

then God is still Nothingness.

Second Man: So I thought. If one were to define you as a fool?

First Man: Indeed, I would then be a fool. I am as defined by others.

Freedom for Jazz

Joseph Hill

IN FEBRUARY, 1948 three famous Russian composers—Sergei Prokofieff, Aram Khatchaturian, and Dmitri Shostakovich—found all their compositions condemned by the Soviet government and themselves accused of having “lowered the high public role of music and narrowed its significance, limiting it by the satisfaction of distorted tastes of esthetic individualists.” Prokofieff and his comrades had their works labeled as exhibiting “a passion for muddled neuropathic combinations which transform music into a cacophonous and chaotic heaping of sounds.”

Similar attacks against progressive music took place in this country in 1956. For example in Birmingham, Alabama, several hundred citizens went to a jazz concert given by the late Nat King Cole. During his performance Cole was interrupted by several members of a White Citizens Council who attacked him. A spokesman for this group said jazz in general was an attempt “to mongrelize America. It appeals to the base in man, brings out animalism and vulgarity.” By the end of 1956, many other civic and religious groups insisted that jazz be outlawed in the United States as it was in Russia.

I must disagree with such insular views concerning jazz. I enjoy jazz because it is an original kind of emotional expression, in that it is never wholly sad or wholly happy. I enjoy jazz for its humor. Jazz plays around with notes, rhythms, and dynamics.

I find I have to defend jazz to those who say it is low-class. These people forget that all music has low class origins. Hayden and Mozart minuets are refinements of rustic German dances. Even Tchaikovsky used a simple Russian folk song and dance as the principal thematic element in the final movement of his monumental *Symphony in F Minor*.

In addition, I find I have to defend jazz to those who say it is too loud. They forget that Beethoven Symphonies, Brahms Concertos, or Liszt Tone-Poems are also loud. I believe their false notions stem from the fact that in the early days of jazz musicians had only cheap brass instruments to use and small quarters to perform in. This is not the fault of jazz.

A few days ago when I was in Block's record shop, a sales-clerk was playing a Beatle recording for two teenage girls. As I was walk-

ing around I overheard an elderly woman exclaim her dislike for "jazz." Once again I must defend jazz to those who mistake it for the base music produced in myriad quantities and passed off onto the vulnerable masses of teenagers.

Recently Great Britain, France, Holland, Switzerland, and other countries allied themselves with communist states in order to denounce "dissonant contemporary music and tendencies of extreme subjectivism." I hope this country will never join in such a union. This country must remember the artist under communist styled supervision is not free, since he is denied the irremovable right of being wrong. The need to be "right" is undoubtedly the heaviest burden such an artist can carry since an artist learns as much from his mistakes as he does from his successes. If the United States were to join this union, it would be denying many men one of their basic and most precious rights—the freedom of expression.

The Return of the Chinaman

Melva Sissom

SITTING in my upstairs study, I watched the darting silhouette of my little Chinese servant as he saddled my guest's horse and helped him mount. His pidgin English carried up to my ears. "Good night, Missy Blake. Careful ridee horsey."

As the horse and rider began to fade from sight and sound, I returned to my desk; and lighting my pipe, I waited for Chang to enter the room. It was ironic, I mused, that around most people Chang had to use pidgin to be understood. It was expected of him, as was the queue he wore.

My thoughts wandered to my two little girls and then to their mother, who had been the strength of my soul. When she died eight years ago, I was left crippled. Had it not been for Chang, who one lucky day came rattling up to my front door in an old peddler's wagon full of pots and pans, I would still be going through the motions of a pretended living; and God only knows what the fate of my daughters would have been. Chang was a remarkable man. Of a first Chinese generation to be born in America, he had attended Stanford University. Believing the life of a servant to be the refuge of a philosopher, as well as a position of power and love, he had, thus far, been content with making my life and my daughters' as comfortable and enriched as possible.

"Missy Stephens, I bling Chinese brandy. Stlong dlink. As a matter of fact, it's brandy with a dose of wormwood in it. Taste it at the back of your tongue," advised Chang as he entered the study.

Lifting the translucent China demitasse to my lips, I tilted my head back. "I see what you mean. That is good."

As I finished the brandy, Chang stood stiffly before me. "All right, Chang, out with it!"

Somewhat taken back by my sudden remark, he began, "Faith-