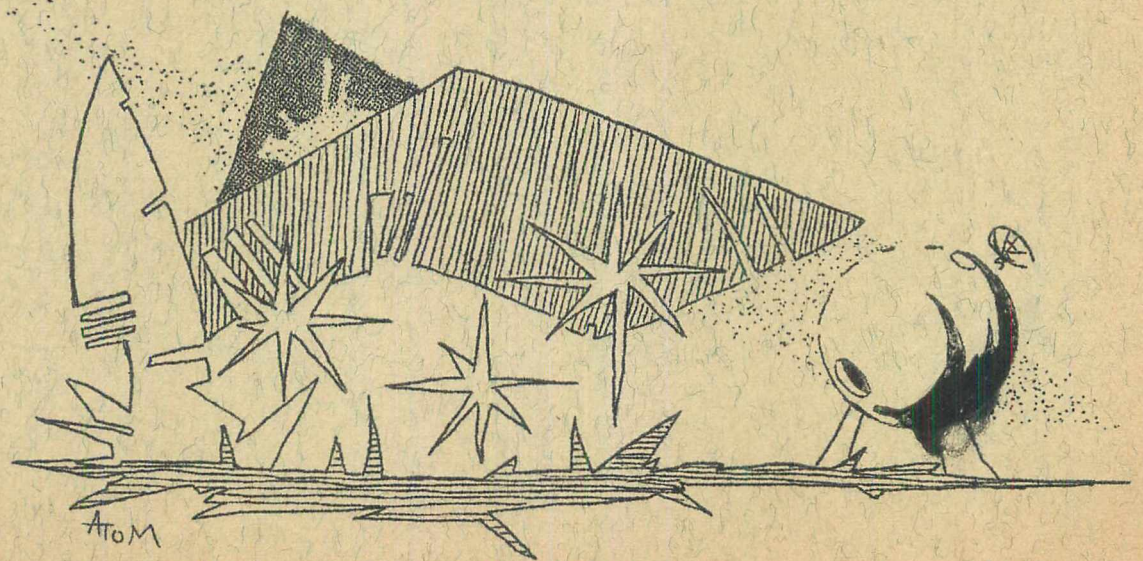
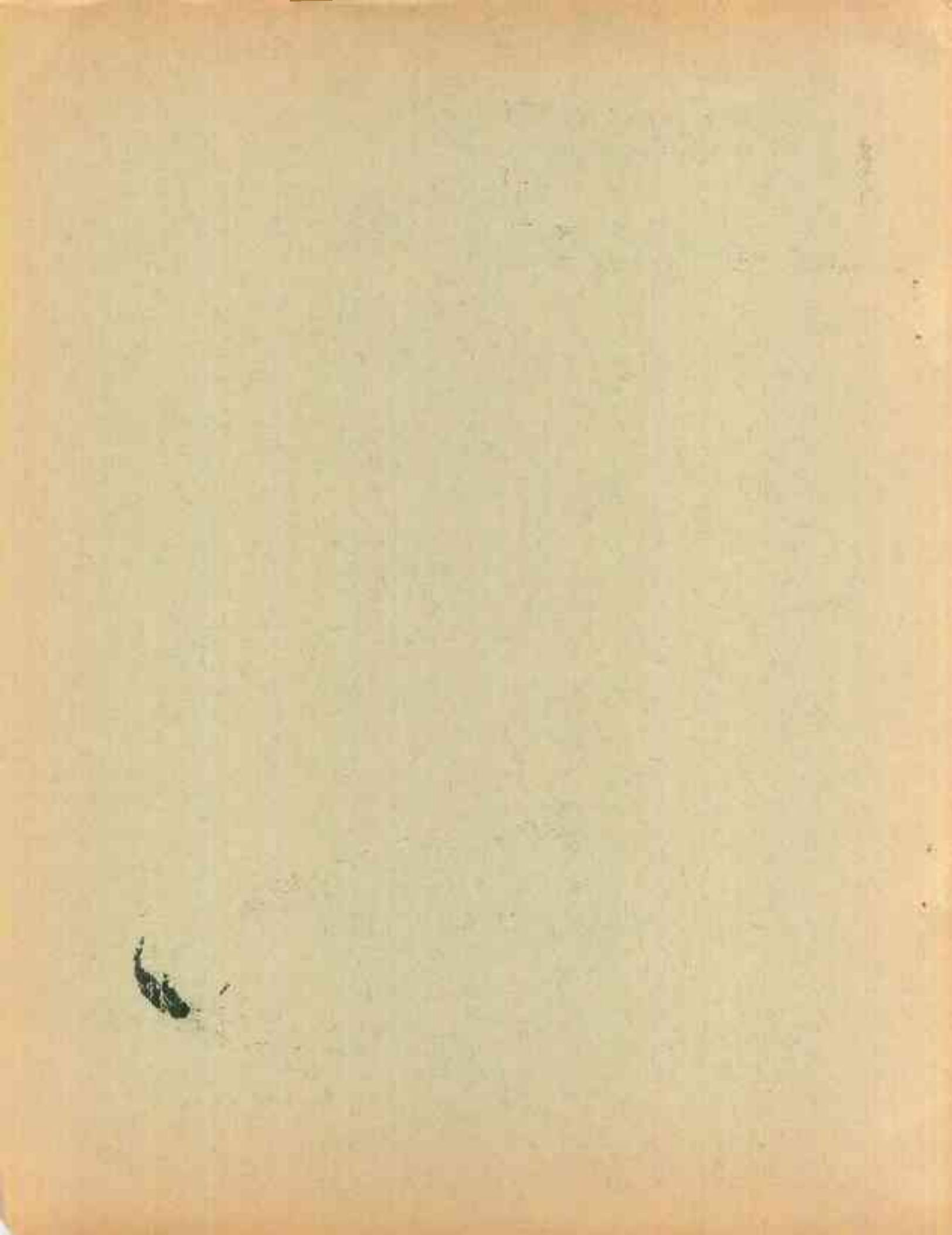


