

The "Crusaders" of Music
From Jazz to Classical & from Classical to Jazz

WILLIAM BILL RUSSO

(25.06.1928 - 11.01.2003)

Master Orchestrator and Brilliant Theorist



(Photo from the Russo Family Newspaper)



Maurice Creuven 2020

Talking about music is good; listening to it is better !

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CHICAGO

Third city of the United States, after New York and Los Angeles, Chicago the 'Black and White', the 'City of the Winds' and the Willis Tower (ex-Sears), has made a vast reputation for the celebrities who have marked its history, from the godfather Al Capone to President Barack Obama, from the black notables of the municipal 'political machine' to the liberal economists of its famous School, whose most mediatized, Milton Friedman and George Stigler, have received the Nobel Prize.

But Chicago is also known for its magnificent Lyric Opera (3,500 seats), the second largest auditorium in North America after the Metropolitan Opera in New York (4,000 seats), and also for its great Symphony Orchestra, one of the best in the world and whose conductors have always been among the most prestigious of their time: Rafael Kubelik, Fritz Reiner, Georg Solti, Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Muti, etc.



Chicago's skyline
(Photo: Joshua Mellin / Huffpost)

In the world of jazz, one cannot count the tributes that were paid to the city of Chicago by musicians and crooners with, however, a special mention to Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. and Dean Martin, the three buddies of the Rat Pack.

We are not going to detail the whole history of jazz here, but it is necessary to

underline the important place that the Illinois metropolis occupies in the evolution of this new and original music. It is there, in fact, that a white jazz, inspired by New Orleans, the "Chicago Style", developed in the 1920s. Its most famous representative, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, recorded the first so-called "jazz" record in 1917 for RCA-Victor.



The Original Dixieland Jazz Band 1918

from l. to r.: Tony Sbarbaro (Spargo), Edwin "Daddy" Edwards, D. James "Nick" LaRocca, Larry Shields, Henry Ragas
(Photo: ODJBcard.JPG / Wikipedia)

Musically, the Chicago school differs from New Orleans in its use of more elaborate arrangements and the replacement of collective improvisations by individual emphasis on each soloist with orchestra accompaniment.

Many Chicagoans will make themselves known throughout the U.S.A. and in Europe: Nick La Rocca, Bix Beiderbecke, Eddie Condon, Benny Goodman, Mezz Mezzrow, Pee Wee Russell, Bud Freeman, Gene Krupa, Muggsy Spanier, George Wettling, Red McKensie, Dave Tough, Ray Bauduc, Jimmy McPartland and many others ...

But Chicago also saw the arrival, in the 1920s, of many black musicians who left New Orleans (closure of the Storyville district in 1917) in the hope of finding better working and living conditions in the north. Many will be disappointed but their musical contribution comes to enrich the so-called Chicago jazz which can be considered as reaching, around 1930, a kind of golden age thanks to musicians such as Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, the brothers Johnny and Baby Dodds, Sidney Bechet, Jimmy Archey, Henry Red Allen, Freddie Keppard, Jimmie Noone, Omer Simeon, Earl Hines, Zutty Singleton, etc.

Thanks to jazz, all these musicians, black and white, rub shoulders daily in a beautiful spirit of fraternity, resulting in the creation of mixed orchestras, a formula that guitarist Eddie Condon does not hesitate to strongly encourage.

And jazz in Chicago continues to evolve, even today, thanks to modern local and guest musicians and a particularly dynamic musical activity that ranges from jazz to classical and from opera to underground.

BIRTH OF A GIANT

It was in the context of the 1920s that on June 25, 1928, little William Joseph Russo Jr (Bill) was born, a young Chicagoan of Italian descent (like so many great jazzmen), who would very quickly become an exceptional musician, a little rebellious, and one of the most important composer-arrangers in the history of jazz.

Bill was born into a family of musicians. His father is a musician and a lawyer. His grandfather, a violinist, came from Europe when he was a young boy; a classical musician but accepting all offers that allowed him to earn a living. Bill has eight uncles, all instrumentalists. One of them, Danny Russo, is a conductor at Chicago's Palace Theater.

So, musically speaking, Bill is well surrounded, but what is very surprising is that nobody in his family wants to turn him towards music! Spontaneously, Bill will nevertheless study piano from the age of five and clarinet at the age of ten. But his taste for music was still very moderate at that time. In any case, for Papa Russo, there was no question of making a living from it, or from any other art form, as the possibilities of making a living from it were far too slim; being a lawyer was so much safer!

THE MUSICIAN

It was at Senn High School in Chicago that Bill discovered jazz and met, among others, two Chicagoans, Cy Touff and Lee Konitz, whom he would later meet again with Lennie Tristano and Stan Kenton.

At the age of thirteen, Bill began playing trombone, tuba, and trumpet in the school band and got into the habit, with his friends, of going to listen to orchestras in Chicago's clubs and theaters. And it is there that he is particularly impressed by the extraordinary power of Stan's orchestra, the one of the years 1943-44, which will make him say, later on :

"Stan's band was the biggest of all the bands I've ever approached and I've never heard my music played so well by other jazz bands. »

Bill is only 15 years old when he joins Billie Rogers' band and then Orrin Tucker's

band. In 1945, he played with Clyde McCoy, a trumpet player who specialized in the use of the 'wa wa' mute and who is best known for his interpretation of "Sugar Blues".

While still very young, Bill and Lee (1927 - 2020), the latter already very skilled on his instrument, familiarized themselves with the music of two great composers, J.S. Bach and Igor Stravinsky: the former for his melodic lines, the latter for the colours and vivacity of his orchestrations. However, Bill and Lee were very disappointed when Stravinsky's "Ebony Concerto" for Woody Herman's orchestra premiered in 1946. Bill will change his mind when, later on, he will be asked to conduct this score and discover all the richness it contains.

At this time, since 1943, Bill and Lee have been following the teaching of the pianist Lennie Tristano (1919 - 1978), born in Chicago into a family of Italian origin, and are passionate about his very complex and avant-garde musical thinking.



(Photo: The Lennie Tristano Experience)

Suffering from vision problems from birth, Lennie became blind at about the age of ten. However, this serious handicap did not prevent her, after studying at the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago, from establishing herself as an excellent and highly original pianist and a great innovator on the melodic, harmonic and rhythmic levels.

He was even the first to use, in 1955 in a great improvisation, the technique of superimposing the piano on a pre-recorded bass/drums permanence and to modify, for the final editing, the speed of the magnetic tapes.

At the same time, he recorded, solo and in blues form, a "Requiem" in memory of

Charlie Parker, remarkable for its depth and sensitivity.

All the audacity of this music can be discovered on an indispensable CD published by Rhino/Atlantic (8122-71595-2) "Lennie Tristano + The New Tristano" which magnificently illustrates the great novelty brought by Lennie Tristano in the use of the piano, especially her insistence on working the lowest register of the instrument, A tendency that can be found marvellously in Ronnie Ball (1927 - 1984) in some of his solos and also in Eddie Costa (1930 - 1962), a particularly gifted pianist and vibraphonist of Italian origin who died much too soon in a car accident.

It should be noted that, on the CD, the six tracks for solo piano, which are taken from the 1962 LP "The New Tristano" and recorded without any technical manipulation, have an expressive force as great as those of 1955.

Immediately after this period, Lennie gradually withdrew from the active music scene to devote himself mainly to teaching. Her students included Bill Russo, Lee Konitz, Warne Marsh, pianists Sal Mosca and Ronnie Ball, tenor saxophonist Ted Brown, trumpeter Don Ferrara, Charlie Mingus, Phil Woods, pianist Connie Crothers, saxophonists Lennie Popkin and Richard Tabnik, and her own daughter Carol Tristano (drums).

Bill Russo used Lennie Tristano's theories in the two scores he wrote (his greatest wish) in 1946 for Lionel Hampton, who would be the first to pay him for his music.

In February 1947, Bill (19) formed his first band in Chicago called "An Experiment in Jazz." "His intention is to own a jazz band, not a swing band. At the time, the nuance is important; it is a question of being in the Ellington/Kenton orientation as opposed to the one represented by Basie/Herman.

Initially, the new orchestra is limited to rehearsals and there are so many interested musicians that Bill doesn't know what to do with everyone. There's Ira Schulman, Johnny Howell, Mickey Simonetta, Milt Bernhart.

The young Bill Russo composed all the music himself and wrote all the orchestrations.

In 1948, Stan Kenton's orchestra was the most astonishing artistic event in the musical world and the great architect of this revolution was, since 1945, Pete Rugolo, the one that, of all the arranger-composers, Bill admires the most. He will say: "*Pete was able to bring to life the ideas that Stan was developing about his vision of jazz; in fact, he was the spirit of the orchestra.* »



Stan Kenton (l.) and Pete Rugolo
(Photo: Jazz Wax/Marc Myers)

It was during a concert given by Bill Russo at the Via Loga Ballroom in Chicago that Pete Rugolo heard this orchestra and was deeply impressed by the young musician's compositions. He told Stan Kenton about it and a few days later Stan called Bill and asked him, "*Would you like to join us?*" »

THE GREAT KENTON YEARS

Bill joins Stan's orchestra during the first week of January 1950; it is the "Innovations" Orchestra, a group of about forty musicians with whom Kenton intends to produce, as usual, a brand new music, based on the principles of jazz, but frankly turned, this time, towards contemporary classical music and the use of a much more complex writing.

Rehearsals have already started on January 1st. The first concert of the "Innovations" takes place on January 30, 1950, at the Los Angeles Philharmonic Hall but is mainly reserved for the press, specialized critics and record producers; it is a little like a preview that allows the musical world to perceive the new path taken by Stan Kenton.

