somebody there taking pictures. And there was a bodyguard standing at the door and another bodyguard standing over there. He needs them! The next day, I got an album and a picture. He sent Zoot's wife



flowers.

I don't talk about Frank much. Most of the musicians I've talked to about Frank like him. I think Frank Sinatra's one of the greatest. Not only musically, but personally. Frank is a real guy. He's one of us underneath all that crap he has to go through all the time. Like he goes somewhere and they're all over him. Jesus Christ, how would you like to have that. I wouldn't like that. No wonder he's got that chip on his shoulder. If he's got that chip on his shoulder, I'm on his other shoulder. I think he's gotten a bum rap all his life as far as the press is concerned. You talk about a big-time name - Sinatra. It's the magic name. He's a regular cat. That's all.

When they started with that 'up the rent' stuff, I decided to come home to Los Angeles and leave New York. In 1981, Ella did a show in Laguna Beach. I think Laguna was one of the best shows we ever played even though it was outside. It was a very good show. That's when I decided to come home.

Traveling with Ella was very strenuous for me at my age, to be getting up very early, packing bags, rushing downstairs and this and that. And getting to the airport and walking to the 87th gate. That takes it out of me. By the time I sat down in the plane, I was so exhausted that I could hardly catch my breath. I do have a bronchial thing. And when I see a flight of stairs, uhhh. I don't know what to do when I see a flight of stairs especially if it's a long one. I have to go up backwards or I can't breathe when I get to the top. When we would finally

get to the destination, we might have half an hour to try and clean up, put your tuxedo on, go down and do a show.

After the show, what do you do? You want a beer. What are you going to do? go upstairs, stretch out and say, "Well, goodnight." Who in the hell does that? She goes straight up to the room and takes care of herself. That's why she's so healthy and strong. The rest of us, we're just a bunch of bums. And it's lonely on the road. I can't make myself stay in the room. I can only stay up there and read so long unless there's a good fight or tennis match or a good movie.

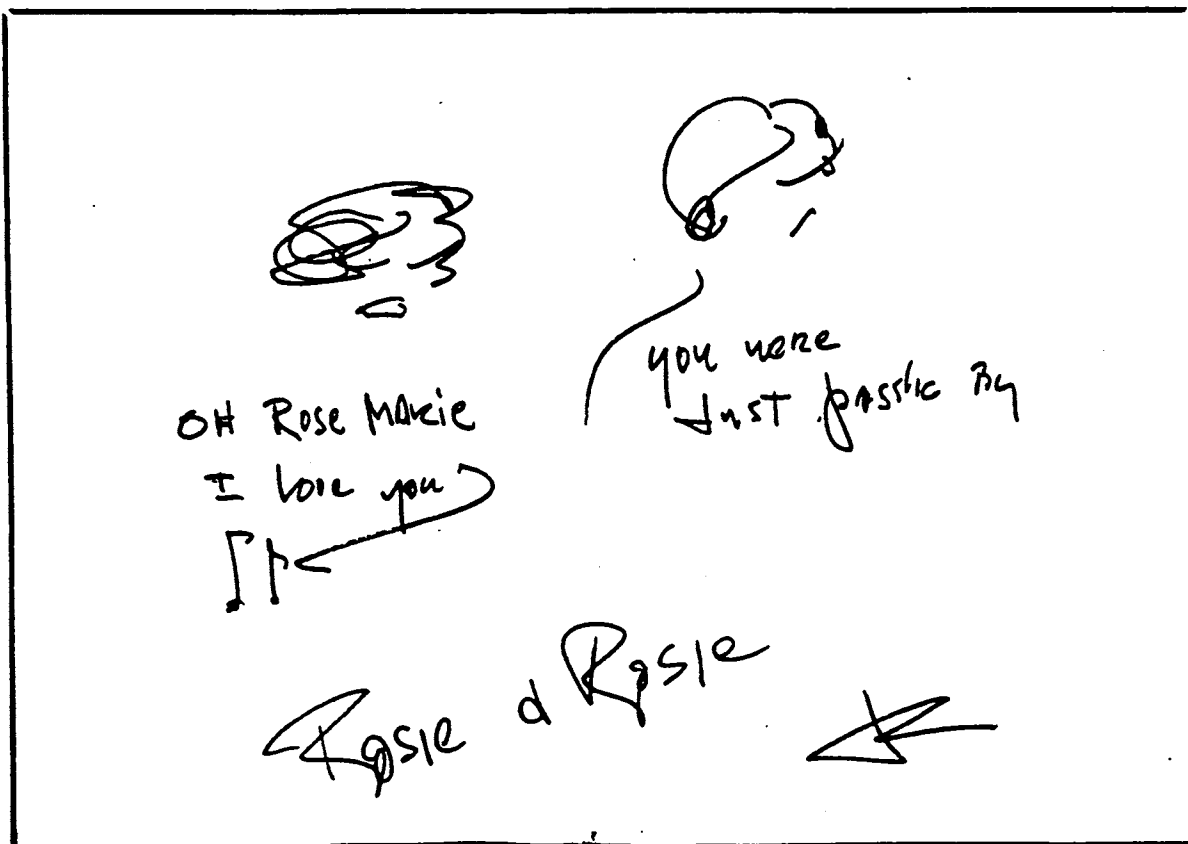
I couldn't keep up with Ella's travel schedule. I have bad habits and I've had them all my life. And nobody will change them. I have stopped this and I have stopped that, but I've always gone back to them. I don't know why. But that's me.

New York is it! That's the only place in the whole United States where there's any real jazz music. And they got the best jazz musicians in the world in New York. I held my own there. I don't know how in the hell I did it but I did. I'll do it again. I don't give a shit if I am 64. Eubie Blake's still making it and he's 98. I don't give a shit about age. It's how you play. I've got a lot of good friends in New York that come and hear me play and support me. But to move back to New York is very expensive too. So where do you go? Seattle. Seattle's real hot now. They have got more jazz in Seattle than anywhere on the Pacific coast. There's no jazz in Frisco at all. There's only about two places. There's no bread in San Francisco. I wouldn't want to live there. It's cold and windy. I'd rather live dangerously in New York.

Chapter 6: Ramblin' Rowles

I've tried to change with the times, but these guys that are in the Chick Corea and Herbie Hancock school know a lot more than I do. I feel so as far as the modern idiom goes. But if you turn them around and put them back with me, I might have a couple of ways of smothering them. It isn't the fact that I know more tunes; it's the way I play them. I started playing back in the old school, but I've tried to stay as modern as I can.

The last time I saw Herbie Hancock, I asked him to play "Come Rain or Come Shine" and he started playing it. All of a sudden, I leaped over to the piano and threw a change in there. He said, "Oh, I like that." He took that change and he went into a whole bunch of stuff that just knocked me out because Herbie



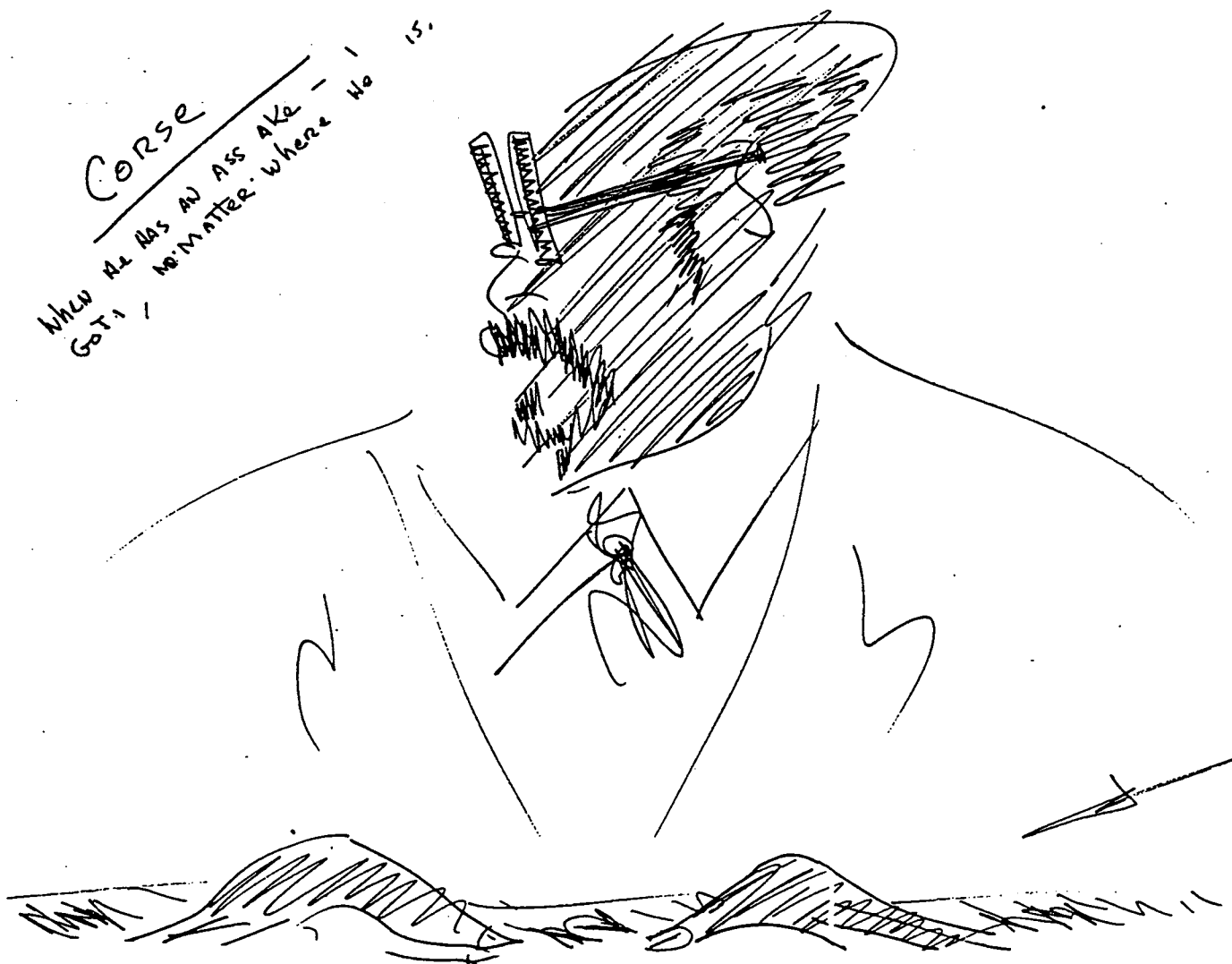
Hancock is a marvelous musician. He had not thought about "come Rain or come Shine" in about 15 years. All I had to do was give him a clue to the tune and he ran away with it. We had a beautiful time. He even made a record of my tune "502 Blues" with Wayne Shorter.

There is no shortage of what you might call "nostalgia players". The first guy that comes to mind is a guy like Art Hodes or Jess Stacy. Or Benny Goodman. Benny Goodman never learned how to get away from the major sequence of changes. I don't understand why. Benny Goodman is a basic clarinetist. Artie Shaw knew how to use other changes to get where he was going. I'm not putting Goodman down but he is a basic chordal player. Whereas you take Coltrane for example. If he was going to end up on an E-flat, there were 20 different ways he devised to get back to that chord. The real smarties are liable to do it any way they can. Any way! It's because they know their harmony. It's not like there are only three chords in this tune so let's just play them. Noo, Noo, that ain't it.

I feel young pianists should take more advantage of their left hand. Some of them don't know anything about 'stride piano', throwing your left hand. Some are learning how to do it. Others that are into the more up-on-top stuff today don't want to. Those people are missing so much. Ask them to sit down and play a pretty ballad like Ellis Larkins or Erroll Garner. Hank Jones. Tommy Flanagan. If you can't do that, then you're missing, missing out on something.

Corse

When Al has an ass ake - 1
 Got it, no matter where Ho 15.



FLANAGAN

Jazz music is again drawing large audiences among young listeners and musicians. I think the rock musicians are getting very bored with their two- and three-chord tunes, all the noise and vaudeville stuff -- especially the drummers. I think they're a bit jaded with this rock stuff, though a lot of them are making

an awful lot of money. Many of them are listening to jazz music. I hope they don't mistakenly center on the idea that jazz originated with "Giant Steps". What they don't realize about John Coltrane is that he went all the way back in his studies to Sidney Bechet. Coltrane had no conception that he invented jazz. He used to work with Earl Bostic. He studied everybody's style. There's not enough attention paid to everything that came in front of Coltrane by young players. Few pay any attention to Ben Webster or Benny Carter, Johnny Hodges, Barney Bigard or Don Byas. Byas was a monster. Johnny Griffin. Griffin's almost forgotten. He's also a real monster. Ohhhh boy, don't mess with him. I have a daughter, Stacy, who plays the trumpet. I tell her to listen to everybody. I think she's capable of being one of the best female trumpet players that ever was at a time when I think people are willing to accept women as jazz musicians. Stacy is a coming complete musician. Stacy has the ability, the ear. The older she gets, the better she will play. She is a natural. I want her to have a background of songs so if somebody says, "Let's play 'Come Rain or Come Shine'," she can play it. Stacy can read like a bitch. She can play in a band. Stacy can play first trumpet, second trumpet, third trumpet...anything you want.

I sit down at night with manuscript paper and I write out tunes for Stacy, tunes she never heard of. I usually write out a piano part to go with them with the right chords. Then I play

them with her and teach them to her. And she likes them. I want her to learn as many of the old standards, all the way back. She learns them so quickly that it's almost as if she's already been there. What is it? Dejavu.

I don't want Stacy to stylize herself after someone like Freddie Hubbard. I don't want her to do that. I would rather she

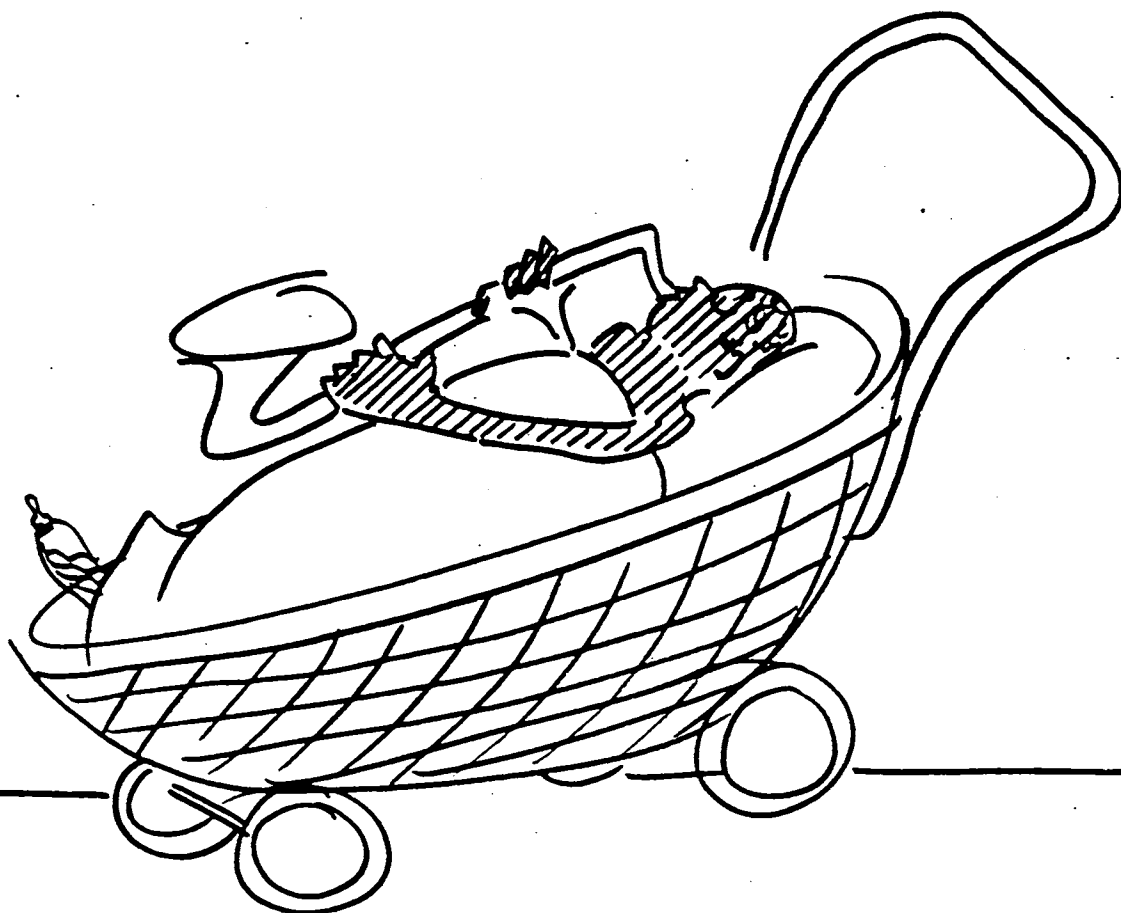


Stacy

stylize herself after someone like Louis Armstrong or Fats Navarro. And take it from there and turn it into herself. If I were to pattern myself after a trumpet player and learn what to do and what not to do, learn when to wait and what to leave out, I would take Fats Navarro and Lee Morgan and throw in a little of the other cats, whoever they are. I would definitely say that Fats Navarro was incomparable. And Lee Morgan was another one. to me, Lee Morgan was one of the greatest stylists I ever heard. And Blue Mitchell. Ray Nance was probably one of the most fantastic. Ray Nance! You can't leave Ray Nance out. You got to have some Rex Stewart. You got to have some Cootie. You not only listen to trumpet players. I tell Stacy to listen to everybody! Listen to Vic Dickenson. Put them all together and they all come out through you. Your way.

I had Stacy play for Al Hirt over the phone when she was much younger. He loved her. When we played together at the Monterrey Jazz Festival in 1973, she got a standing ovation. There was a young girl who played trumpet in the all-girl Maiden Voyage Orchestra which Stacy played in, who went to work with Harry James. I think Stacy should go with Woody Herman. Right now, Stacy is working days, which means she doesn't have enough time to spend with her horn. Oh, she can play. I hope some of my music will continue through her.

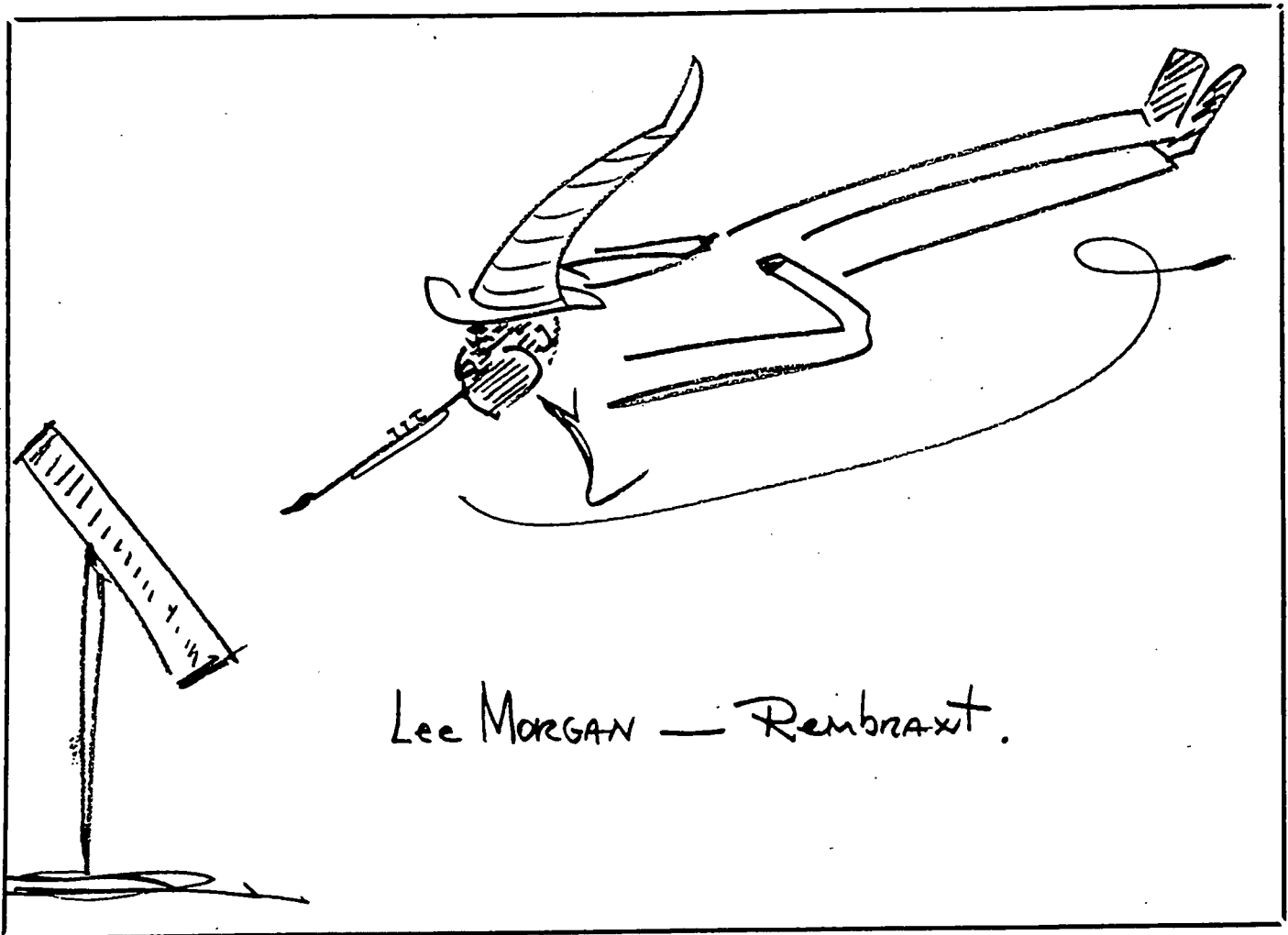
I like to sit down at the piano and play songs that I like to play. I absorb what I hear and whatever comes out just comes out. I play whatever comes into my head. If I want to make it



John Coltrane

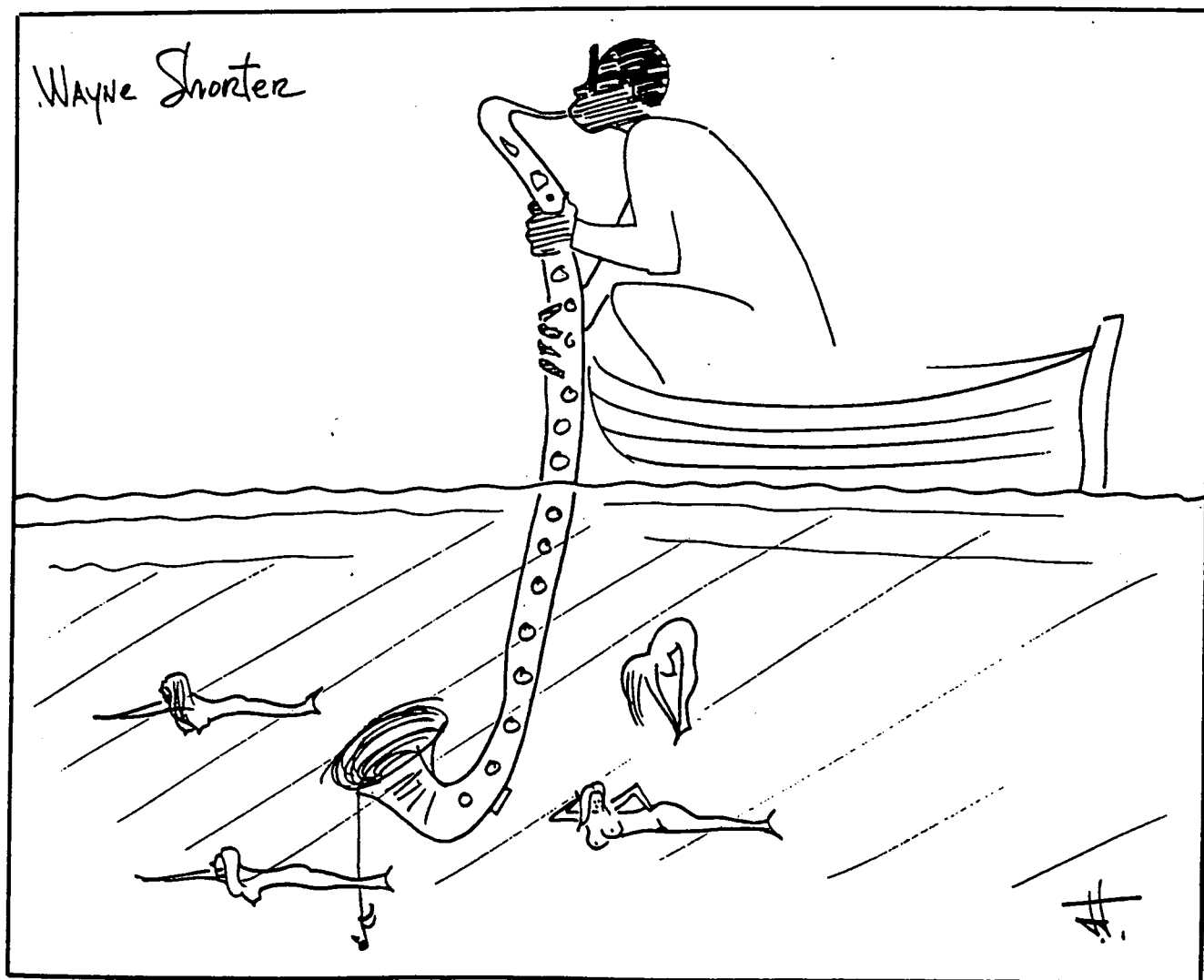
sound like an orchestra, I'll play like an orchestra. If I want to make it sound like something different, I'll play something different. Studio work didn't hurt a bit. It taught me an awful lot. I don't care if the audience is listening or jabbering their goddam heads off. I just like to sit there and play with George Mraz or Michael Moore or Rufus Reid or Mark Johnson and play. I like to sit there and say, "What'll we play? Let's see. Let's play this. Play it as a bossa nova. Play Jobim...Joao Gilberto."

Joao Gilberto, he's my favorite of all. Joao Gilberto, there's a cat! He's tough. Nobody sings like him. Nobody. Nobody can. And nobody will ever be able to play like Joao Gilberto, I doubt. Unless it's some Brazillian cat come down from the mountains somewhere. I think Joao Gilberto is prime time!