NULL-F number 19





Yes, indeed, this is NULL-F #19, only a year in the making (and to think that only an issue ago I could proudly say I'd been in every mailing since I joined in 1955) and probably no better for it. This, uh, emission is brought to you by the bearded Ted White, from his den at 107 Christopher St., NYC 14, for the August (1960, of course) FAPA Mailing...

MY SILENCE over the past couple of mailings has been somewhat more accidental than it was the mailing or so previously. It was occasioned not by any remaining pique or fear of same, but simply by lack of time and conflict of interests--the same old tale. Indeed, I scattered checkmarks throughout both the February and May mailings, hoping to get some comments written, but at this date both are scattered and thusly inaccessible. Therefore, because it is that I am tired of not saying something to FAPA, this slight effort is the right-before-the-deadline result.

I don't intend to go into any rehash now of the reasons for my little fiasco of last fall; it is over and done with. I can't help wishing some people would stop bearing grudges now a year old, however--some of the nit-picking emanating from the Milwaukee area is flatly ridiculous in any context. Suffice to say that I went through a rather trying period of my life, which extended well beyond the narrow confines of fandom and FAPA. That period is concluded now (and has been, since about January of this year) and I shall consider snide references to it in rather poor taste.

What I have done since then, aside from resuming general fanac a bit, is to finally break through into my chosen profession: the field of jazz music and criticism. In the larger-than-stfnal sense, I am now a Pro--in addition to selling to two of the four American jazz magazines regularly (a column in each, plus articles), I've cracked various non-jazz markets, the most significant right now being an article sale to ROGUE. I may have more pieces in that magazine shortly. Although I am now supporting myself (and Sylvia) by writing, I am still aiming towards my ultimate goal, editing. This goal no longer seems too far away.

Naturally this pleases me; after five years of knocking around in odd-jobs and jobs with no futures or personal involvement, I am finally making it in my career. There are a number of side benefits in what I'm doing now: friendships with jazz musicians, the opportunity to write album liner notes (which pay handsomely), free records, the run of many jazz clubs, and...well, almost conventions...

There is this thing in the jazz field called the "jazz festival." Supposedly based on the older European precedent of music festivals, it has, led by the Newport Jazz Festival, turned into something else entirely. This year, on assignment, I went to the Newport thing. The piece which follows, with some minor changes, will appear in the third issue of JAZZ GUIDE, and I think you'll find it's not too different from a conreport...

bad day at NEWPORT

After several years of firm resolve, I broke down this year and went to Newport. If I'd tried, I couldn't have picked a worse year for it.