Such an orientation is certainly not to displease Bill Russo, who is constantly seeking new knowledge in the field of music writing. In fact, he will state that:

"The Orchestra of Innovations was one of the central artistic institutions of the 20th Century." »

Engaged in the trombone section, Bill hardly composes any more, devoting himself more to improving his instrumental technique in order to become a true jazz trombone. This, until the day Pete Rugolo came to see him and told him that he must have one or two pieces in his boxes that the orchestra could play.

THE INNOVATIONS IN MODERN MUSIC ORCHESTRA 1950

Bill finds a score written in 1948 for his own orchestra under the title "Falstaff". He reworks it by adding strings and French horns. It is a great trombone solo inspired by Kay Winding's playing; the piece becomes "Solitaire". Enchanted by this first composition by Bill Russo, Stan asks him if he wants to play the solo part but Bill prefers to abstain and leave the place to the imposing Milt Bernhart.

The recording took place on the afternoon of February 3, 1950, plus two compositions by Pete Rugolo, "Mirage" and "Conflict" with, in the latter, the voice of June Christy superimposed.



Stan Kenton and the Innovation Orchestra at the Arcadia Ballroom/Providence R.I. 1950
(Photo: Rhode Island Music Hall of Fame)

The orchestra consists of five trumpets: Buddy Childers, Maynard Ferguson, Shorty Rogers, Chico Alvarez and Don Paladino; five trombones: Milt Bernhart, Harry Betts, Bob Fitzpatrick, Bill Russo and Bart Varsalona; two horns: John Graas and Lloyd Otto; one tuba: Gene Englund; five woodwinds: Bud Shank, Art Pepper, Bob Cooper, Bart Caldarell and Bob Gioga; sixteen strings and five rhythms: Stan Kenton, piano, Laurindo Almeida, guitar, Don Bagley, double bass, Shelly Manne, drums and Carlos Vidal, conga; June Christy, vocal and Pete Rugolo, assistant.



Maynard Ferguson (Photo: Fresh Sound) - Bob Fitzpatrick (Photo: University North Texas)
 Art Pepper (Photo : Ray Avery) – Bob Cooper (Photo : Wiki Visually) – Bud Shank (Photo : Jazz Times)
 June Christy (Photo: Open Spotify) - Shelly Manne (Photo: Drummer World)

June is very impressed by Bill Russo's strong personality: his taste for reading and his interest in fine arts in general; she often calls him Orson, compared to Orson Welles. For his part, Bill appreciates June's way of singing and especially the way he emphasizes the meaning of the words. He also discovers that June is a great admirer

of Louis Armstrong.

Needless to say, on an instrumental level, Bill is in the company of the best. The level of the staff of arrangers-composers is no less prestigious with, in addition to Pete Rugolo, people like Johnny Richards, Shorty Rogers, Laurindo Almeida, Franklyn Marks, Bob Graettinger, Neal Hefti, Chico O'Farrill, etc.

But Bill will quickly reveal himself and find his place thanks to compositions of a new style, heralding the music that Stan will produce, from 1952, with his orchestra of the "New Concepts", reduced to the dimensions of the usual big band (without the strings).

The "Innovations" experiment was not a great commercial success; it will leave Stan with a loss of about one hundred thousand dollars (over \$1 million today). The Capitol Records Department showed very little enthusiasm for the experiment.

However, artistically, it is undeniably an exceptional, prodigiously creative and influential moment in the history of jazz and American music.

Immediately after the January 30 concert, the orchestra went to the Capitol Studios in Hollywood and, in just three days, on February 3, 4 and 5, 1950, recorded no less than sixteen tracks, eight of which would be released on the LP album "Innovations in Modern Music - Volume One. »



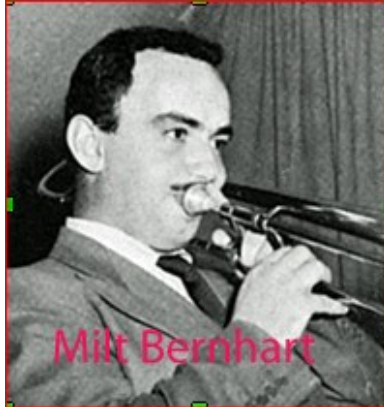
Editions LP of 1950 and 2CD of 1997
(Photos: Capitol Records + Michael Ochs Archive)

The sixteen tracks make up CD No. 1 of the impressive 2-CD Capitol Jazz box set (7243 8 59965 2 8) published in 1997 "Stan Kenton: The Innovations Orchestra". Fourteen other compositions, recorded later in 1950 and again in 1951, make up CD No. 2.

The comments in the booklet are by Michael Sparke, an eminent English jazzologist specialising in Stan Kenton.

The producer of the re-release is Michael Cuscuna, co-founder, in 1983 with Charlie Lourie (1940-2000), of the Mosaic discs of which we know the numerous and magnificent integrals in boxes.

Three pieces by Bill Russo are part of this important production: the twins "Solitaire" and "Ennui", the first, performed admirably by Milt Bernhart, and the second, by the young and talented Harry Betts; the third being "Halls of Brass".



Milt Bernhart
(Photo: Michael Broschat)

"Halls of Brass" is a new composition. Bill is only 22 years old but already shows an extraordinary mastery of orchestral writing technique perfectly worthy of an experienced composer; here, only brass and drums participate; two horns are added. It is a powerful, dynamic, very structured piece and particularly difficult to perform and conduct but Stan likes it very much because he appreciates, as always, the virtuoso side of it, a real tour de force for the orchestra.

The recording takes place on May 18, 1950. The staff is as of February 3 except that Bart Varsalona is replaced by Clyde "Stumpy" Brown. The soloists are Bob Fitzpatrick, Shelly Manne and John Graas.

On February 9, 1950, it was the beginning of a great 90-day tour that would take all these beautiful people from the West to the East of the United States, as well as to Canada.

It begins at the Palomar Theater in Seattle and ends on May 10 at the Municipal Auditorium in Denver. The closing concert takes place on June 3 at the Hollywood Bowl, which was preferred to the Shrine Auditorium for its enormous capacity of 20,000 outdoor seats.

Thanks to musicologist Steven D. Harris, a great connoisseur of Stan Kenton and author of the definitive "Kenton Kronicles" (Dynaflow Publications, Pasadena), we have a recording of the great concert that was given on February 16, 1950, at the Sweets Ballroom in Oakland (California).

The technical quality is very good but the interest lies above all in the fact of hearing, live, this modern and revolutionary music in front of a new and demanding public,

astonished, though curious, but finally conquered by the incredible talent of the musicians and the perfection of the performances masterfully directed by the charismatic Stan Kenton.



(Photo: Steven D. Harris)

It is a copious 2 CD box set (EBCD 2131-2) "Stan Kenton's Innovations Orchestra with June Christy" published on the Jazz Band Compact Classics label and produced, in England, by Flyright Records (22 tracks plus 2 bonus tracks from the concert "Innovations 51", given at Carnegie Hall in New York on October 20, 1951).

Bill Russo is present with "Solitaire", still performed by Milt Bernhart but whose solo is obviously different from the one heard in the Capitol version.

The orchestra is that of February 3 (see p. 9).

On Laserlight, a CD (15770): "Stan Kenton And His Innovations Orchestra", covers ten tracks, including "Ennui" and "Improvisation" by Bill Russo, recorded during the tours in 50/51.

Slight changes in the orchestra include the release of Shorty Rogers, Buddy Childers, Milt Bernhart, Bart Varsalona and Laurindo Almeida but the entry of Conte Candoli, Dick Kenney, George Roberts and Ralph Blaze.

Later, Bill would admit that his music posed more performance problems than that of other arrangers; even Pete Rugolo's scores were easier because they were better written, Pete being, at that time, much more experienced.

About his early compositions, Bill will often joke, a bit like Rossini (Les Péchés de ma vieillesse) :

"Those were the sins of my youth; even the guys in the orchestra didn't like the way I wrote music. Sometimes Stan would say to me, 'That's good, but we'll try it next year, it belongs to another time!' »

On June 6, 1950, it is the end of the "Innovations" orchestra (the first one) and Stan leaves again, on the 7th, with his usual big band.

From June 1950 to September 1951, Bill Russo was no longer with the orchestra. He explains:

"I wasn't interested in being on the road all the time with the dance band. I preferred to wait for Stan to organize, as he envisioned, a new large concert orchestra called 'Innovations 1951'. »

We can understand Bill's attitude who, during long tours, is terribly frustrated at not being able to fulfil his most cherished desire: to compose! He doesn't blame Stan for this because he understands very well that the orchestra's survival depends above all on these tours which represent a real intensive work of execution with, on top of that, the daily coach trips which only allow to take a few hours of very uncomfortable rest. The test is therefore first and foremost for the instrumentalists, who are obliged to renew themselves at each performance while maintaining the same level of technical perfection for the ensembles and the same degree of imagination for the soloists. But, composing under these conditions is really not possible.

INTERMISSION

It should be noted that the big band in question is not without interest because it includes musicians such as Bud Shank, Art Pepper, Bob Cooper, Bart Caldarell and Bob Gioga on saxophones; Ray Wetzel (then Buddy Childers), Maynard Ferguson, Shorty Rogers, John Howell and Chico Alvarez on trumpets; trombones : Milt Bernhart, Bob Fitzpatrick, Harry Betts, Dick Kenney and Bart Varsalona; Ralph Blaze, guitar, Don Bagley, bass and Shelly Manne, drums. Singer: Jay Johnson (not Jay Jay!).

A few recordings for Capitol including, on August 16, 1950, the famous "Orange Coloured Sky" sung by Nat "King" Cole on an arrangement by Pete Rugolo and "Jam-Bo", by Shorty Rogers, with Stan and Nat in piano duet.