I play anything that comes to mind. Wayne Shorter, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard. Just play them and enjoy them. All the old cats too. Cole Porter. All the beauties. Tunes, tunes, tunes, tunes, tunes....Songs! I like a tune and don't care who

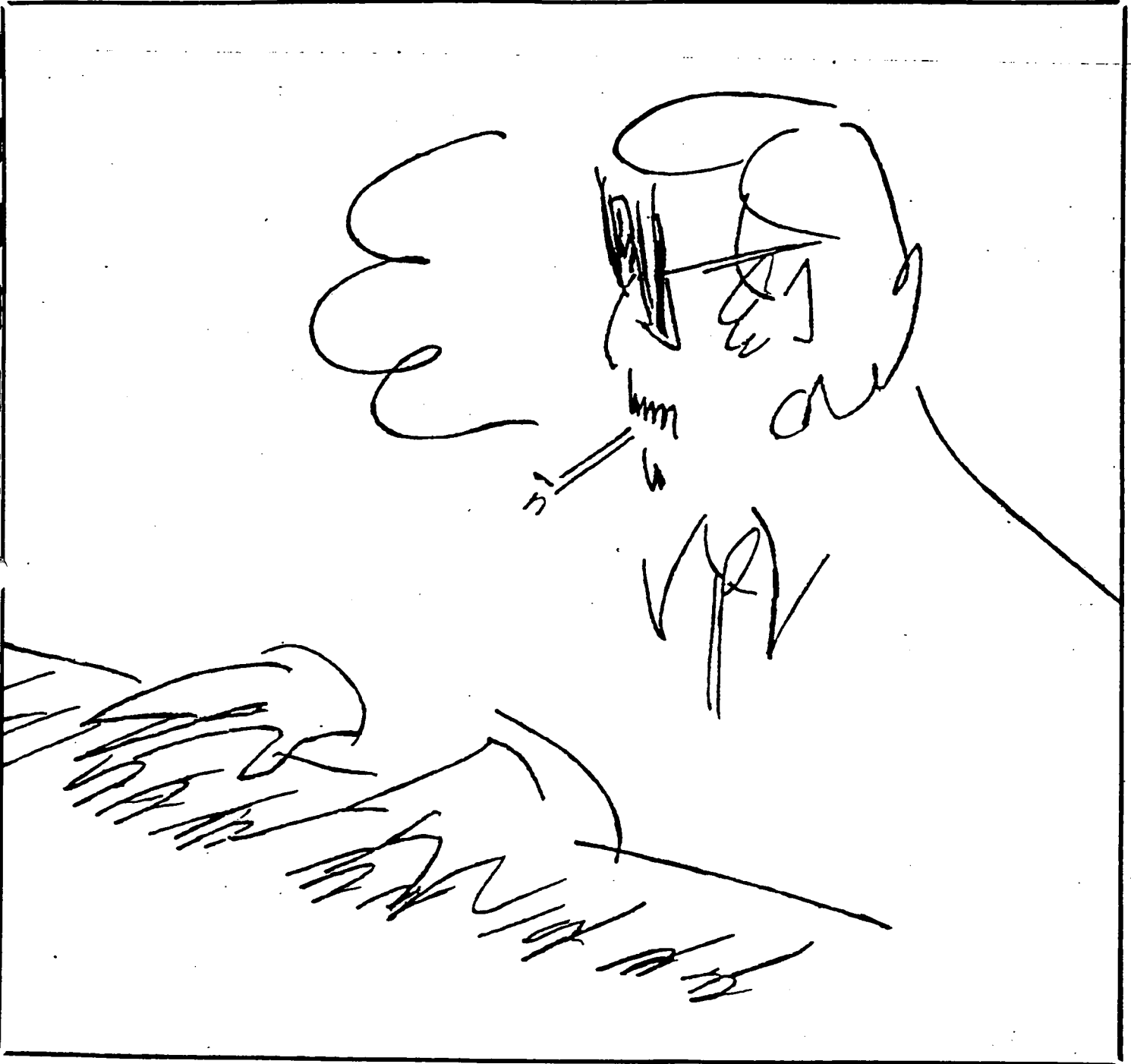
knows it. Ella sings tunes. Lady Day sang tunes. What's wrong with them? Aren't they good enough? Oh come on! It's a drag to go into a place and hear original compositions all night. Not all the people in the audience are advanced musicians. A lot of original compositions are pretty abstract. Now you take a guy like Horace Silver, he wrote with pretty good form and his tunes are the kind of tunes you can remember easily. I've always like him; I like him all the way around. I love Cedar Walton's compositions. I love Wayne Shorter's music, though I'm not too fond of his Weather Report music. I liked him when he was



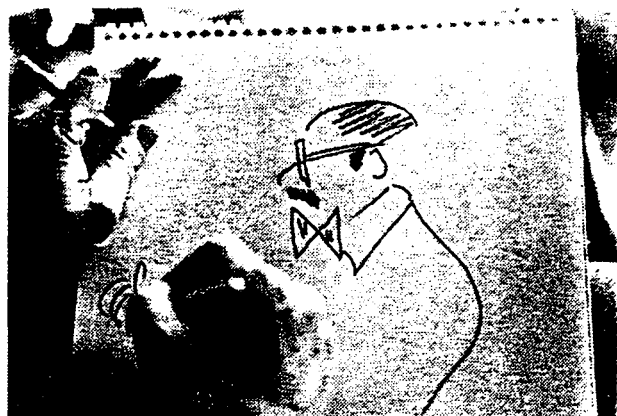
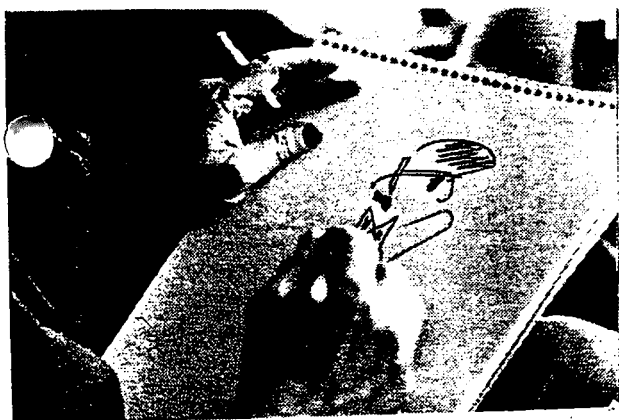
playing straight-out with Art Blakey. Wayne Shorter has just overwhelmed me with his contribution and his ability to write marvelous songs. Lee Morgan is another great composer and Freddie Hubbard can compose nice.

Charlie Parker loved tunes. Charlie Parker used to play "Melancholy Baby". Played the hell out of it. He even played "White Christmas". Sure. Charlie Parker loved music. Ellington played tunes all the time. He was slick. He would mix them up. Duke was likely to play "Red Roses for a Blue Lady" right in the middle of something else.

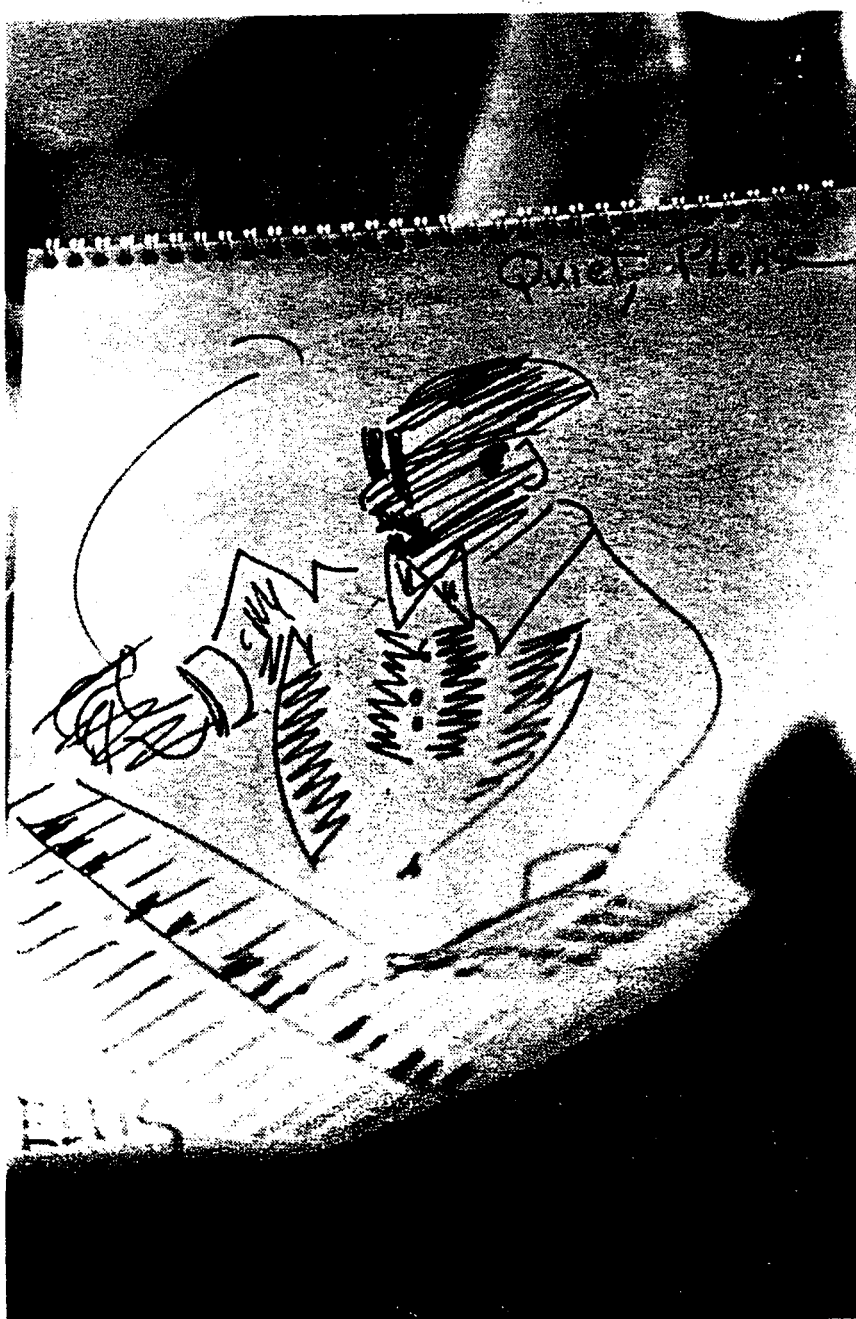
Music. It keeps me awake at night. Like the last three weeks, all I've thought about is "It's Written in the Stars". For the last three weeks, that is the only tune I've been thinking about. I wrote it out for Stacy. I've been thinking about different ways to play it. Everything. Harold Arlen, I love Harold Arlen's music. He's one of my very favorites. He and Jule Styne. But Harold Arlen, whew! I got a thing figured out on "Here's that Rainy Day" that sounds like the blues. All the wrong chords. All different....all different. It's usually played in major and all that crap. Naw, I like to play it my own way. I've got it all figured out. "Rainy Day", and I like the way I play it. I like to hear it that way. There are certain things you can do with "Rainy Day" that are different. Change the melody. You can do this; you can do that. And it's still "Rainy Day". And it's rainy.

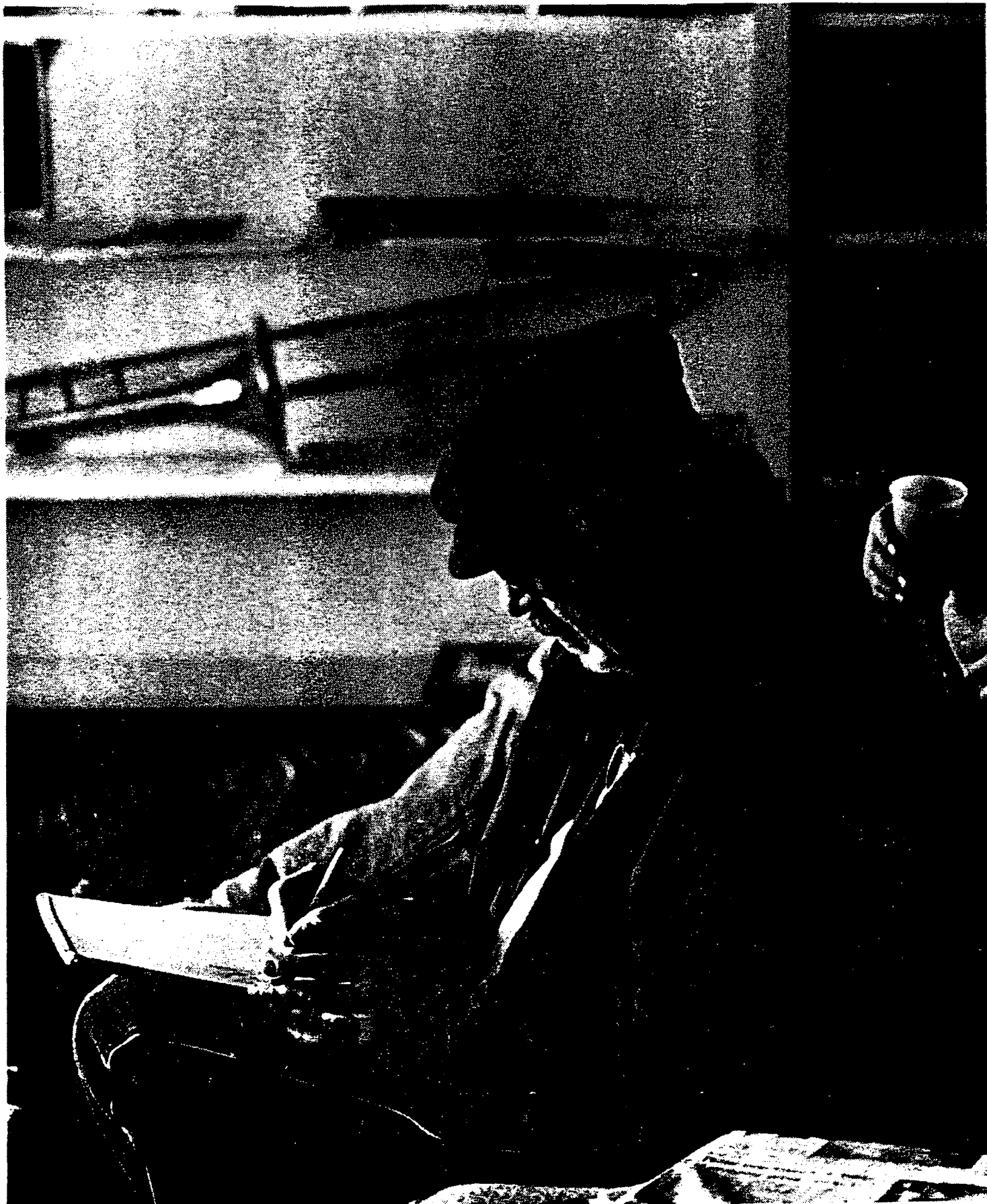


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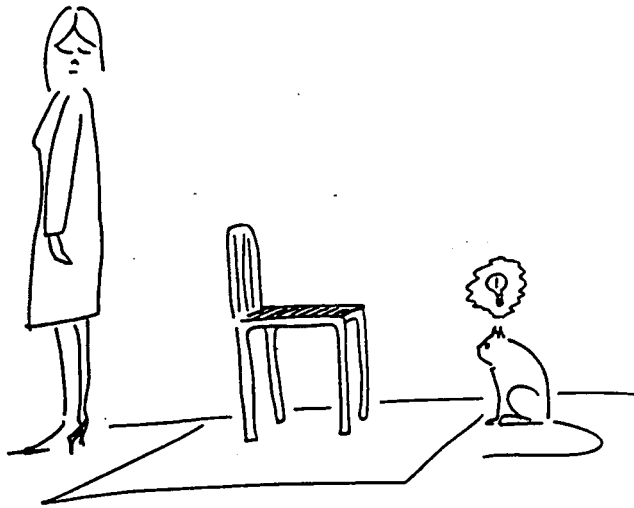
Chapter 7: Rowles Gallery



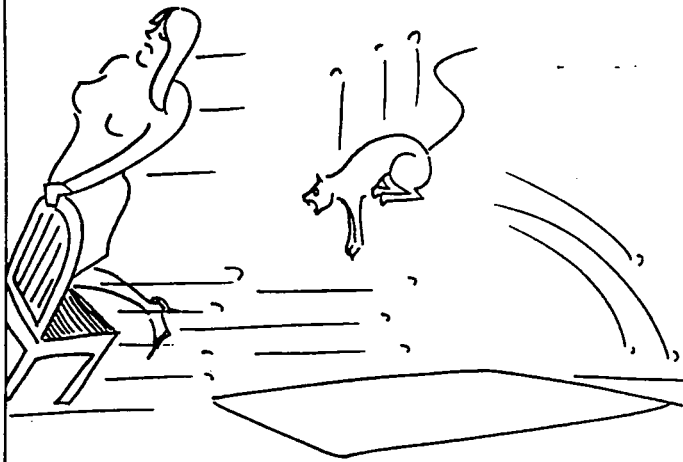


Reedville, Tex. January 16, 1983

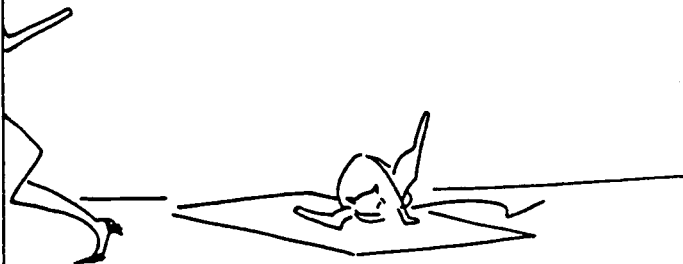
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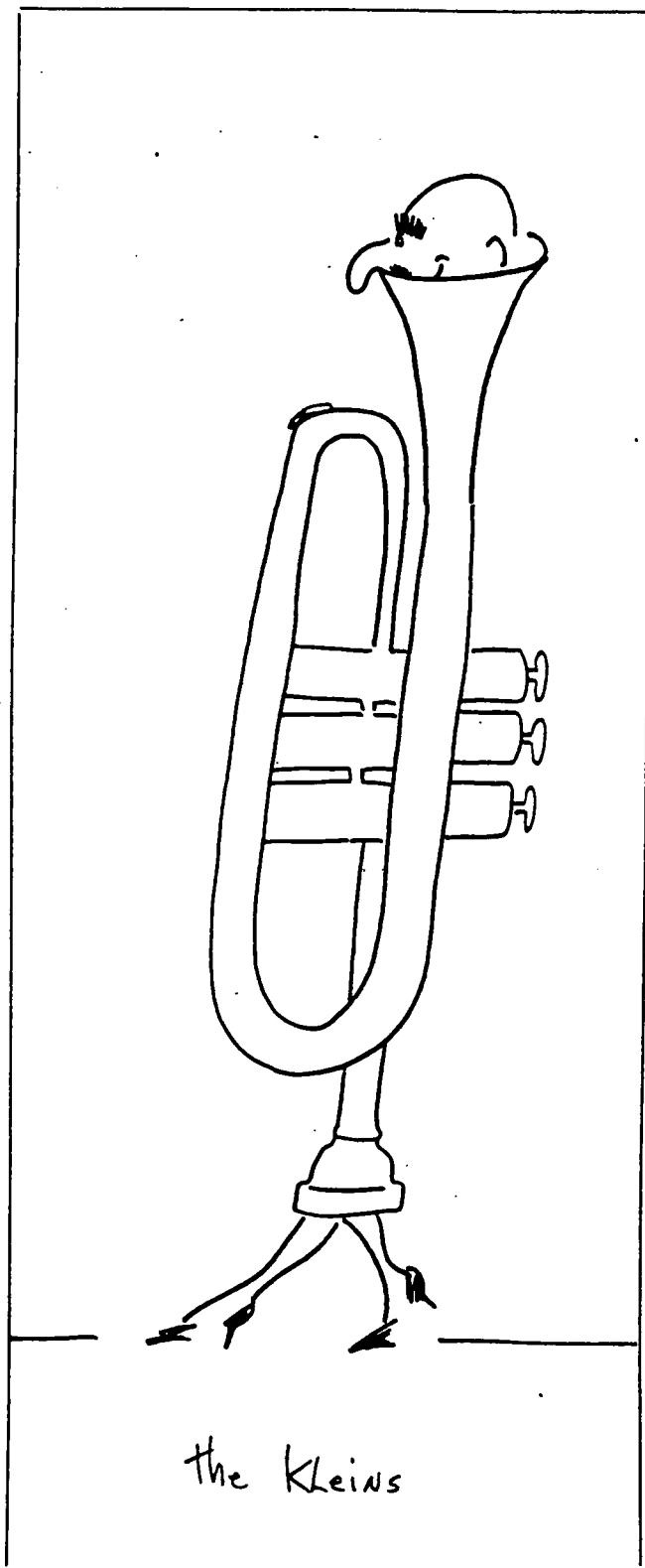
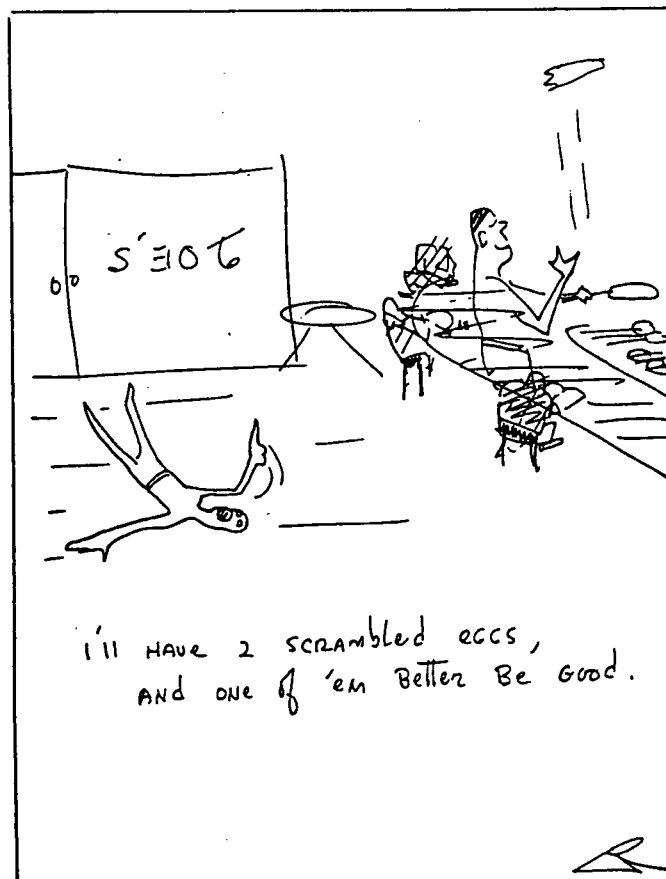
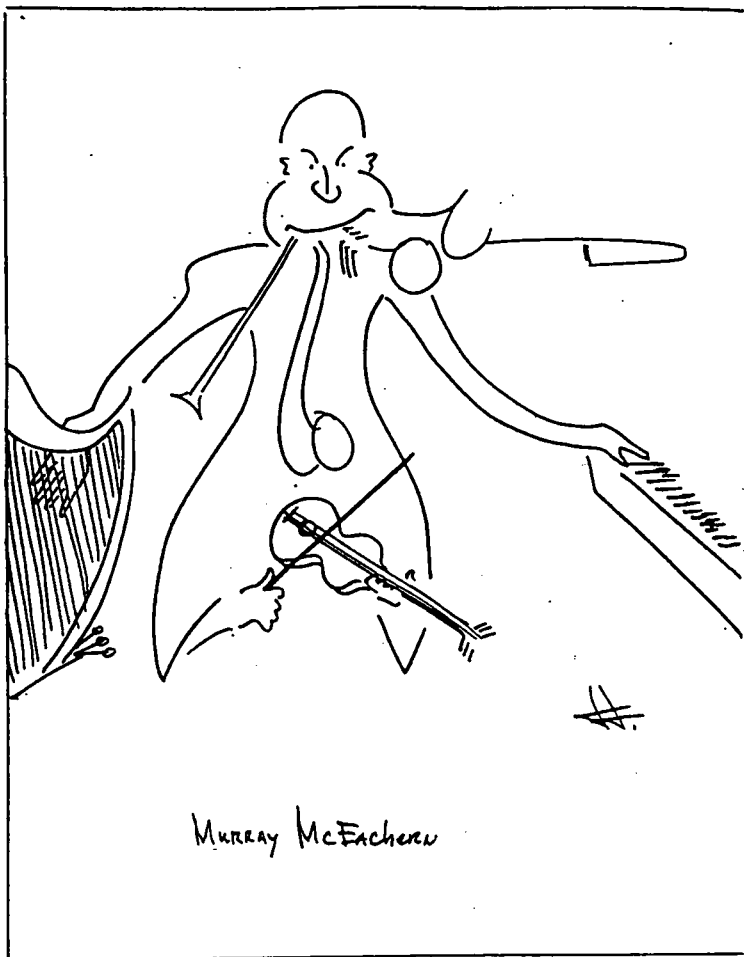


