

Fatha's beat jazz

by Helen M. Spinelli

Earl "fatha" Hines treated Halifax to a fantastic performance of modern jazz in the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium last Saturday night. To review this concert without covering the page with superlatives would indeed be a hard task. Needless to say the audience present for this musical event felt the same way. No sooner had Mr. Hines finished his introduction and put his fingers to the keyboard when unanimous appreciation came flooding from the audience.

Mr. Hines began his musical career in the classical mode but finding it too restrictive, as many famous jazz players did turned his talents to jazz piano and is now internationally famous. Generally, he is regarded as the father of modern jazz piano. Louis Armstrong and clarinetist Jimmie Noone are just two notables with whom he has made immortal jazz recordings. Mr. Hines is also acclaimed for his innovative style of arrangement as well as his perceptive conducting abilities.

These abilities were certainly apparent last Saturday night. Just a slight glance from Mr. Hines would send drummer Eddie Graham or bass player Harley White into an explosion of spine tingling rhythms. Although both musicians are certainly experts in their field the impetus during this concert centered around Earl Hines and his contagious enthusiasm. As Eddie Graham put it after the show "when Earl is on he carries the rest of us with him."

Not to be ignored is reed player Rudy Rutherford, whose name during the 30 years of his career in jazz has been linked with Count Bassie and Buddy Tate. In the first half of the show he played mainly the clarinet and more melodious tones I have yet to hear from this instrument. The Gershwin hits "Rhapsody in Blue" and "The Man I Love" captured the most exciting clarinet tones of the evening. But Mr. Rutherford's talents are not limited to clarinet. He is equally expert in the saxophone and flute which added another note of excellence to the evening's performance.

The program for the night was certainly meant to bring back fond memories for long time jazz enthusiasts. Among the numbers played were "Sophisticated Lady", "Take The A Train", "Days of Wine and Roses," "Tea for Two", and a segment was dedicated to the works of another Jazz King, Duke Ellington, after which the audience leaped to its feet in a crescendo of cheers. A more spontaneous or unanimous ovation has yet to be seen at the Cohn. But one standing ovation was not the order of the evening, no less than three kept us all happily jumping out of our seats.

An added attraction to the night's entertainment came in the form of Marva Josie whose vocal range and style were certainly on par with the rest of the quartet. After a spectacular entrance, coming from the rear of the auditorium using a portable mike, she settled into a fine rendition of "I Got It Bad and That Ain't No Good." The audience's reception of Ms. Josie was less than she deserved though not unappreciative. The clear tones and wide range of Ms. Josie's voice classifies her among the best jazz singers around today. She has been with Hines since 1967 and has toured with him to Russia, South America and Australia.

It should also be noted that one of the high points of this concert was the drum solo "Caravan". Mr. Hines and Harley White quietly walked off stage leaving Eddie Graham to amaze the audience with his flying drum sticks and truly remarkable talent. He literally drummed the audience out of their seats receiving an ovation for his solo.

All that remains to be said is that though surrounded with stellar musicians the 70 year old "fatha" Hines was not outshone. With gliding hands and haunting rhythm "fatha" proved once again to be the greatest jazz pianist the world has ever heard.

A special note of thanks goes to Dalhousie Cultural Activities for bringing the Earl Hines Quartet to Halifax along with the other top jazz musicians (Johan Jones and the presentation Hall Band) we have heard over the past year.



Les Grands Ballets

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens will premiere three works at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, Dalhousie Arts Centre. Les Grands Ballets Canadien will perform on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, October 9, 10 and 11, at 8:30 p.m. There will also be a matinee performance on Saturday, October 11, at 2:30 p.m.

During their stay in Halifax, the company will present the world premiere of two works, "A Yesterday's Day" and "Bawdy Variations", and the Canadian premiere of "Variations of a Theme by Diabelli". "Yesterday's Day" is choreographed by Linda Rabin and the music has been written by Ann Mortifee who is well-known for her score for "The Ecstasy of Rita Joe". "Bawdy Variations" is bound to delight Nova Scotian audiences. Zez Confrey has adapted the rhythms of ragtime and jazz into a blend of instantly appealing piano music that was popular in the 1920's and 30's when everyone was whistling his "Kitten on the Keys" and "Dizzy Fingers". Brian MacDonald's choreography reflects the gaiety of

this music.

In 1974 Brian MacDonald was invited to choreograph a new work for a large group of dancers by the Ballet of the Paris Opera. He chose to create a lyrical piece of pure dance set to one of Beethoven's most renowned works for solo piano, "Variations on a Theme by Diabelli." The company will also be performing "Serenade" choreographed by George Balanchine with music by Tchaikovsky and two other works by Artistic Director Brian MacDonald "Time Out of Mind" and "Tam Ti Delam".

Les Grands Ballets Canadiens was launched from a small ballet troupe, Les Ballets Chiriaeff, and a school found in 1952 by Madame Chiriaeff in Montreal. Today, Les Grands Ballets ranks as one of Canada's three major ballet organizations. The Montreal Star's dance critic Myron Galloway writing on the company's performances in Montreal last summer said: "Les Grands Ballets Canadiens' appearances have proved to be of a higher calibre than any other entertainment I have seen this season."

Bergman examines the marriage battle

by Diane Robinson

It's easy to be negative about "good films in Halifax," as the better and more critically acclaimed films never seem to arrive. Or if they do, it is only after a few years of circulation elsewhere. Hopefully with new smaller theatres being constructed in the Metro area movies of the same high calibre as Ingmar Bergman's 'Scenes from a Marriage' will play more often in our city.

The film was originally made as TV serial but has been edited to make a 3 hour movie, which may seem for some to be a long period to sit in a dark theatre. It may seem even longer as it's definitely not a movie that either assails your senses or is of the light entertainment variety. This is the kind of movie that demands audience involvement in terms of a constant thought-provoking process.

The story revolves around the relationship between a married couple, Marianne and Johan, played by Liv Ullman and Erland Josephson. The way in which their relationship is introduced and developed is in itself a fascinating aspect of this film. Very slowly, in titled segments, the personalities of Marianne and Johan are revealed to us. Film directors are naturally limited in their work as to how many senses they can appeal to in order to bring understanding to the audience. The techniques of this film are so realistic in their approach that you cease to be an objective spectator and become a third person in the room, completely caught up in the interaction between the husband and wife. Other people are mentioned in the movie, in-laws, children and friends, but apart from a few scenes, the film focuses entirely on Johan and Marianne.

The other characters appear mainly as props, vehicles to help understand the couple both as two individuals and as a married couple.

One of the most powerful aspects of this film is the strong realism that exists throughout. Not once does the realism slip, it keeps on gripping you as you watch the screen and realize what is happening between the couple.

The movie begins after they have been married ten years and they are at a supposedly high point. Happy and feeling perfectly compatible they expect this situation to remain forever. But slowly, little by little, we watch the couple rationalize themselves into their break-up. Their pretensions, conventionality and stifling conservatism become facades. Yet while they no longer live together and gradually get a divorce it takes them ten more years to realize why they broke up.

It takes them ten years of learning, struggling, and fighting after their marriage disintegrates to place them at a point they should have reached twenty years before. It is quite frightening to think of one taking twenty years to realize who one is and to have the strength and wisdom to maintain one's personality. As a lesson in learning about relationships between two people, Bergman's film is excellent. I think most of the movie's viewers will come away hoping they won't waste twenty years engaged in a battle for the self and the acceptance of another self with all the funny and queer imperfections that other people always have.

This film deserves to be seen and to miss it will be a real loss. If it leaves Halifax before you get a chance to see it, it will be shown at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium, Sunday, January 11.