Nat "King" Cole



Shorty Rogers

(Photos: Wikipedia)

Then, on September 13, four explosive tracks under the name of Maynard Ferguson: "Take The 'A' Train", "Short Wave", "Band Ain't Draggin'" and "Love Locked Out", the first three being composed and/or arranged by Shorty Rogers; the fourth is by Ray Noble and the arrangement by Paul Villepigue.



(Photo: Hollywood Palladium)

And, indeed, as Bill feared, the orchestra is going on tour.

A Bandstand CD (BDCD 1519): "Stan Kenton - Innovations (?sic) - Live 1951" can be heard in March 51, during his appearance at the Hollywood Palladium from the end of February to the beginning of April. Most of the arrangements, very efficient, are signed Pete Rugolo and Shorty Rogers. As always, the ensembles are impeccable and the soloists are in great form.

We may regret the name "Innovations", which leads to confusion about the composition of the orchestra and the type of music.

An equally exciting CD, "Summer of '51", published by Garland/Dunhill (GRZ006), features 50 minutes of excerpts from the programs that CBS radio aired each night from the same concerts, presented by Bill Baldwin. Happy listeners!

It was during the tour that the musicians learned of the death of their sympathetic colleague, the excellent trumpeter Ray "Nimrod" Wetzell, in a car accident in Colorado on August 17.

The orchestra was disbanded on Saturday, September 1st, 1951.

THE 1951 INNOVATIONS

On September 3, 1951, rehearsals for the new concert orchestra begin; a great absentee: Milt Bernhart.

The solos are then entrusted to Harry Betts, then to Bob Fitzpatrick.

Stan vividly remembers losing a fortune on the tours of the first "Innovations" orchestra. This time he is again considering giving concerts with the "Innovations for 1951" but will try to compensate a little bit for the costs by taking on dance music contracts which will be provided by the saxophone section plus rhythm.

On September 19, Bill Russo was among the trombones for the recording, in the Capitol Studios in Hollywood, of two compositions by Shorty Rogers, who also conducts the orchestra: "Coop's Solo", dedicated to Bob Cooper, and "Sambo" with soloists Bud Shank (flute), Maynard Ferguson and Art Pepper.

The next day, still at Capitol, it is the recording of four songs sung by June Christy: "Street of Dreams", "Easy Street", "Come Rain or Come Shine" and "Daddy", plus two humorous tracks by Shelly Manne and Maynard Ferguson: "Blues In Burlesque Parts One & Two".

But it is on Sunday, October 14, 1951 that the serious things begin: Grand Concert of "Innovations In Modern Music For 1951" at the magnificent Bailey Hall (1324 seats) of the famous Cornell University in Ithaca (N.Y.).

The orchestra is impressive, fabulous even. Saxos: Bud Shank (alto and flute), Art Pepper (alto and clarinet), Bob Cooper (tenor, oboe and English horn), Bart Caldarell (tenor and bassoon), Bob Gioga (baritone and bass clarinet). The trumpets: John Howell, Maynard Ferguson, Conte Candoli, Stu Williamson and John Coppola. Trombones: Bob Fitzpatrick, Harry Betts, Dick Kenney, Bill Russo and George Roberts (bass trombone). Horns: John Graas, Lloyd Otto and George Price. Stan Fletcher, tuba. 10 violins, 3 violas, 3 cellos. Double basses: Don Bagley (solo) and Abe Luboff. Ralph Blaze, guitar, Shelly Manne, drums and percussion. June Christy, vocal. Stan Kenton, presentation, piano and direction.



Cornell University Bailey Hall (exterior and interior)
 (Photos: Bill Price + Cornell University)

The program is grandiose. It begins with Stan Kenton's classic "Artistry In Rhythm" rearranged by Pete Rugolo, followed by "Spirals" composed and arranged by Franklyn Marks, then "Ennui" written by Bill Russo and featuring Harry Betts as soloist. Then comes "Sambo", by Shorty Rogers with soloists Art Pepper (viola), Maynard Ferguson (trumpet) and Bud Shank (flute).

The concert continues with a series of four small concertos, each featuring a soloist from the orchestra. The first, "Art Pepper", is written and orchestrated by Shorty Rogers and allows us to hear an Art Pepper remarkable for his technique, imagination and musicality, confirming that, for several years now, he has been the pioneer of the cool alto saxophone even if, as with all modern violas, his phrasing sometimes reminds us of Charlie Parker's flights of fancy.

Then it's "Shelly Manne" by Stan Kenton. The third, "John Graas", was written by

Bob Graettinger and the last, "Maynard Ferguson" was composed and orchestrated by Shorty Rogers.

Then, June Christy interprets "I'll Remember April" arranged by Pete Rugolo and "Lover" reviewed by Bill Russo.

Art Pepper is the soloist of the majestic and torrid "Samana" written by Manny Albam. We find him, along with Conte Candoli, Bob Cooper and Bill Russo in a composition and orchestration of the latter: "Improvisation".

Relaxing moment with "September Song" arranged by Stan Kenton and "Love For Sale" by Pete Rugolo with Harry Betts on trombone.

"Bob Cooper" is a reorchestration by Shorty Rogers of his "Coop's Solo"; as soloist, a great Bob Cooper; interventions, on flute, by Bud Shank.

The lower sax and drum section perform Stan Kenton's "Opus In Pastels" followed by "Dance Before the Mirror", the second movement of Bob Graettinger's "City Of Glass". Shelly Manne and Ralph Blaze are on percussion.

We hear Bob Fitzpatrick and John Graas in "Halls Of Brass", composed and orchestrated by Bill Russo, then it is Maynard Ferguson who launches into "Easy Street", arranged by Gene Roland.

June Christy returns with "Come Rain Or Come Shine" in an arrangement by Pete Rugolo followed by her classic "How High The Moon".

June ends her performance with "Body And Soul" accompanied by Stan on piano.

The last great piece on the programme is by Pete Rugolo: "Salute", whose soloist is Harry Betts and which ends in apotheosis thanks to the stratospheric Maynard Ferguson and the striking Shelly Manne on percussion; here, perfection is achieved in extreme difficulty!

And this incredible concert on October 14, 1951 closes with the usual "Artistry In Rhythm."

The almost complete recording, a first, was released in 1993 (1 CD JUCD 2008) by Jazz Unlimited (Denmark): "Kenton 51 - Concert at Cornell University" with the collaboration of Steven Harris.

The CD contains 17 excerpts; not included are "Ennui" and "Easy Street", as well as June Christy's interpretations.

Four tracks: "Ennui", "Samana", "Bob Cooper" and "Salute" are taken up, from this concert, by Capitol, in the 2 CD box set "Stan Kenton - The Innovations Orchestra" (quoted page 11) and whose first 24 tracks date from the "Innovations 1950". There are also two tracks conducted by Shorty Rogers: "Coop's Solo" and "Sambo".

The "Innovations 1951" tour continues to Hartford, Boston, New York, Newark, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington DC, Richmond, Norfolk, Toronto, Rochester, Buffalo, Youngstown, Columbus, Pittsburgh, Dayton, Indianapolis, Chicago (Civic Opera House), Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Milwaukee, Des Moines, Kansas City,

Denver, Salt Lake City, Seattle, Portland, San Francisco (Opera House), Oakland.

While in New York City, Stan Kenton's tireless musicians gave two concerts at Carnegie Hall on October 19 and 20, for which HEP records, in its Metronome Series, drew material from a CD (HEP CD 68), "Stan Kenton & The Innovations Orchestra - Carnegie Hall - Oct. 51", produced in 2000.

The rendering is explosive, the orchestra develops unimaginable power and precision. Maynard is in dazzling form; Storytelling, particularly inspired; Art hovers in genius; Bob Cooper, always in perfection and Harry Betts assumes his role as soloist with great dignity, especially in "Boredom". But the prize goes undoubtedly to the percussionist Shelly Manne, whose timeliness, virtuosity and relentless energy punctuate each performance with an authority and brio that arouses the enthusiasm of New York audiences. Magisterial!

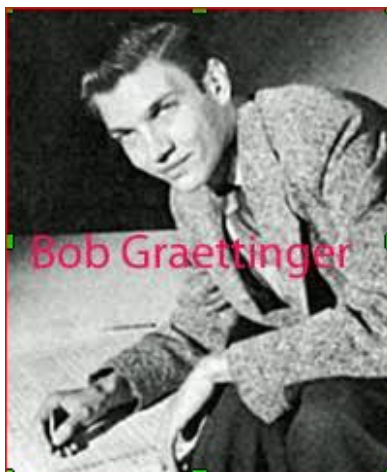
The program is similar to that of 14. Bill Russo's "Boredom", "Improvisation", "Halls Of Brass" and "Gregory Bemko", a piece dedicated to the orchestra's first cello.

Great concert on November 30, 1951, at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles and finally, the last performance of the "Innovations" on December 8, 1951, at the Russ Auditorium in San Diego. Dislocation!

December 5 and 7 are dedicated by Capitol to Bob Graettinger's (1923-1957) "City of Glass", which can be considered the third and final part of the "Innovations"; Bob conducts the orchestra.

Bill will say: *"Bob was a wonderful man but his music describes a tortured and difficult world that will not get out of it, whereas a Mozart, for example, tells us that there is an organized and harmonious universe at our disposal! »*

Thus, it is the end of the great adventure of "Innovations In Modern Music" that has revealed a good number of typically American composers, for the most part, capable of creating concert music whose scores, often complex but perfectly structured, have the ambition to bring together, in a more or less strong way, classical elements of contemporary music of European origin and accents specific to jazz music.