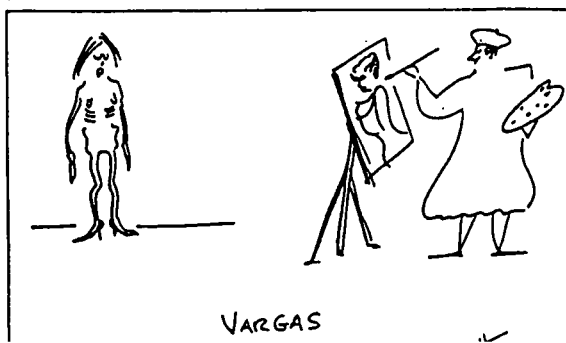
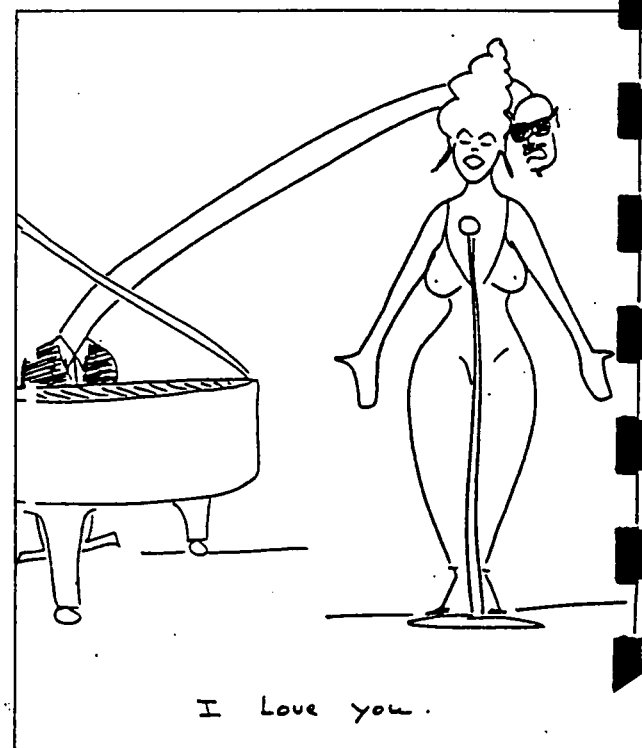
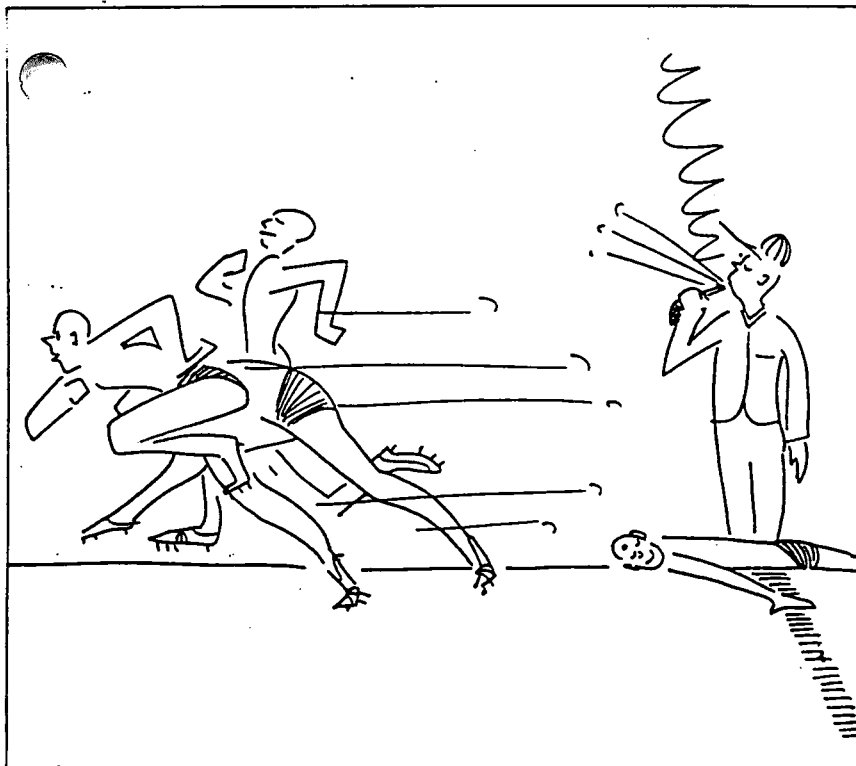
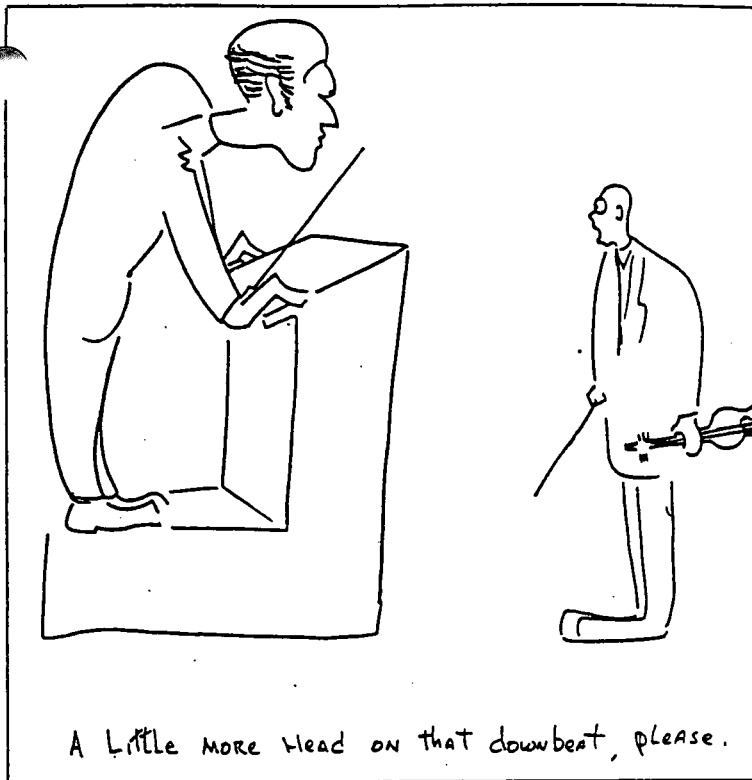
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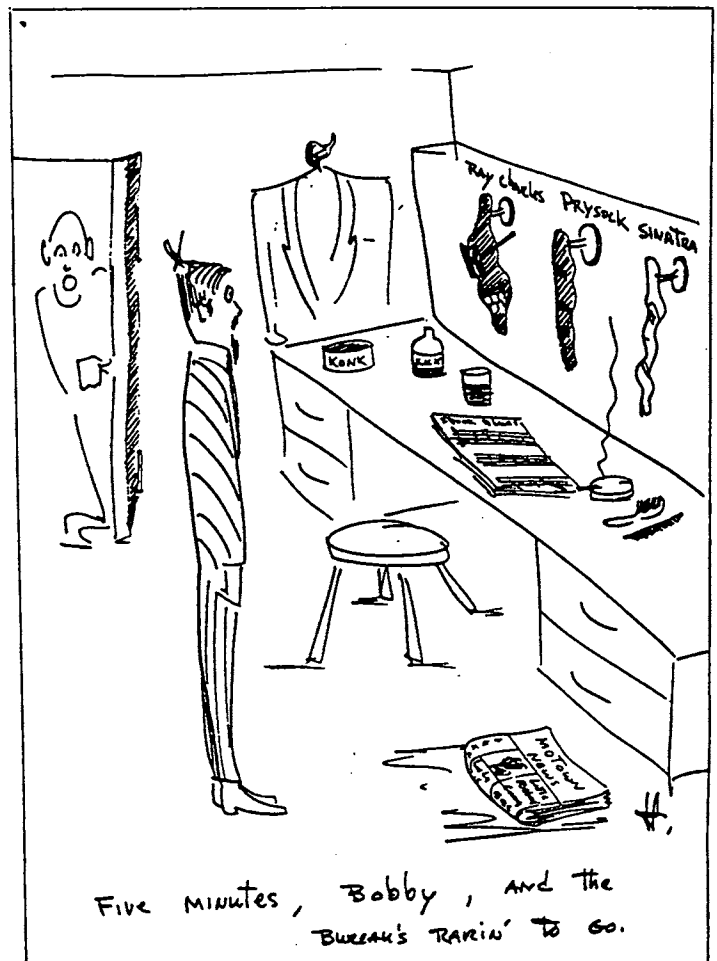
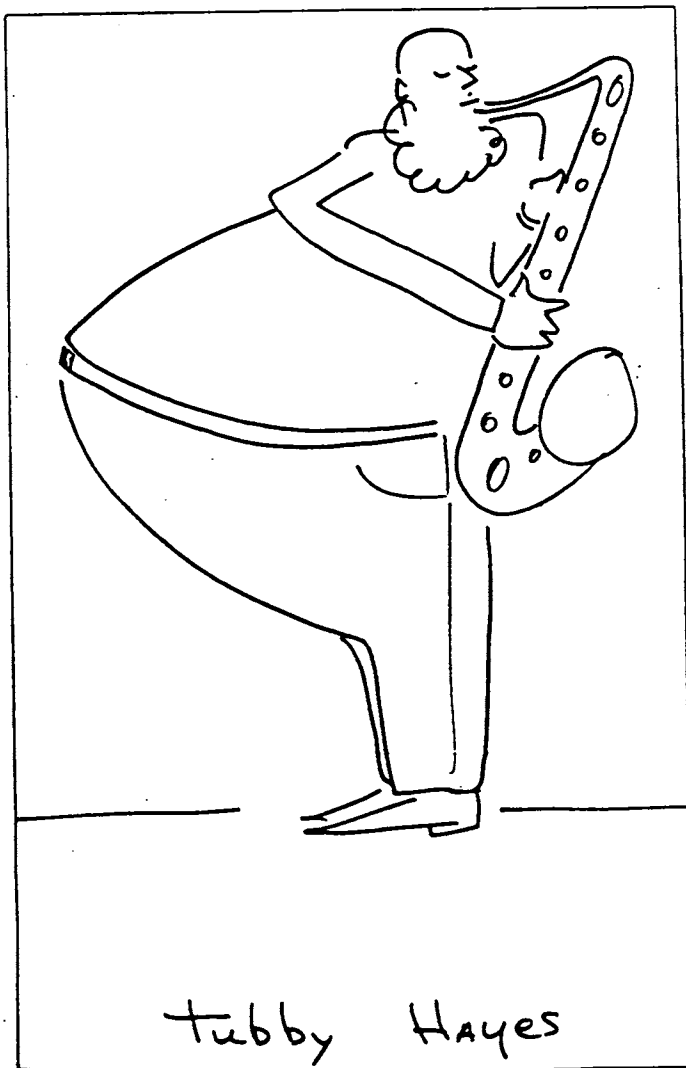
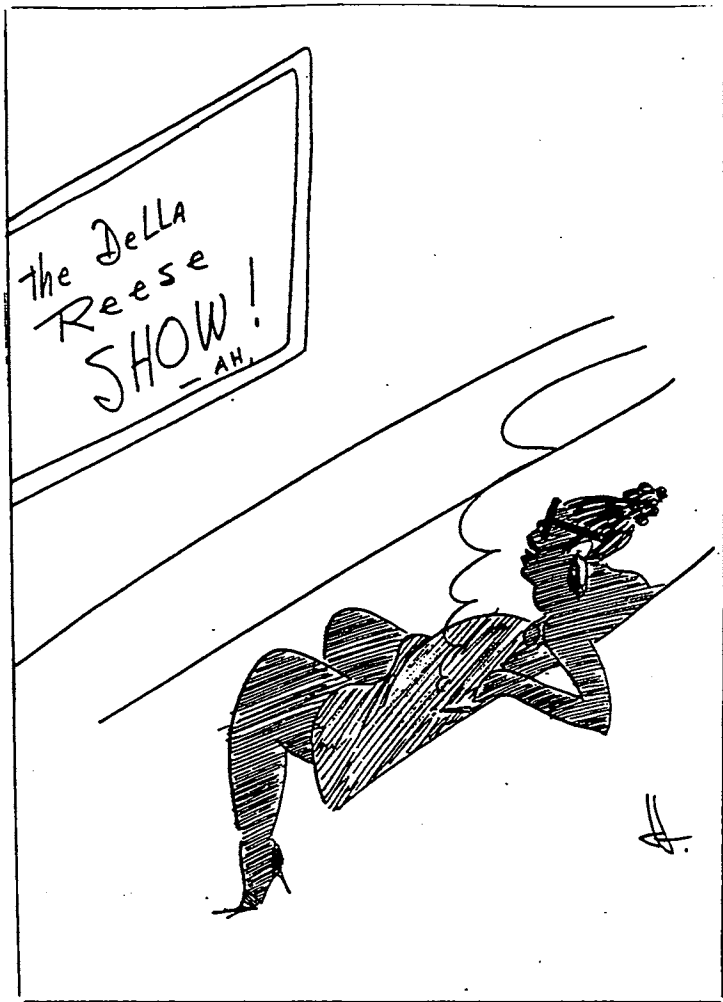
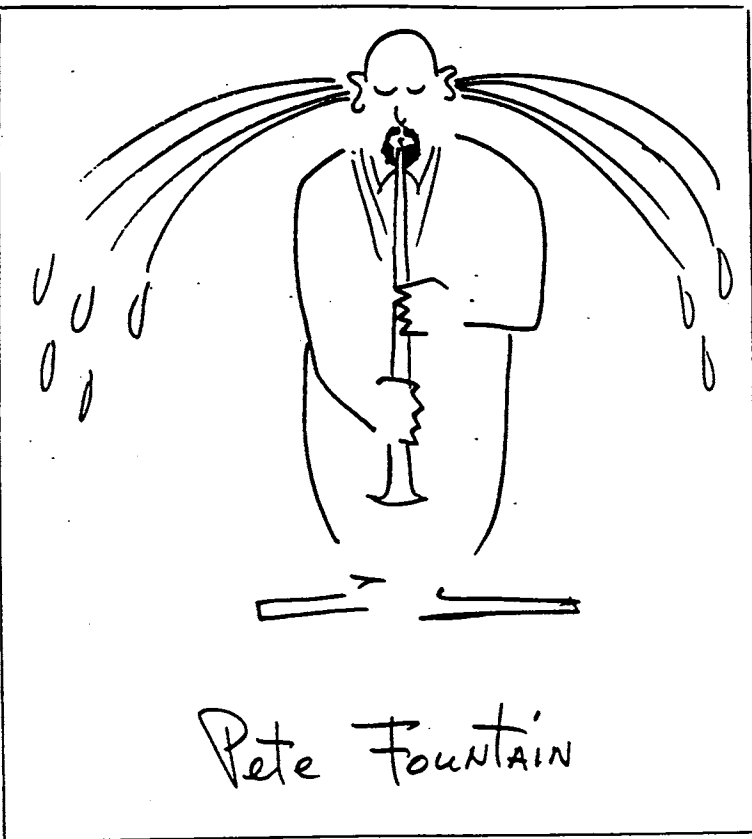


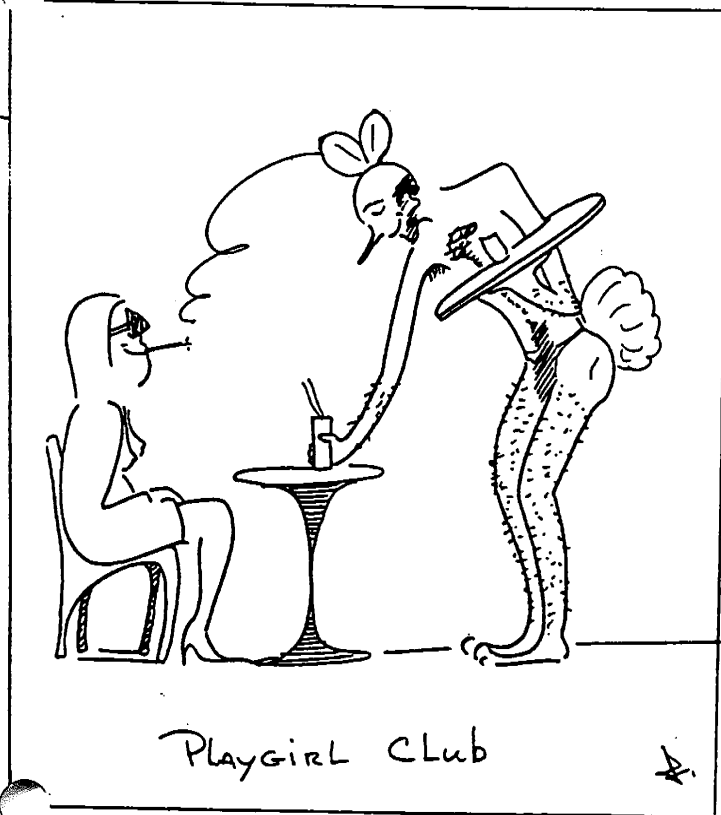
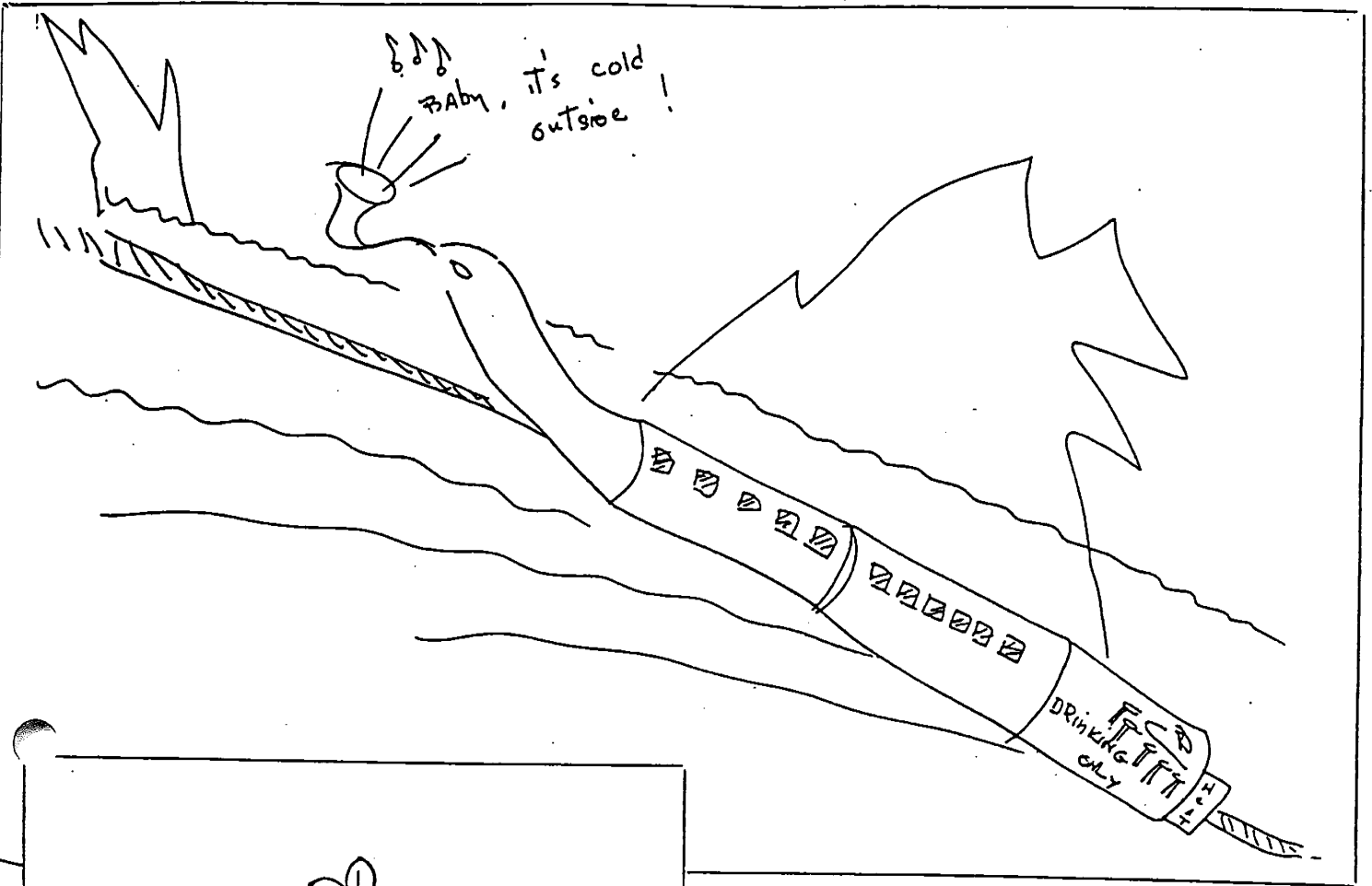
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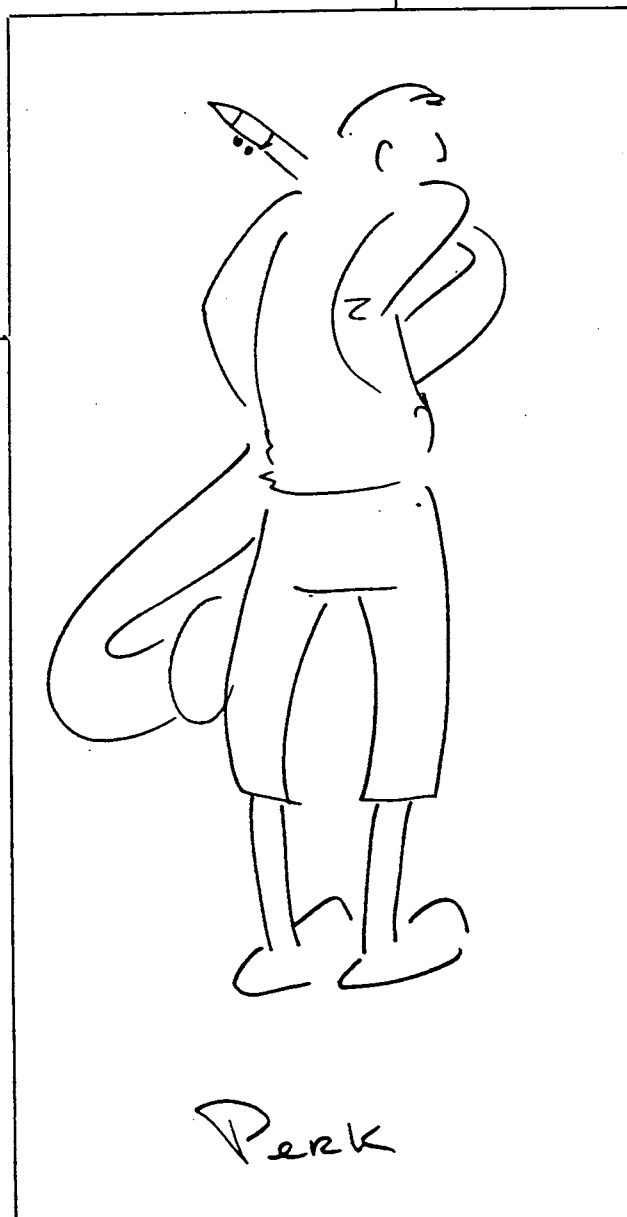
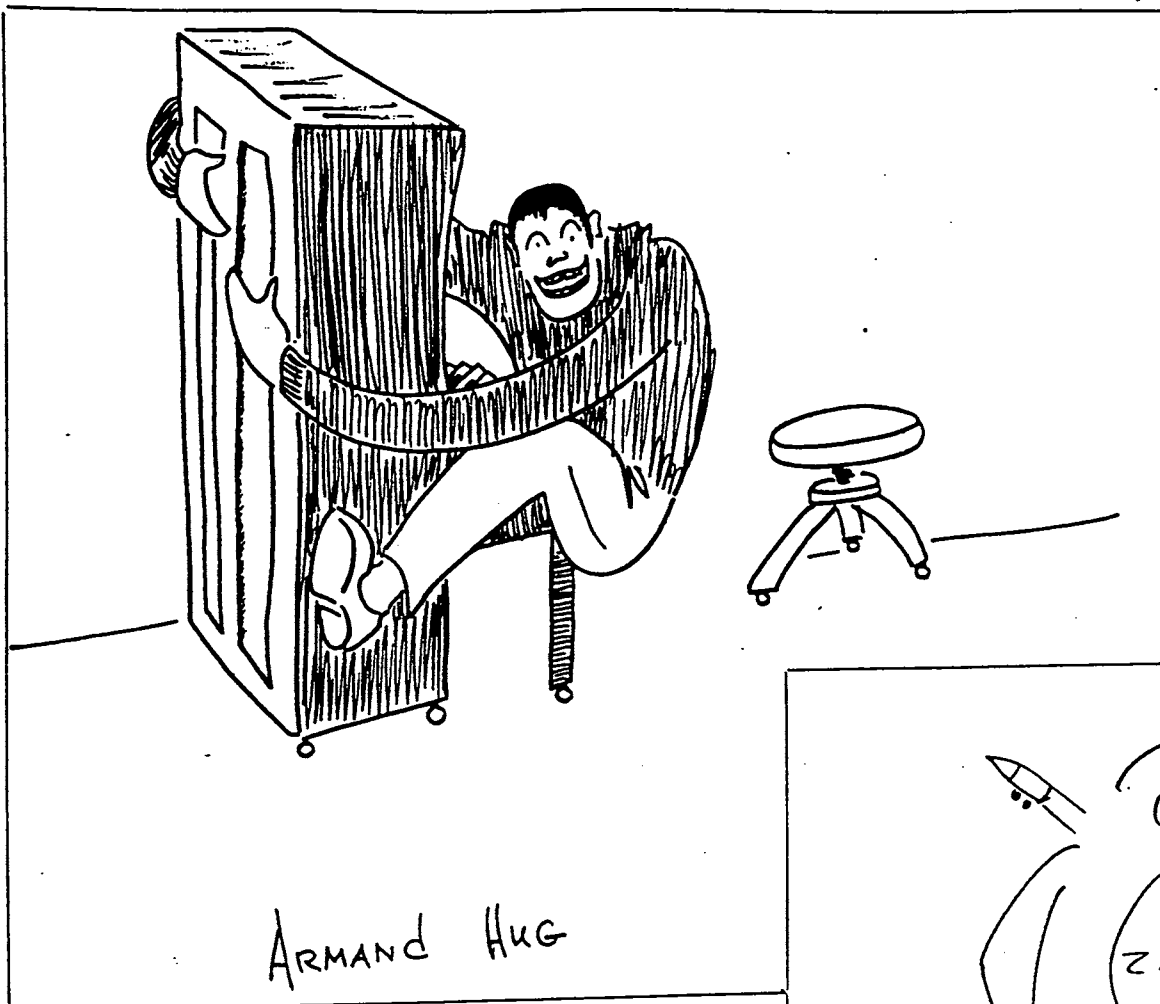


