

BENNY GOODMAN

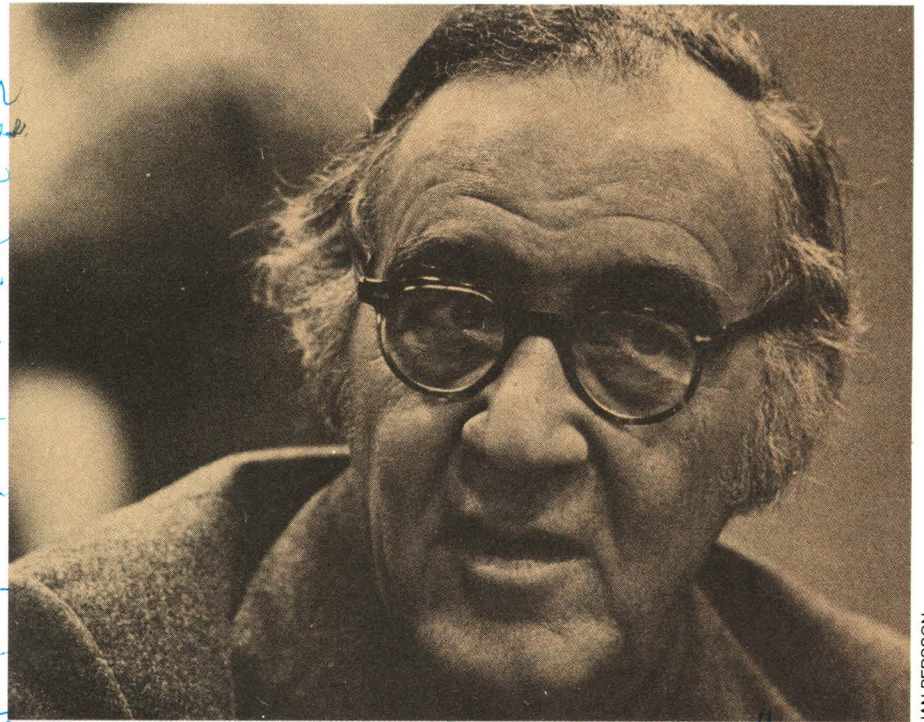
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"The clarinet is a fascinating instrument, but it's kind of a devil too. It's got so much to do with your physical and mental being. It really becomes a part of you. . . . You have to practice like hell or risk losing your grip."

The King Swings On

Sounds like my guitar style practice like hell or lose it.

by john mc donough



JAN PERSSON

What a wonderful opening sentence!
Benny Goodman has been making history and music in roughly equal proportions for longer than most down beat readers have been reading or even breathing. If you were buying db in September 1934, however, you read about him for the first time. "Benny Goodman, with a reputation of being the best hot style clarinet in the country, has finally stepped into the limelight with his own orchestra."

Today Goodman is literally the last of a select number of jazz performers who reach truly mass audiences, and perhaps the only one ever to reach such numbers without abandoning his standards. Ellington is the only other figure who functioned with such iron-willed integrity. As any booking agency will tell you with characteristic pragmatism and immunity to sentiment, Goodman is the only bankable jazz star left who can pack a concert hall by himself. Basie would need a co-star. So would Herman, Kenton, maybe even Rich, his appearances on the *Tonight Show* notwithstanding. But the Goodman mystique has not only survived, it's thrived.

Perhaps the most incredible thing is that it's thrived solely on the basis of music. Goodman tells no jokes, sings no songs, wears no funny clothes. At first glance, he has all the charisma of an IBM senior vice president. His career is untouched by scandal, liquor, narcotics or any other extra-musical diversion. There is the "ray," of course. But that seems more legend than fact today. So the many thousands of people who see him annually can expect only one thing, and that's his music, offered without gimmick, hype or pretense. No frills. Musicians may have diverse feelings about Goodman, but few if any have ever denied his integrity.

Goodman's low profile is an extension of that integrity. He keeps his celebrity status in the closet, along with the hundreds of awards he's accumulated over the years. Despite the extraordinary power of his name, his face goes largely unrecognized in public places, although his participation in a television advertising campaign for American Express may blow his cover in that respect.

Cuts ad copy!
Ogilvy & Mather, ad agency for the credit card company, came to Goodman last year to ask him to do the commercial. As advertising campaigns involving famous people go, the money was not extraordinary—under \$20,000. All participants receive the same fee. But Goodman found the concept clever and charming. Once he said OK, they were promptly shot last spring in Newark Airport. They've just been renewed for another year.