(Photo: Michael Broschat)

From an artistic point of view alone, the experiment is historic and perfectly successful because it took place at the right time, with the right orchestra, the right composers and the right (visionary) conductor. Very difficult, if not impossible, to achieve today. On the other hand, financially speaking, it's another story!

The problem is, of course, to find performers capable of mastering this double musical language and this is where Stan Kenton's personality takes all its importance because he has the gift of forming fantastic orchestras that play with all the technical difficulties contained in the scores and have brilliant soloists such as Art Pepper, Bud Shank, Bob Cooper, Buddy Childers, Shorty Rogers, Maynard Ferguson, Conte Candoli and, soon, Frank Rosolino, Lee Konitz, Richie Kamuca etc.

But life goes on and Stan does not give up on the idea of "*developing a true American style of musical expression*". In 1965, he will create, always in this spirit, the "Neophonic Orchestra"; Bill Russo will take part in it.

THE NEW CONCEPTS

After a short recording session on January 21, 1952 at the Capitol in Hollywood, with a studio orchestra formed especially for the occasion, Stan left again on February 15 with his big band of about twenty musicians and recorded, on March 12 in Hollywood, an arrangement by Bill Russo on the very popular "Adios" sung by Jerri Winters.

The orchestra, this time called "New Concepts of Artistry in Rhythm", includes trumpeters Buddy Childers, Clyde Reasinger, Conte Candoli, Ruben McFall and Jack Millman, trombones Bob Fitzpatrick, Bill Russo, Harold Branch, Gerald Finch and George Roberts (bass trombone), violas Dick Meldonian and Lennie Niehaus, tenors

Bill Holman and Lee Elliot, baritone Bob Gioga on guitar, Ralph Blaze on bass, Don Bagley and 20-year-old drummer Frankie Capp (real name : Frank Capp). Stan is on piano.

On March 20, during a very long day of work devoted to titles due to Johnny Richards and Gene Roland, it is also the recording of "Bill's Blues", composed by Bill Russo, who also takes a solo with Conte Candoli and Lennie Niehaus.

Bill remembers that the short solo was played by Bob Fitzpatrick, but on audition it doesn't seem to be true; "The Kenton Era" mentions Bill as the soloist, while Mosaic's boxed set "The complete Capitol recordings of the Holman and Russo Charts" attributes the performance to Bob. Let's take a guess!

The orchestra travels extensively during the summer of '52: Illinois, Indiana, Ontario, Wisconsin, Ohio, Quebec, Maine, Connecticut, Washington D.C., North Carolina, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania.

A Mr Music CD (MMCD-7022) "Stan Kenton - 'Live' - From Canada" gives us a glimpse of the tour with the recording of three "Concerts in Miniature" that took place: two in Ontario, on June 3rd in Kitchener and on the 24th in Toronto, then the one on July 1st in Montreal. Three scores by Bill Russo appear on this CD: "Ennui", "Bill's Blues" and "Portrait Of A Count" for Conte Candoli.

In September, the musicians are in Chicago for several recording sessions in Studio A at Universal.

At this point, Stan returned more to the path of swing with arrangers such as Bill Holman, Gerry Mulligan, Johnny Richards, Bill Russo and wonderful soloists including: Conte Candoli, Richie Kamuca, Frank Rosolino and Lee Konitz, who joined in August (until the end of 1953).

Bill, who forced his hand a little, is very happy to have Lee back and is counting on him to help him steer the orchestra in a whole new direction.

Undoubtedly, the recordings that will come out of these sessions are of a truly exceptional level and Bill Russo's compositions have a lot to do with it. Indeed, they are increasingly important, not only in the creation of the repertoire, but also, and above all, in the projection of the orchestra's new sound.

While Pete Rugolo, very much marked by his heritage of the great Italian tradition, applies himself, with the genius that we know, to multiplying decorations and musical embellishments, Bill, on the other hand, constitutes, within the orchestra, new and unusual instrumental alliances from which he derives very original and unexpected sounds.

Pete pays particular attention to the details of his scores; Bill is more focused on creating new sounds for the orchestra as a whole, which he considers as a whole.

All the musicians of this prestigious big band deserve to be mentioned: trumpeters Buddy Childers, Maynard Ferguson, Conte Candoli, Don Dennis and Ruben McFall, trombones Bob Burgess, Frank Rosolino, Bill Russo, Keith Moon and George Roberts, saxophones Vinnie Dean and Lee Konitz (altos), Bill Holman and Richie Kamuca (tenors) and Bob Gioga (baritone), Stan on piano, Sal Salvador on guitar, Don Bagley on bass and Stan Levey on drums.

On September 8, 1952, it was the recording of the famous "Prologue", in four parts, signed by Johnny Richards and in which Stan had fun presenting, in very short interventions, all the musicians of the orchestra.



In 1953, at the Steel Pier in Atlantic City, New Jersey.
(Photo: Michael Broschat)

Standing: Stan Kenton, Stan Levey, Tale Candoli, Buddy Childers, George Roberts, Maynard Ferguson, Don Dennis, Sal Salvador, Bob Gioga.
Seated: Ruben McFall, Don Bagley, Dick Meldonian (replaced by Lee Konitz), Bill Holman, Bill Russo, Frank Rosolino, Bob Burgess, Lee Elliot (replaced by Richie Kamuca), Keith Moon, Vinnie Dean.

On the 10th, a historic session with, first of all, the miraculous "Portrait of a Count" by Bill Russo, a kind of small concerto for trumpet and jazz big band dedicated to Conte (Count) Candoli, which achieves there a real masterpiece of technique and musicality, so much so that Bill Russo, himself, is amazed by the result.



(Photo: William Claxton/Verve)



(Photo: Eva Diana/Dave Pell/Mode Records)

But the session continues and, after Gerry Mulligan's magnificent "Young Blood", it is again a concert score, "Frank Speaking" (or "Happy Talk" or "Frankly Speaking"), that Bill wrote for the incomparable Frank Rosolino; another brilliant success! The two Bill's, Russo and Holman, were both very fond of this concertante form at the time.

The next day begins with a spectacular composition by Bill Russo: "23 Degrees North, 82 Degrees West", a title corresponding to the geographical location of Havana and which will also be called "Cuban Night" or "A Modernist In Cuba" later on in some concerts. A bongos player is added to the orchestra: Denon Kenneth Walton, for this piece and Johnny Richards' "Taboo" which will follow it.

Three musicians are highlighted: Frank Rosolino, Lee Konitz and Stan Levey, but it is especially the orchestration, as a whole, which is impressive by the work that Bill requires from the different sections used as huge sound blocks in an original and terribly efficient writing. As always, the orchestra is impeccable.

Bill said, *"I think it's one of my best plays. »*

Among the the theories he likes to defend, Bill Russo will always insist on the importance of orchestration in the making of a musical work. Everyone knows the three basic elements of a composition: melody, harmony and rhythm, but, in addition," says Bill, "it must be very well orchestrated; this fourth criterion is crucial. At the age of 24, he gives here a striking proof of this.

Its publisher states: *"This is one of the most creative and important compositions ever written for an orchestra. »*

On September 15 at 5 p.m., the recording of the terrible "Invention for Guitar and Trumpet" that Bill Holman wrote for Sal Salvador and Maynard Ferguson and that MGM will place in its film "The Blackboard Jungle" is first completed.

Then comes a great moment for Lee Konitz, soloist of "My Lady", Bill Russo's favourite piece of all his scores. Lee is simply admirable in this ballad which respects a perfect balance between soloist and orchestra.

Later, Bill would say, *"Writing for Lee was the inspiration. He had such a sense of melody line and way of playing that composing became very comfortable... But Lee was very conscious of his value and treated me condescendingly despite all the respect I gave him. »*

During the evening, we move on to Gerry Mulligan's "Swing House" and then to "You Go to my Head" arranged by Bob Graettinger.

In between is the first part of "Improvisation", an ambitious composition in which Bill Russo tries to incorporate elements of 20th Century classical music into a jazz context. The idea is to have four soloists improvising simultaneously, but on the recording a major role was given to Lee Konitz, the most eloquent of the four (according to Bill), the others being Buddy Childers, Bill Holman and Bill Russo himself. Bob Burgess intervenes in the first part and Sal Salvador accompanies Lee in the second part. The whole thing will end on the 16th at four o'clock in the morning.

At the end of September, a "Concert in Miniature" series is recorded by the N.B.C. and will be rebroadcast for the U.S. Army.

Bill then finds himself drawn into one of those long tours, which the orchestra is used to, across the United States: Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Iowa, Massachusetts, Maine, New Jersey and, finally, California.

On January ¹, 1953, Stan Kenton's orchestra plays at the Balboa Beach Rendezvous Ballroom for the big special New Year's concert, then from January 6 to February 2, it gives a series of concerts at the Hollywood Palladium.

Submarine Records releases a CD (DSOY637) "Stan Kenton and His Orchestra, Concert Encores 1953" which resumes the sessions of January 18 and 22, 1953 at the Hollywood Palladium. The recordings are technically excellent and the orchestra is resplendent. Among the 14 tracks are several scores composed or arranged by Bill Russo: "Sweets", "I Got it Bad", "Lover Man", "Gone with the Wind" and "You Go to my Head". The commentary is by Michael Sparke.

Another CD, but this time on Mr Music (MMCD-7026), "Stan Kenton - 'Live' - Hollywood Palladium" restores two "Concerts in Miniature", those of January 12 and 27, 1953. One can hear a theme by Bill Russo: "An Aesthete On Clark Street", whose soloists are Bill, Bob Burgess and Frank Rosolino. The libretto commentary is by the prolific Scott Yanow.

