

# The Coat Puller

(a column)

John Sinclair

1965

It shouldn't be news to anyone—but it probably is—that the local gestapo is responsible for ending the performance of LeRoi Jones' "the toilet" and "the Slave" at the now shut-down Concept East Theatre. The plays, directed by Woody King (who is now back in New York) and performed brilliantly by such Detroit actors as Sam Blue (Toilet) and Harrison Avery (Slave), began their run in August, made it through a couple of weeks, and then were brutally closed by the guardians of law & order—and "morals"—in our fair city.

Someone had complained that the plays were "obscene," and the police wasted no time locking the Concept's doors. A cop, interviewed on a local TV station, told his audience that if the "obscenity" charge wouldn't stick, they would just refuse to renew the theatre's license next year. And in a similar action, the Unstabled Theatre was also shut up for not having a license—after owner Edith Carrol Canter had waited patiently for a period of six months or so before opening in her new location, without a license, because the licensing bureau refused to give her any consideration on her application. What amazes me is that this city's "theatre-lovers" have kept entirely mute about both cases and have allowed the "authorities" to do whatever they wanted to with Detroit's small theatres. OK—now they have exactly what they deserve—the Fisher, whose every production is for these ears hopelessly obscene, i.e. totally devoid of any art or human use.

The Artists' Workshop has reopened at its new location (4857 John Lodge at Warren), after the old building on Forrest Avenue was burned out last spring. Weekly programs of music, poetry, and graphic arts are presented there each Sunday afternoon (5:00 p.m.) as the workshop continues to be the only place in town with a consistent concern for what is happening with young Detroit poets, musicians, photographers, painters, and other artists. And with the acquisition of an offset machine, a letterpress, and a new mimeo, the Artists' Workshop Press makes a significant expansion. Robin Eichele, the director (with this writer) of the Press, is in the process of setting up a printing cooperative and is looking for other folks who need printing facilities and would be willing to share the cost of maintaining the printshop with him. He can be contacted by mail at the Artists' Workshop Press, 4825-27 John Lodge, Detroit, or reached by phone at 832-7543.

**MUSIC.** the Detroit Contemporary 4 and other "avant-garde" musicians can be heard in concert at the Artists' Workshop each Sunday. Pianist Andrew Hill, who has recorded three excellent LPs on Blue Note under his own name (*Black Fire*, *Judgment*, and *Point of Departure*), will be featured in concert at Wayne State University December 10, under the auspices of the WSU Artists' Society. Tickets are available at \$1.00 at the WSU box office, Music World, the Artists' Workshop, and from members of the Society. The Detroit Contemporary 4 will also be featured at the concert. Record-buyers please note: there are record shops in town who carry recordings by the musicians of now. Music World (Warren at Woodward), Monroe Music (60 E. Monroe, downtown), Land of Hi-Fi (E. Grand River, opposite the Broadway Market), and Discount Records (W. Adams at Woodward) usually have what you might be looking for, including ESP-DISKS (Albert Ayler's *Spiritual Unity* and *Bells*, the New York Art Quartet, Paul Key. Sun Ra, Guiseppe Logan, Byron Allen, etc.), the Archie Shepp sides on Impulse (*Four For Trane*, *Fire Music*) and Savoy (New York Contemporary 5, Archie Shepp-Bill Dixon Quartet), Ornette Coleman records, etc. And don't anybody

miss John Coltrane's latest Impulse date, *John Coltrane Quartet Plays*, or another new Impulse side, *The New Wave In Jazz*, featuring the groups of Archie Shepp, Grachan Monour, Albert Ayler, Charles Tolliver, and Trane, recorded at the Village Gate last March at LeRoi Jones' benefit for the Blacksarts Repertory Theatre School.

Blue Note Records also has a whole lot of new music featured lately, including Bobby Hutcherson's *Dialogue* (featuring Andrew Hill, Sam Rivers, Freddie Hubbard, et al.), Hill's *Point of Departure* (with Eric Dolphy), drummer Tony Williams' *Life Time*, etc. These records document the huge changes in consciousness that are being made in musicians' minds these days, and anyone who wants to be *moved* by music again should listen to these men. Again, ESP seems to be leading the way, and that company will soon make available Ornette Coleman's 1962 Town Hall Concert (ESP-1006), which is lovely, lovely. Now if someone would just record Cecil Taylor again, whew.