It had started quite simply, when Tom Wilson, the editor of JAZZ GUIDE said to me, "Ted, why don't you do us a report on Newport this year? Play up the circus aspects and all that jazz; really slam it into them." "How about expenses?" I asked. "Press passes and all that?" Tom said he'd see what he could do.

We decided to go for one day only--the real expense was in getting accommodations--if there were any left. The plans were for five of us to go up in my car: Margo Nelson and Bill Coss of METRONOME, Andy Reiss, Sylvia and myself. Andy didn't wake up in time, and Bill unfortunately became sick, but after a series of misadventures with the extremely poor road signs along our proposed route, the three of us found ourselves joining a long line of cars on a small country road in Rhode Island. It was about 3:00 on a hot, fiercely sunny afternoon. The cars were all waiting for the Jamestown Ferry to Newport.

It required two and a half hours of slowly inching forward before we made it onto the ferry.

Clearly portending events to come were the high beer sales at the stores close to the ferry landing. Youths, largely college-age and -bred, spent their two and a half hours steadily downing can after can of beer. By the time the ferry was loaded, so were its occupants.

We were lucky in finding a speedy (and free) parking place, from which we set out on foot to explore the area. Crowds thronged the streets, most of them clean, American, Jack-Armstrong-types, few of them anywhere near sober. To be accurate, perhaps as many as 25% of them knew who Horace Silver--the night's big star--was, but probably a majority thought of him as a character out of Robert Louis Stevenson. Sprinkled among the reveling youths (most of whom were dressed extremely informally) were a few sober and panic-driven adults who seemed to be seeking the nearest exit with a What-Am-I-Doing-Here? look on their faces.

The crowds were raucous crowds, full of beer and sickness, painfully square. Although I was dressed in an expensive suit, my full beard drew more than a few catcalls and cries of "Beatnik! Hey, looka the beatniks!" It was like running a gantlet every time we braved the streets. Sylvia drew a number of obscene proposals. Fortunately it was too early yet for any of these lotharios to think of carrying out

their promises--I began wondering though, apprehensively, about what it would be like later...when it was dark...

We checked at the press gate at Freebody Park, and found no one there but a gate keeper who directed us to the hotel Viking. We found the Viking, and discovered the press office deserted and locked. A note in the window said the office closed at six; someone had been precipitous, since it was not yet nearly six. The note added that beginning at 7:30 we could fine someone at the Park itself.

We decided to kill time by finding the Cliff Walk Manor, where Charlie Mingus had organized an insurgent festival in protest to the mishandling of the main event. Heading down Memorial Blvd., we passed Mingus, who was sitting in the back seat of his Buick convertible with a drummer and Allen Eager, and who was apparently playing pied piper to his affair.

We also passed by increasing numbers of evidence of vandalism: smashed windows in car agencies, overturned trash cans, and the everpresent crunch of broken glass and beercans underfoot.

The Cliff Walk Manor is a large, pleasant resort-type restaurant with a sloping lawn in the rear which turned nicely into an amphitheatre facing the sea with the addition of chairs and a bandstand. It was between concerts, so we looked the place over, and after a short while returned along the wide, park-strip-split Memorial Blvd. to Freebody and the circus. A constant belt of cars moved honkingly bumper to bumper along the street in both directions; many convertibles or sports cars with their tops down and filled with screaming, shouting, beer-drinking kids. By this time we were innured to this sort of thing, but we were still surprised when one car went by with several college boys in it, one of whom had pulled down his shorts and was laughingly displaying his bare posterior to the crowded sidewalks.

We reached Freebody a little after 7:30, and I looked up Jay Weston, the man I'd been told was in charge of press relations. He was quite obnoxious; despite prior word from Tom Wilson, my press card from METRONOME, and the fact that Margo (whom he knew personally) and Bob Perlongo (the assistant editor of METRONOME) vouched for me, he refused to admit us, and came on with a big line about how I was some sort of phoney who worked for no one. (When I repeated this story to Wilson and Coss afterwards, both were indignant at the treatment I'd gotten.) Thus I was exiled from the Newport Jazz Festival. Apparently, to judge from subsequent reports, I missed little.

Leaving Freebody in disgust, shouldering our way through crowds of angry drunks without tickets, Sylvia and I made our way back to Cliff Walk Manor. On the way we passed a boy of perhaps eighteen staggering across the street with his arm around an equally staggering girl of no more than fifteen; in one hand he carried a beer can (apparently the police, now at long last enforcing a no-carrying rule, had not yet noticed him), while with the other he crudely squeezed the girl's breasts. She was giggling slightly.