"Goodman was not only a very reasonable

person to work with," recalls Tom Rost who wrote the commercial. "He was a delight. Totally cooperative. When we asked him to do that little clarinet tag at the end, he was happy to. We were a little reluctant to ask him to do a second spot for the money machine, but he went right along with it. He made no script changes or anything. I think he enjoyed it, and that comes through in the commercials."

Goodman has two basic moods that associates observe. The first is joviality. He has a mischievous good humor, often punctuated with a dry, sophisticated wit. Often no one seems to enjoy it more than Goodman himself. He has a charming, infectious falsetto giggle which often rises to fairly hardy levels. He likes to laugh. And when he laughs, he shakes. He is private about issues and matters that are his own business, but otherwise is open and honest in his reactions to people and conversation. Ruby Braff once emphasized Goodman's almost naive honesty. He either speaks his mind, Braff said, or he clams up. "That's why interviewers find him a cold fish sometimes. He's afraid he'll blurt out some answer that he might regret, so tries to be diplomatic by either silence or evasion."

2 The other Goodman is the "preoccupied" Goodman. This is the mood that so many find so ambiguous, the one that has created so many misunderstandings. Here are three such stories told by friends who understand: Helen Forrest, vocalist with Benny at the time, and Goodman once left a rehearsal and shared a cab back to where the band was staying. As they walked to the street, however, Goodman's mind was still in the rehearsal hall. He and Helen climbed into the cab and then just sat there. Benny offered the driver no instructions, still deep in concentration. After a minute of silence the driver finally turned around. "Well, what about it?" he asked. Goodman is supposed to have reached for his wallet and

asked the driver how much he owed him. Pre-occupation, phase one.

Phase two is sometimes a bit more exasperating. Several years ago, related a Goodman sideman, the band had gathered for a balance rehearsal in which Benny checks out the group for the house sound system. Some pretty good music sometimes gets played on such occasions, which precede every concert. On this occasion Goodman asked Zoot Sims what he wanted to do for his featured number. Zoot called *I Never Knew* and then proceeded to play it in inspired fashion. With everything in place, Benny disbanded the rehearsal and went for dinner. Later that night, the first number Goodman played when he walked out on stage was *I Never Knew*.

Phase three of preoccupation requires the greatest of patience. Jimmy McPartland, who has known Goodman longer than probably anyone else alive, tells of this episode without hostility: "When the war ended in 1945 I was in Paris and had money to burn. So I went to see Maurice Selmer, and when I got there I had this idea. I told him to pick out a clarinet and I would give it to Benny as a gift. So I got one for about \$80. When I got back to New York, I called him at his office. What happened next hurt my feelings more than I can say for years. I called and said I'm back. 'Oh, yeah. Great. Well, how are you?' he said sounding a little detached and preoccupied, like he was listening with only one ear. I told him I saw Maurice and that I had picked out a clarinet for him. 'It's a present,' I said. 'Oh, yeah,' he said. 'Good.' I asked when we could get together. He said, 'Well, drop it off at the office when you get a chance. I was crushed. I said okay and hung up. I ended up giving the clarinet to a youngster in Chicago who couldn't afford one.'

But in telling this story, McPartland emphasized this: "Now I've forgiven Benny for

Well he seems to perhaps not have paid attention to Benny's wishes. I might well have expected this!

that because I know him too well not to forgive him. He was not then nor is he today, I think, a rude person. Not only doesn't he intend to be mean or unfeeling. He doesn't even know it. He's a dedicated man with great powers of concentration. When his mind is on something, he tunes everything else out. This is easily seen by others as unfeeling. They're wrong. That's why I can still say I love the guy."

Goodman started playing clarinet at Hull House in Chicago well over 50 years ago. A few weeks ago he was back in Chicago and back at Hull House, or at least a benefit for Hull House. With him was his current sextet. Buddy Tate, who first played with Goodman at Newport in 1958, is one of the major veteran stars performing regularly with him now. On cornet (Goodman insists on introducing him as "on trumpet") is Warren Vache, a poised, fluent musician who may become Goodman's most celebrated gift to jazz this decade. Connie Kay, formerly of the MJQ, is another distinguished veteran in the regular group. John Bunch on piano came up in the '50s with Gene Krupa among others and has been with Benny off and on for over a decade. A regular in the last year on guitar has been Cal Collins, a musician of great versatility and sensitivity whose a cappella choruses with Benny, for all their off-handed casualness, can sometimes embody some of the most absorbing jazz heard anywhere today. Benny seems to love the rapport, and the idea of taking chances—particularly on a number like *Sing Sing Sing* where the free form openings have no set chord structure to guide the two musical lines.