Miles Davis's little band finally made it to the Grand Bar last month, but the prices were so high most of us who wanted to hear the band (with Wayne Shorter, Herbie Hancock, Reggie Workman, and Tony Williams) were left at home, listening to records. (Which cost less than one set at the Grand Bar). Something has to be done about this exploitation—but as long as the hipsters are willing to put out that kind of money, and as long as the musicians are going to change that much, nothing'll ever change.

And speaking of change—that's the title of a new jazz magazine being made at the Artists' Workshop Press. Edited by cornetist Charles Moore (of the Detroit Contemporary 4) and this writer, the first issue has reviews of records & concerts of new music written by poets & musicians only. No "professional" jazz writing, but (as one contributor puts it) "with the artist's sensibility. Also featured is news of new music happenings in Paris, London, New York, L.A., San Francisco, and Detroit; photographs of Archie Shepp, John Coltrane, Marion Brown, Cecil Taylor, and others; poems and stories; and the complete score for composer Jim Semark's Emotional Organ Suite. Available by subscription (\$2.00 for 4 issues from Artists' Workshop Press, 4825-27 John Lodge, Detroit 1, Michigan).

Bobby Rodgers' Half-Pints, 692 Amsterdam between Second and Third Avenues, is open again, with music on weekends, a liquor license, and reasonably-priced drinks. Vibist Jack Brokensha is reportedly opening a new club after the first of the year, but don't hope for much in the way of music there. And the Drome Bar (Dexter at Leslie) and Baker's keyboard (Livernois at 8 mile) continue to bring popular "jazz" groups to Detroit, at fairly reasonable prices. But when will some of these club owners, and enough listeners to make it feasible, get hip to some of the REAL music that's being made today? And then bring it here? God only knows?

**BOOKS:** A revised edition of Robert Creeley's stories, *The Gold Diggers*, has just been published by Scribner's and is available in both hard-cover and in a paperback edition. You can get it at Book World (Woodward north of Warren.) Books from Grove Press: LeRoi Jones' novel, *The System Of Dante's Hell*, has finally been released and is out in hardcover only. Also his *Dead Lecturer*, poems, is now out in paper from Grove, as is William Burroughs' *Nova Express*, and you can find these (or at least the latter) almost anywhere. *The Autobiography Of Malcom X* is out now too, but in a hard cover edition that sells for \$7.50. If you can afford it, buy the book. Please.

Paperbacks Unlimited, in Highland Park, has a small selection of new American poetry, including a number of the Totem Press books (Jones' *Preface To A 20-Volume Suicide Note*, Jack Kerouac's *Scripture Of The Golden Eternity*, Ron Loewinsohn's *Watermellons*, Joel Oppenheimer's *The Love Bit*, Allen Ginsberg's *Empty Mirror: Early Poems*, and others). But the primary source for new print has to be the Centicore Bookshop, 1321 S. University, in Ann Arbor. Centicore has almost everything that's in print from modern poets, including Auerhahn, Jargon Totem, and other small presses. For hip modern poetry magazines, the Artists' Workshop manages to get its hands on most of them, or at least can get them for you, including *Wild Dog* (San Francisco,) *Kulchur* (New York), *El Cornu Emplumado* (Mexico City), and a lot of others.

I want also to advertise here my own book, *This is Our Music* (now going into a second edition), George Tysh's "sit up straight" and our poetry magazine, *Work*, the second issue of which is now current and available at \$1.00, from the Artist's Workshop Press. Likewise the 2 books, at 50 cents each. Next in the series is Jim Semark's new book, and a first book of poems by J.D. Whitney, a young Detroit poet who publishes IT / an embryonic magazine of poetry (336 Luther S., Detroit 48217 — \$1.00 for 6 issues). Whitney will be reading at the Workshop Sunday, December 5.

The current issue of *Poetry* (1018 N. State St. Chicago 60610) is given to Louis Zukofsky's "A", 14-plus reviews of and by Zukofsky. A good thing to have. Finally, for this time, I have a couple copies of *Kulchur* 9, out of print in this country, which contains the only printed text of LeRoi Jones's the toilet. If anyone is interested, I'm selling them for

\$2.00. His two other produced plays, *Dutchman* and *The Slave*, are out in hardcover from William Morrow & should be read, as long as we can't see them done here in Detroit. See you next time.

# fifth Estate

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