Along the way we noticed numerous residents selling souvenirs in their front yards, and parking cars (a dollar each) on their lawns. All along the sidewalks, youths lounged in groups, milling about, creating minor

eddies of disturbance. Darkness was falling; with it a feeling of greater license.

My press card gained us immediate and courteous admittance to Cliff Walk Manor. The first person I saw past the gate was Ornette Coleman. I introduced myself, and we chatted for about fifteen minutes. I was quite gratified with Ornette's reaction to an article I'd done on him for METRONOME, and I found him easy to converse with. My greatest impression of Ornette was that he is a genuinely good person, one whom I increasingly admire.

After we had gained our seats amid a quiet, largely attentive and well-mannered audience, the concert began, with an "all star group" made up of Kenny Dorham, Allen Eager, Kenny Drew, Arthur Taylor and Wilber Ware. The music was rather ordinary, with few highspots, and largely uninspired. Earl Coleman joined the group to sing several tunes, and I found him polished, sophisticated, and very unswinging.

I noticed that my eyes were watering, and stinging slightly, and I looked around for a cigarette smoker. There were no smokers immediately around us, but others were also rubbing their eyes. At the end of the set, Max Roach, who was acting as emcee, announced that the police had used teargas on a mob up near Freebody Park and the Viking. It had drifted a mile down to us, demonstrating the amount used.

(Later I was to hear that Freebody Park had been in a state of seige, with a howling crowd of beer-crazed youths battering down the gates and swarming the fences. The police used firehoses and teargas to disperse a mob which was estimated at over 15,000.)

There followed a Max Roach set (a report on which I included in the JAZZ GUIDE version of this piece), and then Ornette and his group. It did not seem to me that they were playing as much or as fully as they had a week or two earlier when I'd dug them at the Five Spot, but very likely this was due to the increasing cold. A cool humid breeze was blowing steadily off the water, chilling all of us, and undoubtedly limiting the dexterity of the musicians. (Later Eric Dolphy confirmed this. "Playing with Mingus, we always came on last. Man, it was really chilling--sometimes I could barely move my fingers!") The chill was too much for us; although we regretted missing the rest of Ornette's set, and what was to follow, we rose and left. It was after midnight and we couldn't be certain when Freebody would let out. We didn't want to get caught in that mob.

Somehow we made it safely back to the Weiss Rak IV, and pulled out. As we left Newport, we noticed police roadblocks restricting all incoming traffic. We couldn't care less; we were glad to be out of it.

Instead of trying to make the long return trip to New York City, we decided on the short 50-mile trip to Boston. Braving unknown, un-mapped freeways, and homing in by instinct (I'd only driven to Boston once before, more than a year earlier, by a different route), we ended up at the Ivory Birdbath, where a prior call had assured us a bed which we thankfully fell into. What a day.

AND EVER AFTER...: Sunday, July 3rd, we spent in blissful repose until about noon, whereupon we woke up and were informed that the Birdbath was moving. Thus properly shocked awake, I accompanied Bill Sarill on an exploration trip of Boston's subways, elevateds and high-speed trolleys. Fascinating, fascinating. Why do you know that on the "Airport Line," just past the Maverick St. Station the trains drop their third rail and pick up an overhead line? And that--? Ah, but I can see you're not--well, most of you anyway--rapid-transit fans. Oh well...

We stayed over Sunday night, after having helped move things into the new house (okay, so I didn't do much, but I left my car keys behind so that the others could... I'm very generous in that respect) which I hear is soon to be moved out of again. Poor Ivory Birdbath.

Monday, July 4th, was a beautiful day, and we spent it leisurely motor-ing over the back roads of Mass., Rhode Island and New York, avoiding as many tolls as possible. By evening we were back in Manhattan, back in the Village.

That night we went out and saw "The Maltese Falcon" with Harlan Ellison.

Thus ends another fine old Adventure In Fanzine Editing, brought to you exclusively by NULL-F, the fanzine with a title which means nothing, but has inspired admiration; the fanzine with a title which was arrived at in desperation as the first deadline drew nigh; the only fanzine so named which has had a column named after it without credit... Yes, N-U-L-L -- F ! The Slimmer Fanzine.

Look for it. There's no guarantee you'll find it otherwise.

this has been a fanzine
for boyd raeburn

