

# NOISE level

... of which this is Volume One, Number Three, is an Up-roarious and Disconstructive Publication. Taking his cue from George (Kettering) Washington and going smartly in off the black, the culprit admits, "Fandom, I cannot tell a lie. I did it with my little typewriter." I am an Unreconstructed Rebel and my name is

JOHN BRUNNER

of the Sign of the Unstrung Tongue - Highlands, Woodcote, Reading.

SEND NOT TO KNOW WITH WHOM THE FAULT LIES - IT LIES WITH ME

USELESS DEFORMATION Dept.

The Advertising Rates of this magazine are impossibly high.

The Subscription Rates are (a) intolerably low (this rate applies exclusively to good-looking young women) or (b) by trade for some minor item connected with sf - e.g. a portable ultronic blaster, a barrel of moonjuice, or a small starship - my garage won't take anything over Capella class. Live pigs by appointment only. Of course, you will be unfortunate enough to get one anyway if you have joined the

OFF-TRAIL MAGAZINE PUBLISHERS' ASSOCIATION

- but the less said about that, the better.

According to Fredric Brown's "What Mad Universe" all characters and events in this magazine are fact. Persons wishing to horsewhip the editor are requested to phone for an appointment beforehand, in order that he may be out when they call.

This issue is dedicated to Brutus, who was an honourable fan, but who married Anne Dromedary, one of the Loch Mess Camelons, and was never the same again.

All right, let's go!

PAGE TWO. You are requested to restrain your enthusiasm...

### NOISES OFF

During the middle of March, newspapers, and in particular the trade papers of the popular music business, such as the Melody Maker, carried reports of the death of Charlie (Yardbird) Parker, the altomam who, with Dizzy Gillespie, was credited with the development of bop. He was 35.

The contributory causes of death which were given by the doctors read like a list of questions in an exam for third-year medical students. Those which weren't listed in so many words can be summed up in three-d. Drink, dope and divorce.

I hold no brief for modern jazz - I'm a traditionalist. But I had a certain admiration for Parker's music - it had a claim to be called original, and much of it I found, if not to me enjoyable, at least interesting to listen to. I am quite ready to concede that he had something, was in fact an artist.

But the reports of his death led me to do some serious thinking about what is commonly called the plight of the artist in society. I assume (and from what I've been able to find out am correct in assuming) that the fans of his music who read his biography, with its continual story of failure to adjust, excused it on the ground that he was a genius. The ordinary reports in the News of the World of dope addicts, habitual alcoholics, and broken marriages, almost certainly call forth an entirely different reaction - one more of disgust or even self-righteousness. For a supposedly moral and sane human being in this society of ours, the latter reaction is normal and sound.

Why then is 'genius' considered an adequate excuse for miserable lack of success in the leading of a normal life?

A great deal of nonsense has been talked and written on this subject. I have heard, I imagine, every conceivable vice from drunkenness to homosexuality condoned on the grounds of genius. The fact remains that any man who cannot come to terms with the society he lives in can call no one to blame but himself, and to take the path of escape through heroin or liquor is an admission of failure.

There is no such thing as 'the plight of the artist in society'. It is merely a tag attached to weakness and instability by people who believe that the possession of talent entitles them to behave anti-socially. Society must suffer from such an attitude, in that it deprives other people of the benefits of the talent, but inevitably the man who makes the heaviest payment for such foolishness - amounting at times to complete insanity - is the 'genius' himself.

Pass right down inside the magazine, please. PAGE THREE.

## BALLADS OF DEEP SPACE - 2

Miss Mary Rose, so the legend goes, was all of her woman from top to toes. Those who ought to know say she curved - just so - and lucky the man who was called her beau. For the touch of her hand brave men have spanned great gulfs and come to Earth to land. There was magic or such in that self-same touch (some men found one touch much too much) - men killed to kiss this famous miss, and some did a great deal more than this, for Mary Rose had generous charms and equally generous were her arms.

They say a glance from her would fire a one-sexed android with desire.

Men came from far to see this star, who worked in Space-man Charlie's bar. The work, they found, was to stand around most inadequately gowned. She'd pass a drink, and with it a wink, and they'd think what they were meant to think, so they'd stay behind until they'd find she wasn't paying them any mind. But some of them kept on coming back, and among these last was Martian Jack.

They say one man took her into space - she breathed on his tubes and he won a race.

This Martian Jack had a crooked back, for his ship once crashed in the Skagerrak, and he'd lost an eye and was also shy of one whole leg below the thigh. He could not face the risks of space; but he loved it, and so in any place where spacemen were you'd find him there, sitting in an old wheelchair, with a greasy cap laid in his lap. The spacemen glanced and said, "Poor chap!" and threw him coins lest the powers that be make them into wrecks as bad as he.

One kiss from Mary Rose, men swore, soured you on others forever more.