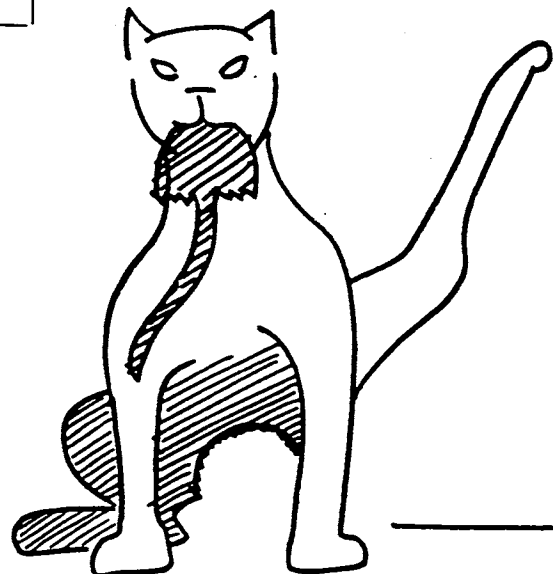
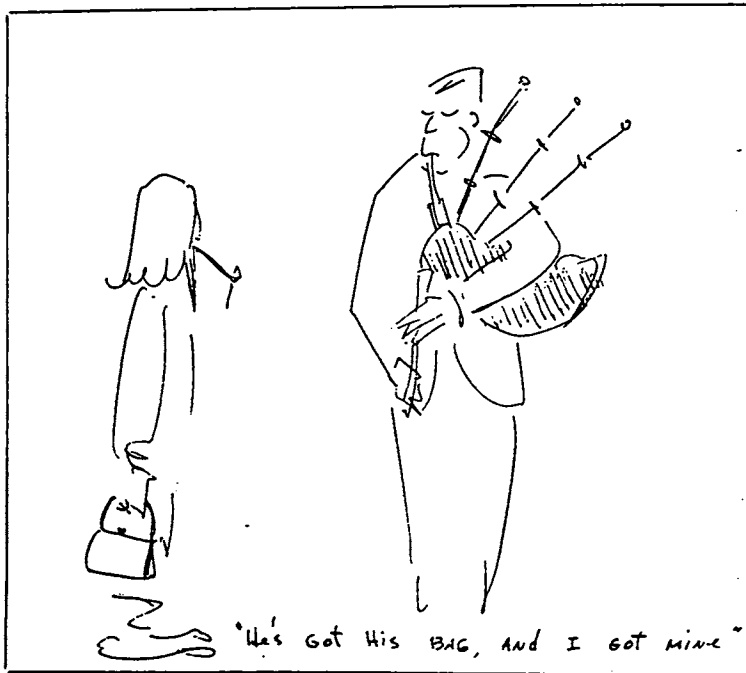
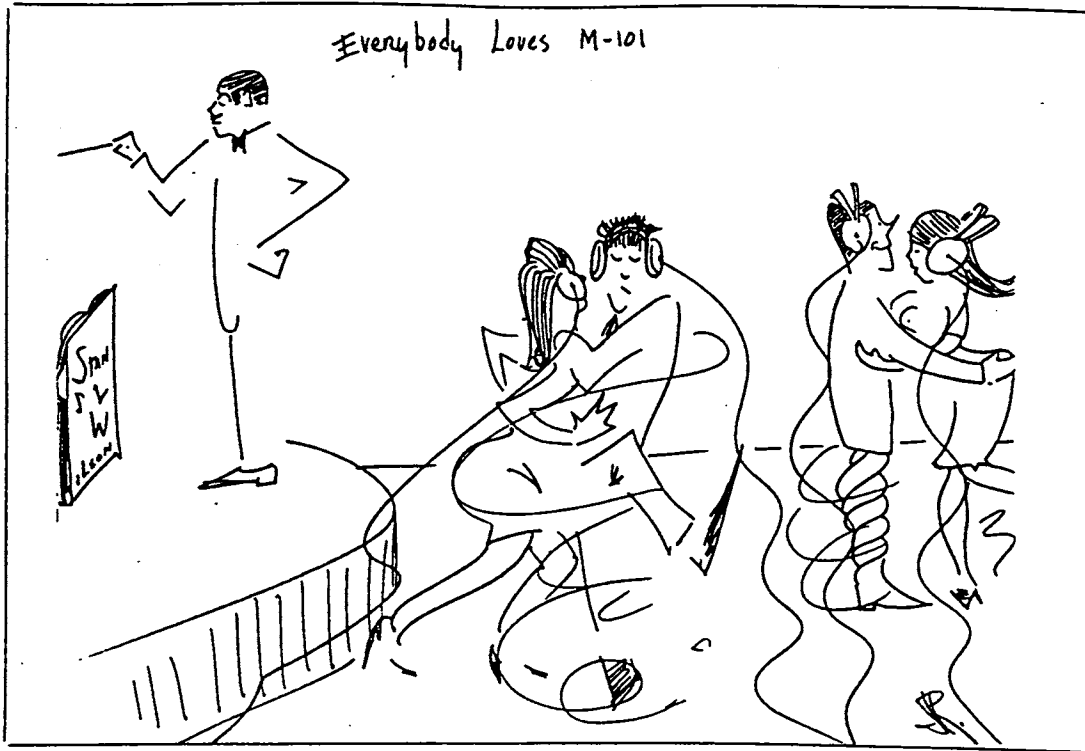


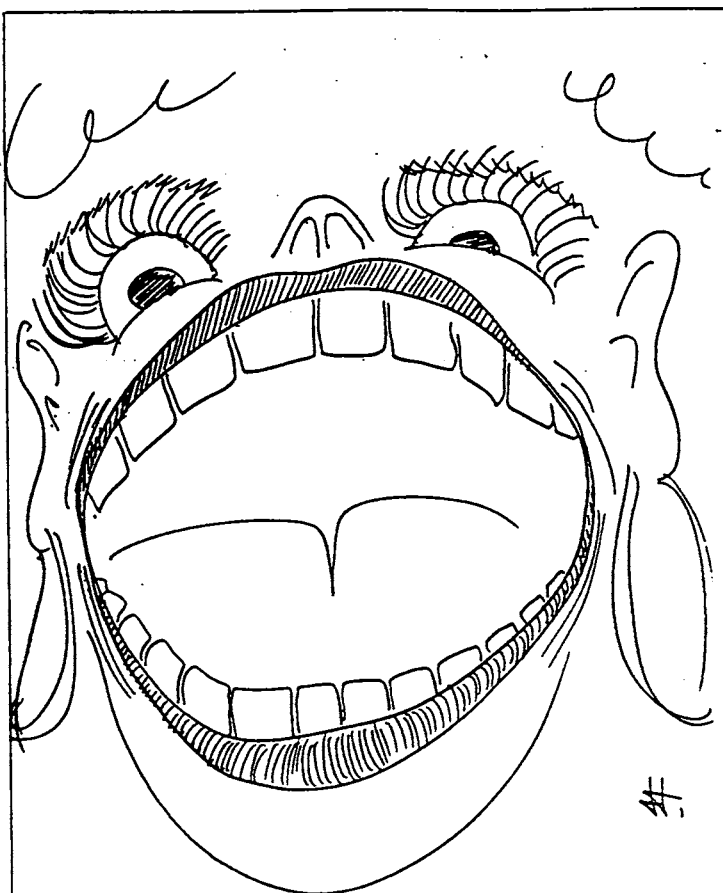




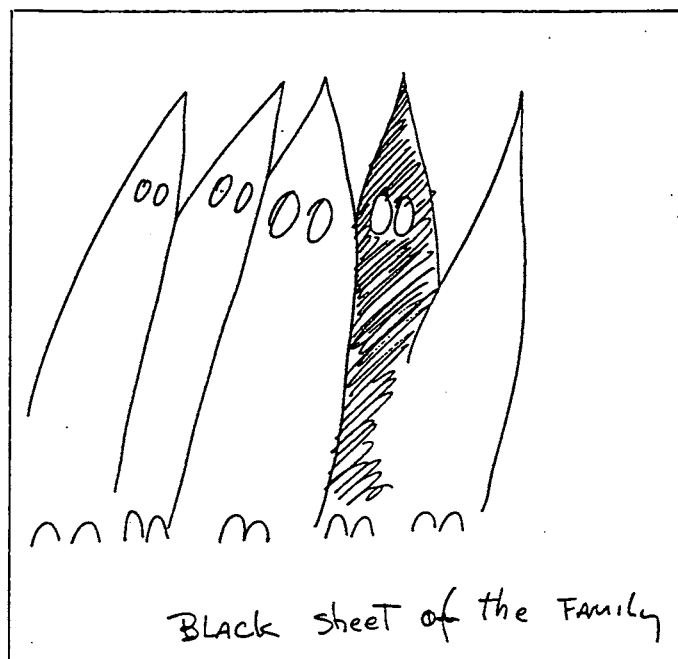




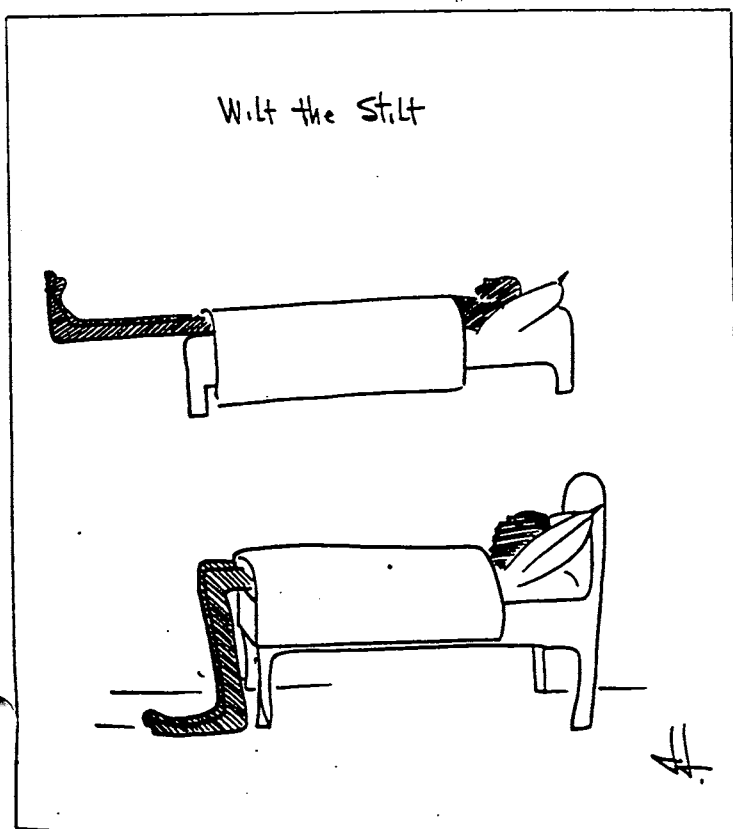




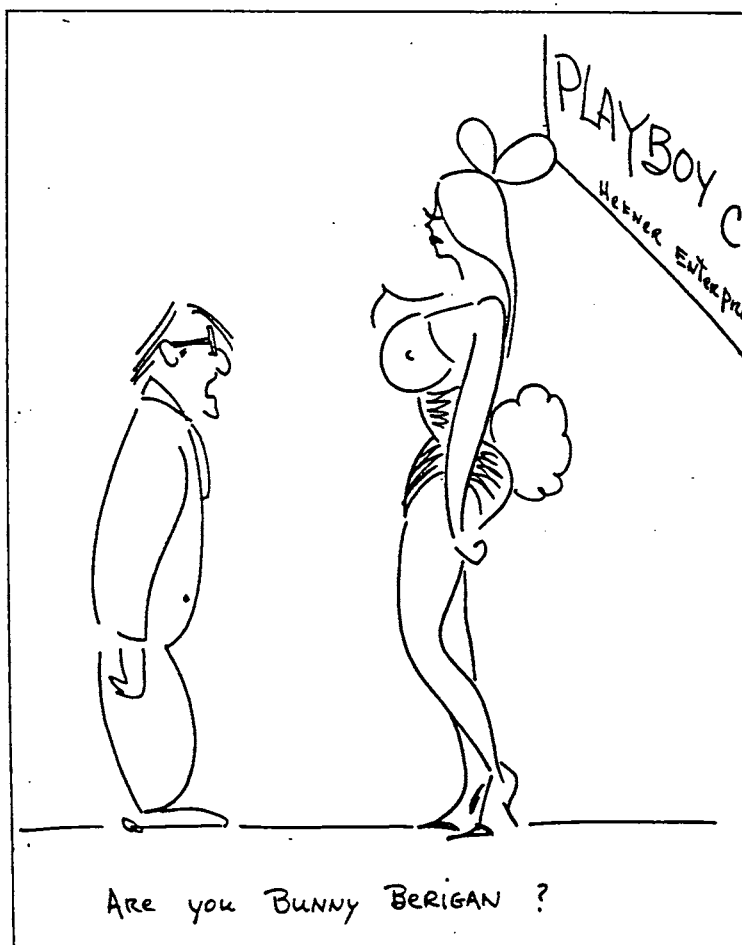
MARTHA RAYE



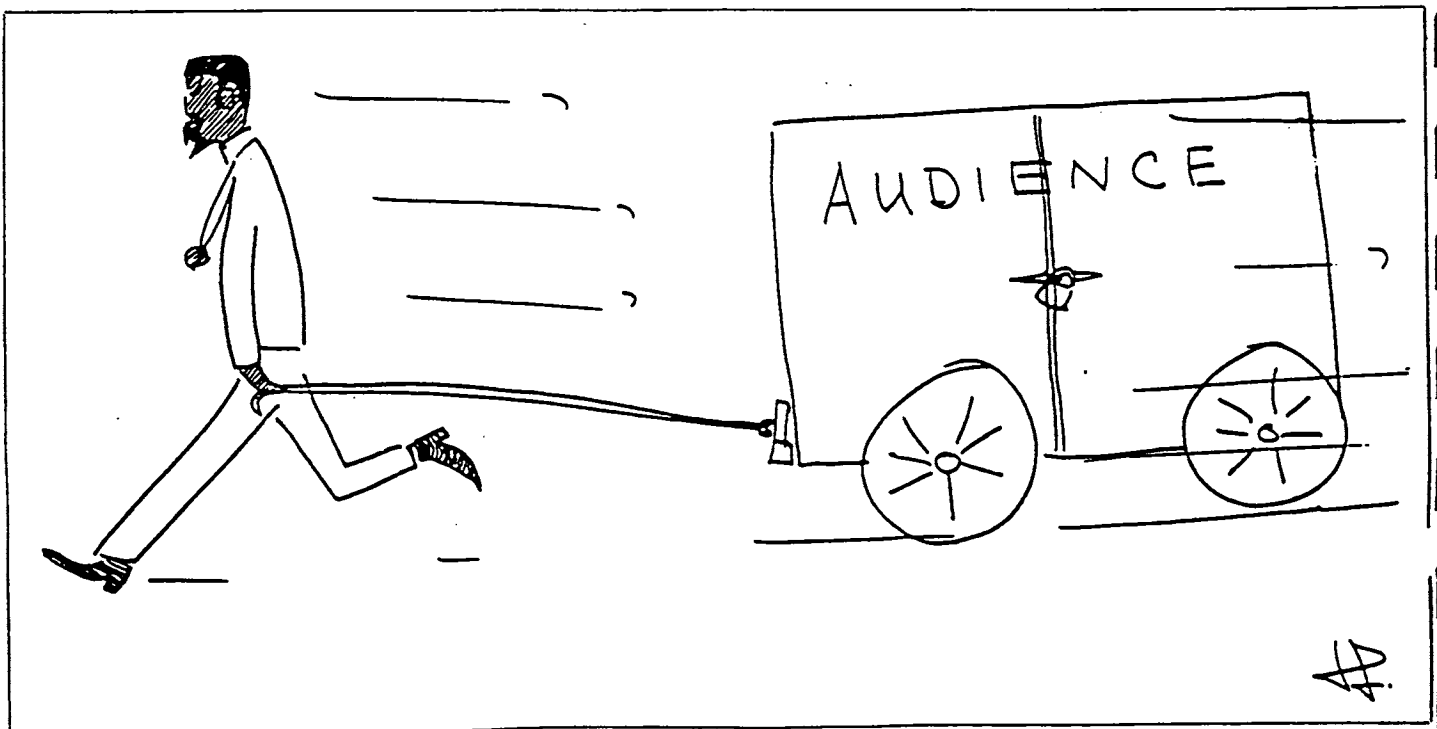
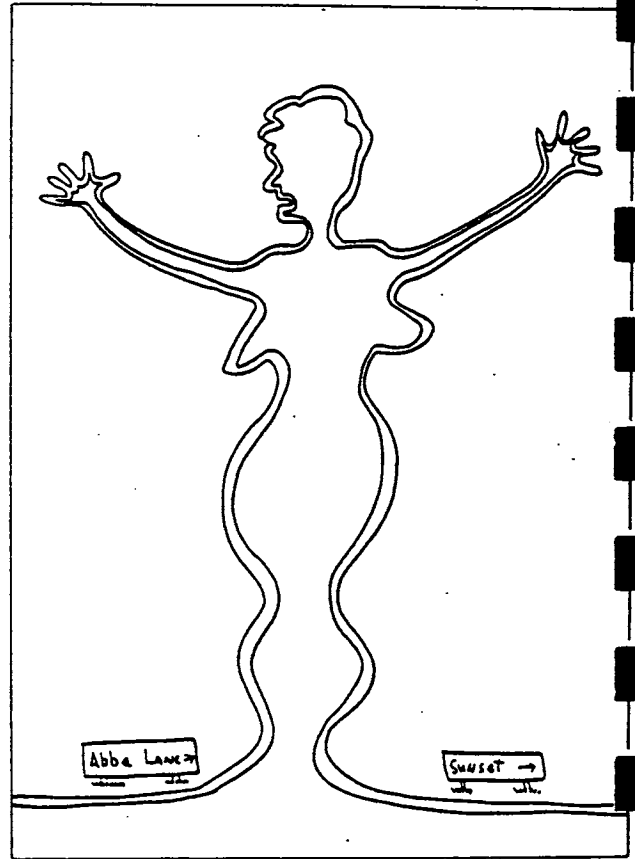
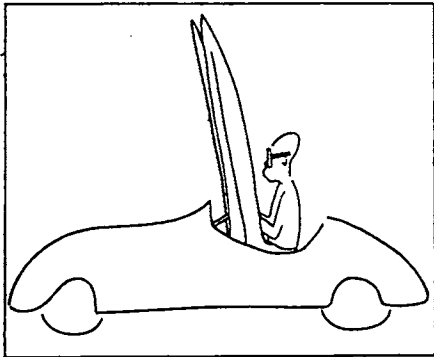
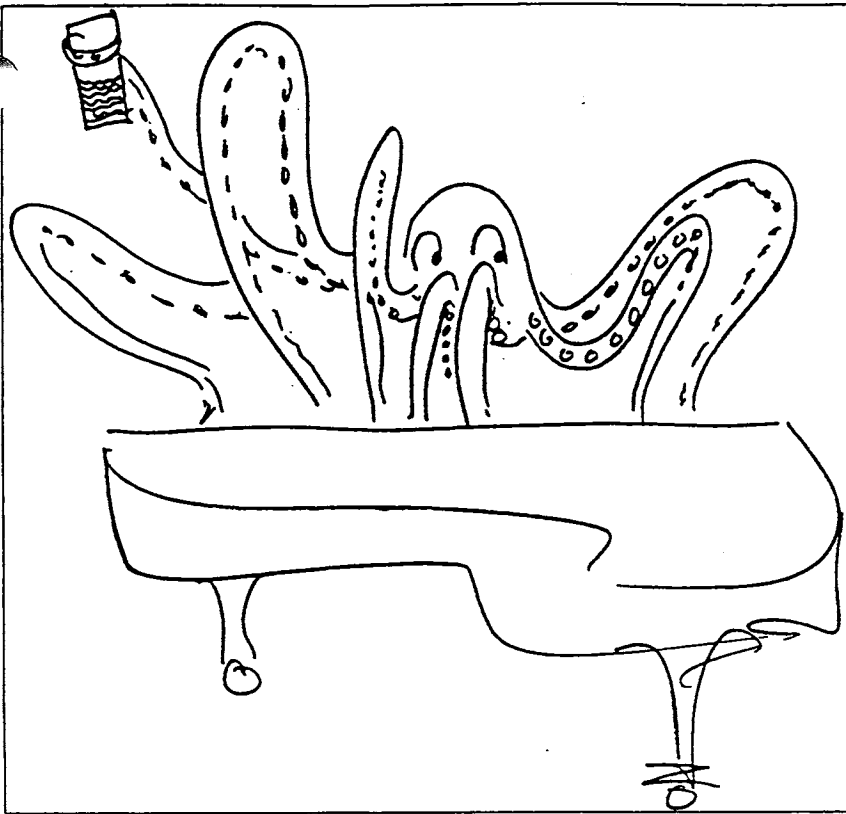
Black sheet of the Family

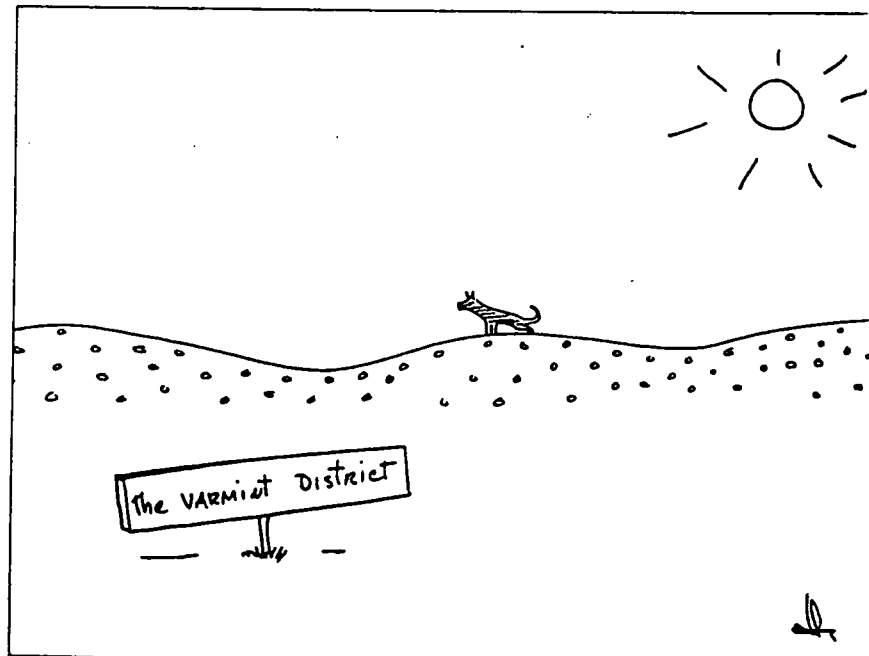
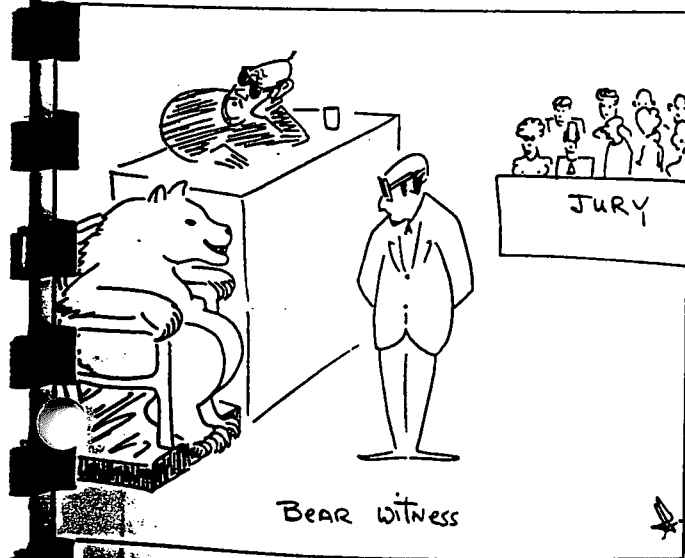
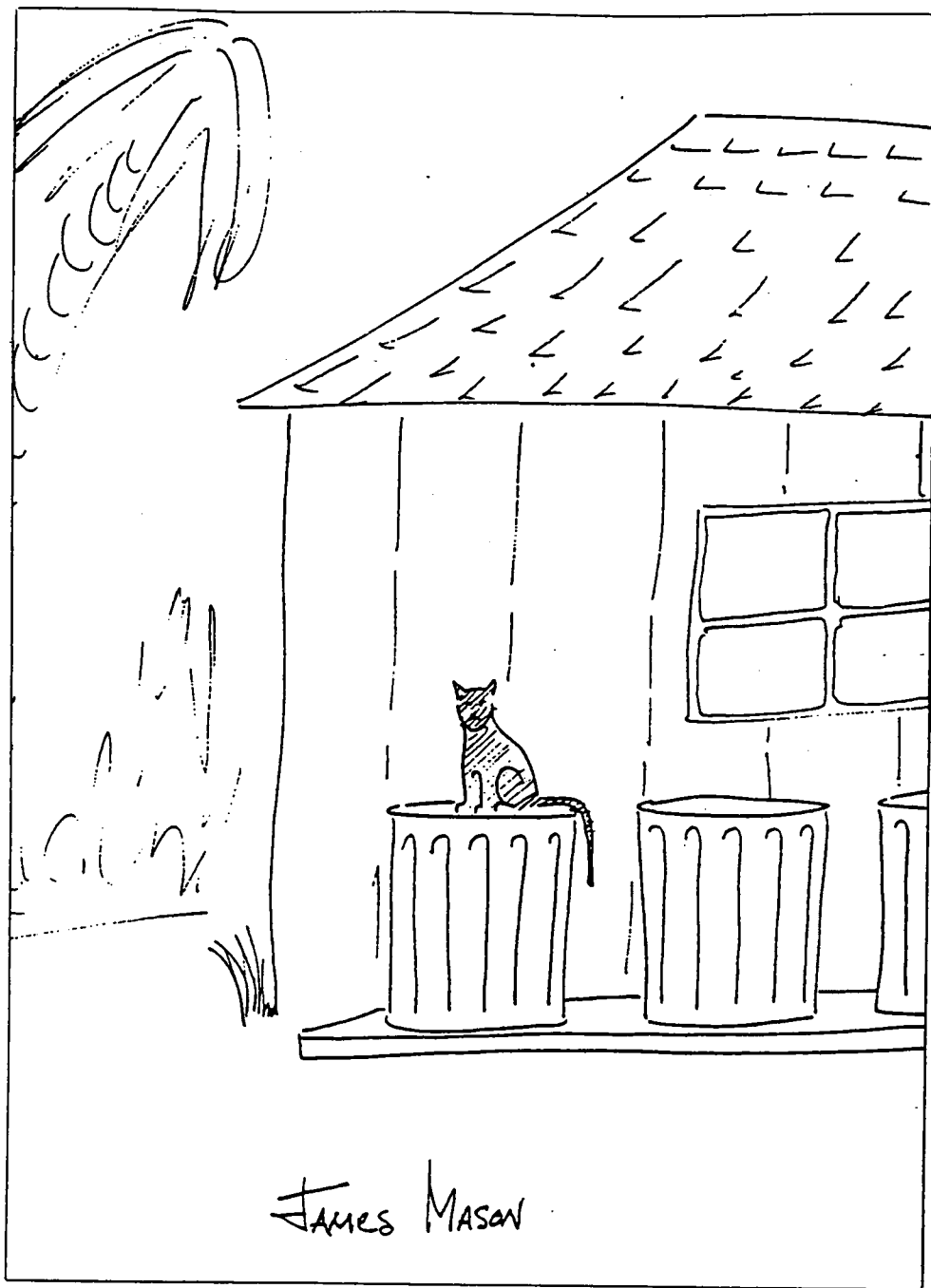


