

Burton hosts fifties jazz greats

Dazzling performance by Mitch-Ruff Duo

By ALAN OFFSTEIN

Dwike Mitchell and Willie Ruff, a piano-bass duo well-known to jazz fans of the fifties, appeared at Burton Auditorium last Monday evening in front of a three-quarter house. Showing color film of folkloric dancing shot in Brazil, bassist-French horn player Willie Ruff narrated a short history of the role of the drum and the dance in suppressed Black cultures. This was followed by historic footage of ex-slaves "buck dancing" for "Uncle Tom" Edison to test his new invention, the cine camera.

Having made that point very clear, the duo began a dazzling performance of blues and ballads that illustrated how much Black music had changed in America without losing its fundamental African feature, rhythm.

Their playing is very heavily influenced by the Oscar Peterson school of lush, bluesy piano and the bass in a powerful rhythmic role, breaking into melodic space for brief solos. In a program of Billy Strayhorn, Duke Ellington and Dizzy Gillespie compositions, the men totally mesmerized their audience.

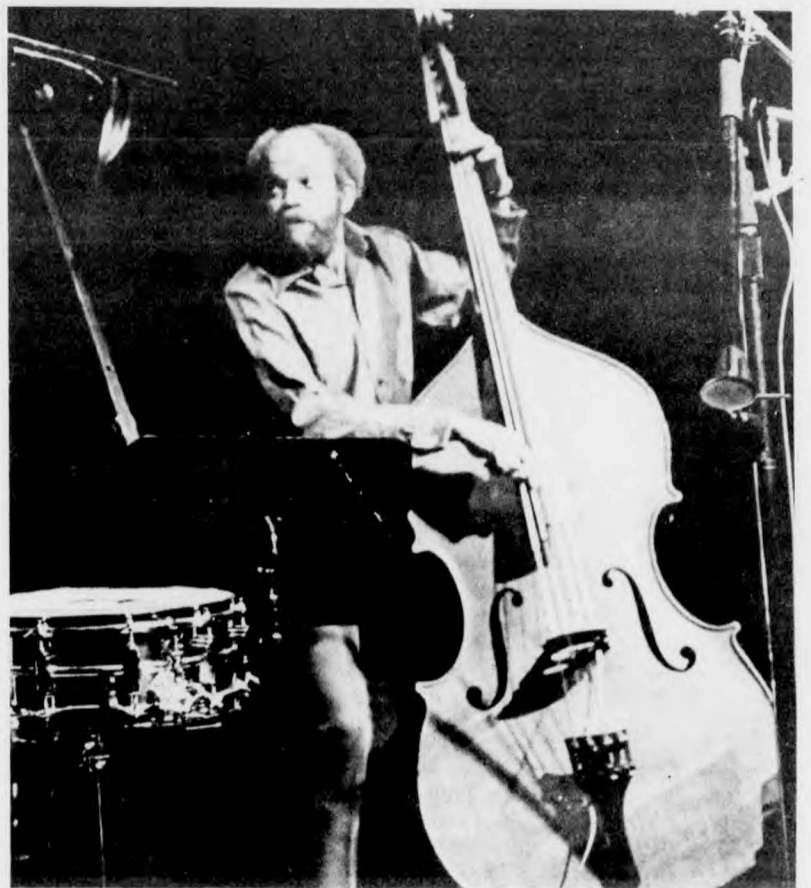
For the last few years Mitchell and Ruff have been visiting artists at various U.S. colleges including Dartmouth, U.C.L.A. and now, Yale. They will be taking time out starting this February to tour South America and

Africa with Dizzy Gillespie, not just to play their music, but mainly to film and record Black music at its source, adding to the body of knowledge on a neglected American art form, jazz.

Dominant voices in Black Arts have generally been musical ones: Jelly Roll Morton, Charlie Parker, John Coltrane and Albert Ayler to name a few. Their messages have consistently reached out to the people and for that reason jazz music, and its promise of freedom, has traditionally been suppressed by white society. It is noteworthy that the program at Burton listed the academic qualifications of Dwike Mitchell and Willie Ruff — degrees from here and there — but did not mention even one of their numerous albums.

Mitchell and Ruff communicate beautifully with people, and I do not want to detract from them by suggesting that they do not represent the state of Black music as it is being played today. But in contrast to contemporary artists like Richard Abrams, Archie Shepp and Ornette Coleman, men whose music is continually innovative and of immediate relevance to society, such is the case.

It is regrettable that the York series has limited its Black music content to a jazz style that is almost archaic and only historically pertinent to new ideas in Black Arts.



Mitch Ruff

Director's fatal mistake makes Sergeant Musgrave's Dance sterile

By SANDRA SOUCOTTE

Sergeant Musgrave's Dance, playing at Hart House until Feb. 5 is a minor production of a minor masterpiece. Director Martin

Hunter's first, and probably fatal, mistake was to allow the figurative and often poetic language of the play to dissolve into the unmastered Irish accents.

collective guilt and complicity in an unauthentic masquerade.