He'd drifted round each landing ground, never settling till the day he'd found this vision rare with space-black hair - he'd never seen anyone quite so fair. He fell at sight that self-same night - but his mirror told him he was a fright, and no half-man like this Martian dared ask such a beauty for her hand. So he simply sat with his greasy hat in a corner, and was content with that. However much his heart might burn, he was sure such a man she would simply spurn.

If half what they say of her is true, there's no hope left for me or you.

He came each day to watch her, gay - he drank, but never a word he'd say to those he knew the whole night through till once, when customers were few, and lights were dim, some passing whim made her speak pleasantly to him. He breathed a sigh when she'd gone by, and vowed he'd remember



PAGE FOUR. If you don't like this, you know where to put it.

till he die. Because of his leg and his broken back, three words must suffice for Martian Jack.

They talk of beauties such as Helen. Well, she may've been pretty, but she wasn't sellin'.

The months went past, until at last a certain Big Man Kelly cast covetous eyes on the lovely prize of Mary Rose. Now she was wise to the ways of men, so she dodged him when he reached for her - so he'd reach again. On the other side sat Jack; one-eyed he watched them, sitting horrified. He recalled the word he alone had heard from Mary Rose. "She's like a bird," he whispered there, where none could hear. "She mustn't fall to the hunter's snare." Then Big Man Kelly seized her wrist and drew her to him - and they kissed.

They say of this Miss Mary Rose she changed her men as she changed her clothes.

Then the crippled man reached out his hand and caught the bar to make him stand. His back unbent with his fierce intent to kill him who had soiled his innocent, he forgot the whole of the dreadful toll the crash had drawn on his body and soul. The medcorps men had told him then he would never leave his chair again. These men were wrong. Upright and strong he stood once more - but not for long. His tortured heart could stand no more, and he fell - stone dead - on the sawdust floor.

They say of the men whom she made her lovers they came half-dead from between the covers.

The bar grew still as they felt the chill black touch of death sap at their will. Big Man looked down with a solemn frown. "Who's he?" he asked. "Is the cripple known?" "It's Martian Jack," came the answer back. "A no-account - just a broken wreck," said Mary Rose. "Forget him, men." And she turned and kissed Big Man again.

=====  
ADVERT.

Colquhoun's an insufferable chap;

His manner's unbearably horsy!

Yet his wife can survive it. (She'll tell you in private

This service is done by Divorcee).

Use LETHENE for a clear conscience! Don't be guilt-edged!

=====  
CORRESPONDENCE CALUMNY

... MALLEABLE iron ore, I hope! ... Pochsarcd from A.M.

(No, Archie. Strang was a tough guy, remember! None of your Wrigley's for him. Sorry and all that. J.K.H.B.)

CON-VALESCENCE

I am now able to reveal the following exclusive item of information. The programme for the Cytricon, 1955, was a hoax.

At least, that's the way it looked to me. There may have been one or two items which took place but which I missed, being engaged on more important duties, such as lowering a shot of Guinness. However, as has been truly stated, it has taken the British to show how a real American-style con ought to be held. I don't know about you, but I enjoyed myself. Probably the only people who didn't were the neofen who weren't acquainted with many visitors. I expect some hundreds of people will be doing full-scale con reports, so this one is merely a recital of a few items which stuck in my craw.

Denny Cowen being registered in the lift.

The night-porter refusing a tip from Archie Mercer.

Trying to give some coherent facts to Jean Davey (that's the representative of the Press) for her to make a reasonable story out of, while John B. Hall and others kept introducing confusing items such as the hierarchy of zap-guns.

Being crowded out of my own bedroom at half-past five on Monday morning because there were a husband and wife (not married to each other - they were brother and sister) on my bed, the other halves of the relationships and an odd man in occupying the floor, and therefore adjourning to the lounge to swap puns with Ah Chee and Don Allen.

Deciding to start a movement to knit one's own stencils.

Reciting the "This we do, not hastily" passage from Stewart's "Earth Abides" to Dan Morgan at about half past two on Saturday morning.

Filling letterboxes with quote-cards on the way back from supper on Friday.

Being shot in the eye with what the owner of the zap-gun swore almost as blind as I was had been no more than water.

Discovering where Jim Blish got the word spindizzy from. He stayed on the second floor of the old wing at one time - obviously.

Being libelled in line by Atom, who forgot to sign it.

Watching the manager alternately chewing his nails and rubbing his hands.

Telling Bloch by pactsarced to cancel his send-a-brick campaign.

Going to bed on Monday night and waking up to find that it was two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon.

Blog ...

SLIDEHORN TO SALVATION

A very bad man was Hotshot Hone.  
He drank and he drugged himself to the bone.  
But he had one redeeming trait -  
No one could blow a hotter trombone.

In the end he met his fate,  
Died, and went to the Pearly Gate,  
But Peter on the doorstep said,  
"No room inside. You needn't wait."

So Hotshot Hone, he scratched his head  
But meekly went where a demon led  
To a place which, as you have no doubt guessed,  
Is where bad people go when dead.

Still, Hotshot Hone was self-possessed.  
"This ain't so hot," he said in jest.  
"I'll settle that -" so to add some heat  
He put up his horn and blew with zest.