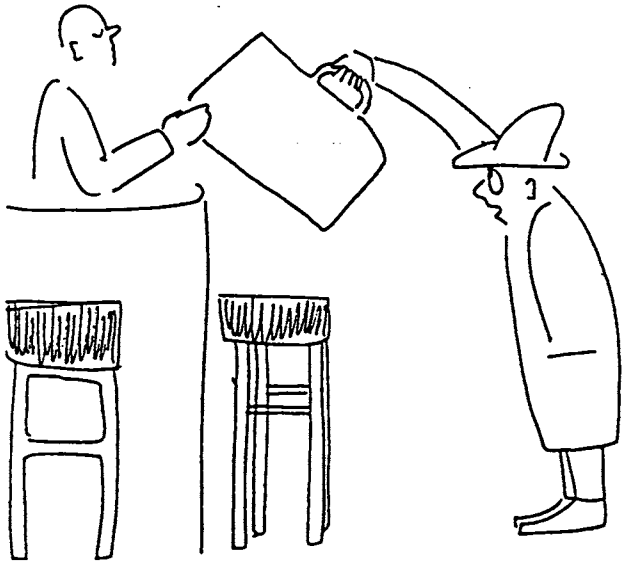
Wilt the Stilt



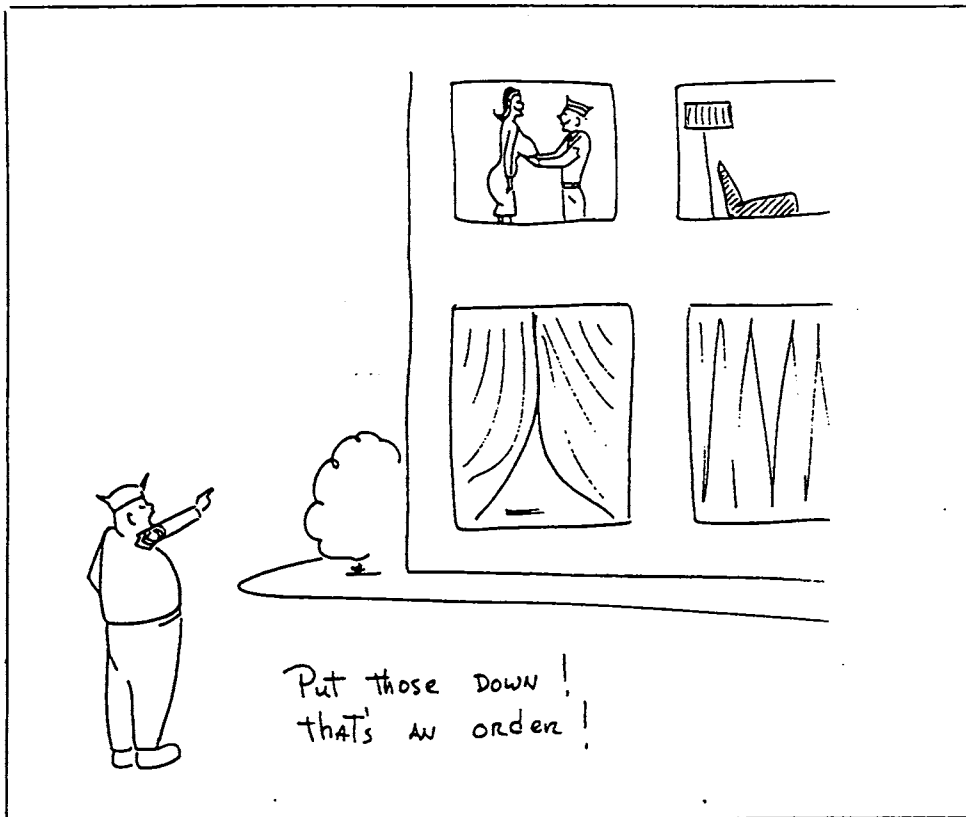
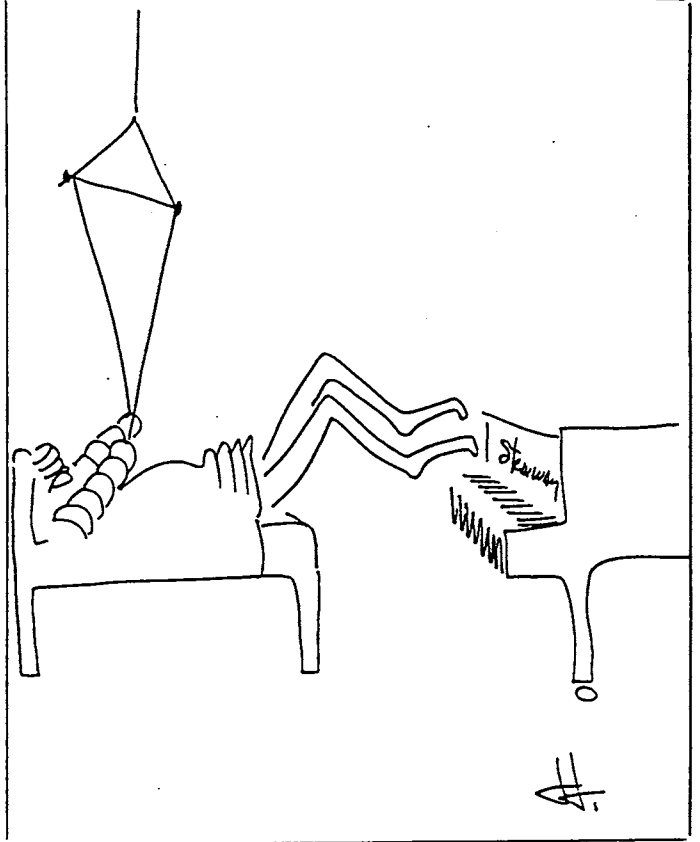
Are you Bunny BERIGAN ?



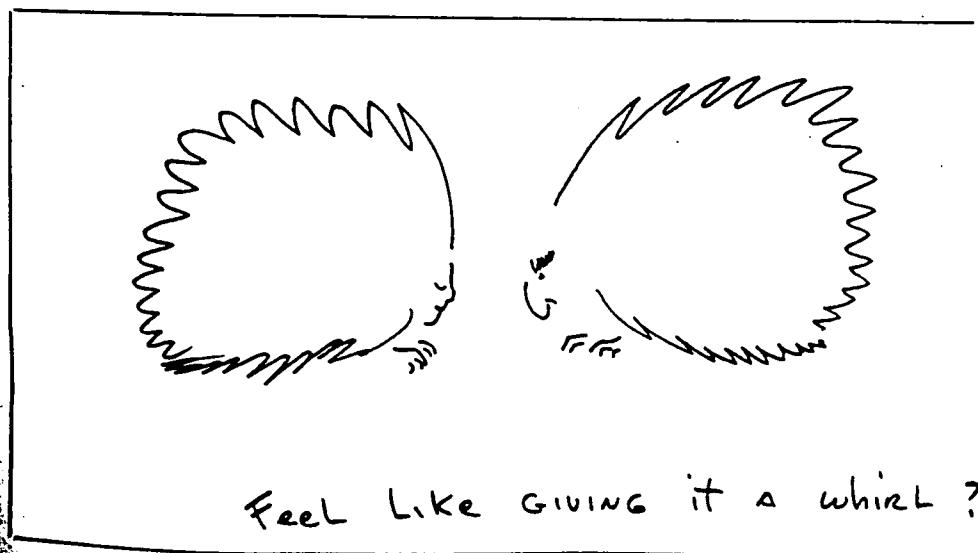
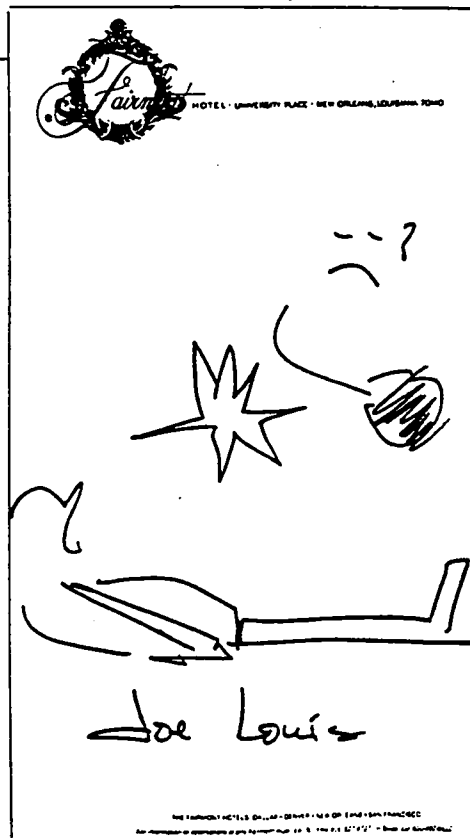
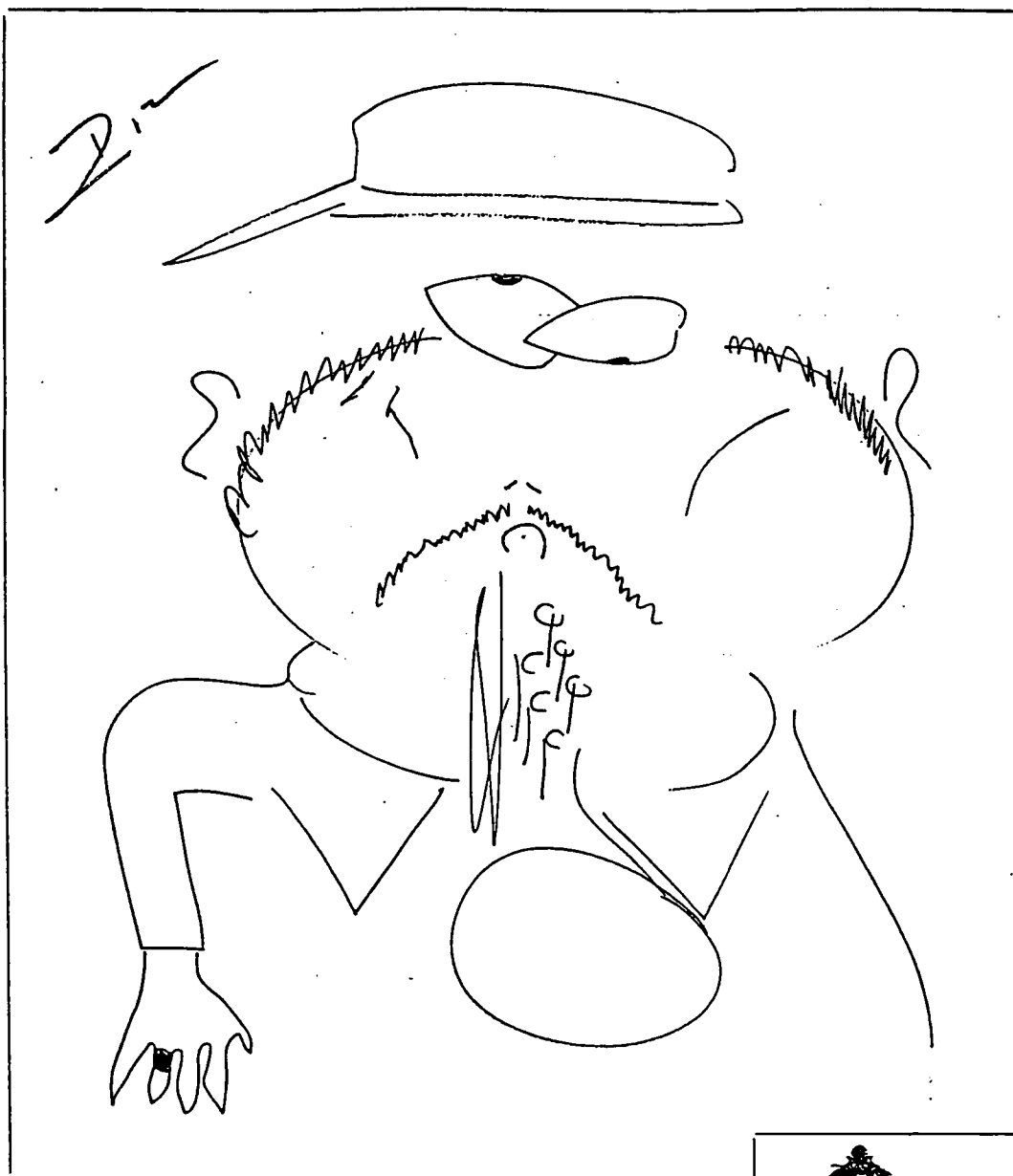


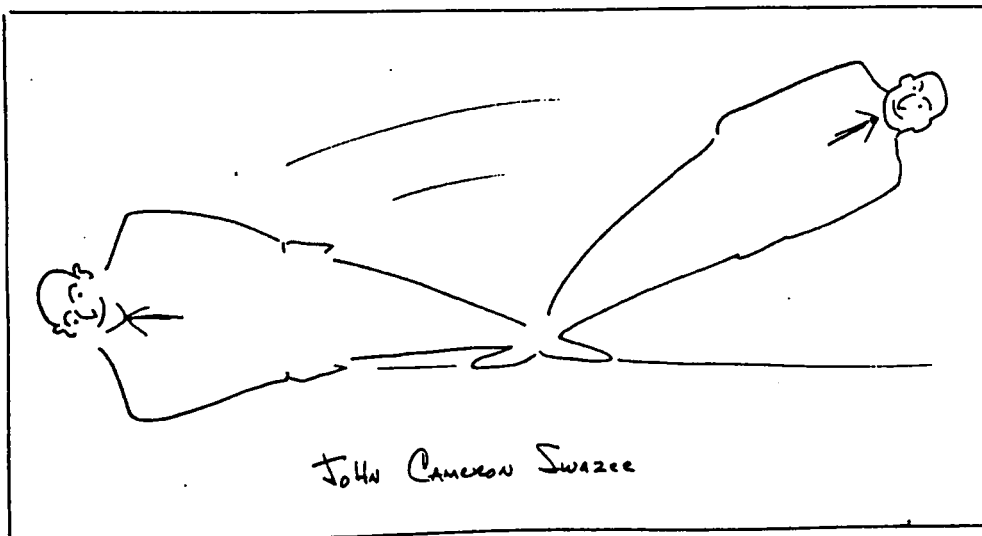
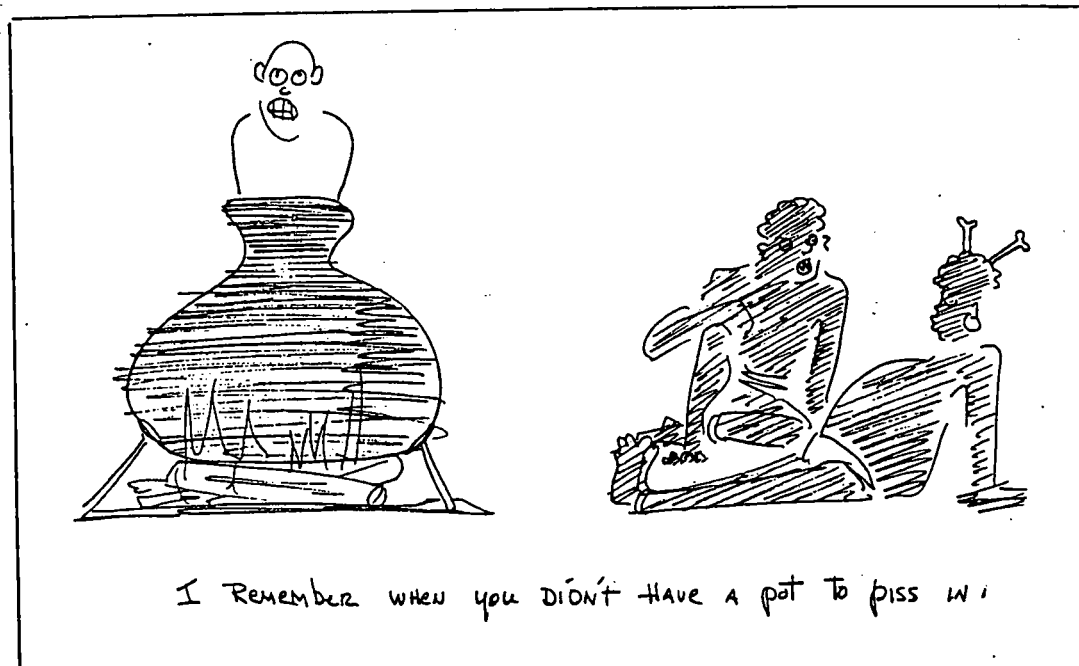
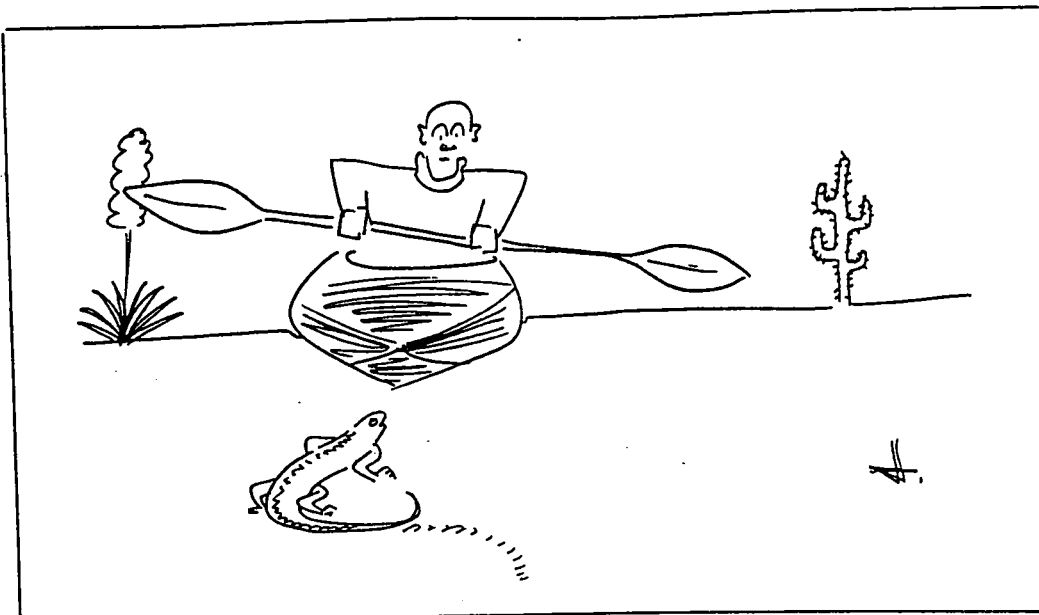


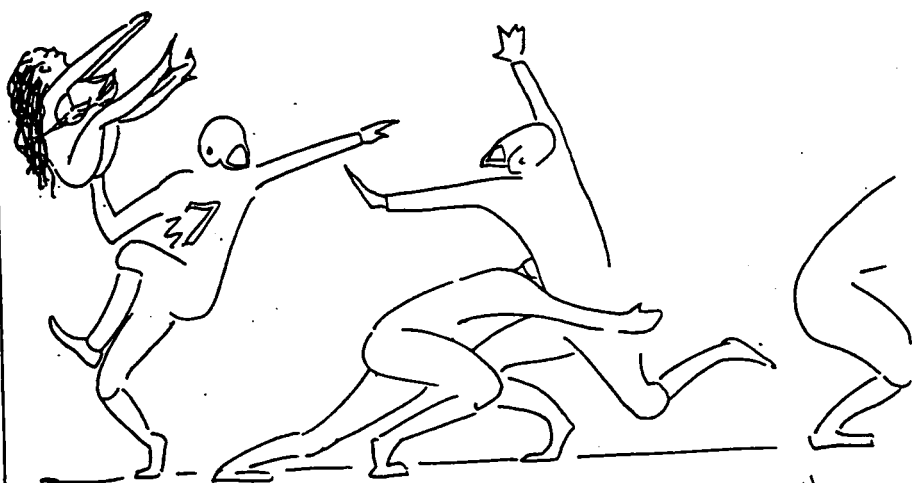
Guard this with your Life — it's
Got the violin parts to "NAGASAKI"
in it.



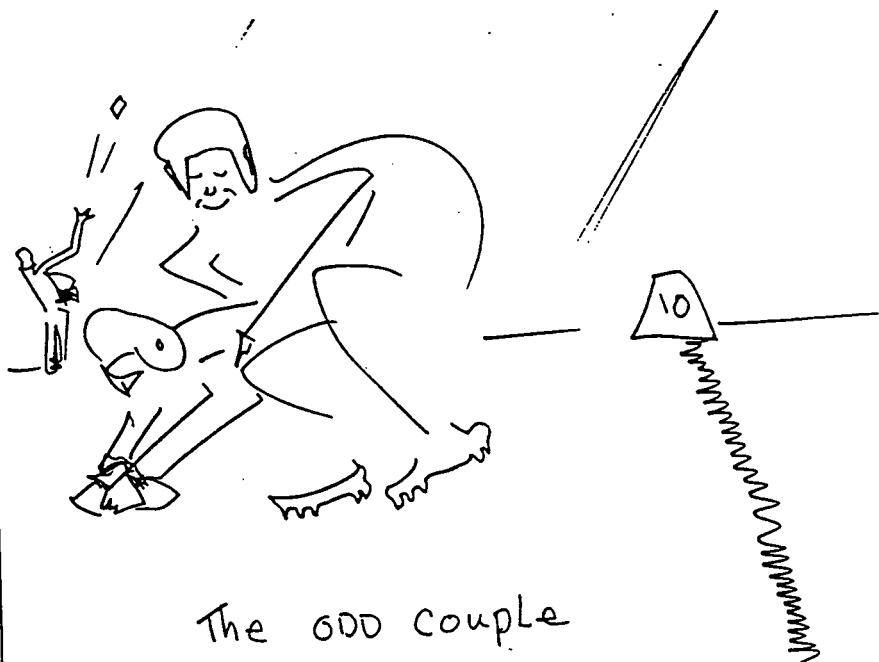
Put those Down!
That's an order!



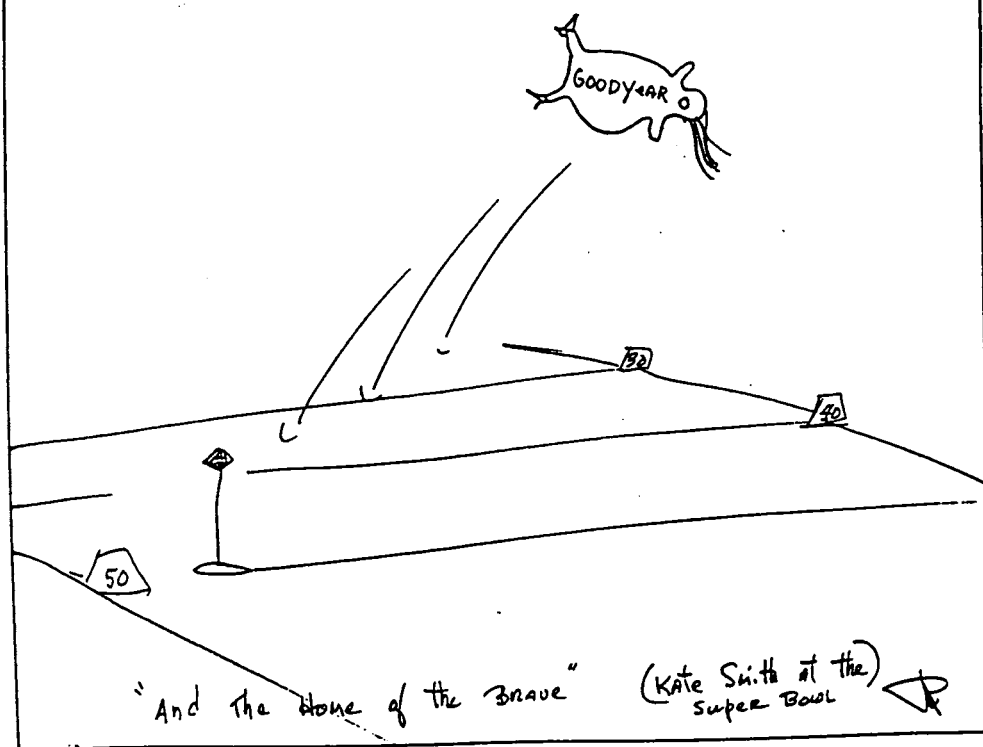




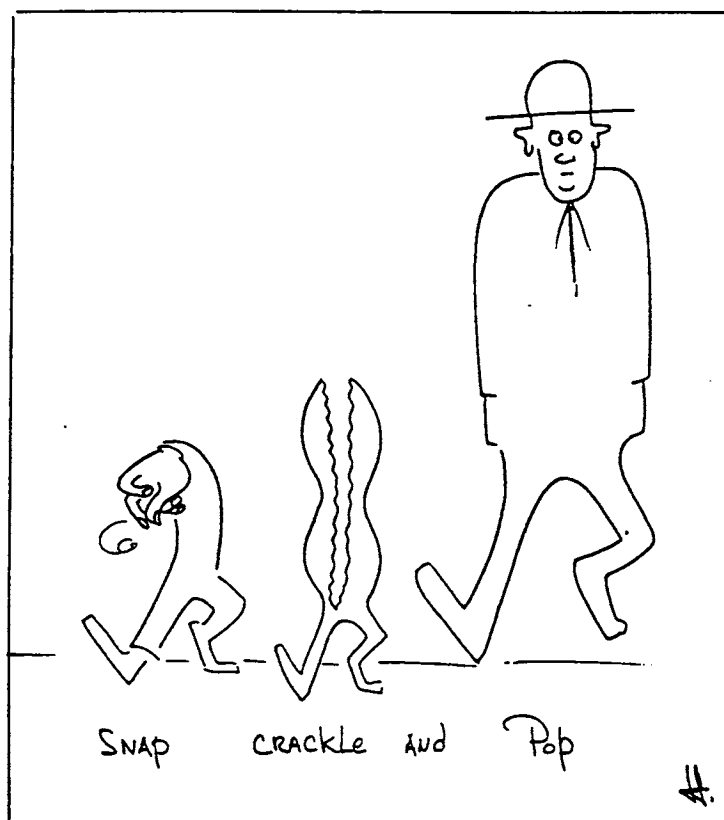
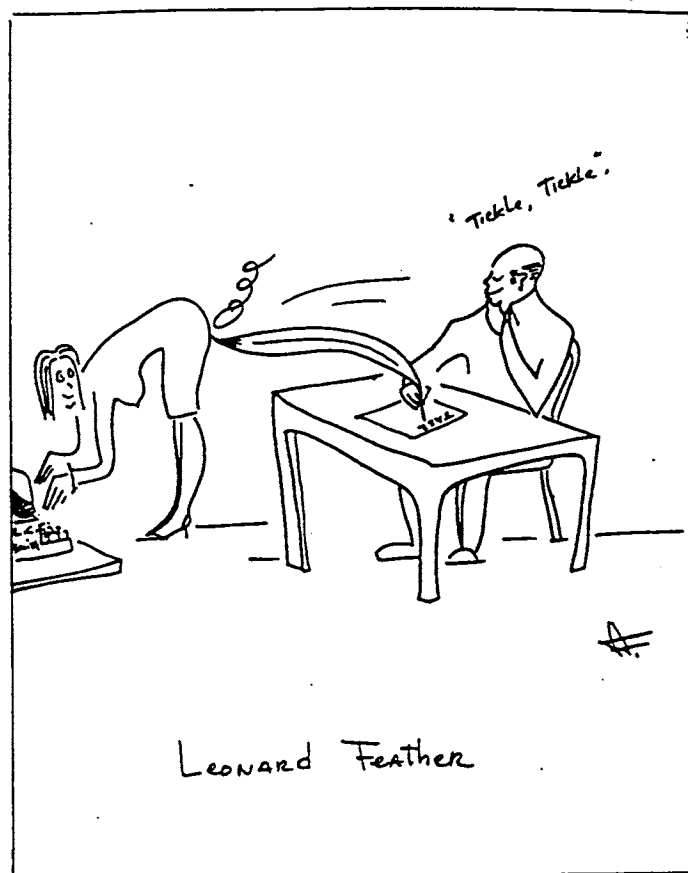
the Aristocrats