When I met with Goodman in the Ritz Carlton Hotel, he was fresh from the swimming pool. If there had been a handball court handy he would have put in some time there too. He was in a jovial and loquacious mood. He talked about a good many things with uncommon frankness: music today, the famous quartet reunions of 1973, plus his own understanding of why people find him hard to work with. But since he seems to surround himself with a number of young musicians, we started out on music education.

"I'm afraid I haven't taken a terribly active role in music education," he says, perhaps with a hint of regret. "I've done seminars at the University of Chicago and Yale, but I'm not really much of a lecturer. I know Woody and Stan do a lot of clinics, but I haven't gotten into it very much. For one thing, schools don't seem to ask me. I know there are a number of schools with excellent jazz programs. I've heard some of the student groups on records, and I must say I think they're quite good. I would point to the bands at Notre Dame and Terre Haute. I think it would be interesting to take some of my arrangements and guide a band like that through them. I feel that I can rehearse a band better and more quickly today than in the old days. More knowledgeable. On the other hand, I'm comfortable with a particular style of band and I know what to do with it. But some of the recent band arrangements I've heard leave me cold. I really don't know how to approach them. For example, I don't understand why arrangers want to use eight brass. I don't see the reason for that. It's got to make an orchestra sound tubby. They can't get eight brass to play as well as you can get five or six."

Goodman puts great emphasis on the words "got" and "can't" as he speaks.

"But you see I was never affected by the

harmonic structure of a brass section as much as I was with the rhythmic sense. I find a great similarity among bands today. Drums are very dominant, doing a great many things. Bases play a contrapuntal role rather than a rhythmic function. There seem to be a lot of flutes too. And almost without exception the saxes are nil. What I would call good reed section writing and playing has virtually vanished from the language of the contemporary band. Reeds were always the basis of my bands, you know. I think that's why current bands interest me less today. And have you noticed how loud bands have gotten in the last few years? They used to think we were loud, particularly Gene Krupa. Gene never played that loud. He was much quieter, but with definition, with a point. It's silly to look back, and I don't like to. But when the evidence stares you in the face, or the ear, there it is."

Goodman is rarely seen leading bands these days. Occasionally there are brief exceptions. Last summer he assembled a band for a few engagements on the West Coast. A year or so ago he used Louie Bellson's. And in the early '70s he toured Europe with a superior English band assembled by his friend Frank Reidy. But he basically finds it awkward and unwise working with a band today.

"The level of musicianship is high today among young musicians," he says, "but if you're going to have a good band you've got to play together. You can't do it walking into a studio. A point of view and common purpose has to develop. 17 men reading a score isn't a band, even if they do manage to start and stop together. The band I had last summer only lasted a week or two. We played four arrangements and *Rhapsody In Blue*. How the hell do you develop an important band that way? I can go out with six or seven guys for one date and just play. But I can't with a band. It takes a lot of woodshedding to sound like anything."

"It's not a question of expense. I don't tour anymore, at least for any sustained time. I don't play clubs anymore either. I don't even accept one week or two week or even three day engagements. I used to play the Rainbow Grill five or six years ago. I think that would drive me out of my mind today. When you get to be my age five or six years can make a hell of a difference." Goodman laughs. "I do what I can do most effectively. I'm not interested in knocking myself out when there are good fish to be caught and other interesting things to do."

Nobody approaches Goodman for anything of a professional nature without first going through chief executive and general trouble shooter Murial Zuckerman, a fiercely loyal lady who's run interference for Goodman for the last 10 or 15 of her 25 years with him. Murial was hired by Benny in 1951. Trained in accounting, she had worked for the firm that handled Goodman's books. She began as his personal secretary. But when Goodman shed booking agencies, managers and other assorted hangers-on in the mid-60s, Murial effectively took over. She screens all bookings, particularly with symphony orchestras of local reputations only, spaces his travel itinerary and handles all contracts. Her advice usually carries weight.

"Murial can be tough," says pianist John Bunch. "But Goodman has a lot of demands on his time. He needs her. It's amazing how much more efficiently things go on a European tour when she's along. She's a wonderful woman with great compassion beneath that tough exterior. If you're straight with her,

you'll get results."

Although Goodman spaces out his working schedule comfortably to include perhaps a half dozen concerts a month, his clarinet remains the center of his life.

"To get back to clinics, what I really like to do is talk to clarinet players about certain ideas. I would enjoy doing a clinic involving woodwinds and woodwind ensembles. In many ways, classical music interests me more in so far as the clarinet is concerned. I know a good deal more about other classical woodwind players than I do about jazz woodwinds. For one thing there are no jazz clarinetists among the contemporary generation. There are several reasons for this, I think. First, the clarinet is a difficult instrument on which to achieve real fluency. Next, it's not loud. I think younger players find they can reach a broader expressive range in less time on the sax, trumpet or guitar.

