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consp - Carter

30 C. Devore / done?

December 16, 1987

TO: Bill Carter

FROM: Henry Blackburn, M.D.

I've just received the "insets" from Charlie Devore. I guess I haven't known what an inset was, apparently a series of anecdotes which are inset in a continuous story. They are delightful, highly readable and pithy. I'm amused by your Sweet Emma stories; it would be nice but obviously not essential, if on page 4, you said "Preservation Hall's alltime best sellers, Sweet Emma and her Preservation Hall Jazz Band, recorded in 1964 at a Guthrie Theater concert in Minneapolis", but never mind, it's on the record cover. On page 5 when you talk about me, Emma used to call me the "jive doctor" and not the "jazz doctor". "There's Dr. Blackburn, he's that jive doctor."

Your section on Narvin is marvelous, particularly how you bring in the role of the New Orleans rhythm section, the creative tension, the looseness against tightness, is lovely. And finally, Polo Barne's diary is a little draggy but you're right, it's part of the simplicity and monotony and quiet calm of the New Orleans musician's life and style. The descriptions of the Humphrey band playing at Princeton are classic, and will bring up all the nostalgia and richness of their concerts to each reader. So glad you travelled while Cie was still playing and talking.

That's a nice little story about Robbie and Punch visiting New Orleans. The Sancton bit is fine. On page 29, though we know what he means about Lincoln's Civil War and the space age, ~~but~~ he reads a bit pedantically.

I'm sending you a copy of a wild idea about voodoo being the cauldron in which jazz developed. It may or may not influence your idea of linkage.

Third line from the bottom, page 31, it should be "right side of the abdomen" rather than "right side of the stomach"! That's a marvelous story about not being "tuned up after the surgery". I guess you don't want to worry about his spelling of Dr. Ocshner's name on page 38. I much look forward to reading the whole. Happy greetings from here. I'm still flipping out on alto and the blues.



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Corresp - Carter

December 21, 1987

Bill Carter
644 Emerson St.
Palo Alto, CA 94301

do sent?

Dear Bill:

I very much liked your listing of Polo Barne's sources of income and the dignity and independence that P. Hall indeed has given them all. I would assume that this message would probably come through in more detail elsewhere.

I think it's great that you've got other anecdotes, like Robbie's section, Tom Sancton's section, capitalizing on the best that others have to offer, and the Russell William Wagner thing. I suddenly realize now that's Bill Russell! I didn't know that Bill Russell had been interviewed by Whitney Balliet and wonder why it was such a painful experience.

I have a bit of concern about Bill describing Mahalia as being "highly sexed" and "women having orgasms in public" with Gospel singing. I think Bill may confuse a religious trance or hysterical convulsion with orgasm! These comments will expose him to sexist and racist accusations.

Who is David Young? He does a good job too. The Lomax thing is fantastic, e.g. the fusion. I'm delighted that he, as well as you, from time to time and through the mouths of the musicians, are pointing out how insidious the tradition of serial solos has become.

I can't believe Allen Lomax burst into tears with Sing Miller. I do that every time I hear him, even when I know he's been petulant and crotchety and small in the band room just half an hour before the concert. The honesty, simplicity and beauty of his hymns are overwhelming.

The Billie and DeDe piece is lovely, so rich you can almost smell the gumbo.

Bill Russell's little essay is great, emphasizing the musicians working together. How anybody could read these marvelous inserts and go back to a single intro chorus and an ensemble out chorus with only solos between, is beyond me.

Delighted by your section on the dance halls and the different evolution of what might be called "the jazz that stayed at home" versus the expatriated jazz.

I was delighted to read Barbara Reid's Luthjens story. I spent a marvelous night there with Billy and DeDe's band in the late '50's. Boy, Mama Lou's sounds great.

Never got there. I suppose I dare not ask whether by any chance it still exists. (When I think of the things I missed seeing in my four years there in the '40's!)

There should be an insert about Kid Twat. I'm sure Charlie and I could put one together. He was a great character, a sweet and gentle man, at least in his later years.

Charlie Devore's short section on the funeral bands was great.

Your travel notebooks are delightful. I think it's marvelous that you're bringing Phil Somes in as an integral part of the family and movement and the "human support system".

I see on page 3 of Appendix A that you did mention that the Sweet Emma record was made in Minneapolis in 1964--that's great! Your description of the way Jaffe handled business and working with Janie is delightful. The point is that he concentrated on the important things, the artistic things, the friendly things, the thoughtful things, no matter if other things fell through the cracks.

I'm delighted that you describe Sings bows to the audience; they are so beautiful, even if hammed. I love the quote from Sing Miller, "I want a hotel on the ground, man".

Hey, they're coming to Minneapolis in March, you must come and we'll have a party. This time it's my turn.

I'm glad about the nice things you said on Jaffe's tuba playing. I agree with you. It's also nice that you talk about his motions. His direct profile posture with the tuba facing the audience, when they're coming home on, say, "Panama", was striking.

I love the interview with Sing Miller on page 14 of the Appendix, and love the story about Jim Robinson calling Woody Allen, "Willard". I like connecting Blacks risk-taking to jazz and the buffering of risk-taking we get from middle class values.

Boy, I can't wait to see the rest of the book! Happy Christmas to you and Ulla.

Regards,



Henry Blackburn, M.D.

/ma

cc: Charles Devore
Butch Thompson