Arden's directions demand a highly stylized use of set and color. This set, blending an effective combination of wood and granite, made use of gibbet-like structures and stark iconographic tombstones, all of which helped to heighten the growing tension of this strange mission. Apart from the red of the soldier's uniforms, the puristic possibilities of a formal use of color were lost. Arden apparently saw this play, like a Lowry painting, in terms of white, red, blue and black; the black of the coal-mine and a demented soul, the white of winter, the red, white and blue of the flag etc.

In spite of its failures, this is still an interesting play and even though none of the actors really click in their roles, George Komorowski as Bludgeon, a bargee and Doris Cowan as Annie, have some good moments. Its mixture of verse, prose and song and the basic metaphor of the dance add a certain amount of rhythm to an otherwise fragmented and potentially sterile production.

In a play that is supposedly as ungeographic as it is unhistoric, capturing the flavor of the language should not have mattered as much as capturing the flavor of what is being said. John Arden certainly has a lot to say about the vagaries of morality in war, with all the ensuing dilemma's of senseless killing, desertion and the need for retribution.

These are soldiers, winter-locked in a northern England mining town, with the ostensible mission of recruiting others to follow the military drums for glory and a country's honor. The dance of "Blackjack" Musgrave is actually one of death for his small company and for twenty-five of the townspeople if his macabre formula for retribution is to be completed. The guns point finally at the audience, though, for this is a theme of

Grateful Dead lets loose on latest album

Grateful Dead: (Warner Bros. 2WS 1935) The Dead's latest double album, recorded live, comes close to the excellence of their Workingman's Dead album which was released a few years ago. The music is wired with a touch of the free form blues that was a very large part of the Dead's early sound.

Much of the music was written by members of the group, but interest on the album centres around the Dead's interpretations of compositions of other contemporary artists. Me and Bobby McGee, Johnny B. Goode, Not Fade Away and Goin Down The Road Feelin' Bad are just some of the tunes that the Grateful Dead let loose on.

Scott and Rigg fight with dying script and lose in The Hospital

By LYNN SLOTKIN

The film, The Hospital, has all the makings of a success. The writer is the well-known Paddy Chayefsky; the director is Arthur Hiller of Love Story fame; and the two leads are the award winning George C. Scott and Diana Rigg. But the patient died on the operating table.

The main problem seems to be with Chayefsky. He is well known for his early success, but he hasn't had a success in years. His script concerns the incredible inefficiency that takes place in an ordinary hospital. For instance, a young intern and his girl friend, decide to use the vacant bed of a just-deceased patient. During the night, his girl leaves, he is mistaken for the previous patient, and by morning he mysteriously ends up dead.

There are the usual cases of sick people not being admitted to the hospital until they fill out forms in triplicate. And to top off the list, someone is killing off members of the staff.

Chayefsky tries to make a serious point about the awful straits hospitals are in, but he fails to make the point because the incidents are so funny, that one doesn't take anything seriously.

The acting seemed to be another problem. George C. Scott played George C. Scott instead of Dr. Bach. He was gruff, tense, constantly dissatisfied.



George C. Scott tries to calm patient in the hospital.

Diana Rigg was a big disappointment. She was totally mis-cast as Barbara, a 25 year old former acid-head who freaked out of school in New England, and ended up in the Sierra Madre mountains with her

missionary father, preaching to a lost tribe of Apaches. Do you believe it? Neither do I.

The film had a lot of potential, but it was never realised. Too bad there wasn't a doctor in the house.

David Rae sounds tired at Grumbles

By JOHN OUGHTON

The first time I saw David Rae perform was at Mariposa about six years ago. If memory serves, he was a skinny, barefoot fellow who was playing very good backup guitar for Ian and Sylvia, and to all appearances, hoping that nobody would notice him. Rae is now appearing as a solo act, equipped with a scratchy, but serviceable, voice and some self-confidence. During his recent week at Grumbles, I attended Rae's last set of the evening; he had already performed twice that day, and thus looked pretty tired.

Perhaps as a consequence of fatigue, both his playing and his singing lacked refinement. Rae has lately taken to playing the piano as an occasional change from the guitar; he has learned blues patterns well, and sometimes throws in surprising little variations, yet his piano work was at times hesitant or monotonous. Rae has a tendency to hammer chords as hard as he can on both piano and guitar, with the result that the musical ideas get pounded rather than developed.

Despite all my reservations, it was obvious that Rae really loves playing for people. For me, the best moments of his act came with enthusiasm and skill. Generally, Rae seems to play other people's songs with more feeling than he does his own. The main objection I have to Rae's material is what seems to be his attitude towards women: 'don't mess with me baby, cause I'm your hootchie koochie man', or something like that. The blues have a great tradition of male chauvinism, but there's no real reason for Rae to continue it.

Generally, one wonders whether Rae is really at his best in a solo act.

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