"But I don't think there's any decline in the clarinet just because there are so few jazz clarinets. There are many wonderful classical players. Very many, and very good. Music education has expanded quite a lot at the university level, and although I haven't been in close touch with it, I think this has been good for the clarinet. I feel any kind of teaching produces results. I can't comment on the quality of the teaching, but on the other hand I feel there are really only great pupils, not great teachers. A cliché, I guess. But it's the involvement of the student that really counts. In the final analysis, it's between the musician and his instrument, isn't it?"

"My own music education included an instructor called Franz Schoepp, who was a strict German disciplinarian. But it also included a lot of listening and imitation. I guess. I listened to the Mozart Quintet, the Brahms Quintet and Haydn. I still have some of the records I listened to as a boy.

"I started on the Albert clarinet, and although I switched to the Boehm system within a few years, I can still play Albert. The Boehm wasn't yet popular when I started, even though it had been invented in 1830 by Theobald Boehm. There are certainly undisputed advantages to it, but I think it did lose something. A number of articulations are easier on the Albert. In fact, some German clarinetists still use a combination of the two systems.

"It may seem strange for me to say this, but I consider that my music education is still continuing. Isn't that amazing? But there's still so much to learn. There are so many different styles of clarinet that I admire. There's Jeremy Zequire, Carl Leister, a beautiful player with the Berlin Philharmonic, and Richard Stoltze. There are all kinds of philosophies on playing the clarinet. It's a vast subject when you get into it. There are those who believe, for example, that you shouldn't put your fingers down very strongly. My own feeling is that when a player is playing very well there's a great deal of relaxed pressure in his fingers on the notes and keys. I experimented with different degrees of firmness, even exaggerated firmness, which was Kell's theory. I enjoy listening to others out of curiosity, and I may take an idea here or there. Then in the end I do what I want."

Goodman's interest in classical music has been especially pronounced in the last decade. Roughly half the concert appearances he makes are with symphony orchestras. His repertoire includes the two Weber concerti, Mozart and Brahms. He's proud that several of the pieces he's commissioned for clarinet

(from Hindemith, Copland and Bartok) have become important works of clarinet literature. The day before he sat for his conversation he had rehearsed Hindemith in New York. He recently donated the original working manuscript of the piece he had commissioned from Hindemith to the Morgan Library.

This is why he says he considers his education in music still continuing. With the time now to devote to classical, he is in his 60s addressing problems full-time classicists solved in their 20s. In addition to Reginald Kell, his most celebrated classical teacher, he has also studied with Eric Simon and Augustin Duques of the NBC Orchestra under Toscanini. John Hammond, who in the '30s encouraged Goodman's interest, has since had his reservations, however. "I have come to the conclusion," Hammond writes in his autobiography, "that while it is fine for jazz musicians to play classical music and vice versa, it is unwise to make public appearances until each is ready to do so. In 1936 Benny recorded with the Pro Arte String Quartet, records which did not turn out well. Later he recorded Mozart with the Budapest String Quartet, a far better group, but again the performance was not particularly good."

Looking back Goodman agrees. "When I worked with the Budapest Quartet 40 years ago I just plunged into it. I had a kind of jazz vibrato, but I just played. Later it struck me that I really would like to know what the hell I'm doing. Since then I've found it very interesting."

In the last decade he has produced excellent versions of the two Weber concerti and a version of the Carl Nielsen clarinet concerto that he is ambivalent about. "I first heard a marvelous recording of it by a French clarinetist called Louis Cahuzac. But I think perhaps I didn't have a chance to play it enough myself before I recorded it with the Chicago Symphony and Morton Gould. I would have liked to play it with a couple of orchestras. Get it under my belt that way and then record it. But the opportunity arose at that moment and we did it. There are many difficulties in it for the clarinet. But those things happen."

I asked Goodman about the physical demands the clarinet makes, and how he feels he is able to cope with them considering his age, which is 68.

"The clarinet is a fascinating instrument, but it's kind of a devil too. It's got so much to do with your physical and mental being. It really becomes a part of you. The way it fits into your mouth, the calluses underneath your lips, above your teeth and on your fingers. You have to practice like hell or risk losing your grip. I would say the clarinet requires a degree of stamina equal to the trumpet. I think a clarinetist can play for many years. I have and I expect to continue playing. Although I don't have the stamina I used to—I used to rehearse all day, play five or six shows a night and then go out afterwards; I find that unthinkable today—I pace myself today. Look. You will find very few concert clarinet players going around playing concerto programs like I do at my age. You just won't. The proof is they don't. The only notable exception I can recall was Cahuzac, who performed well into his 70s.

