

The Coatpuller

John Sinclair

1966

It's good to be back with you again. The Festival Sunday was one of the most beautiful things I have ever experienced, and I think a lot of the people there had the same experience as myself. There were SO many people there, all day long, And everyone was really grooving. Joseph Jarman started the Festival off just after one o'clock with a spoken introduction and music trumpeter Peter Bishop (also of Chicago) and bassist Doug Riggs. The readings began with Dave Sinclair, J.D. Whitney, and Mike Litle, all of whom opened the people up for the biggest human sound ever to come out of Detroit—the Lyman Woodard Ensemble of the day, a totally integrated musical blast made up of Lymie at the organ, Jim Semark, piano and trombone; Ron English (Lansing), guitar; Doug Riggs and John Dana, basses; Byron Lyles (Lansing), drums; Charles Moore, cornet; Pete Bishop (Chicago), trumpet; Joseph Jarman (Chicago), alto saxophone and clarinet; David Squires, tenor saxophone; Jerry Younkings, tambourine; Bud Spangler (Lansing), tambourine; and, after the music started getting GOOD to me, I had to run home and get my own alto saxophone so I could get in there too.

The second set of readings was beautiful too, featuring three men who are for me the strongest young poets of my own generation—three men whom I consider my contemporaries in every sense of the word: Robin Eichele, of Detroit; Ron Caplan, of Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Toronto; and Victor Coleman, of Toronto. Each man read a series of poems from their collections: Victor's 9 POEMS FROM THE MUSIC OF ERICK SATIE, Ron's SURFACES and TRANSPARENCIES, and Robin's just completed book of RUNES. After a musical interlude by Charles Moore, John Dana, and Ron English, the poets returned, with myself added, to read two rounds of longer poems. These three men generated such beautiful energy and love that I couldn't wait any longer and had to get up there with them to read for the first time in six months. And the audience—then and throughout the day—was the best set of listeners and diggers I have ever seen.

The next set of music was made by a cooking combination of Woodard, organ; English, guitar; Joseph Jarman, alto, Semark, piano; and Bud Spangler, drums, who was cooking so hard I looked over at my brother and saw him rolling around on the floor hollering and screaming. Bud is also the most beautiful disc jockey in the world—his "Jazz Horizons" show on WKAR-FM in East Lansing on Thursday nights (9 to midnight) features the best music being made anywhere, presented exquisitely, and people all over Michigan who hear the show will tell you how much it means to them. I mean, Bud Spangler is the only man on the radio in this whole area today who will play records by Cecil Taylor, Archie Shepp, Ornette Coleman, John Coltrane, Marion Brown, Sun Ra, Charles Mingus, and the other musicians who are really doing it now—and Bud does this consistently and always always, in the best of taste. His other show, "New Jazz in Review," which features new recordings with commentary on them by Bud and Ron English, can be heard on WKAR on Saturdays at 4:30 p.m. Bud Spangler literally kept my mind alive while I was in prison, playing the only decent music I could hear.

Back to the Festival: the next set of readings had Tommy Mitchell (of Dartmouth College and, this summer, of Detroit), Jerry Younkings, and a presentation by the League of Revolutionary Poets which featured Allen Van Newkirk and Dan Georgakas and two cohorts. They managed to stir things up a little. They were followed by a

Lansing group made up of Byron Lyles, drums; Hank Hence, tenor saxophone; Clarence DeMyers, piano; and James Calhoun, bass.

The final set of readings (by this time it's around 10 o'clock) started with Jim Semark reading from his NIGHT-VISION EXPRESS and new work, including a beautiful new rhythm ballad which had the audience taking part, chanting a mantra on the vowels a-e-i-o-u; then George Kimball, a young man from Lawrence Kansas who has been instrumental in starting a Workshop—like venture there this summer, the Midwest Artists' Co-op, and who hitchhiked all the way here from Lawrence to be here for the Festival, got up and did a lovely reading from everyone. I finished it off with THE LENI POEMS and some things from FIRE MUSIC: A RECORD.

By this time it's 11:15 and the Motor City 5, a new Detroit acid-rock band, took over for an hour so the people who were still there could dance a little standing up. All day long it'd been the answer to Olson's line about "how to dance / sitting down," and the people were showing out. When the MC5 cleared out the movies began, featuring some 8mm flicks of Emil Baccilla which will be shown again in the near future.

What I want to say about this Festival of People is that it was just that—there were so many lovely people there, all partaking equally in the work of other people, who were doing it for them. It's that simple. The place was packed almost all day long—it didn't start thinning out until late at night—and the whole thing went on for more than twelve hours. Detroit is about to break wide open, into a new discourse where everyone who wants to can live and work as completely functioning HUMAN BEINGS, as themselves then, and everyone can help everyone else to this new life. I know we can make it, and last Sunday was only the first indication of what CAN happen when people get together.

fifth Estate

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