But, on January 22nd, it is already the return to the Capitol Studios in Hollywood for several recording sessions devoted to a whole series of very well-known themes of American popular music in new arrangements, light but very beautiful, mostly due to Bill Russo: "Sketches on Standards".

The first of these standards is "Harlem Nocturne", which Stan started an arrangement of but which he then entrusted to Bill. Stan plays the introduction and the finale with, in between, a solo by Frank Rosolino on an orchestral background.

Then comes "I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues" sung by the mischievous Frank Rosolino who also takes a solo with Don Bagley, Stan and Conte Candoli.

On January 28, from noon to 6:30 pm, the orchestra recorded, among others, four very cool aerial arrangements by Bill Russo: "There's a Small Hotel", "Sophisticated Lady", "Over the Rainbow" and "Lover Man".

Of particular note is the perfect use of trombone ensembles whose sound is a true marvel, as well as the fantastic power of the trumpets, all of which creates an ideal context for Lee Konitz whose astonishing fluidity contrasts marvelously with the orchestra's interventions.

Who would still dare to play "Lover Man" after Lee's masterful performance here? Bill acknowledges that the character of these arrangements is due in large part to the presence of Lee Konitz in the orchestra. The beauty of Bob Burgess's playing in "Over the Rainbow" is also noteworthy.

Two days later, on January 30 from noon to 6:30 pm, two more arrangements by Bill Russo are on the program: "Shadow Waltz" and the exceptional "Fascinating Rhythm" for which Bill remembered Lennie Tristano's classes and the "Four Brothers" sound for saxophones. Later Stan would joke kindly about Bill's "Four Mothers Sound".

In "Shadow Waltz", two magnificent soloists can be heard, Buddy Childers (mute) and Frank Rosolino.

As for "Fascinating", whose smooth and fluid orchestration and swing make it a real little masterpiece that many musicians still talk about today, it gives the floor to Frank Rosolino, Richie Kamuca, Lee Konitz and Bill Holman.

Bill believes that "Fascinating" is probably the best of the fifty or so arrangements (he prefers "recompositions") he has written over his entire career.

For his part, Lee Konitz will say how much he loved the musical beauty of the arrangements Bill signed for the "Sketches on Standards" series.



(Photo: Max Frank Music)

Musicologist, composer, educator and conductor Terry Vosbein, a passionate connoisseur of Stan Kenton's work and a student and friend of Bill Russo, makes a very detailed exploratory analysis of "Fascinating", as one would do for a classical score, which allows one to discover all the richness and subtleties it contains in less than three minutes:

"Bill demonstrates his ability to work in a standard format while introducing the fundamental traits of the cool and highly structured style that will characterize him in his orchestration.

In 'Fascinating', Bill uses a formula he used in 'Gazelle', a composition later recorded by Shelly Manne's ensemble, and gives the floor to four instruments: a viola, two tenors and a trombone. For Stan Kenton's orchestra, Bill distributes the solos to the same voices but cannot help but express a preference, giving eight bars to Bill Holman and Richie Kamuca while Lee Konitz receives twelve and Frank Rosolino sixteen. Note that 'Fascinating' is one of the rare scores by Bill Russo to end with a powerful finish. »

Terry Vosbein was born in New Orleans into a family of musicians, which will certainly have favoured his artistic blossoming because this hyperactive sympathetic is, without a doubt, a gifted musician and a true "Crusader".

We will have the pleasure of discussing this further.

Also on January 30, 1953, Stan Kenton's orchestra took part in a "Concert Encores" and the "All Star Parade of Bands" program for the N. B. C. in Hollywood. As he often did at concerts, this time Stan asked Richie Kamuca, who would perform "It's The Talk of The Town" in an arrangement by Bill Russo, which tenor saxophone had influenced him the most; Richie replied, *"Lester Young."* »

What a prestigious model but also a disciple who does him great honour!

Bill's composition "An Aesthete on Clark Street" for three trombone soloists is on the

program: Bill Russo, Bob Burgess and Frank Rosolino.

On January 31 and February 2, the orchestra completes its engagement at the Hollywood Palladium, and the following day, it performs a "Concert in Miniature" in Vancouver, Canada, as part of a tour with Nat "King" Cole. Pete Candoli replaces Buddy Childers.

On February 10th, small "Concert in Miniature" for the N.B.C. in San Diego and, on the 11th, return to the Capitol Studio in Hollywood.

Buddy Childers returns but Pete Candoli is retained, Maynard being the soloist in two particularly harrowing pieces by Bob Graettinger "A Trumpet" and "An Orchestra".

The session also includes three arrangements by Bill Russo for the young singer (25 years old) Chris Connor who was hired on January 16th on the indications of June Christy herself: the percussionists "And The Bull Walked Around, Olay" with accompaniment sung by the orchestra and "Jeepers Creepers": soloists Conte Candoli and Don Bagley then the very delicate "If I Should Lose You".

After several attempts by admittedly talented singers, Stan finally found the performer capable of succeeding June, not only by a certain physical resemblance, but also and above all by the possession of an almost similar voice timbre and phrasing.

On February 19, the band performs in Eugene (Eugene Armory), Oregon, for a long double bill, dance and jazz, with humorous sequences between Stan, the band and the audience; everyone has fun to the sound of the best music.

Following certain changes in the orchestra, Stan takes care to introduce the musicians by asking each section to greet the audience in either English or Spanish; some will even do so in unintelligible language!

The training includes : Vinnie Dean and Lee Konitz (violins), Richie Kamuca and Bill Holman (tenors), Henry "Hank" Levy (baritone, replaces Bob Gioga and will be, in the 70s, very active arranger with Stan); the trumpeters are Buddy Childers, Conte Candoli, Don Dennis, Don Smith and Ernie Royal (former trumpet player, among others, of the Jacques Hélian orchestra in Paris, replaced Maynard), ; on trombones, there are Bob Burgess, Frank Rosolino, Keith Moon, Bill Russo and George Roberts; Don Bagley on bass, Sal Salvador, guitar and Stan Levey, drums. On piano, Stan Kenton and, on vocals, Chris Connor.

All the great hits, old and new, of the Kentonian repertoire are on the programme in compositions or arrangements, mainly by Bill Russo, but also by Johnny Richards,

Pete Rugolo, Gerry Mulligan, Bill Holman, Lennie Niehaus, Gene Roland, Stan Kenton and even some "head" arrangements by the orchestra.

Among the Bill Russo's are: "23° N., 82° W. ", " Jeepers Creepers ", " If I Should Lose You ", " My Lady ", " Frank Speaking ", " There's A Small Hotel ", " I'll Remember April ", " Taking A Chance On Love ", " Tenderly ", " There'll Never Be Another You ", " Harlem Nocturne ", "It's The Talk Of The Town", "Sophisticated Lady", "Darn That Dream", "Over The Rainbow", "Easy To Love", "You Go To My Head", "Everything Happens To Me" and "I Got It Bad" by Duke Ellington, whom Bill admires greatly.

An excellent overview of this day is recorded on three CDs (Sounds of Yester Year/Submarine Records England - DSOY 796, 799 and 802) released in October 2009: "Stan Kenton and His Orchestra - 19 February 1953 - The Armory, Eugene, Oregon".



Michael Sparke
(Photo: Amazon.co.uk)



Chris Connor
(Photo: Jazz Wax/Marc Myers)

One can appreciate the repersonalized interventions of the different soloists, the very swinging presence of Chris Connor and the particularly energetic support that Stan Levey brings to a band in great shape.

Michael Sparke signs off on the comments, as always, very well researched. He is also the author of "Stan Kenton - This Is an Orchestra! "(University of North Texas Press - 2010), which is an authoritative work among the many publications devoted to Stan The Man.

Before playing "23° North, 82° West", Stan asks Bill Russo to explain how he conceived his score, which Bill does with a lot of humour. As one would do in a classical composition, he illustrates, with the help of the orchestra, the first bars of the

piece which contain no less than three different themes played at the same time by the trombone section: the first theme is played by two trombones, the second by the bass trombone and double bass, and the third by the other two trombones. This is followed by percussion, orchestra and soloists Frank Rosolino and Lee Konitz.

Here Bill already shows his great abilities in musical analysis and the special care he gives to the orchestration. Listening to this music, it sounds wonderful but one cannot imagine the complexity and subtleties that are in the writing itself.

It should be noted that after having played "Love For Sale", the orchestra sang a warm "Happy Birthday" on February 19, 1953 to celebrate Stan's birthday. Stan thanked the orchestra by alluding to his 28th birthday! Let's specify that, only since the 80's, we know that Stan Kenton wasn't born on February 19, 1912 but on December 15, 1911. This explains this slight, though involuntary, misunderstanding of the orchestra.

On March 3, 1953, the orchestra gave a "Concert in Miniature" for the N.B.C. at the Aviatrix Club in Amarillo, Texas, followed by a series of performances at the Blue Note Theatre Restaurant in Chicago from the end of March until April 8, with a short stop the same day at Universal Studios in Chicago to record three arrangements by Bill Russo: "All About Ronnie", "Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen" and "Baia". In the trombone section, Bill is replaced by Tom Shepard but is present at the session. Don Bagley, who has just become a father, is momentarily replaced by Glen Roberts.

On April 15, it is the big concert at Cornell University in Ithaca (N.Y.). Bill resumed his place in the orchestra and, when Stan invited him again to explain to the audience how he composed "23° N., 82° W." Bill thought long and hard about how painful it is to play, sometimes for two hours, without being able to smoke a cigarette ... which amused the students a lot, but Stan intervened and said that it was time to play the piece now!

