

# Royalty visits Cohn

by Mike Greenfield

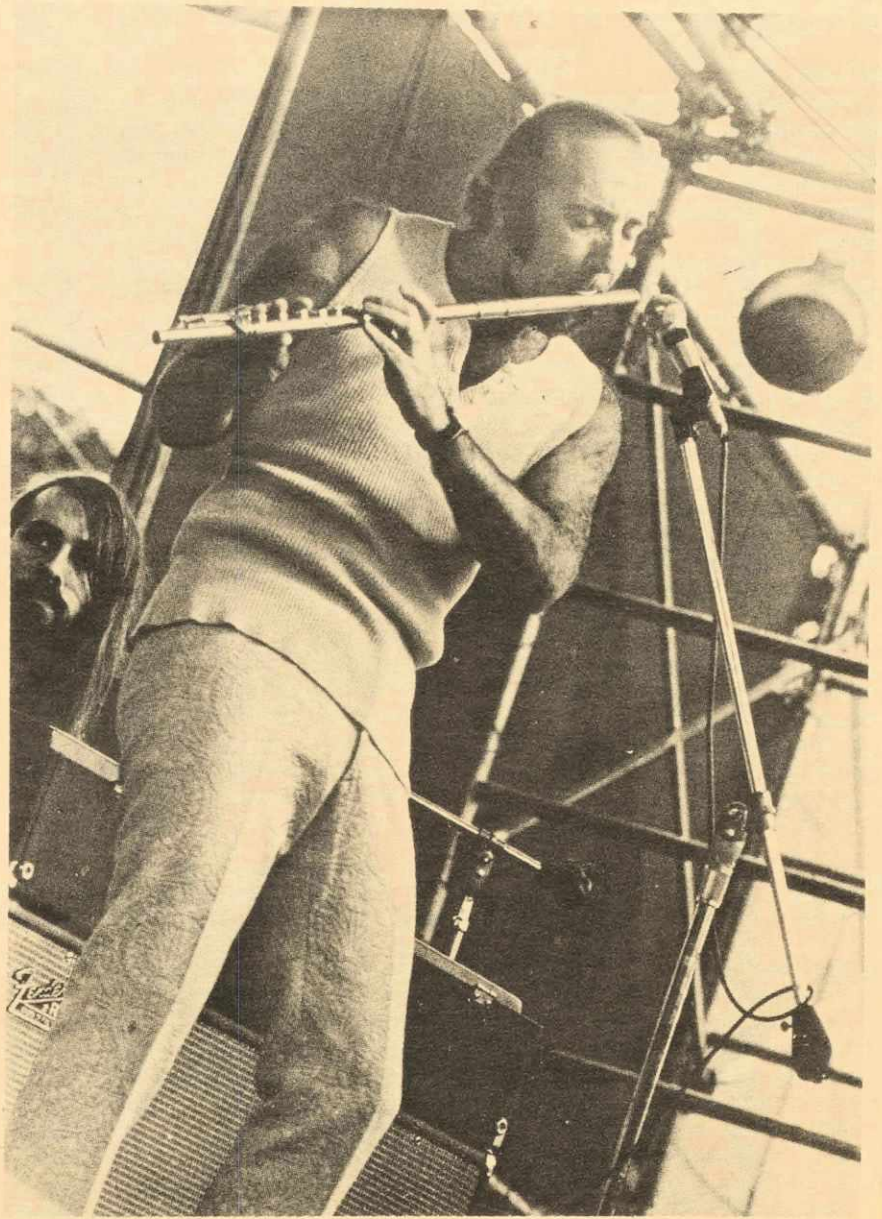
Undoubtedly Herbie Mann is one of the premier jazz flautists in the world. His career has spanned three decades and in that time he has made just about as many sounds with the flute that can be made. Recently he has formed his own group "The Family of Mann" and they have already produced one album, "First Light".

For Halifax audiences Herbie Mann's concert was another in a series of superlative jazz concerts provided by the Rebecca Cohn this year (with Preservation Hall yet to come). Yet there were reasons to be apprehensive about this concert. To cover costs the Cohn was forced to have two shorter concerts rather than one longer one. Earlier in the year when the same set up was arranged with Jose Fleiciano it amounted to a very short and limited view of an excellent musician, invariably something of a disappointment. Secondly, some of Herbie Mann's recent albums were of the disco-music variety, abhorrent stuff to most jazz lovers; it would have been a let down if Herbie would have played disco. On both counts the Family of Mann

quickly dissolved any apprehensions. From the opening "High in the Andes" to the encore "Hold On I'm Coming" they represented the best of Herbie Mann's jazz flute.

