

The Coat Puller

a column

John Sinclair

1966

Live (i.e. alive) musical activity continues to grow here in Detroit, and on its own terms, which makes it all the more valuable. Pianist Andrew Hill made his first concert appearance in this part of the country here last month, under the sponsorship of the WSU Artists' Society and his Detroit-based agent, Lutz Bacher. In doing so Andrew also became the first major artist of international stature to be sponsored by the young student organization (only six months old), and the first such musician to undertake a totally cooperative musical venture outside the New York Area. The most significant extra-musical fact about Andrew's concert is that he (& Bacher) worked directly with the society, on a person-to-person (rather than businessman-to-businessman) basis, with music rather than money as the determining factor in the arrangement. This is the only way the rotten music-as-business situation is going to be overturned, and it must be revolutionized—and fast—if the music is going to be as an art form otherwise all anyone but the most privileged listeners will be able to hear in public performance will be the tired “entertainment” music that clutters the “jazz clubs” now.

The lines of battle have already been drawn, and contrary to what is called “public opinion” it is the established powers who have ineradicably drawn these lines. John Coltrane remains now as the only dynamic artist/performer on the nightclub circuit, and as he continues to grow as an artist his economic utility for the club owners diminishes in direct proportion—the “in-crowd” set is dead set against being moved by the music they pay their money to hear, and they will soon get only what they are paying for—pure unfeeling metronomic, noise—e.g. Ramsey Lewis, Jimmy Smith, Cannonball Adderley, the Quartet Tres Bien, etc.

As a result of the intense interest in new music being evidenced by many young Detroiters, both listeners and musicians, a great many New York musicians are eager to perform here. Alto Saxophonist Marion Brown, one of the most exciting voices in American Music, will be here for a concert in the Helen Deroy Auditorium Friday, January 21, at 8:30 p.m., under the sponsorship of the WSU Artists' Society. Marion, who has worked with Sun Ra, Grachan Monour, Bill Dixon, Allen Shorter and other new musicians and recorded with Bill Shepp (FIRE MUSIC—Impulse A-86) and THE NEW WAVE IN JAZZ—Impulse A-90) and John Coltrane (ASCENSION—Impulse) and under his own name (THE MARION BROWN QUARTET—ESP 1022), will be accompanied by the Detroit Contemporary 5 at the concert.

A second concert featuring Marion Brown and the DC 5 will be held at the Artists' Workshop, John Lodge at Warren, at 7:00 p.m. Sunday, January 23. The concerts will mark the return of the Detroit group from a 10-day eastern tour, which includes 3 concerts for the Jazz Art Music Society in Newark, single concerts in New York City and in Buffalo, and 3 concerts in Toronto. Marion will join the group in Newark and continue back to Detroit with us.

A new radio program started last Saturday afternoon 3–4 p.m.) on WQRS (105.1 FM) with Richard Zeff playing recordings of new music. Featured on the first program were Ornette Coleman and Don Ellis; tomorrow's show will have music by Albert Ayler and Cecil Taylor.

Detroit's own Spikedrivers, a very hip folk-rock band comprising Ted Lucas, Dick Keelan, Sid and Mary-Carol Brown, and Steve Booker, started what we hope will be a series of weekend concerts at the Midtown Theatre, Canfield and Third. The band has recently been heard at the Roostertail (!) and at the Falcon Bar. Hear them if you can—they're out of sight.

The Concept East Theatre, 405 East Adams has reopened with a new license and a slightly more conservative approach. Now playing there is Harold Pinter's *THE CARETAKER*, which is after all a good play. Please help support the Concept East if you want to see any decent theatre again in Detroit. Otherwise, forget it, with maybe a very few exceptions. One exception should be David Small's new play, *THE GIFT*, which will open under Hurst Rinehart's direction at the Studio Theatre (WSU, Cass at Hancock) early in February. David, a Detroiter, had his first play produced a while ago at the Concept East (naturally).

All the space I've got now, but tune in next issue of the *Fifth Estate* and I'll try to pull your coats to some fine new books and records you might dig having. Remember, "Batman" goes on the Idiot box this week—check your *TV Guide* if you can stand to look through it. And please check out the Free University of Detroit registration Jan. 24–28; classes start Monday Jan. 31. And for godsake, keep your ears open. "A foot is to kick with," Olsen said, so get your kicks in '66—THINGS BETTER GET BETTER.

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