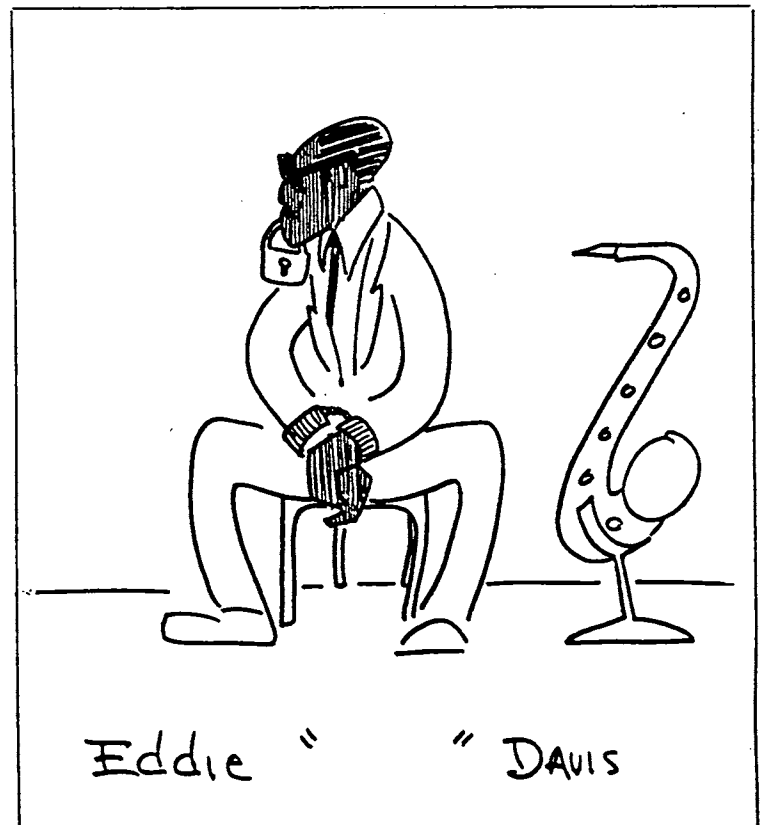
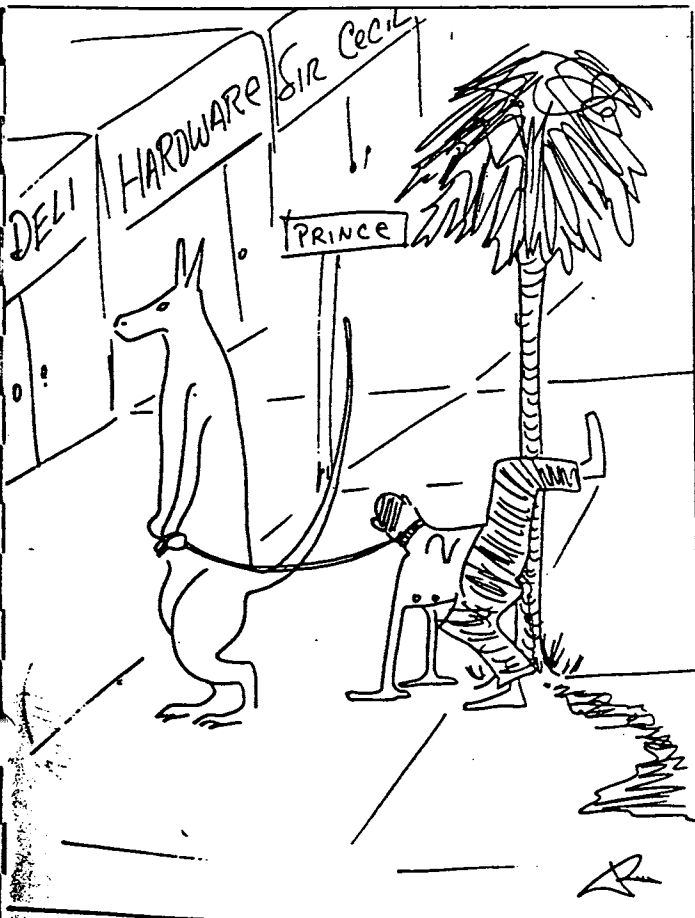
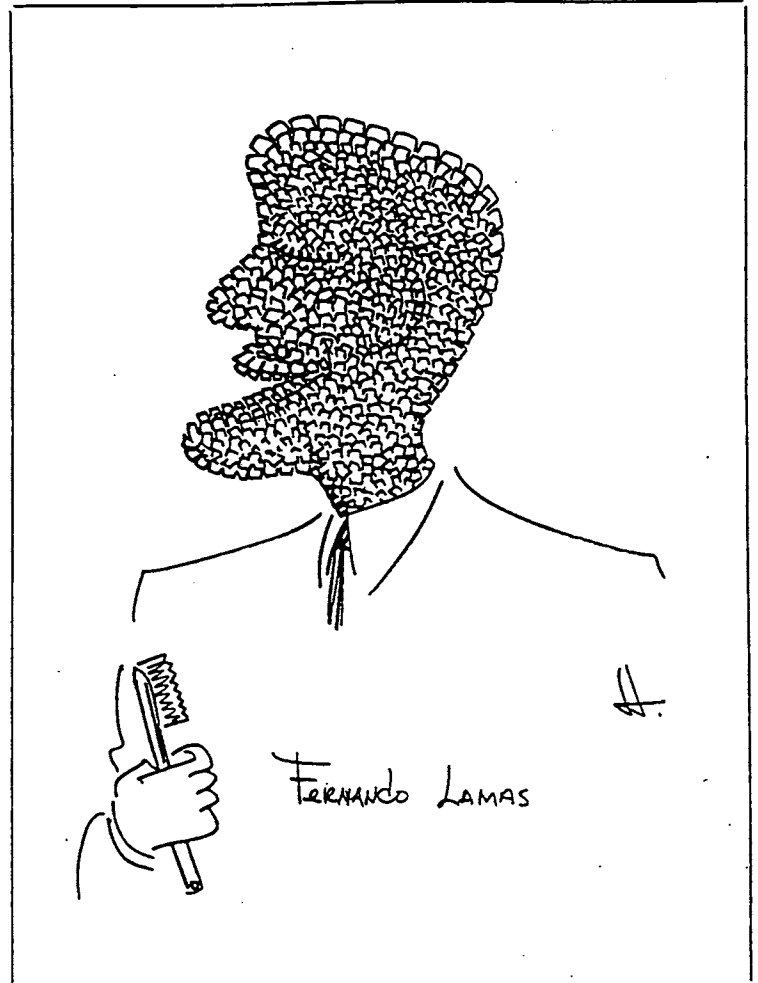
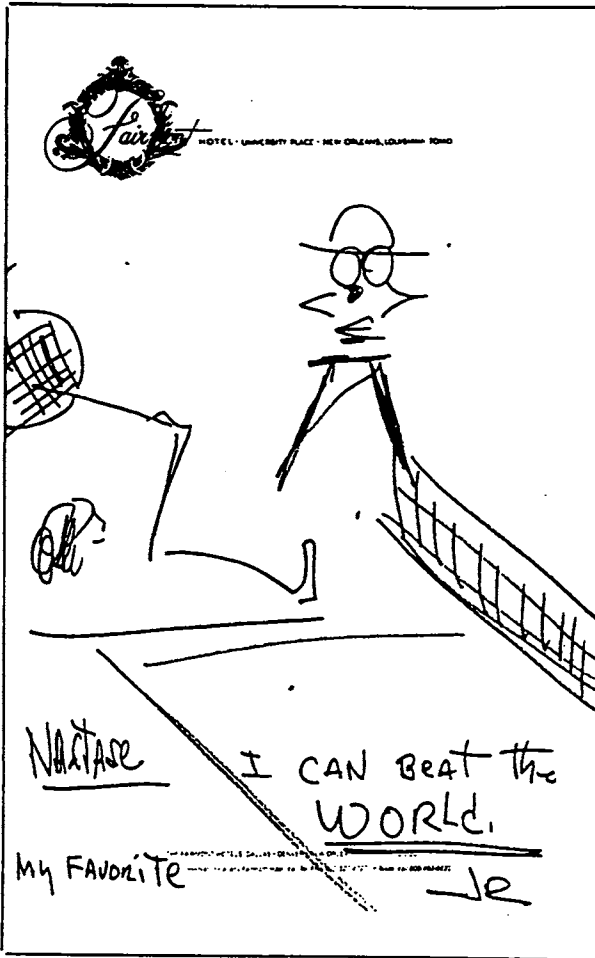


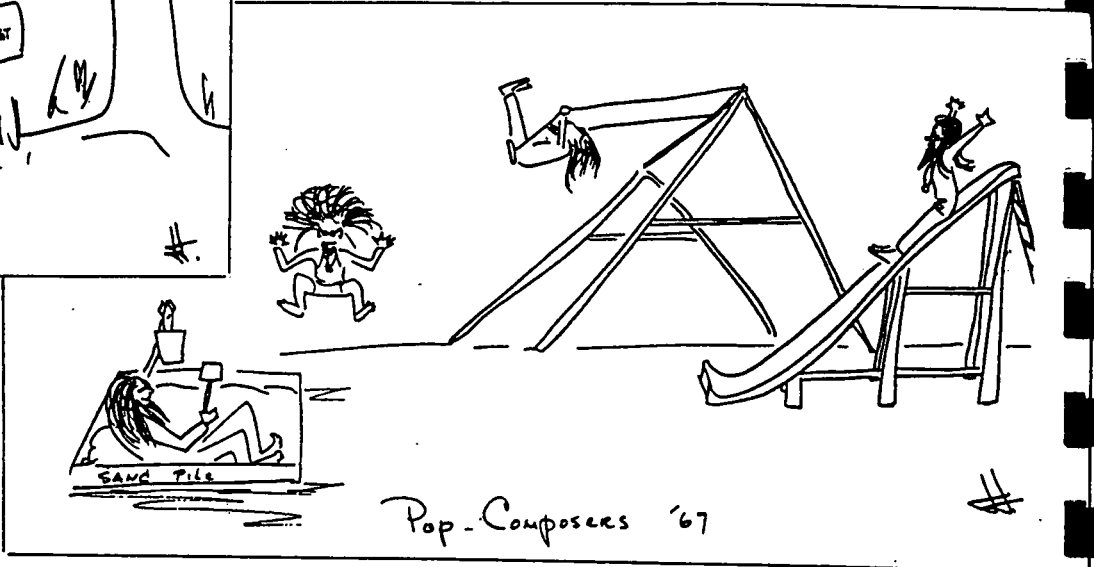
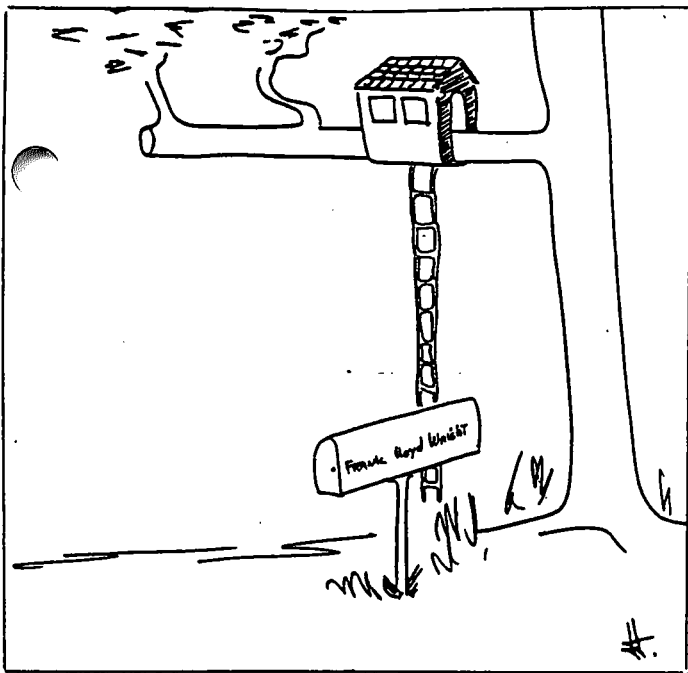
The odd couple



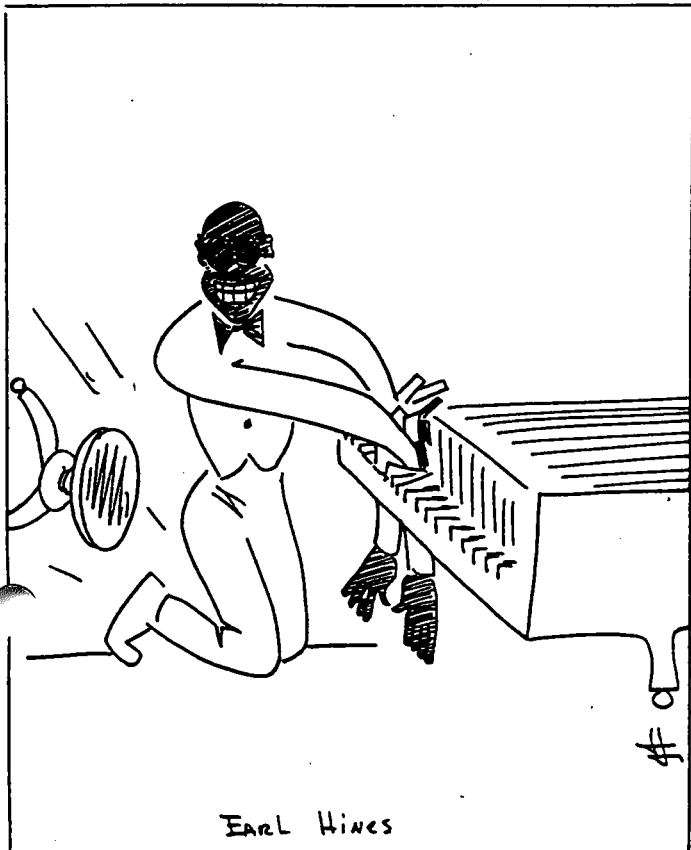
"And The Home of the Brave" (Kate Smith at the Super Bowl)







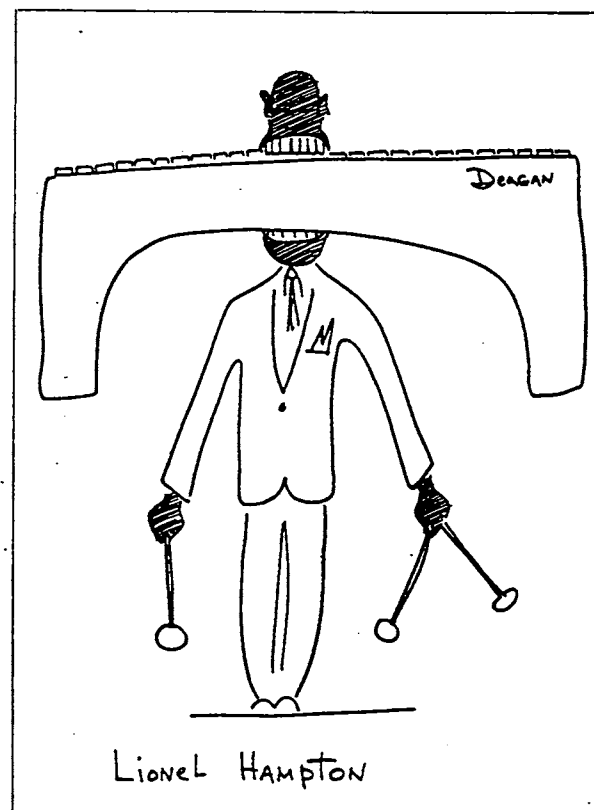
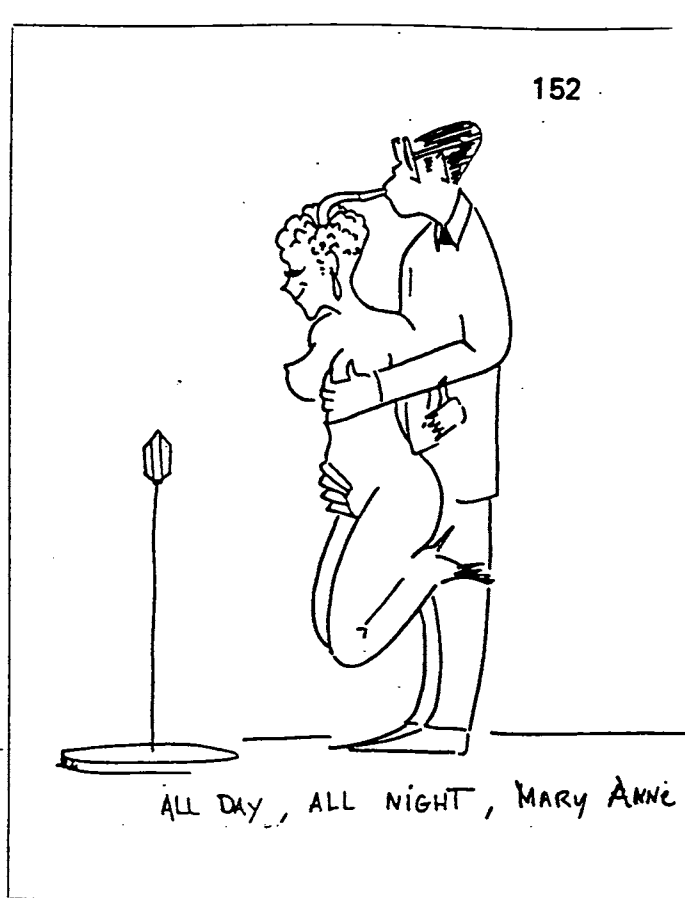
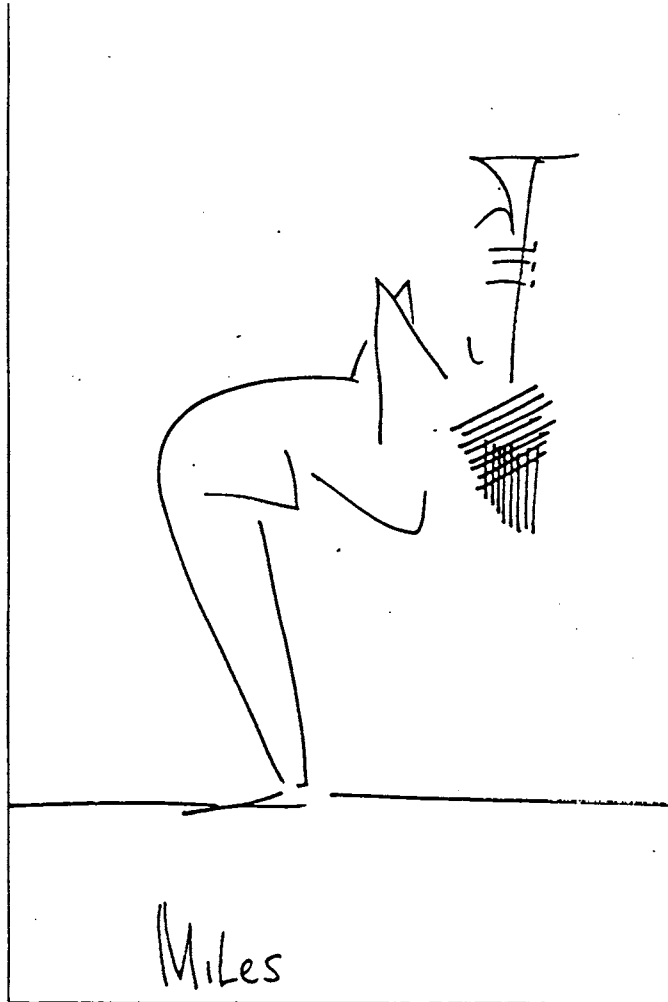
Pop-Composers '67

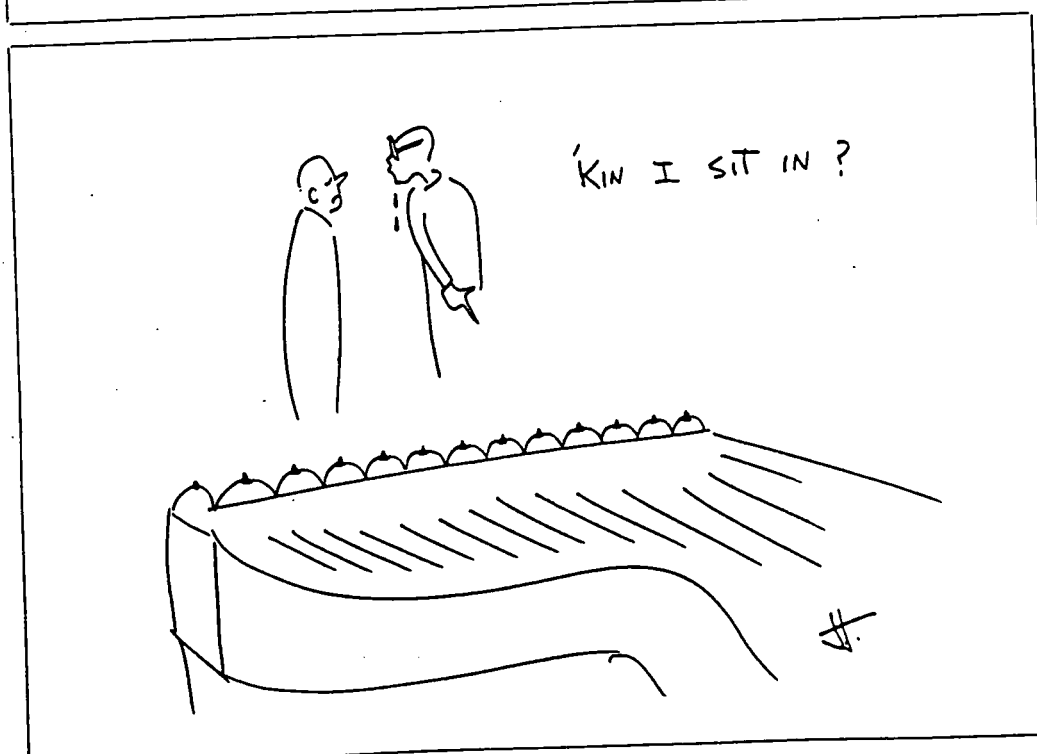
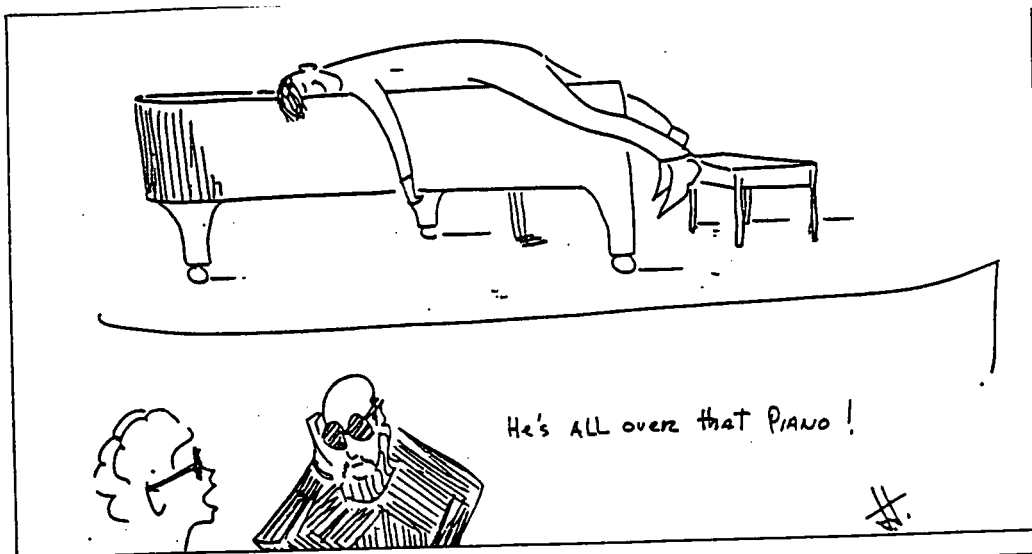