Disappointingly though, the Family of Mann was not complete. Bob Mann the guitarist did not make the plane from Toronto. The fault apparently lay in an Air Canada botch up. The band also lacked a sax player, on the first Family of Mann album David Newman played sax and flute, too bad he was not included in this concert. The Family of Mann did include - Arman Halburian on percussian (everything from cowbells to whistles), Pat Rebillot on keyboards, Steve Gadd on drums, and Tony Levin on bass.

The incompleteness of the band was soon lost as Herbie and his flute took us to the sweetest reaches of the Jazz Kingdom. Unlike the guitar, the flute does not fill you an awesome sound, it gently surrounds your consciousness and then it lifts you like no other instrument can. This was best illustrated in the piece that started off the second half of the first concert, Pat Rebillot's 'Violet Don't Be Blue'.



# A special concert - Mitch Miller & the A.S.O. filmed for C.B.C. television

by Bradley Warner

On Wednesday afternoon, March 10, the Halifax community had the rare opportunity of experiencing the pain and pleasure of creating a musical program for television. It definitely was more pain than pleasure. Although the audience was briefly disappointed with a last minute change in program, we were treated to colourful romantic and contemporary works: Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*, and Roger's and Hammerstein's *Sound of Music*.

As usual, Mitch Miller was a colourful character on the stage. (Perhaps some remember his antics in the long-running T.V. program, *Sing Along with Mitch - I do*). For all his extroverted, humorous behaviour, he is in fact a reasonably accomplished conductor of more serious music. For example,

*Scherezade*, although considered a "popular" romantic work, demands that the conductor carefully draw from the instrumental resources of the orchestra to create a tableaux of imagery the theme of which the work suggests. This can be rather difficult when one considers that the A.S.O. is somewhat noted for its lack of co-ordination and responsiveness.

Miller, on the whole, was able to accomplish his task. The only major flaws in the performance originated in the sector of the various sections of the orchestra and soloists. This not to say that they did not perform well, rather, that the listener was aware of various glaring errors which briefly disrupted the flow of

the music--unfortunate, but true. For instance, in the Rimsky-Korsakov number the cellist at times unnecessarily dragged-out one of the two dominant themes delegated to that instrument.

The concert master (first chair, first violin section) as usual was technically correct, but stylistically, (ie. emotively) his interpretation was, perhaps, a bit cool towards Russian romantic lyricism. On the other hand, the brass section was excellent in clarity and control. The majority of the woodwinds were also performing in a like fashion. My compliments to the flutes, bassoon, and oboe, (although the solo clarinetist lacked consistency in tone and texture).

The *Sound of Music* somehow seemed to come off much better than the first piece on the program. Perhaps the A.S.O. is much better at playing popular numbers rather than the "old-fashioned stuff", but I'd prefer to think that it was more likely due to the fact that there was no "warm-up" before the taping and the taping situation is always somewhat constricting to even the most accomplished performer.

For all my criticism, I still considered this taping session a very enjoyable and instructive experience. It was not a "formal" concert, rather the possibility of creating an ideal music program within the confines of the television tube. This is a second best to first hand experience in the concert hall, but give the producers credit for the endeavour.

The program will be aired in mid-May.

By the second half of the first concert Herbie and his band were sufficiently warmed up, and each composition even the slower 'Cric-ket Dance' was alive with the beat of musicians 'cookin'. Each musician's solo pumped more energy into ten minute long renditions of such tunes as Wonder's 'Bird of Paradise'. Pat Rebillot's keyboards and Tony Levin's bass were especially memorable.

While rock stars tend to become infatuated with their success in generating a mass following, jazz people tend toward the introverted with the knowledge that it is only their music that pleases people, not any media hype. As the Family of Mann played you realized that no light show, or dancing girls, or fits of destruction will satisfy either you or the band. Herbie Mann and his

troupe have got the ability of top musicians and the attitude of jazz artists, coupled with the easy going manner of Herbie Mann himself, you've got a lot of class and something approaching a perfect concert.



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