The concert continues with more than twenty titles from the orchestra's current repertoire. Several soloists take the floor: Frank Rosolino, Lee Konitz, Conte Candoli, Bob Burgess, Richie Kamuca, George Roberts, Ernie Royal, Buddy Childers, Don Bagley, Sal Salvador, Stan and Chris Connor.

To close the performance, Stan Kenton, as always, recalls the name of each musician, but he has barely finished when the orchestra launches into humorous imitations of other big bands such as Woody Herman, Les Brown, Ray Anthony, etc.

Stan thanks the audience for their wonderful welcome, the instruments are packed, placed on the bus, the musicians and Chris settle down and off to Pennsylvania. A short stop in Scranton before heading back to Mahanoy City where the band plays at the Lakewood Park Ballroom on the evening of the 16th.

We work hard at Stan Kenton's, and the bus rides are very long and tiring. However, Stan will keep this habit of having his orchestra travel to the end, even if he is ill.

On April 21, the orchestra plays, for the first time, in Springfield, Massachusetts, the town of Sal Salvador, whose family is in the Municipal Auditorium. Stan announces the "Sal Salvador Evening" and Sal will be the soloist in "Gone With The Wind" arranged by Bill Russo.

That night, Stan learns that the contracts are signed for the European tour.



Sal Salvador
(Photo: France Musique)



Frank Rosolino and Conte Candoli
(Photo: Ron Slenzak/RCA)

From April 23 to May 6, recording for Radio at the Birdland Theatre Restaurant in New York of a series of concerts, many of which will be reprogrammed by the Army Radio Service and subtitled "Concert in Miniature", "All Star Parade Of Bands", "Jazz Night Club" and "Concert Encores".

More than sixty pieces are performed at these concerts, most of which are compositions or arrangements by Bill Russo, including, for example, a "Poem For Trumpet" with soloist Conte Candoli.

On April 28, two great names in American music were in the audience: Paul Whiteman and Frank "Machito" Grillo, whom Stan, with his usual sense of humor, hastened to put in the spotlight.

On Sunday, May 10, Stan Levey takes a week's leave of absence for a brief stay in his hometown of Philadelphia where he will join the orchestra on the 16th at the Broadwood Hotel Ballroom.

However, a "Concert in Miniature" is scheduled for May 12, for the N.B.C., in Glen Echo, a small Maryland town on the Potomac. For this concert, Stan will call upon a 24-year-old drummer, Joseph A. Morello of Springfield, who is partially blind but highly recommended. Three years later, Joe Morello will be the brilliant drummer of Dave Brubeck's famous quartet.

Three scores by Bill Russo are performed: "Everything Happens To Me", sung by Chris Connor, "Frank Speaking" played by Frank Rosolino and "Lover Man", still in the hands of Lee Konitz.

Also on the programme: "Swing House", by Gerry Mulligan, with Frank Rosolino, Lee Konitz, Richie Kamuca and Conte Candoli, "These Foolish Things", arranged by Bill Holman who is also the soloist, and "Jump For Joe", by Gene Roland, with Ernie Royal and Richie Kamuca.

Stan conducts but does not play, the local piano being out of tune!

On May 19, the N.B.C. records a "Concert in Miniature" at the Palms Theatre Restaurant in Columbus, Ohio, which, like most, will be rebroadcast by the U.S. Army Radio Service.

It features arrangements by Bill Russo, Bill Holman, Pete Rugolo and Gene Roland, the usual soloists and the voice of Chris Connor.

Short passage of the orchestra by the Capitol Studio of Chicago for the recording, on May 25 (or 27?), of two arrangements by Bill Russo; first, a remake of the very beautiful "All About Ronnie" with Conte Candoli (mute) and a wonderful "I Get A Kick Out Of You", both sung by Chris Connor, admirable in two musical atmospheres yet very different from each other.

Once the session is over, everyone takes the bus to the Excelsior Park Ballroom in Minneapolis where a service is scheduled to end in the early hours of the next day.

A new start, the same day for a tour in Wisconsin, which makes it possible to specify, contrary to Capitol's indications, that the recording, on May 28, 1953 in Hollywood, of the two pieces by Bob Graettinger: "A Thought" and "Some Saxophones" was not conducted by Stan Kenton but by Bob Graettinger himself.

From June 9 and for a month, the orchestra will travel from Wisconsin to Indiana, then to Ohio, Ontario (Canada) to return on July 7 to the Chicago Opera House for an N.B.C. "Concert in Miniature".

A few changes among the saxos: Don Carone replaces Vinnie Dean on the alto, Tony Ferina is on baritone and Zoot Sims takes Richie Kamuca's seat.

About Zoot Sims' presence in the orchestra, the following anecdote is told:

Zoot has gotten into the habit of always wearing white socks. However, as everyone knows, the sax section is in the front row of the orchestra, at the edge of the stage, so the audience only sees Zoot's socks from the audience. Stan repeatedly asks him to put on more socks, but Zoot replies that he only has white ones. Stan insists and, one day, he observes that Zoot no longer wears white socks; ... he has, quite simply, smeared the tops of his ankles with black shoe polish. Clever!



Buddy Childers
(Photo: All Things Kenton)



Zoot Sims
(Photo: Jazz Giants)

George Shearing, who was playing in the afternoon, stayed in the evening to listen to the orchestra and told Stan of his sincere admiration for this ensemble, which is the best he has heard in a very long time.

On the programme: "Young Blood", "My Lady", "Half A Havana", "Solitaire" and "Boop Boop Be Doop" (a title inspired by a Leola B song). Pettigrew in the 1930s).

The next day, July 8, is the big recording day at Universal Studios in Chicago. All the arrangements are by Bill Russo who also takes care of supervision and fine-tuning with the orchestra. Tom Shepard, Bill's student for harmony, replaces him on trombone.



(Photos: Capitol Records)

Eight magnificent beaches are engraved to compose the "Portraits On Standards" which are a little bit the prolongation of the "Sketches" made in January.

The music is clear, limpid, airy; the swing is extremely supple but effective and the soloists are in great shape. On the orchestration side, Bill allows himself new and sometimes very cool instrumental associations which, under an apparent simplicity, result in creating sounds with ample and really beautiful harmonies, a true "Mister Sound." »

The themes used are very well known standards of American popular music (except one):

"I've Got You Under My Skin" with soloists Conte Candoli and Lee Konitz; "You And The Night And The Music": Conte Candoli and Zoot Sims; "April In Paris": Buddy Childers and Lee Konitz; "Crazy Rhythm": Lee Konitz, Zoot Sims and Conte Candoli; "Autumn In New York": Buddy Childers; "Reverie" (after Claude Debussy): Don Bagley and Sal Salvador; "I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good": Frank Rosolino and "How High The Moon": Conte Candoli and Zoot Sims.

"Reverie" is sometimes called 'Russo-Rie' or 'Under A Blanket Of Blue'.

These recordings definitively affirm the new sound of the orchestra which will be confirmed in the "Showcase" that Stan will devote to his two great arranger-composers of the moment: Bill Russo and Bill Holman and will announce the "Contemporary Concepts" of July 1955 whose principal arranger will be Bill Holman.

The next day, in the same studio, an "Artistry In Rhythm" is recorded, plus two scores by Bill Holman: "Theme And Variations" and a remake of "Bags", for Don Bagley, but which will never be released, Stan preferring the version made in January.

Bill Russo, busy with composition work, does not take part in the concert in Cincinnati on July 14, but is back for the "Concert in Miniature" on July 21 at the Hampton Beach Casino in New Hampshire. Stan places a lot of importance on this concert because, he says, the Casino is the place where any orchestra worth its salt must have played!

The program includes "The Opener" and "Zoot" by Bill Holman, "Round Robin" by Shorty Rogers, "I Got It Bad" by Duke, arranged by Bill Russo and "Francesca", arranged by Pete Rugolo. It features the soloists: Frank Rosolino, Zoot Sims, Lee Konitz, Count Candoli and Stan Levey.

In July and August, several "Concert in Miniature" will again take place, notably in Massachusetts and New Jersey, an N.B.C. program for the government: "The National Guard Show - Let's Go To Town" and some sessions with singer June Valli.

The broadcasting of the "Concert in Miniature" (sometimes called "Concert Encores") is a truly happy and historic initiative taken by N.B.C. Radio from June 1952 to November 1953, whose aim was to programme a modern jazz orchestra every Tuesday evening from 10.35 to 11 p.m. and to leave its conductor complete freedom as to the choice of music and commentary.

Now, Stan Kenton, who at that time, with his orchestra, arrangers and soloists, was the champion of the Readers Polls, objectively imposed himself as the big band to watch for this kind of show which, by all accounts, was much too short.

We have seen that the recordings are made wherever the orchestra goes, during its American or Canadian tours, but with the very important guarantee, given by Robert Wogan, one of the leaders of the N.B.C., of having the best technicians and sound engineers.

A CD (001) Artistry Records from 1989 gives us a particularly brilliant (71 minutes) overview of these performances: "Stan Kenton & His Orchestra, 1952-53, The Concert in Miniature Broadcasts".

It features 18 of the orchestra's greatest themes, including 10 arrangements by Bill Russo, as well as the soloists: Zoot Sims, Ernie Royal, Lee Konitz, Frank Rosolino, Conte Candoli, Richie Kamuca, Buddy Childers, Bill Holman, Bob Burgess, etc; all in great form and supported by an enthusiastic audience.

But the great initiative belongs to the English firm Submarine (Sounds Of Yester Year) which, in February 2014, will release the first of the 24 CDs that make up the complete "Concerts in Miniature - Stan Kenton And His Orchestra" and cover the entire period from the preliminaries in April and May 1952 to the concert of November 3, 1953 at the Eastman School of Music Theatre in Rochester (New York). However, the series is interrupted from August 14 to September 28 by the European tour.