"My practicing routine today is for both maintenance and improvement where possible. Let me put it this way. You have to keep up, and if you're lucky enough to get better,

fine. I don't practice as much today, though. On the other hand, I find I can't stay away from the thing too long. Last summer three weeks went by when I didn't touch the clarinet. When I came back I hardly had a callus left. You lose it pretty quickly.

"You hear musicians talk about jamming to keep their chops in shape. Well, concert players have to keep in shape too. They practice scales, they play concerti. I know if I can be in good enough shape to play Mozart, Brahms or Weber, I'll certainly be able to play jazz. Jazz is really second nature to me. But classical isn't. I find I have to give it more concentration. A good concert performance doesn't just happen. I have to reach for it."

Goodman doesn't seek out musicians directly from the schools as do Woody Herman and Stan Kenton and Maynard Ferguson. He hears about musicians from friends. He calls people and asks for advice, asks if there's anybody around he ought to hear. If someone strongly recommends a player, Goodman will make it a point to hear him. But that's not enough. Before he can decide if he's right, he must play with him. Goodman might ask the candidate to drop in for a rehearsal. Or he might actually use him in a concert or two. It rarely takes him long to decide once that's happened. His groups are remarkably stable considering the irregularity of his itinerary. Zoot Sims has played with him on and off for 30 years, although in recent years he's pursued his own solo career full time. Among the personnel who played the recent Hull House benefit, all but the bassist had had at least a year of service with Goodman. He seems particularly high on the two youngest members, guitarist Cal Collins and cornetist Warren Vache.

"I like a rhythm guitar," Goodman says. "A good guitarist, in my opinion, can be a good rhythm guitarist if he's a good soloist. Cal does both marvelously. In fact, he plays a classical guitar much of the time. As a rhythm instrument, this is difficult. There are no highs on the classical guitar. It plays quite close to the bass. Of course, it's unamplified, so he uses a mike. I'm sorry the rhythm guitar has become so rare in jazz. I think it provides a rhythmic foundation to a group."

I stopped Benny at this point and confessed that I could never really tell a good bassist from a fair one.

"You and me both," he laughed. "I really don't know that much about them. But they always seem to be doing so much it mystifies me. If I say I want two beats, some seem to think their hands are completely tied. It's very seldom you hear two beat bass today. But I think two beat can be very useful when juxtaposed with a sudden double to 4/4. It can give a group a great but still subtle lift. It all sounds so natural because the horns are already playing with a 4/4 feel.

"This kid Warren's pretty good too. When he came with me a couple of years ago, he was uptight. I don't know if you heard him."

I did indeed hear him on his first night with the band, and he did not seem uptight. But then I wasn't on stage. I asked Goodman why there seem to be so many stories passed among musicians about how maddening it is to work for Benny Goodman.

"I realize I'm sometimes a little difficult to please. I must say I gave Warren a bad time. I guess this is why some people say I'm hard to work for. I used to be considered a task master, a real disciplinarian. Well, in the band days maybe I was. You can sloop around

with a band of 16 guys. Today it's different. I don't lose my temper or anything. But when a musician asks me what I want musically, I say I don't know. Take Warren. He said he'd come down and play for me, audition. I told him that was a waste of time. I told him, look, you have all the freedom in the world to play. So play. Don't go about it halfheartedly as if you're trying to please somebody else. Make your mistakes, but blow. Well, I think he's playing much better now.

"You see, I can't tell a person what I want to hear from him. And I think this makes some people uneasy. But I can't help it. Who the hell cares anyway? Just because some guy isn't right for my group doesn't mean he's washed up in music. Plenty of fine musicians weren't right for my groups, so they've gone on to groups they were right for. Ron Carter was in a group I used in a Columbia record session in 1975. He was a soloist, and I didn't need a soloist. George Benson was on that session too. He's a fine musician, but we have different tastes. Ten years ago Herbie Hancock was in a Rainbow Grill group of mine. I recorded with him too. Maybe I ought to put these records out. I might have a big seller. I don't really understand what they've been doing in recent years, but Benson and Hancock certainly seem to have gone very commercial. I think they're much more commercial than I ever was. Well, anyway, the point is that I flounder when someone asks me how they should play. What can I say? I don't know what I like until I hear it."