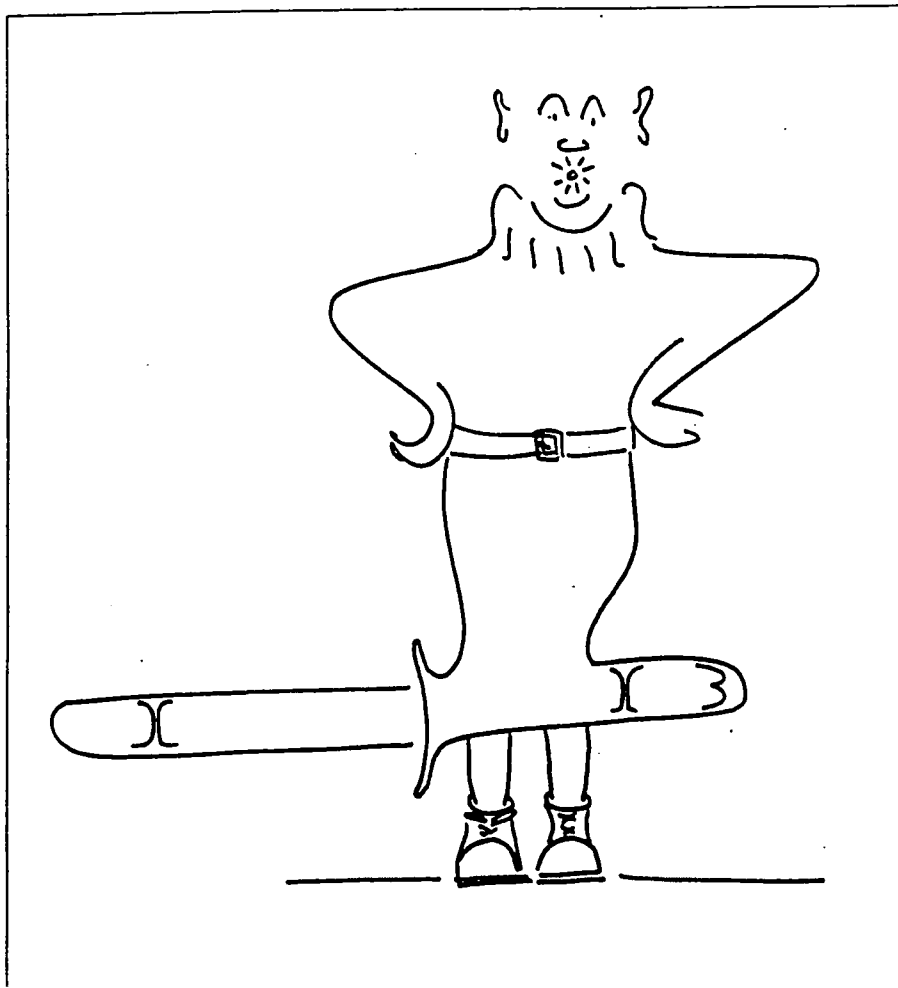
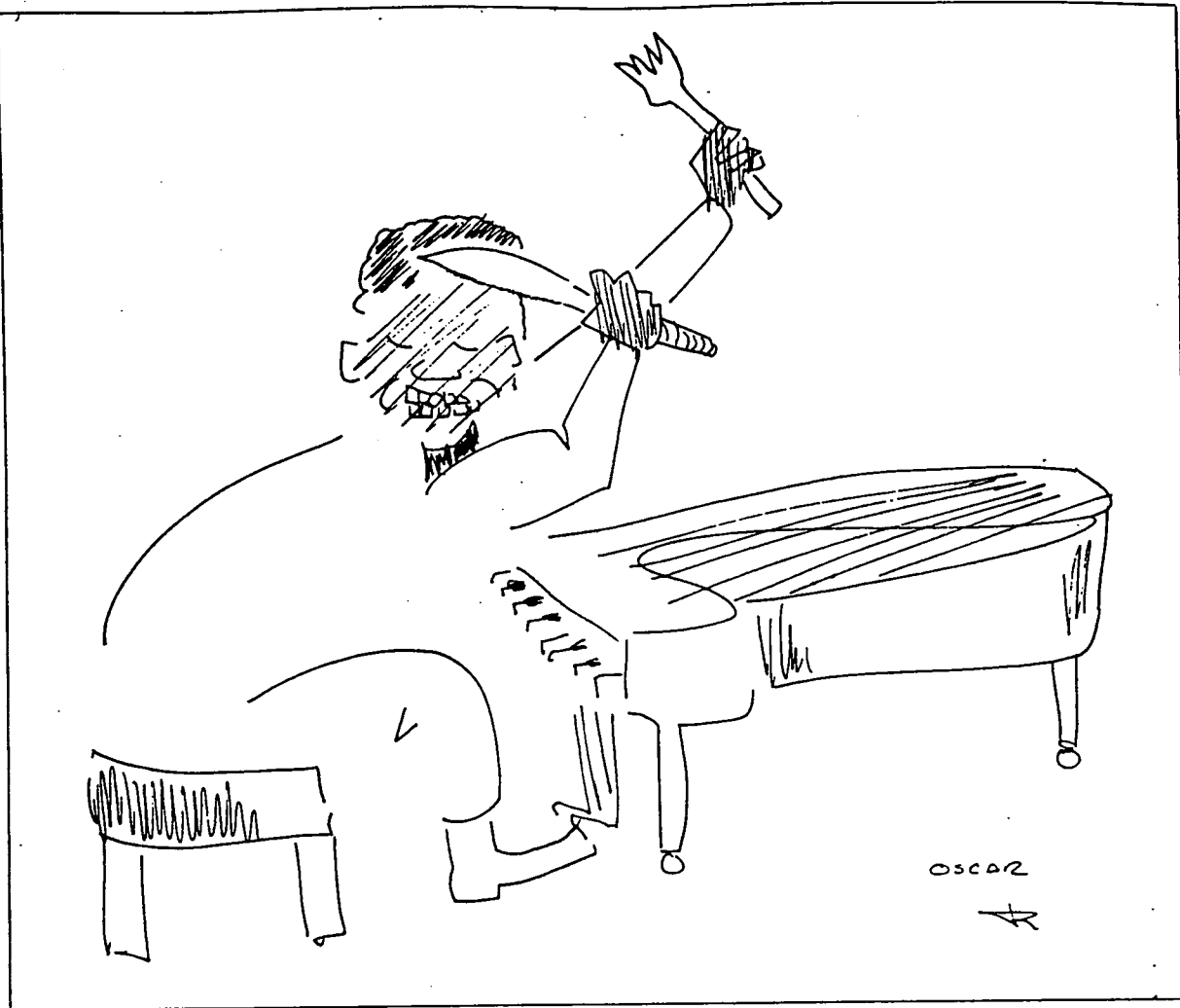
Earl Hines

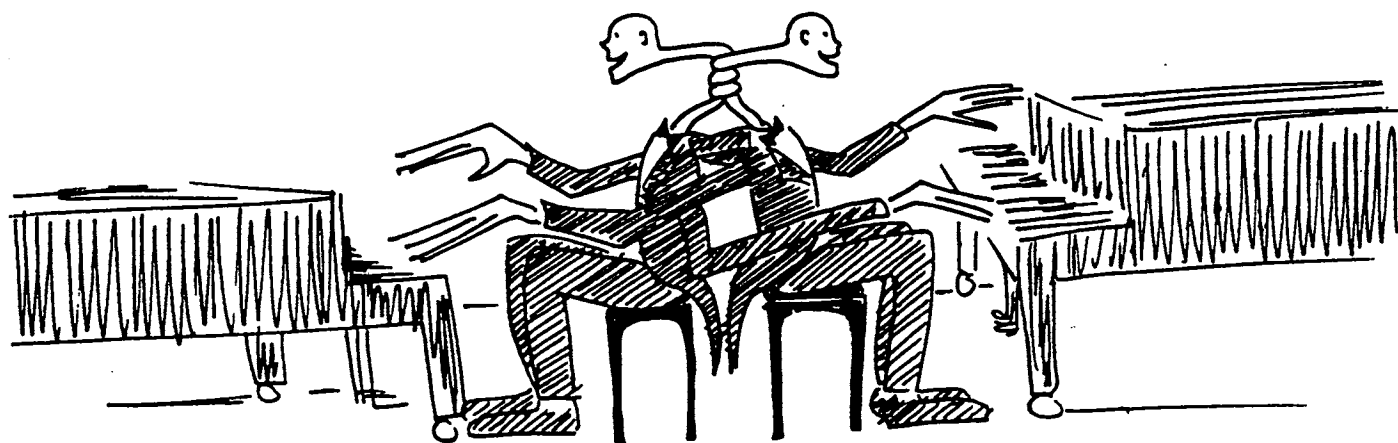
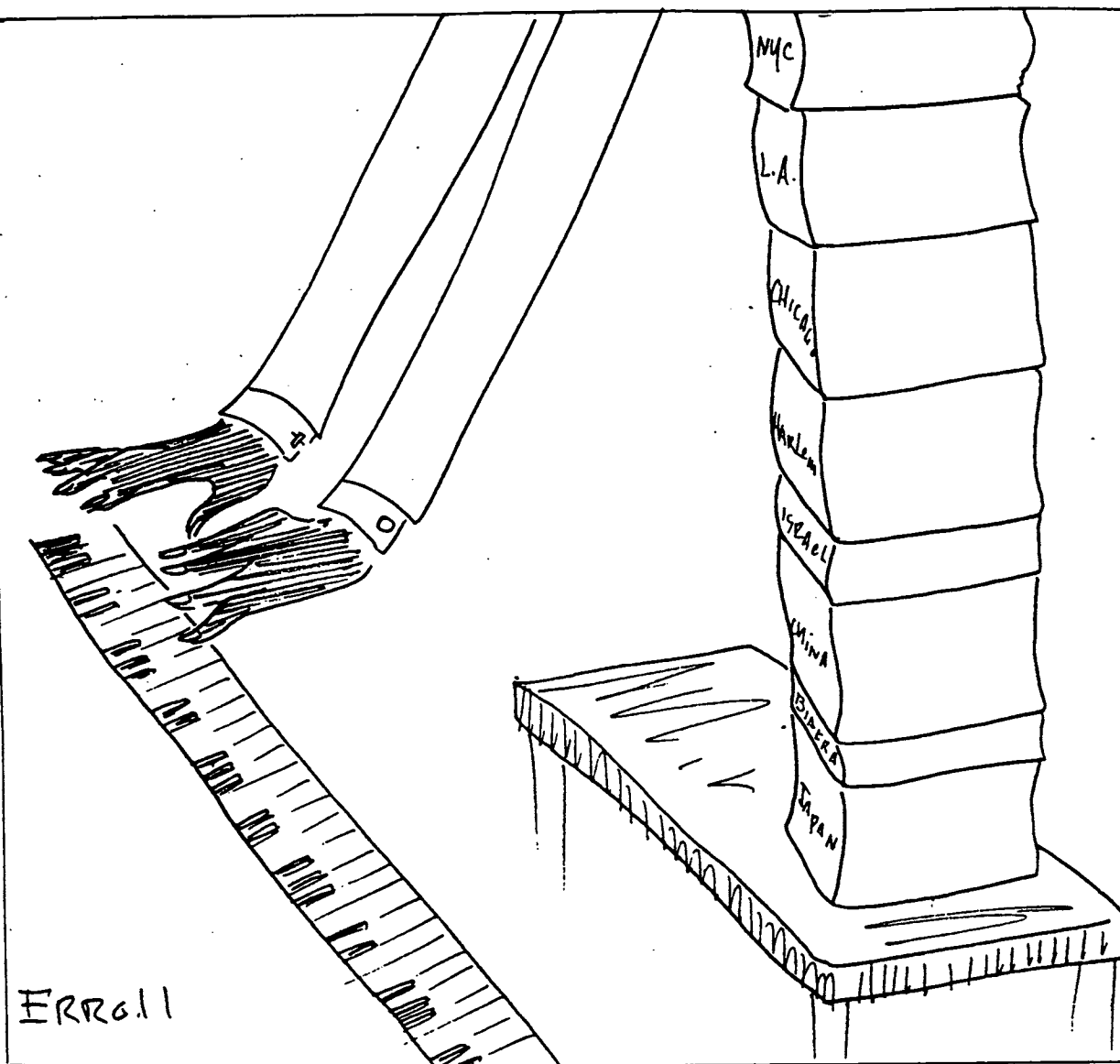


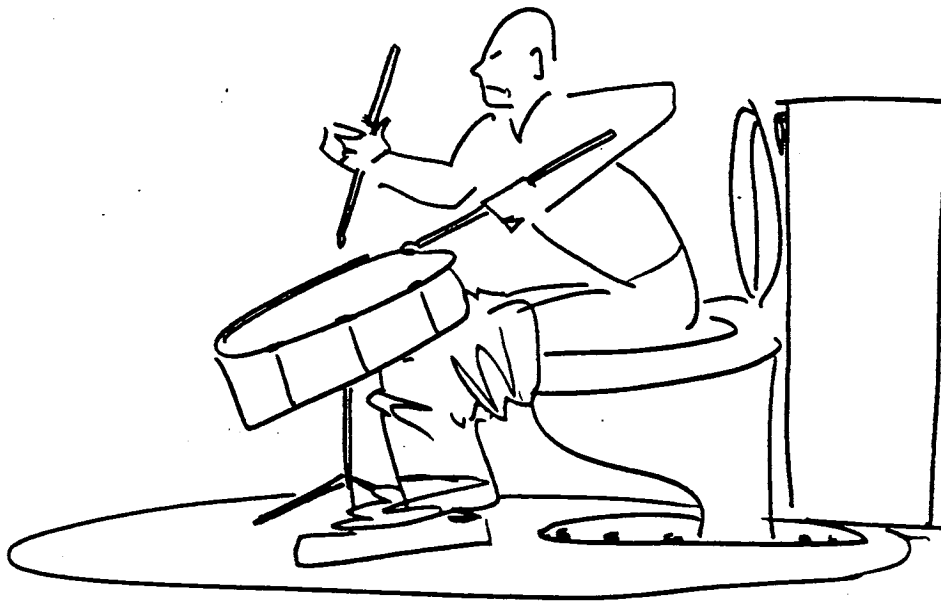
I'LL HAVE ONE TOO MANY.





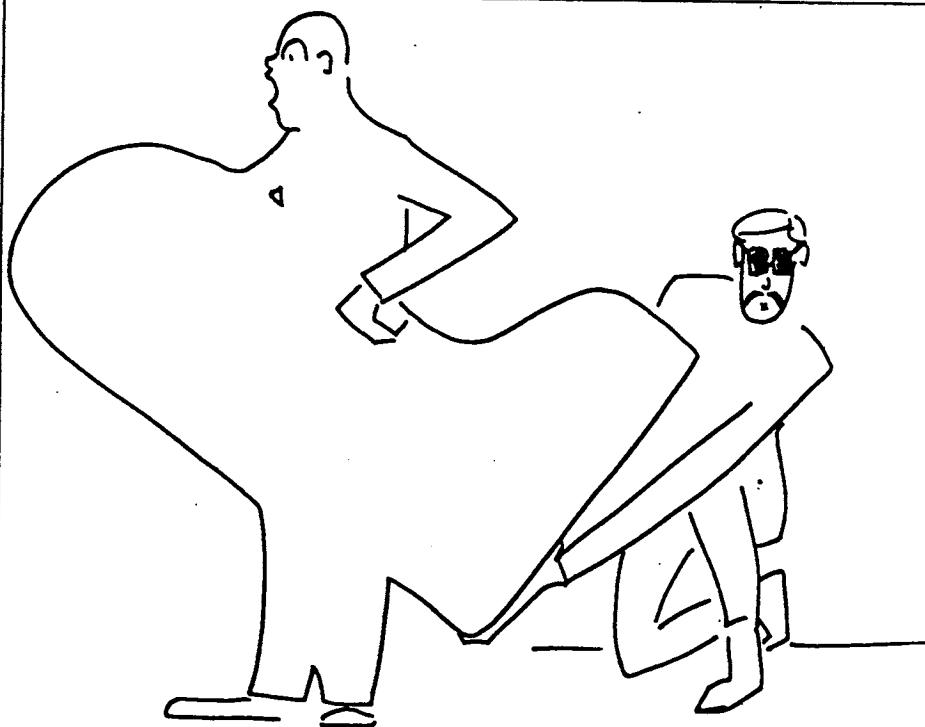






Buddy Rich

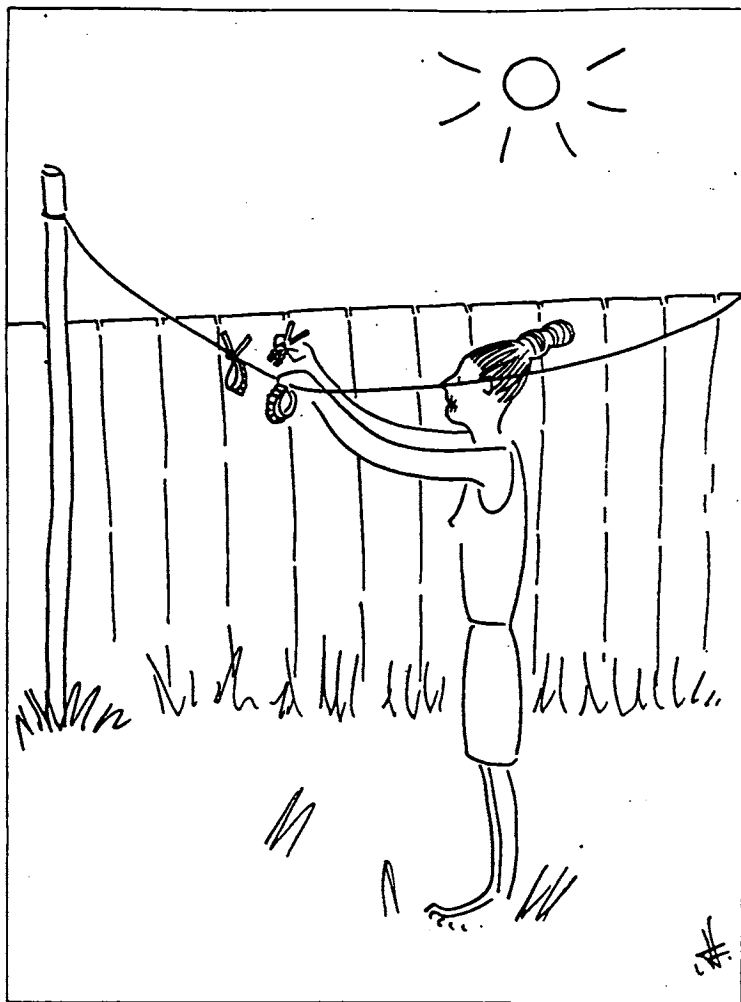
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'it's starting to hurt.'

Ben Barrett

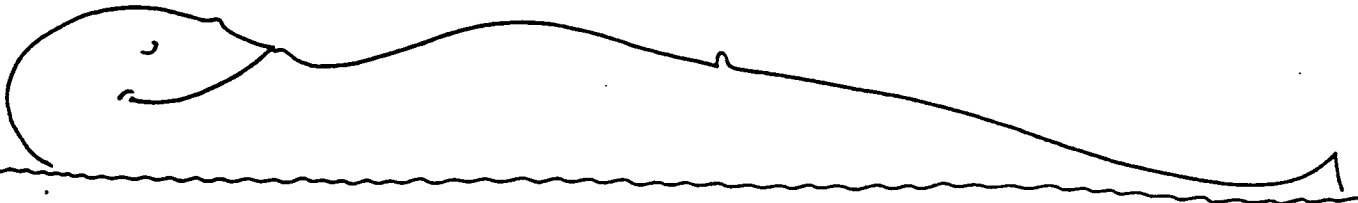
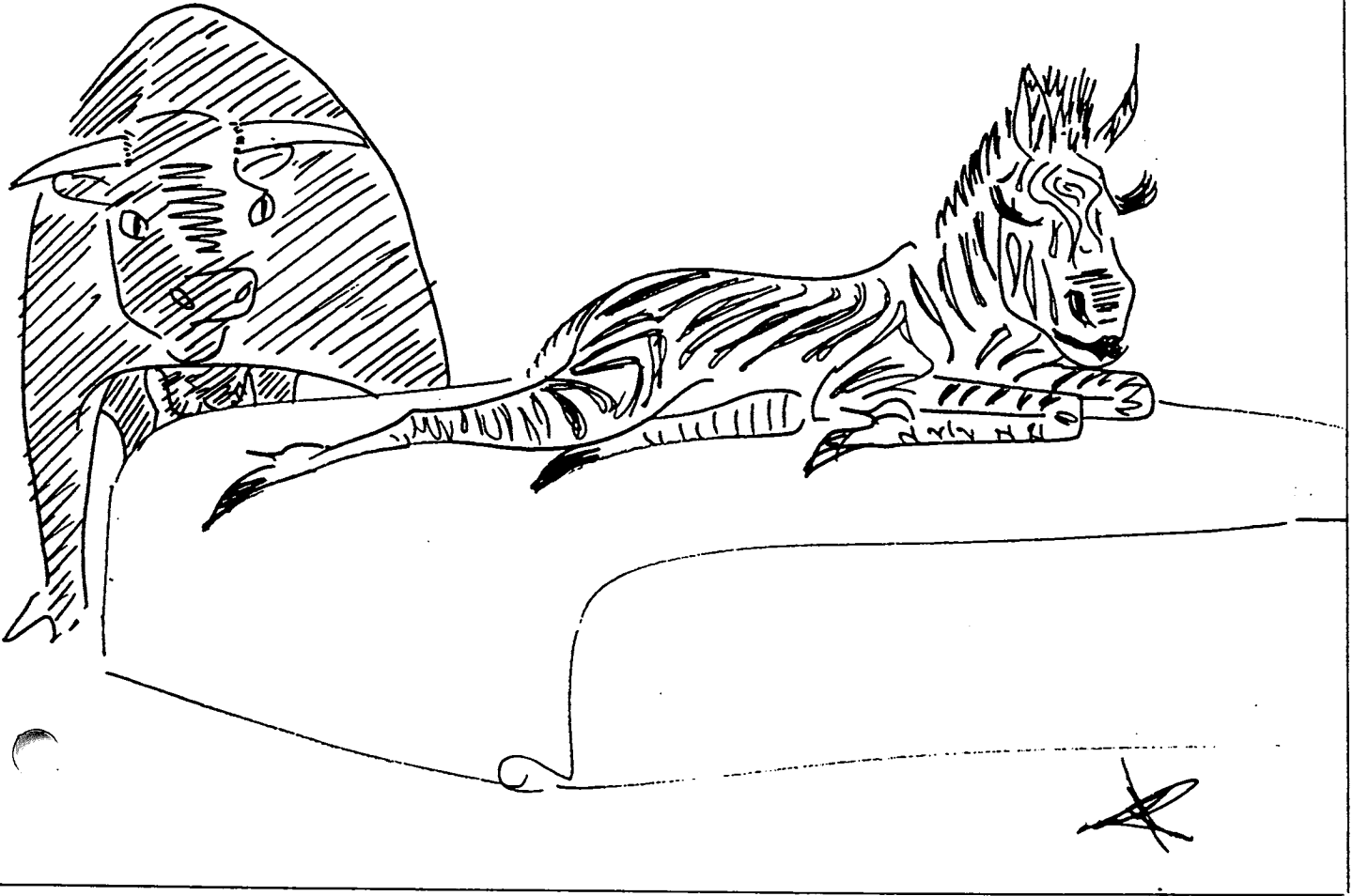
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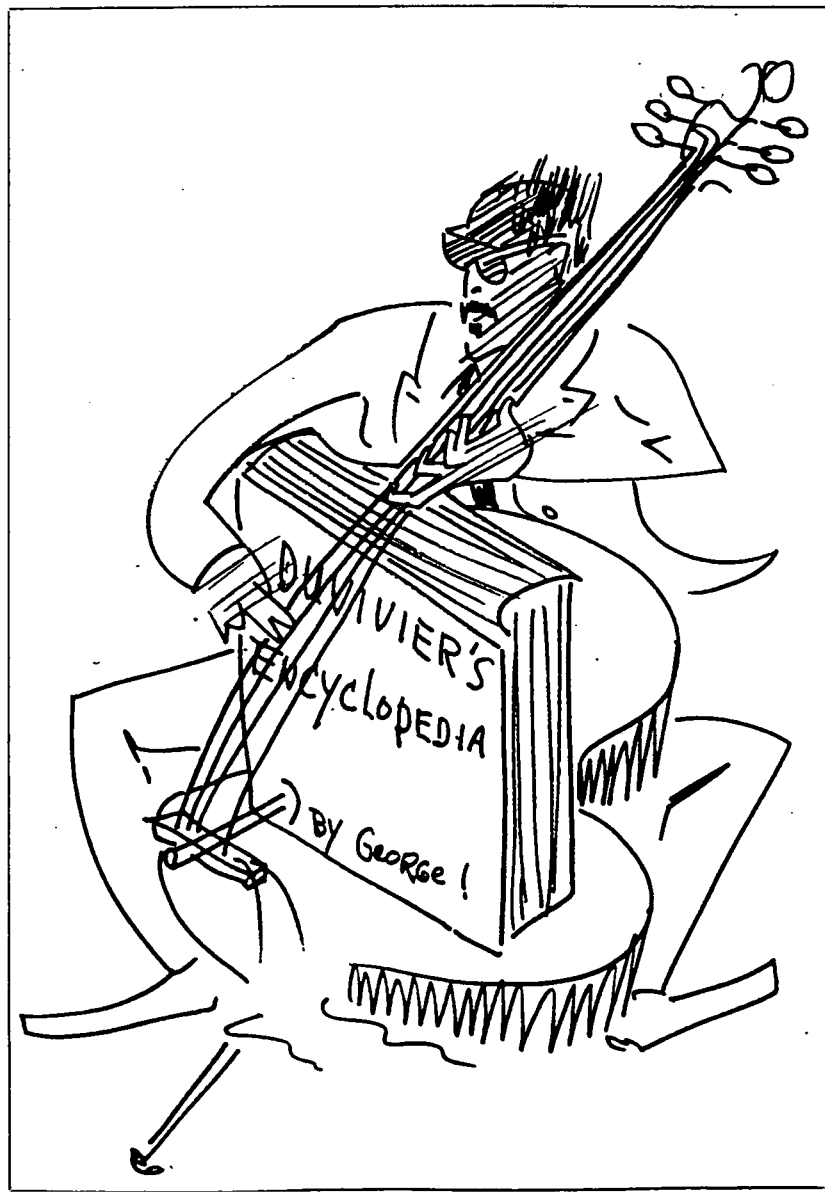
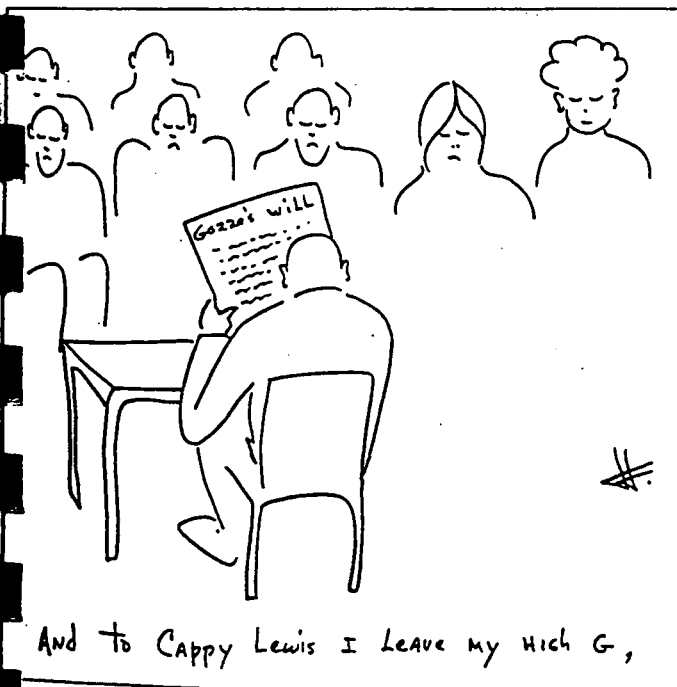
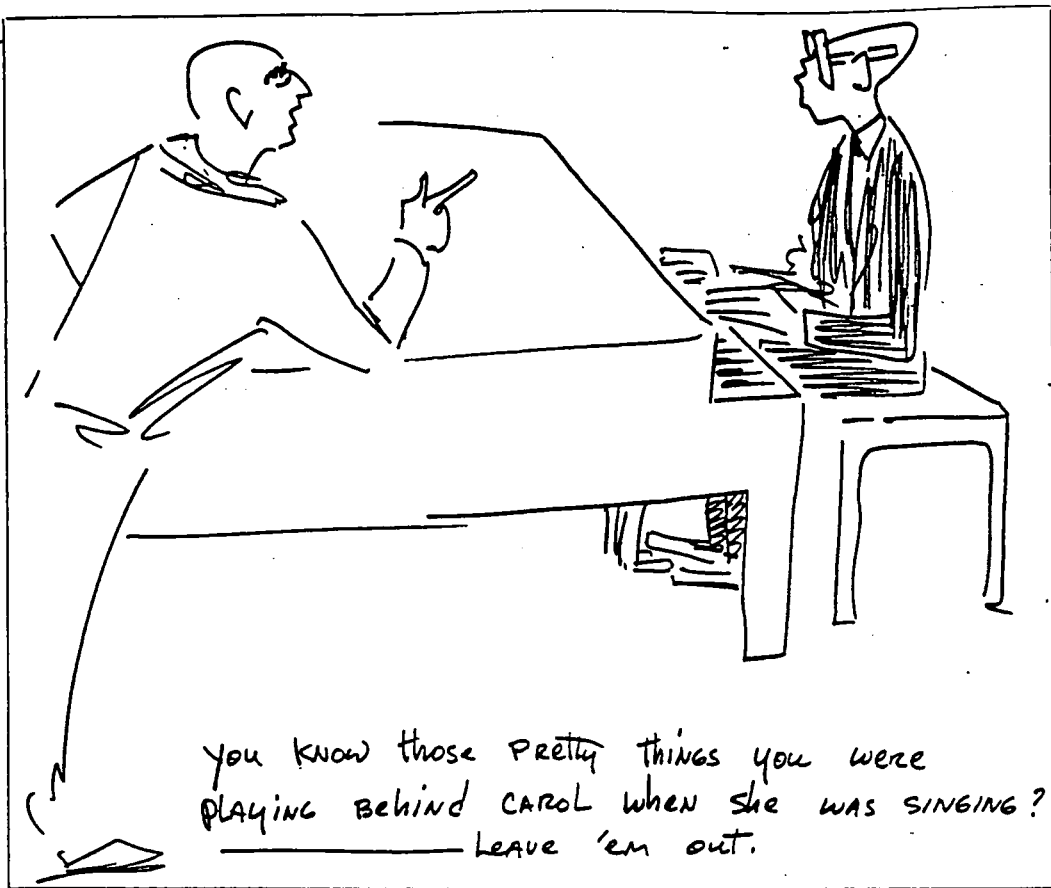
FAG GIRAFFE