A few personnel changes have to take place and then it's the big departure for Europe.

Chris Connor, very tired from the numerous American tours, is replaced by June Christy who comes back thanks to the exceptional deal Stan was able to get from the management of Capitol Records, of which June is now a real star in her own right.

George Roberts and Sal Salvador (who does not like flying) are replaced respectively by Bill Smiley and Barry Galbraith. The violas are Lee Konitz and Dave Schildkraut.

But the saddest is for Ernie Royal who suffers from mouth problems due to a nerve dysfunction in his upper lip. The specialist he consulted formally ordered him to suspend his activities in the orchestra or else he would not be able to play at all. Ernie is really devastated because, as he will tell the English journalist Howard Lucraft (future Managing Director of Jazz International, created at the beginning of 1955 and

sponsored by Stan Kenton) before the departure of the plane :

"He would have given anything to be able to take part in this tour and go back to Europe where he worked two years earlier. »

It is Buddy Childers who, from then on, takes over the heavy lead trumpet function while keeping the solo passages intended for him. A formidable mission for the young (27) but already veteran trumpet player of the orchestra.

Stan then finds himself with only four trumpets just a few hours away from the start. Fortunately, one of the band's porters, Victor 'Ziggy' Minichiello (Kelly), is also a trumpet player, and not the least of them. He agreed to take the fifth place in the section.

In recognition of the long absences due to the orchestra's numerous travels, Stan makes a nice gesture of generosity by offering the wives of the married musicians to take part, at his expense, in the great European tour.

What a Boss!

EUROPE, HERE WE ARE !

And it was late, on the evening of Wednesday, August 19, 1953, that all the participants met at New York's Idlewild Airport; the plane took off at 3:00 a.m. for a crossing that was far from what it is today. A short stop at Gander Air Force Base, on the island of Newfoundland (Canada), to refuel, and then on to Ireland and Holland, finally arriving in Copenhagen, Denmark, on the afternoon of Friday 21st. There, several welcoming committees are rushing to be introduced to this very impressive group, led by the majestic Stan Kenton, whose reputation is well established. Accommodation is provided at the Richmond Hotel.

On the afternoon of the 22nd, Stan receives the English journalist Jack Marshall, from the New Musical Express, for an interview which continues with a visit, by taxi, of the surroundings of Copenhagen. Jack will say how surprised he was to converse with such a relaxed conductor only three hours before his first major European concert.

But his astonishment is even greater when he sees these thousands of Danes, whom he believed to be very conservative, rushing and jostling at the entrance of the concert hall to listen to modern jazz.

This is the famous KB Hallen (Kjøbenhavns Boldklub Hallen), a 3,000-seat Concert Hall, unfortunately destroyed by fire on September 28, 2011 and which had received many great names in jazz: Don Redman, Louis Armstrong, Dizzy Gillespie, Oscar Peterson, Kid Ory, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Woody Herman, Sarah Vaughan,

Coleman Hawkins, Mary Lou Williams, Illinois Jacquet, Lionel Hampton, Dave Brubeck, Art Blakey, etc.

So the concert can begin. The orchestra consists of Lee Konitz and Dave Schildkraut, violas, Zoot Sims and Bill Holman, tenors, Tony Ferina, baritone; trumpets: Buddy Childers, Conte Candoli, Don Dennis, Don Smith and Ziggy Minichiello; trombones: Bob Burgess, Frank Rosolino, Bill Russo, Keith Moon and Bill Smiley, bass trombone; Barry Galbraith, guitar, Don Bagley, double bass, Stan Levey, drums, June Christy, vocal and Stan Kenton, piano and conducting.

The programme includes proven themes representing different periods in the orchestra's history. The arrangements are by Gerry Mulligan, Pete Rugolo, Bill Russo, Shorty Rogers, Bill Holman and Stan Kenton.

Titles: "Young Blood", "Collaboration", "Intermission Riff", "Lover Man", "Round Robin", "Solitaire", "Frank Speaking", "Pennies From Heaven", "Love For Sale" and "Zoot".



The full orchestra before the Gothenburg concert (Photo: Steven Harris: The 2003 Kenton Kalendar/Dynaflow).

Debout : June Christy, Bill Smiley (caché), Don Smith, Conte Candoli, Buddy Childers, Don Dennis, Vic Minichiello, Bill Russo.

Middle: Keith Moon, Bob Burgess, Frank Rosolino.

Seated : Bill Holman, Tony Ferina, Lee Konitz, Zoot Sims, Dave Schildkraut, Stan Levey, Don Bagley, Barry Galbraith, Stan.

The five saxos and drums play "Opus In Pastels" and the concert ends with "Eager Beaver", "I'll Remember April", "How High The Moon" and "Lover".

The improvised passages are entrusted to Conte Candoli, Zoot Sims, Lee Konitz, Bob Burgess and Frank Rosolino, who also has fun, as is often the case, vocalising on "Pennies". June Christy sings " I'll Remember April " and " How High The Moon " .

The concert is a triumph but, as the cheering is just about over, Stan receives a phone call from his mother, Stella Kenton, telling him that his father, Floyd (65), has just succumbed to the leukemia he had been suffering from for some time.

Success on one side, sadness on the other : life !

Professionally, Stan must continue and assume his responsibilities both to his musicians and to the thousands of European music lovers who await his arrival.

Stan retires for a long time alone, in his hotel room, then is called back by Howard Lucraft who offers him to go and have a bite to eat with a few people from the orchestra. The atmosphere, of course, is not cheerful and only weakly reflects the pleasure felt during the concert.

After a few hours' rest, Stan and his whole world make a new start, this time to Sweden, as two concerts are scheduled for Sunday, August 23rd, at the Concert Hall in Gothenburg.

The next day, the orchestra plays at Eriksdal Hall in Stockholm.

It's raining all over Scandinavia, but the welcome in both cities is really warm; hundreds of fans are there, photographers and autograph hunters, not to mention the flower bouquets and radio interviews. The Scandinavians call Stan "the American Sibelius! »

Stan recalls the 1953 European Tour in these terms:

"We travelled 33 days and played in concert halls, most of the time in different cities; the orchestra was on the verge of total exhaustion and people were going crazy, even in the streets; we had to run away! »

After Sweden, we headed to Germany for a series of concerts in Kiel (Ostsee Halle, August 25), Hamburg (Ernst Merck Halle, two concerts on the 26th) and West Berlin (Sportpalast - demolished in 1973 -, two concerts on the 27th). The success is total; in Berlin, it is estimated that there were about 15,000 people at each concert.

Stan develops the great repertoire: " Artistry In Rhythm ", " Intermission Riff ", " Opus In Pastels ", " Eager Beaver ", " Artistry In Bolero ", " In A Lighter Vein ", "

Young Blood ", " Round Robin ", four compositions or arrangements by Bill Russo: " Lover Man ", " 23° N. - 82° W. ", " Frank Speaking " and " Taking A Chance On Love ", sung by June Christy, which continues with " I'll Remember April ", " Willow, Weep For Me ", " Great Scot " and " How High The Moon ", the last four arranged by Pete Rugolo. In the finale is the grandiose "Concerto To End All Concertos" with Zoot Sims, Buddy Childers, Dave Schildkraut and Don Bagley. The usual soloists also improvise, depending on the piece: Bob Burgess, Lee Konitz, Conte Candoli and Frank Rosolino.

Horst Lange of the Melody Maker says:

"I went to the Sportpalast without really being a fan of modern music and I came out a firm admirer of Stan Kenton. Kenton gave two concerts and filled the hall both times, winning a huge success with the usually critical Berlin audience. Even the purists were thrilled! »

It should be noted that Duke Records has published an L.P. (D-1022) "Stan Kenton In Berlin 1953" which gives a very convincing sound image of these concerts. All the titles are there, in no particular order, except "Frank Speaking" which was played by Frank Rosolino but does not appear on the disc, probably for lack of space. One remark, however: the cover states "live in Berlin, August 27, 1953" and mentions, in the orchestra, the names Tom Shepard, George Roberts and Bill Perkins instead of, respectively, Bill Russo, Bill Smiley and Bill Holman.

While in Berlin, Stan and the orchestra are also filmed playing "23° N." The orchestra is also filmed playing "23° N." The orchestra is also filmed playing "23° N.". - 82° W. "and " Love For Sale " to appear in " Schlager Parade ", a German musical released in November 1953, in which many stars also appear, including Werner Müller's orchestra and ... Maurice Chevalier.

After the triumph in Berlin, the orchestra gives two concerts at the Nieder Sachsen Halle in Hanover on August 28th, then two concerts on the 29th: one at the Williams-Bau in Cologne, the other at the Apollo Theatre in Düsseldorf. On the 30th, concert at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and on the 31st, it's the Lichtburg in Essen.

On September ¹, 1953, big concert at the Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels.

It is the day of the "Jazz Armada": several planes take off from three airfields around London and drop off, in Brussels, not only an impressive number of fans (about 300) who know, through the record, the music of Stan Kenton but also countless musicians active in various English orchestras of the moment.



The Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels
(Photo: Arkadia)



Interior of the Palace of Fine Arts
(Photo: Jazz Brussels)

This influx to the continent is explained by the disagreements that existed at the time, between the English and American Musicians' Unions, and thus prevented Stan from performing in England. However, two concerts were planned in Dublin (Ireland).

In the hall are several English conductors: Johnny Dankworth, Freddy Randall, Norman Burns, Vic Lewis and Ted Heath who, like all the fans present, can hardly

believe that they will finally hear and see this fabulous orchestra live. But the dream has come true and is, unfortunately, all too soon over, despite a two-hour performance!