Goodman doesn't constantly shuffle musicians in and out of his groups for the sake of change or freshness, although when he does find a musician he has a rapport with it seems to invigorate him, be it Charlie Christian or Cal Collins. He depends on the moment for freshness in his performances. If the group plays several nights in a row, he thinks, it will probably sound more exciting than when it hits for the first time in a month. "We don't have a damn thing written down," he insists. "I try to keep the format as loose as possible."

John Bunch says this of Goodman: "As for his playing, sure he has characteristic phrases and transitional devices. But he is as inventive a musician as there is playing today. Hardly a concert goes by that he doesn't surprise us all with some twist or diversion he's never done before. Some are subtle and some are pretty daring. It's a lively group. Anything can happen. That's what keeps it musically fulfilling."

"It's a kick to watch him get hot," says Buddy Tate. "When he really gets into a chorus he can really lift a crowd out of their seats. The tunes are selected on the spot, usually from among a basic repertoire. But there is no set solo order or duration. If I think I can take an idea further with a third chorus, I'll take it. Although I'll sort of check out the corner of my eye to see what Benny's doing. I think it's pretty obvious that he still likes to play. It still excites him."

Mike Moore, a bassist Goodman uses frequently, calls it "a paid jam session, just for fun. Sometimes I think it's a little too loose."

One thing Goodman is not loose about is sound systems and microphones. A *Time-Life* profile on Benny several years ago recounted an incident in which Goodman squatted off against a French soundman stringing cable about the stage and littering the playing area with microphones. "Monsieur, s'il vous plait," Goodman mumbled, "get 'em outta here," kicking over a couple to emphasize his point. When the soundman dug in, Goodman pulled

his horn apart and started packing. "Either they go or we don't play. If I'm not allowed to practice my profession without this ridiculous interference, that's it. I'm going home." Goodman finally prevailed, of course, and the concert went on as scheduled.

"In a nutshell," reflects Goodman today, "I believe in less mikes than more. You go to some of these places and Christ, they have more microphones than instruments. You end up hearing musicians you don't even want to hear.

"Occasionally I'm successful in doing something the way I want to do it, and that London LP of the English band and the Copenhagen album were two of the times. We used just four mikes on the band. I recorded it myself, and we did no editing after the fact. Several critics raved more about the sound than my playing, but that's all right. It sounded the way a band should sound—naturally balanced. I ought to say that I'm telling you what I think is right for me, not everyone else. Right? With that in mind, I guess I can say that I hate a lot of editing and remixing and dubbing they do in records today. I think you should be able to get it in the studio, unless you're a vocalist. When I record that's how I do it. Then I put the tapes away for a while and come back to them in a month or so. It gives me objectivity.

"I have a fine little studio in my home in Connecticut. It's great for five or six musicians. We use Nagra equipment, which I think is as good as anything around, and Neeland Crawford is the engineer I use. He likes to do the same kind of recording I do."

Goodman will soon celebrate a milestone in his career—the 40th anniversary of his first Carnegie Hall Concert. Ten years ago for the 30th he invited every member of the original Carnegie band (every one was still alive for that anniversary) to his apartment for a mammoth party. How he will celebrate the 40th is still under wraps. But Columbia Records will reissue the classic concert recording for the first time since 1956 and completely remastered for the first time since 1951, the year of its original issue.

"Sometimes when I listen to some of the old records with the trio and quartet, I'm astounded. I've heard some airchecks of the old '37 band. It astonishes me. It had such a lively spirit, a brashness, a force and determination."

I asked him what he thought of the clarinet player.

"Well, he wasn't bad. There's nothing like youth and brashness in a good player. I've studied music a lot since then, and I'm sure I know more about it. But that was a special time, and a remarkable group of musicians."

In 1972 the original Quartet was reunited on a TV special taped at Philharmonic Hall. The performance, with Goodman, Hampton, Krupa and Wilson, stopped the show. Subsequently a tour was arranged that included Carnegie Hall and the most publicized event of the 1973 Newport Festival, Ravinia near Chicago, and the Saratoga Performing Arts Center. Krupa was not well by then, but the music produced by the quartet seemed to have tremendous vitality. I asked Goodman how such reunions look from his side of the footlights.

"I don't think they recaptured anything. That's why I was always reluctant about getting the group together again. In the interim we've all had our own bands and groups. Lionel particularly. He's going to jump up and down on that last chord and that's all there is

to it. It's instilled in him. I don't say this with any recrimination at all, of course. It's just his way. He's had a band for 35 years. Gene, I think, was a little more flexible, but Teddy has gone his way for three decades. You can't expect people to come together and pick up right where they left off. That's impossible. In 1937 it was 'the Benny Goodman Quartet.' In 1973 we were all leaders. Leaders don't want to be sidemen again, do they? The concerts went well to the extent that we were all good musicians and played well together. But it wasn't like it was before. It was nostalgic, but we've all gone off on different tangents. In the old days we rehearsed, but we couldn't rehearse in '73. Nobody wanted to. I did, but some didn't. We did three appearances. At Ravinia in Chicago, Lionel didn't show up until the last minute. And there were all these personality problems. Again, I have no recriminations about Lionel, but at the time it didn't make for the greatest of ease. I could play you some of the original records and you

wouldn't think those reunions were so extraordinary. They were good appearances, so take it for what it was."