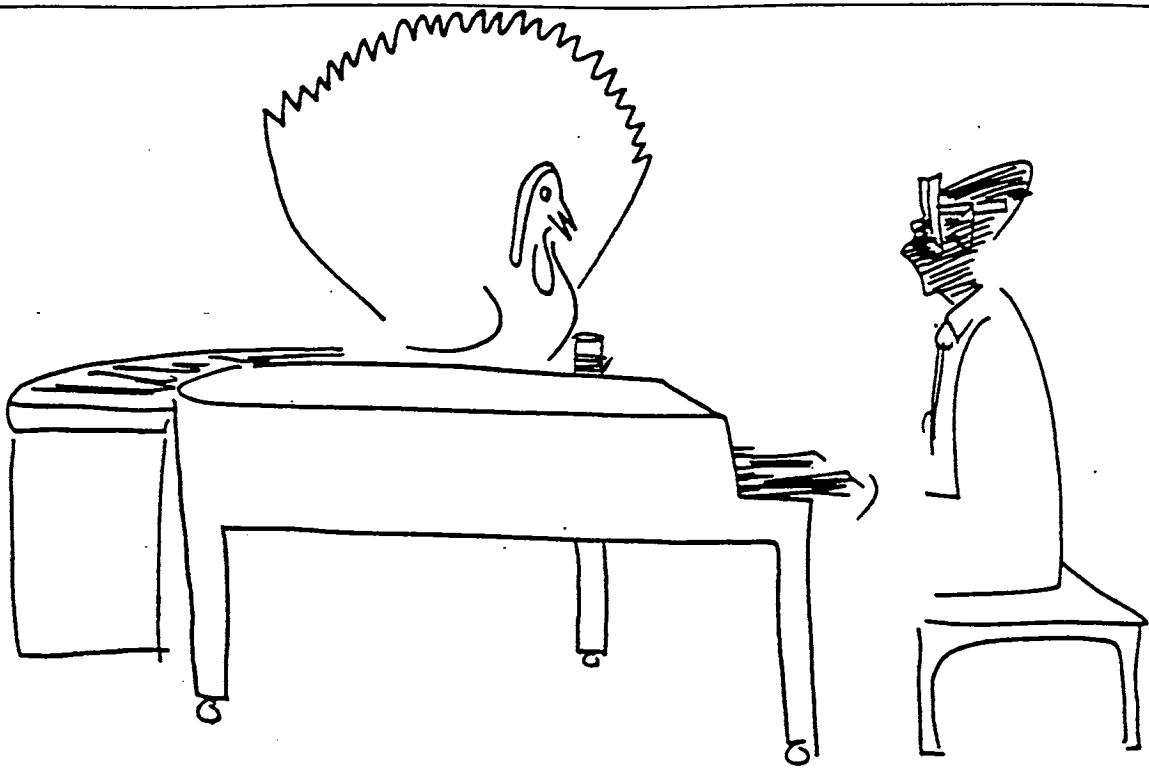


TAKE OFF them striped pajamas !

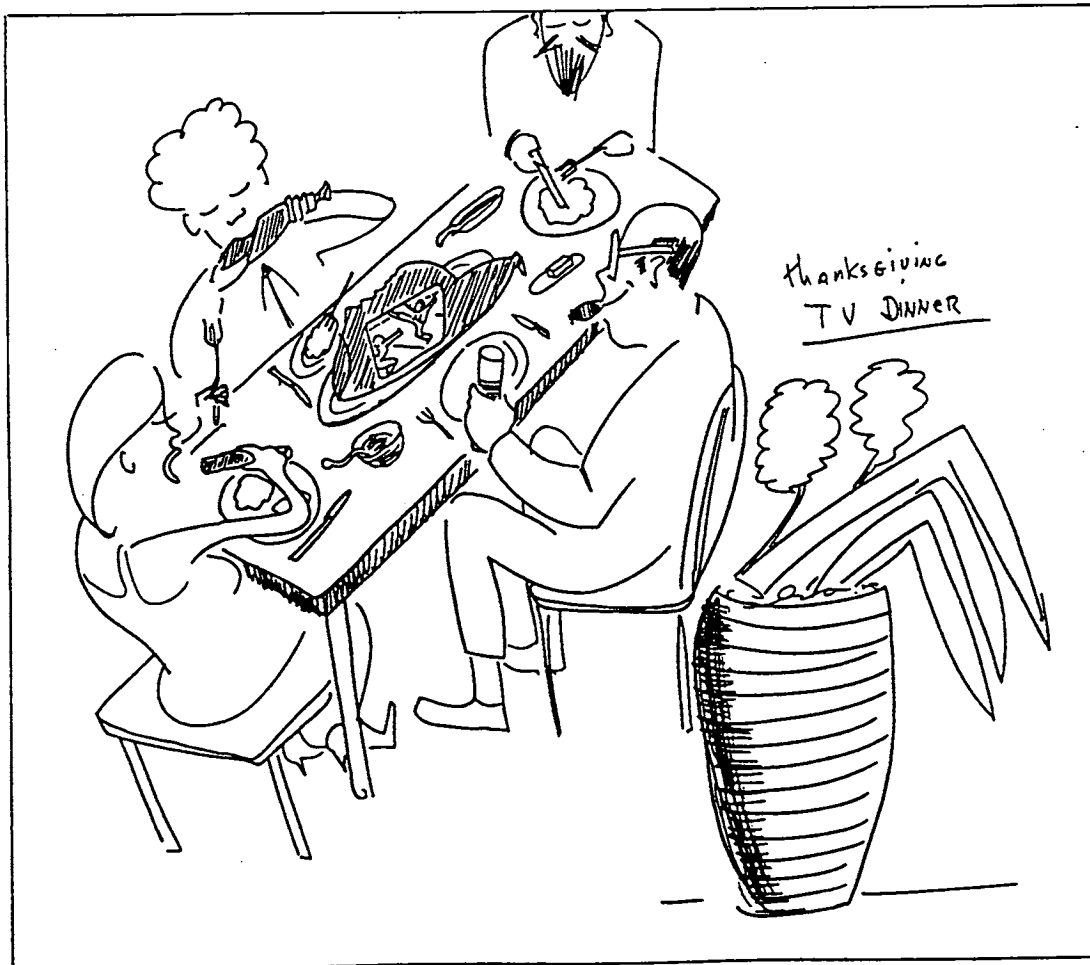


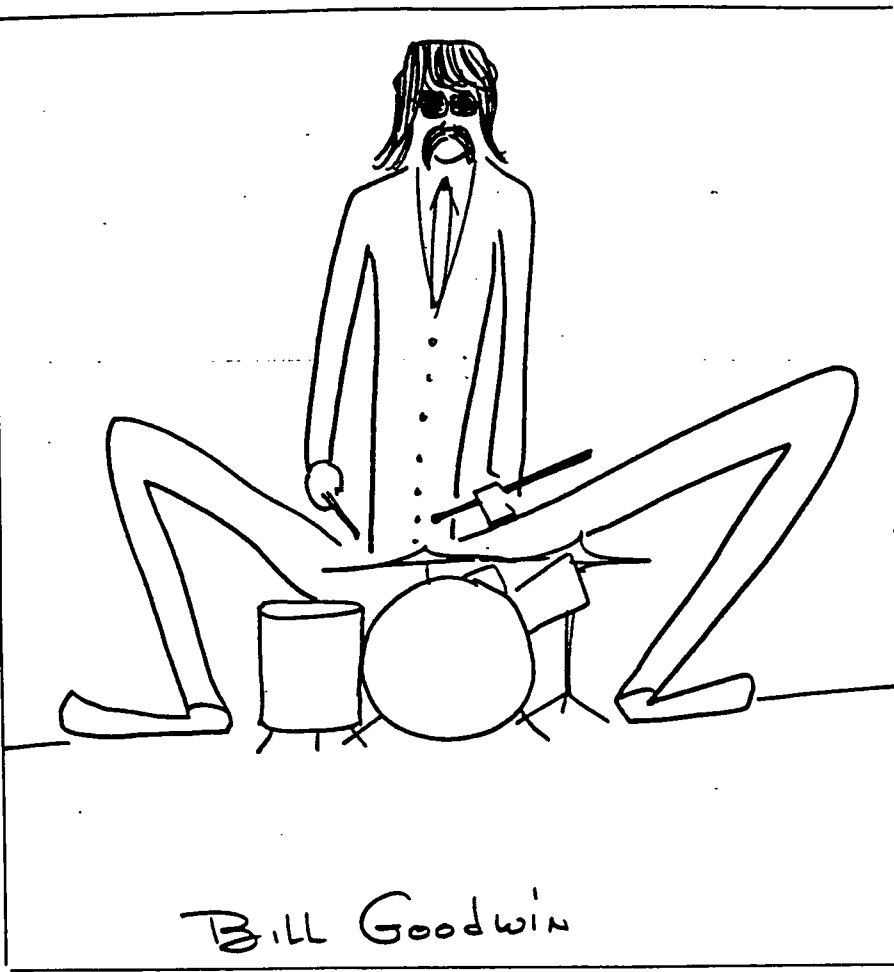
Moby Dick

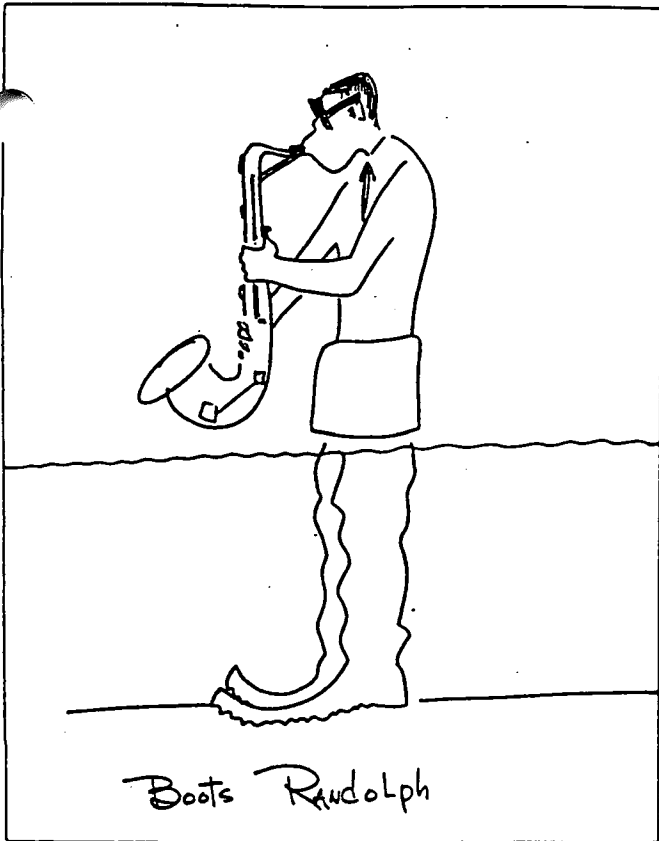




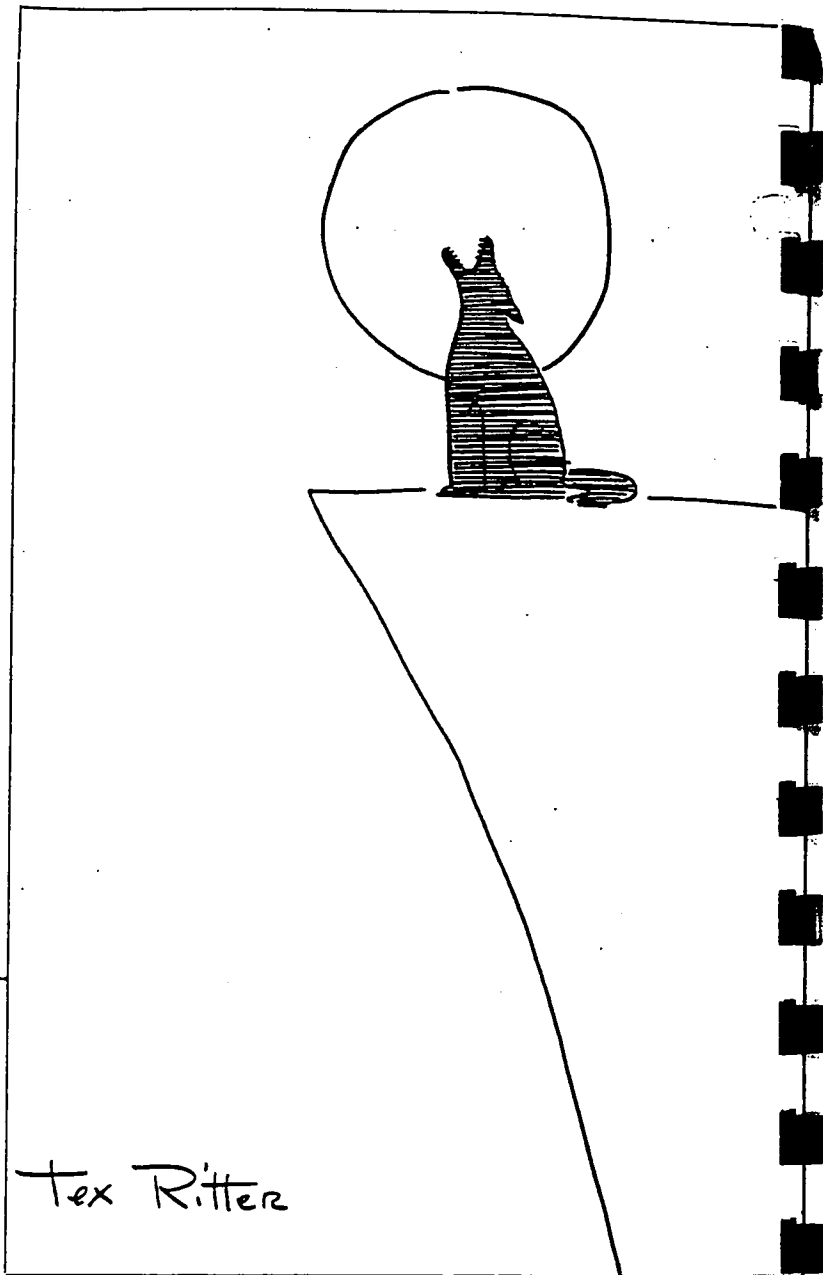
Do you know the Turkey Trot ?



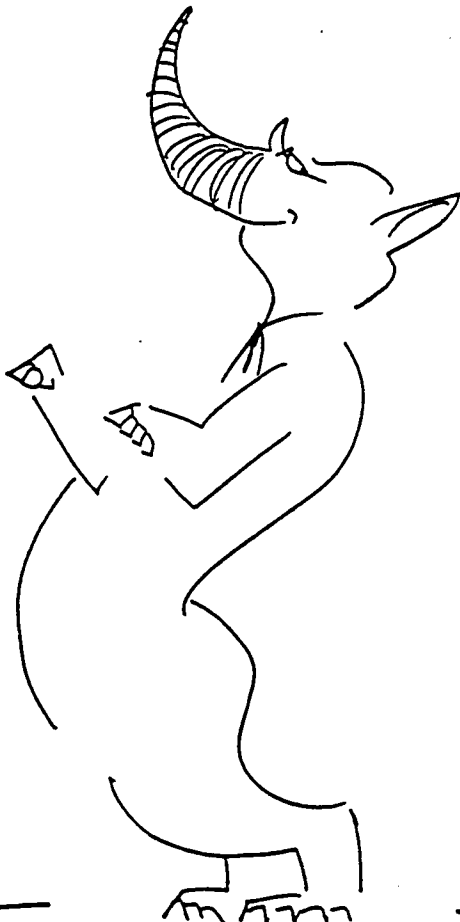




Boots Randolph



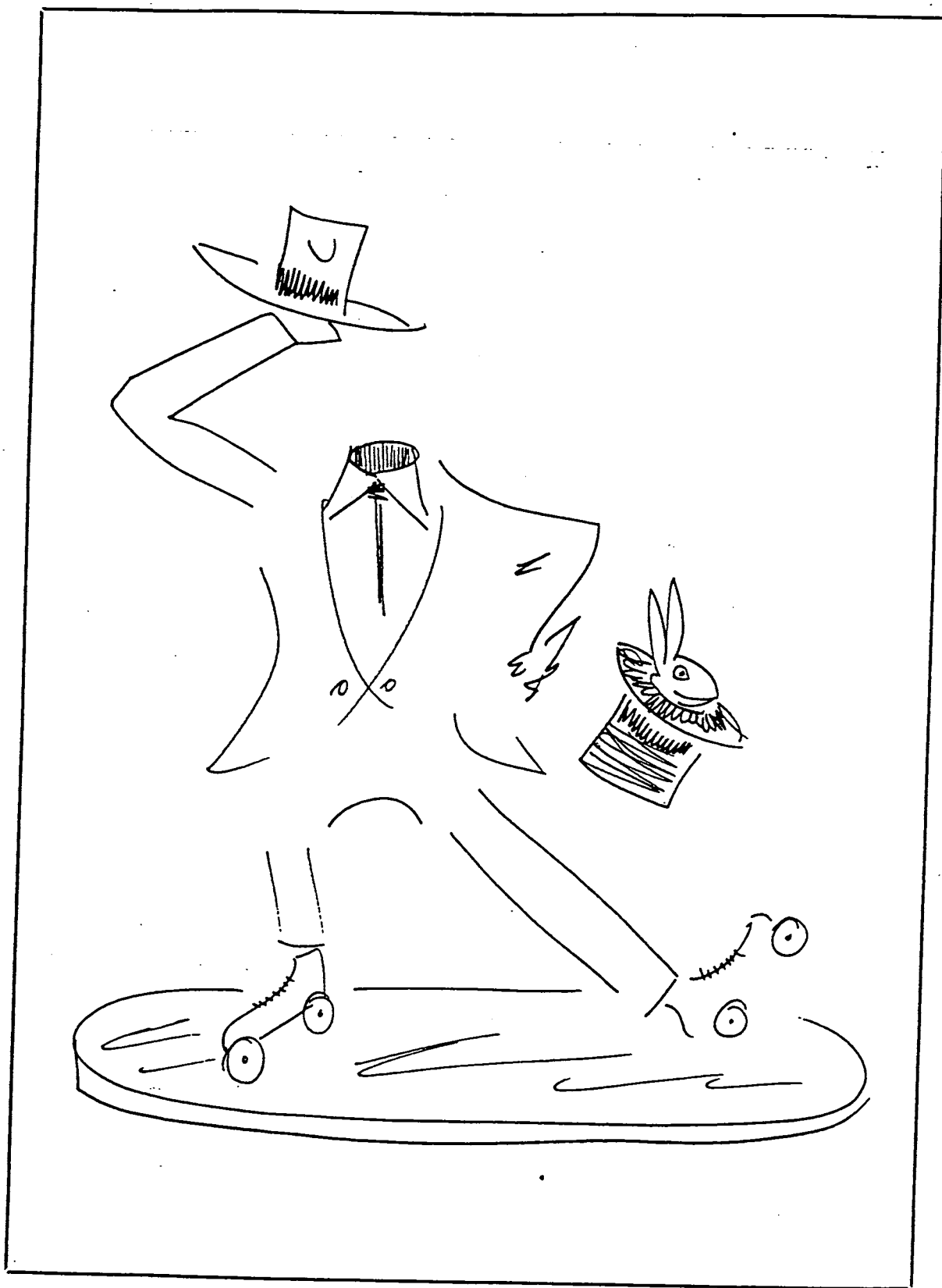
Tex Ritter

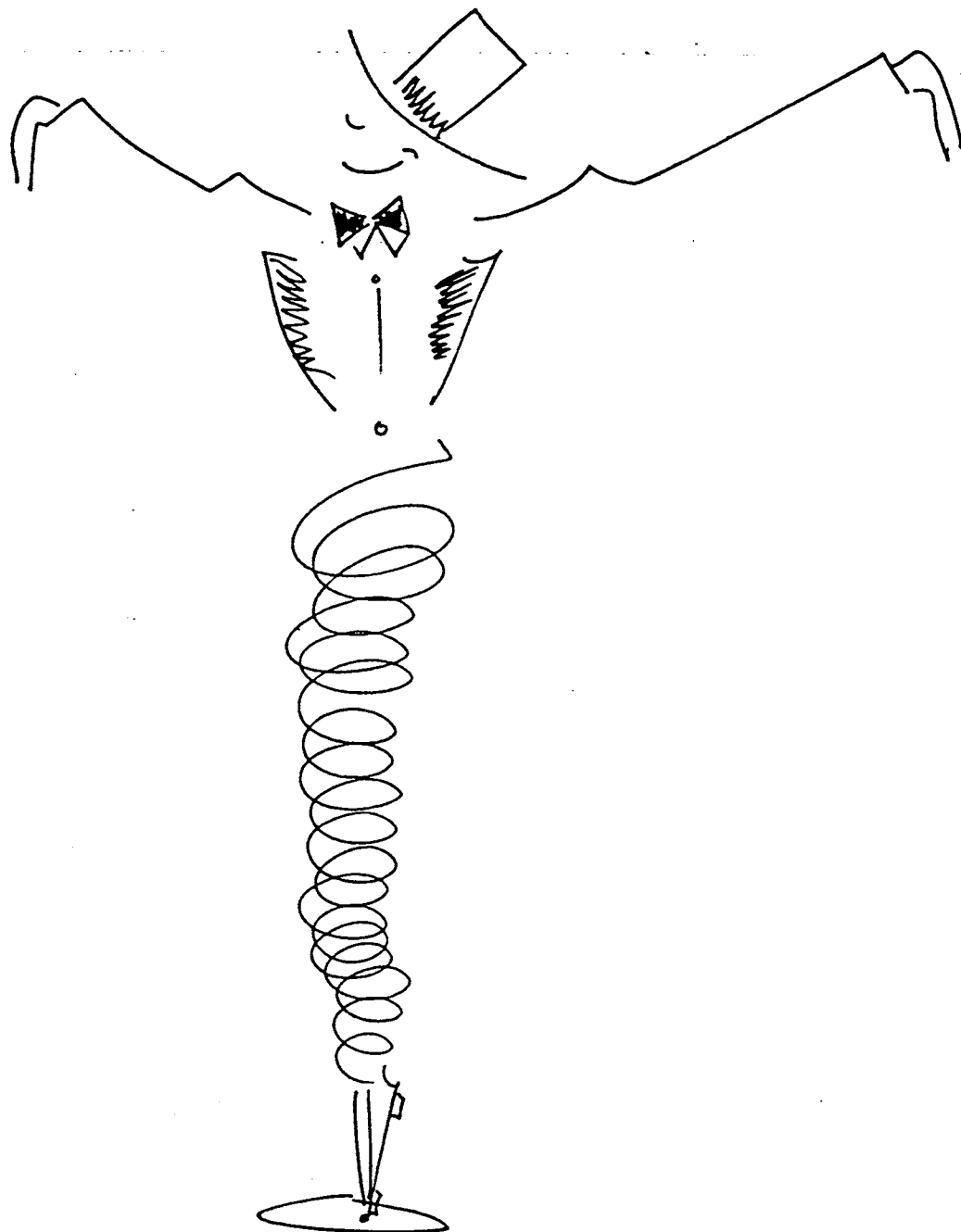


YOUNG MAN with A HORN.



IF HE WASN'T SUCH A sNOT NOSE , HE'D BE
A GREAT TALENT





THAATTs ALL, FFFOOLLKKSS!

[Signature]