The imps and demons tapped their feet  
At the hot trombone's insistent beat,  
And some of them started in flapping their wings  
In time with the music fast and sweet.

Now the youngest angel in the choir that sings  
The praises of the King of Kings  
Was in disgrace and sent away  
For breaking one of his harp's gold strings.

Well, just then Hotshot chanced to play  
His loudest phrase in his loudest way,  
And the angel expiating his sin  
(Having been American) shouted, "Say!"

And he mended his harp and joined right in,  
But, being inexpert, made a dreadful din,  
So Gabriel, who was wandering near,  
Put up his trumpet and corrected him.

The other angels came along to hear,  
And, picking it up, played it loud and clear,  
And liked it so much that God said, "Right!  
If they want him, the fellow must come up here!"

And that is why, if you die tonight  
And ascend the heavenly steeps of light,  
You may hear a jam session (possibly not)  
Played by a jazz band of angels in white.



CORNBALL MISCELLANY

Before anyone writes to tell me that the 'poem' on the opposite page is at direct variance with the opinions expressed in NOISES OFF, allow me to point out that Goethe saved Faust from eternal damnation even though he had sold his soul.

Regards and best wishes to all the OMPA folk who were at the Con. Nice to know that there really is someone else in the apa, and that it isn't all done by Proxyboo Ltd. If I didn't sort you out and tell you I liked your stuff- well, it was either (a) because I didn't have time or (b) because I don't like it.

If anyone knows whether there is or isn't a Journal of Paraphysical Research (or words to that effect) in this country, would they perhaps be kind enough to let me know? I've been bought a MAD subscription by Nan Gerding over in the States and she wants payment in paraphysical and allied literature. Pretty please?

I heard this story from Derek at the Globe the other week - C.S. Lewis laughed at it, and I think you may. Seems that once upon a time when Wittgenstein was only a student, he attended a lecture by Bertrand Russell. Now one of Wittgenstein's pet aversions is universal negative existentialist propositions (ouch) which means statements like, "There are no such things as fairies."

Russell had just remarked in passing that this was, of course, axiomatic.

Wittgenstein got up in the body of the hall and said, "Ah down't believe you."

Russell eyed him with a steely glare. He said, "My dear Herr Wittgenstein, surely you will agree that it is true to state that there are no rhinoceroses in this room?"

"Ah down't believe you," said Wittgenstein firmly.

Finally Russell got down off the platform and went around the room, solemnly looking under the chairs and in all the broom closets. At the end of his tour he turned triumphantly to Wittgenstein.

"Now ah believe you," said Wittgenstein.

Then, of course, there was the occasion when Moore, the Cambridge philosopher, came on to the platform at a lecture and wrote a whole raft of symbolic logic on the board. He stood back and said, "Now, gentlemen, I think you will agree that is obvious?" Then he turned around and looked at it again. After scratching his head, he walked off the platform and nothing further happened for half an hour.

Then he returned with a broad smile on his face and said, "Yes, I was right. It is obvious."

PAGE EIGHT. The tumult and the shouting dies - the zappers  
BACOVER BABBLINGS and the Things depart.

There was a young lady (?) in Florida  
Whose language grew horrid and horrid.

Since the Chamber of Commerce  
Hired this lewdest of mommerce  
They tell me the climate's much torrid.

My reputation for being a gentleman is solely due to my be-  
ing under-sexed

#### A HOLE FOR PLUGS

This issue's overflow is devoted to pushing the virtues of a gentleman whose reputation I have frequently maligned, though not in NOISE LEVEL. Go dig JAZZ AT THE FESTIVAL HALL on Decca DFE6328 - a 45 r.p.m. extended play which features Bertie King on alto with Chris Barber's group. I never used to think much of Bertie when he was working with Freddie Randall on clarry, but it seems that he's been with groups led by Shearing and others in Jamaica, and he's come back playing a nice confident Carter-like sax - big tone, plenty of ideas. I like Merrydown Blues; the others are Skokiaan, I'd Love It, and Tight like That (on Merrydown cider?)

Confetti is a paper hole in the atmosphere

#### THE CRYSTAL BALL

NOISE LEVEL is nothing if not consistent. In this issue you did not find any of the things I said I wasn't going to put in it. For fear of spoiling my 100% record, I'm not going to make any forecast this time.

Oh. Just imitating a dragon

While contributions are invited, it is understood (by me at any rate) that they are sent at the author's risk and must be accompanied by a liberal bribe. Interpreters' fees will be deducted from payment if stories or articles are submitted in Idiomatic Crashbanian, Inferior Hieroglyphic, or malice aforethought. Crystal-gazers' fees will be deducted in the case of manuscripts which fail to arrive at all. Rubbings should be taken of brasses and graffiti, when feasible. Patronised by the Keeper of Printed Books.

Does this hotel accept rubber cheques?

You have been reading

NOISE LEVEL!

which is guaranteed  
to induce that deep sleep which doctors say is so.

¡Hasta la vista!