



Jazz pianist George Shearing and his trio gave a rather uninspiring performance at the Cohn recently.

## Shearing does not play Hemingway

by Carl Matheson

Ernest Hemingway probably once said that a good novel should be noted as much for what it does not contain as for what it does contain. At any rate we shall assume that he did.

In that case Hemingway's admirable dictum can, in its wisdom, be extended to musical performances. When viewed in this light the effort of the George Shearing trio at the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium last Thursday night appears most adequate, for the concert contained no tributes to Elvis or documentaries on the corn belt. The concert in omitting what should have been omitted, however, also omitted much that should have been retained. As a result, like Chinese food, the evening was pleasant but unfulfilling.

There was an expectant hush in the building before the concert because here was the man who Kerouac described as a making people sweat by simply appearing on stage. When he was brought out, therefore, I sweated dutifully, in deference to Jack Kerouac.

Then he began to play. My apocrines ceased to function as did my other glands and the person sitting next to me, who promptly fell asleep. The music was nice. It was a bit too nice. Shearing has his customary golden touch; no one can bring out a melody as well as he can. His sidemen played along compatibly and unobtrusively. The first numbers seemed to be an effective preparation for the production of some truly gratifying music.

To my horror the niceness continued, unmitigated, throughout the first half. Song after song consisted of a five voice, locked hands rendition of a melody followed by an inoffensive and spongy one line piano solo with perhaps a bass solo and a few drum breaks inserted for variety. The names of the songs, bassist, and drummer need not be revealed since they were all of little importance—anyhow jazz sidemen and macho wrestlers are alike in that their anonymity should be broken only in the context of trivia

contests. The bassist did have some redeeming features, including a fine sense of melodic invention on his solos; the drummer didn't, apart from his being a shining example of the success of make work projects. The total main role effect of the material and accompanying musicians was characterless. They served mainly as parts of the Shearing machine, a machine that takes a melody and with it manufactures a euphonic pseudo-jazz arrangement.

Shearing's music is no longer jazz. On Thursday night he cashed in on the sensitivity of his fingertips while the rest of him slept. These were no creations. Except for two numbers at the start of the second half of the programme the band appeared thoroughly uninterested in the music. Their only concern was to get the solo orders straight.

Shearing by himself was worse. His solo number showed that his left hand is totally impotent. Without the solid backing of a strong bass line his sound is oddly naked. His playing portrayed him, perhaps unjustifiably, as the ideal dining room pianist, a performer who provides a pleasant ambience without demanding the concentration of energy of his audience.

In the days before Lenny Bruce and Jack Kerouac none of this criticism would have been valid. Shearing's importance as a stylistic innovator is huge. High playing, however, cannot subsist on historical importance. It, like his calculatedly racy jokes, can now only titillate fifty year old ladies whose perfume can be smelt a block away (of which there were many). The artistic soul that linked him to the angry fifties has departed and can only be remembered by means of recordings. Listening to Shearing now is listening to the superficial attributes of the artist without perceiving his substance. This Thursday's concert, in spite of the total amiability, can only leave a sad and rather empty feeling in one who knew the Shearing that made people sweat.

## Movie views

by Gregory J. Larsen

I consider myself to be an avid movie goer. On the average I would say that I see one film per week. At a cost of three dollars and fifty cents per film I pay fourteen dollars per month, and one hundred and sixty-eight dollars per year to support this visual habit. A fair amount of money one could say.

I feel myself to be a relatively tolerant person. But I believe there is one exception to this general rule of thumb though. This exception is that of unnecessary distraction in the cinema.

Can you imagine paying the astronomical price paid for general admittance into a film and spending those two, approximate, hours gabbing with a friend? Even worse are those who insist on informing their companions of crucial, or exciting moments in the film thereby informing the rest of the audience of the same destructively-revealing information. Of course, these persons have had the good fortune to have previously viewed

the film and seem to feel a need to reveal their thorough knowledge of the piece to everyone there. Then there are those who think they are at a football game or something of that type and feel it necessary to shout out running commentary to the film's unfolding action.

Fellow viewers I say to you is this fair? When considering our generous contributions to a specific theatre for the privilege of viewing a film I believe it should be the right of that customer to view the film as the artists have presented it. Should we have to suffer with the previously stated unpleasantnesses of others? Why stand for it?

I say, fellow film buffs, let us view films for what they are and for what they artistically represent. There is plenty of time for comment and criticism after the piece. Let's keep these for leisure moments and not during those precious minutes and some times important minutes of a film's presentation. THANK YOU!!!

## Outrageously Rudy

by Cheryl Downton

Apparently all Rudy Valentino ever really wanted in life was to take his honours diploma from an agricultural college, settle down in California with a loving wife, and lead the simple life of an orange grower. With no reflection upon Valentino, perhaps it would have been best for today's movie going audiences if he had done just that; anything to be spared from Ken Russell's latest symbolic extravaganza—**Valentino**.

Russell's tendency toward the outrageously overdone can be seen in his previous endeavours; evidence: **Tommy**, **The Boyfriend**, **The Music Lovers**, **Mahler**, **Lisztomania**. Unfortunately, **Valentino** is inseparable from Russell 'technique'. The movie, based on the book of the same name, tends to exaggerate scenes of an insignificant nature, while com-

assigned; the portrayal of the Valentino who oozes blatant sexuality and transposes women to little more than jelly is, alas, only glimpsed. In the few scenes requiring fancy footwork, Nureyev's tootsies conquer the crassness.

Michelle Phillips (of late Mamas and Papas fame) is cast as Valentino's somewhat neurotic—verging on the psychotic?—wife. Her acting is rather haphazard and bland at the best of times, and she will do well to stick with A & M records. Carol Kane's minimal exposure as 'Mr. Fatty's' girl of the hour, is only adequate. The brief interchange between Kane and Nureyev would lose nothing if the ketchup drenching french fry scene had been left on the cutting room floor (more Russell 'technique').

Leslie Caron as the 'on again off again' movie queen, is wasting her



pletely understating areas of a more relevant and possibly factual character. Two scenes in particular are grossly overplayed: Valentino's stay in jail, and the whole viewing of the corpse leans toward the gross and idiotic.

Rudolf Nureyev is a universally acclaimed artist of enviable quality, but can he act? The answer cannot readily be found in **Valentino**; none of the actors get much of a chance to display their ability, real or imagined. Nureyev certainly looks right for the part to which he is

time and ability in **Valentino**. She is just another artificial character in an artificial movie.

The film itself is choppy and sadly lacking in real and spontaneous feelings and heartfelt emotion. Rocky faithfuls will no doubt lap up the boxing match of honour (the pink powder puff's duel fought for respect and proof of doubted manhood), and lovers of token symbolism will no doubt suffer from acute stomach afflictions as Valentino dies grasping for the rollaway orange.