Goodman remains loyal to his original ideas. Although his style has evolved over the years, the lineage back to the young king of swing remains clear and logical. The only style to follow swing in which he seriously experimented was bop. "It came at a moment," he says, "when jazz was sort of stilted as far as I was concerned, at a dead end. Any kind of art can all of a sudden just lay there. Bop had freshness to it. Drive. Abandonment. The harmonies didn't seem all that different from the music I played. Plenty of swing musicians mixed easily with bop players. I just tried it for the hell of it. We made some good records."

As for free music, Goodman seems to have little interest. "I don't know. If you're asking does it affect me, I don't think so. I play tunes. I play Gershwin's and Chick Corea's. They write music other people can play. I think most of the musicians I work with feel the

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same way. I don't find them captivated by free music. I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe Warren Vache loves it. He hasn't told me. I've heard Albert Ayler, for example. If I hear a sound and it doesn't appeal to me, then he's left me. I think practically all the *great* sax players have had attractive sounds. Certainly in the past—Lester Young, Chu Berry—and the near past too—Stan Getz maybe or Buddy Tate. I think even John Coltrane had a fine sound in the early '60s.

"I'm not being very explicit about this. I guess I'm holding back. I could say it's a bunch of crap. As far as I'm concerned, that's it. But it's just my opinion. I'm not *against* it. I just don't think about it."

If you walk into a record store with a large selection of Goodman records, you will find close to 100 albums on a variety of small labels. Many contain old 78 rpm records Goodman made as a sideman in the early '30s. Others contain airchecks by the Goodman band at its height. They've been a major factor in the Goodman marketplace since at least 1968, and in the case of Sunbeam, 1971. For years there have been rumors that (1) Goodman intended to sue and (2) that Alan Roberts

of Sunbeam had managed to bribe Goodman's lawyers with some great amount of money. Both appear equally preposterous.

"A lot of the infringements on these records involve Columbia, not me so much. Why the hell should I sue somebody if Columbia doesn't want to with their big legal departments. It's ridiculous. It would cost me more than I'd ever get back. It's a terrible thing, and I don't approve. But I've got better things to do than go chasing around after a lot of record people. As for the airshot, the ones I've heard are so muddy you can hardly hear them. As for releasing my own records, no. There are too many better things I have to do with my time.

"I think some of these record clubs do a much better job of promoting non-rock music than the big companies. If you release a record by just throwing it into the stores without proper promotion, you might as well throw it in the garbage can. I have nothing against the record companies for this. They're geared for the big million sellers. But for myself, I think smaller or more specialized companies are better."

In addition to the reissue of the Carnegie Hall Concert album by Columbia, London Records will soon bring out Goodman's first *new* album since 1973, a collection of sessions from Goodman's Connecticut studio. The ab-

sence of recent records doesn't mean Goodman hasn't been recording, however. There were several sessions for Columbia in 1975 involving Joe Venuti, George Benson and a planned date with Dizzy Gillespie, which never materialized. Goodman considers the sessions unexceptional, more of the same old thing. In the days of the original Quartet and Sextet, new material was constantly cooked up because the groups played together nightly and tried out new ideas in frequent rehearsals. The lack of a regular schedule makes new, original material hard to come by today. The last "original" played by a Goodman sextet was *The Swinging Monk*, a 1966 piece based on a Verdi theme. This is why Goodman records are scarce these days. Recently a Goodman band recorded four Gordon Jenkins arrangements for RCA. Goodman has not yet decided their future.

While he is mulling over such decisions, he enjoys playing to live audiences, prowling antique stores, and fishing and swimming.

"There are certain things you can do something about," he says with the philosophical air of a man who knows what he's talking about, "and some things you can't. I like to keep my energies where they can be productive. I don't want to go around batting paper bags." **db**

ROSOLINO

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electronic jazz of today. What do you think of it?

Rosolino: It's like Wayne Shorter and Herbie Hancock and all these people have to do what they're doing today in order to stay on the road, make the money and just keep playing. Why don't they sell themselves for what they really were? Like, I thought they did a fantastic job with Miles in the mid-'60s. Among other things, they opened up the rhythm section so it could breathe. It was a great direction to go in.

But today, they and other people play on one or two chords and use a lot of electric devices. The musicianship is there, of course, but they're not using it.

I heard Wayne Shorter and Joe Zawinul play before they ever got into their present bag. I used to wear Wayne Shorter's records out, I loved him so much.

When I went down to the Lighthouse to hear Weather Report, however, it was just a bunch of weird electronic sound effects. And they played it so loud it practically shattered my bones. I walked out. I didn't want to hear that.

Chick Corea does it more musically, however, more artistically. It's not just a bunch of electric noises played on one-chord structures.

Underwood: What do you think of some of the newer trombone players, Albert Mangelsdorff, for instance?

Rosolino: He's into a freer bag of music and I respect him. He sounds real to me. Albert will hit one note, hum a second note, and create two or three overtones at the same time. It has to be in a very slow, free setting, however, not a fast, straightahead setting. But it's not a gimmick. It's an approach, and it takes a lot of time and study to learn. Bill Watrous has been into it somewhat, but Albert started it and is the master.

Underwood: How about Roswell Rudd?

Rosolino: People give him all this attention and the kids think that's the way to go, but I think that's a shame. I think he's just playing a

bunch of nothing—nothing creative, just a bunch of noise to me. Why don't they listen to J. J. Johnson, or myself, or Billy Watrous, or Jimmy Cleveland, or other players who are really saying something?

Underwood: A lot of people are keeping their eyes on a new trombonist named Glenn Ferris.

Rosolino: I saw Glenn playing with the Don Ellis band on television some time ago. He swooped and soared and growled and did all those jive calisthenics—I mean, who needs it? I can hire a greyhound dog to do that.

Of course, he was playing in the context of Don Ellis, who did all those 1/4, 11/4, 9/4, 5/4 tunes and all kinds of electronic stuff. If it had made sense, that would be all right. But just to see how weird and how distorted you can make it—that's not music.

Glenn later came out to the Times Restaurant where I was playing one night with Conte Candoli. He wanted to sit in. I guess he had decided to get serious, because he sounded much better than he did with Don Ellis. He sounded like he really meant business on that horn. I think he's got a lot of talent. I saw he could play some solid, straightahead jazz and he sounded beautiful. I started thinking, "Hey, maybe this kid's all right!" He's got ability and he's got good ears and he's young. If he really worked at it and got serious about it, he could become a real trombone player.

Underwood: Technically speaking, how have you developed the flexibility on the trombone that enables you to play almost with the fluidity and rapidity of a tenor saxophone?

Rosolino: Flexibility is all in the lips, the chops. I use combinations of tonguing and slide maneuverings, and I work intervals out so I can make things happen through the chops and not through the slide. The slide has only seven positions, and they are only guides.

It's a combination of tonguing, of letting notes fall in by themselves, just letting them pop in. You can't play jazz by double-tonguing. It comes out restricted, too staccato—duka-duka-duka-duka. You do it by single-tonguing, which comes out doodle-doodle-

doodle-doodle. It's the "doodle system." Carl Fontana does it, too.

Along with the doodle system, you change from one position to another, feeling exactly where the note breaks. They call it the breakthrough of the horn. That's where you get all of those fast triplets and 16th notes. It's tonguing, moving from one position to another, and breaking them.

Underwood: What about horns and mouthpieces?

Rosolino: I use the Conn 6-H 500 bore horn, a model Bill Harris came out with some years ago.

The mouthpiece is a matter of personal taste. Mine is called a Bell Aire Rite Cup, 41, the one I started out with when I was 13 years old, although I've opened up the back bore and the throat of it to free the upper and lower registers.

Nearly all well-known companies make basically good mouthpieces. It's a matter of finding one that fits you personally. Everyone doesn't have the same lips and muscles, so don't listen to anybody who says, "This is the mouthpiece to buy!"

I don't believe in changing mouthpieces, because that messes up the muscles you might have spent years developing and setting. Once that mouthpiece feels comfortable, nothing hurting or biting, then stay with it.

Underwood: Do you also play the valve trombone?

Rosolino: From time to time, and I also play the four-valve Conn baritone, the euphonium, but the slide is my major instrument.

For years, J. J., Carl Fontana, Jimmy Cleveland and myself have had this approach, where you can play the slide with speed, so you don't have to go to the valve trombone. Plus the fact that a valve trombone has a different sound and demands a different approach.

A lot of valve trombone players tend to overblow and they ruin the sound of it. One of the few guys I've heard play the valve and do it well is Bob Brookmeyer. He gets a rich, beau-