In his review (Jazz Hot n° 80 - September 1953), Jean-Louis Scali expresses, with a lot of spirit and good mood, all the sensations felt at this concert:

"The great hall of the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels was completely full ... The orchestra enters, imposing, then the Master, modest and smiling, friendly and Olympian. Immediately a few bars of the "Artistry In Rhythm" burst out, or rather fuse together, as an indication; and the spectator, who was expecting something wonderful, understands immediately that his predictions were below reality ... One can never emphasize enough this properly physical action of the Kenton orchestra on the nervous system ... even the unisons take, in the orchestral context, an unusual look ... All this is too intelligent, too well developed, too well adjusted. These complicated performances are amazingly perfect in focus. Kenton's musicians are admirable technicians who can pull themselves with remarkable ease out of the worst musical shoes ... Frank Rosolino is probably the best modern trombone ... As for his technical virtuosity, there is almost enough to cry out for a miracle. Then there was Lee Konitz, perfectly used. His "Loverman", different from the recorded version, is however not at all inferior to him ... he forces us to listen to him, to follow him in the complicated meanders of his improvisation ... Zoot Sims, in great shape, gave us remarkable solos, well constructed, solid, full of swing and feeling ... The hall was a real triumph for him ... Stan Levey is an extraordinary drummer ... He literally carries the orchestra on his shoulders and ensures a remarkable efficiency in the rhythm section ... As for the others, I heard too little to say a word about them. »

Clearly, for Jean-Louis Scali it was much, much too much for a single concert!

After Brussels, the tour goes back to Germany, passing through Hannover, Baden-Baden, Frankfurt am Main, Munster and Dortmund.

Concert in Milan on September 6, then back to Germany: Bremen, Bremerhaven, Osnabrück, Bielefeld, Wiesbaden.

The concert in Wiesbaden was not on the tour program; it is organized at the last moment and follows the performance that takes place on September 9 (20:30) in Bielefeld. But, the two cities being 340 km distant from each other, the orchestra arrives at the Walhalla Theatre in Wiesbaden around midnight; the audience is there, numerous, the musicians show no fatigue, June is in voice, the concert can begin and it is a triumph, especially for Stan Levey.

A brave lady, Frau Bremen, a great jazz lover, obtains from Stan the authorization to record the concert and we can say that the result is almost perfect.

In 1992, it was Mack McShaffrey, former trumpet player for the US Army stationed in Wiesbaden, who, with the help of Steven Harris, produced the recording on an Astral Jazz CD (JCD-101) under the title "Kenton 53 - Concert in Wiesbaden": A happy initiative!

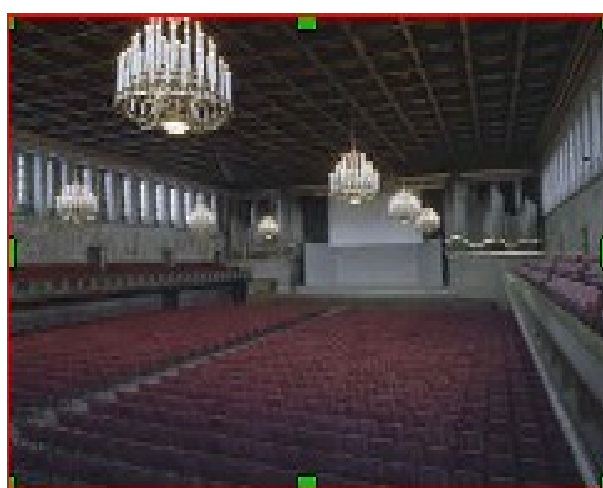
On September 10, concert in Mannheim and, on the 11th, in Karlsruhe and Baden-Baden.

Short visit to Switzerland on the 12th: Basel, Bern and Zurich.

On the 14th, we return to Germany: Stuttgart, Nuremberg and Munich.



Munich Deutsches Museum
(Photo: Wikipedia)



Kongress Saal
(Photo: Discog)

The magnificent concert on September 16th, in the huge Kongress Saal of the Deutsches Museum, Munich is brilliantly restored by a Sounds Of Yesteryear/Submarine Records box set (DSOD 608 - 2 CDs) "Live In Munich - 1953". Booklet signed Michael Sparke, July 2002.

The orchestra is in superform and the soloists, always so generous in their improvisations, are triumphant in each of their interventions, notably : Lee Konitz, Zoot Sims, Conte Candoli, Frank Rosolino, Bob Burgess, Stan Levey, not forgetting the adorable June Christy, whom the audience immediately gave a standing ovation without giving Stan time to finish his presentation. And it is in front of a perfectly collected and silent room that June finishes with her delicious "Something Cool" but the audience doesn't even wait for the last note to explode in a thunderous applause.



Munich: Lee Konitz as soloist
(Photo: Brew Lite)

The excellent recording obviously gives an eloquent picture of the immense success that was reserved for Stan Kenton and his music during the European Tour, a success that seems, according to some, to have been even greater than the one he enjoyed in the States!

And on September 17, after a last concert in Germany, in Kaiserslautern, it is the arrival in Paris; rest with a visit of the city.

The next day, a major musical event, the legendary concert at the Alhambra Theatre, which at that time became the new temple of jazz.

Organizer: Charles Delaunay, with the collaboration of Albert Bettonville; two great names in the life of jazz in France and Belgium.

A small apprehension, however, the French jazz lover of the time has the reputation of preferring rather old jazz, the demand for modern jazz being rather low. It is even said that it can be noisy if he does not like the music.

But Stan breathes a sigh of relief when, as soon as he enters, warm applause greets him and his orchestra. Many French musicians are among the audience. And the atmosphere continues in this way, with enthusiasm, throughout the concert, which led Jacques Hess to write:

"Would anything have changed?" (Jazz Hot n° 81 - October 1953).

The complete and chronological recording published fifty years later by Jasmine Records (JASCD 640 - 2 CD) and beautifully commented in the booklet by the unavoidable Michael Sparke, October 2004, is a striking proof of this.

Stan Levey will say:

"The orchestra caught fire in the evening in Paris; it was the best concert of the entire European Tour!" ... Let's add that his implacable personal efficiency also played a big part in this.

The program is copious: twenty-five pieces that illustrate different eras of the orchestra. The arrangements are by Neal Hefti, Bill Holman, Stan Kenton, Gerry Mulligan, Johnny Richards, Shorty Rogers, Pete Rugolo and Bill Russo.

The classical signature tune of the orchestra, "Artistry In Rhythm", opens the concert, followed by a brilliant "Young Blood" (soloists : Conte Candoli, Zoot Sims, Lee Konitz and Buddy Childers in the high register) and the mood is created. Stan thanks the audience for coming and, in this way, discovering the musicians of the orchestra who are, in return, happy to get to know French jazz lovers.

Quiet moment, all relative, with the beautiful "Collaboration" (s.: Stan Kenton and the excellent Bob Burgess). Then, it's the well-known " Love For Sale " (s.: Keith Moon, Lee Konitz) and the magnificent " Walking Shoes " (s.: Bob Burgess, Bill Holman, Lee Konitz and Conte Candoli). Small delicacy with " Opus In Pastels ", reserved for all saxos and rhythms.

Then comes one of the highlights of the concert: Bill Holman's "Zoot" (s.: a formidable Zoot Sims and a terrible Stan Levey), a track that the Capitol box set (4 L.P./2 C.D.) "The Kenton Era" had already discovered in April 1955 and, as a result, popularized. Zoot Sims is in a dazzling form and Stan Levey puts, in the tenor-drums exchanges, such a breathtaking energy that one understands, there, that he was a boxer in his youth. It's a triumph!

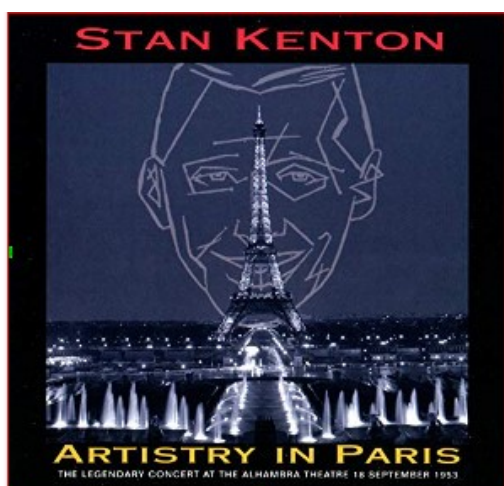
Two pages by Bill Russo: "23° North, 82° West" (s.: Frank Rosolino and Lee Konitz) and "Solitaire" (s.: Bob Burgess) demonstrate virtuoso orchestral writing in two very different genres, but perfectly mastered by both Bill, as author, and the instrumentalists in terms of execution.

Let's continue with the still young "Intermission Riff" (s.: Zoot Sims) written, in 1946, by Ray Wetzel (1924/1951), then trumpet player with Stan but who died very young in a car accident.

Now it is Lee Konitz who develops his sensitivity in Bill Russo's "Lover Man" and his brilliant technique in Bill Holman's "In Lighter Vein".

The first part of the concert ends with the well-known "Lover" (s.: Zoot Sims and Frank Rosolino) in the arrangement by Pete Rugolo.

As for the second part, it starts with the traditional "The Peanut Vendor" whose introduction is exposed, with a certain fantasy, by Bill Russo while, in the finale, the trumpets have fun to place, twice, a quote from "The Champ", the famous theme of Dizzy Gillespie! A success!



(Photos: John Loeffler/Jasmine Records)

Then it's time for Stan to introduce this wonderful trumpet player, Conte Candoli, first of all in this magnificent score, "Portrait Of A Count", that Bill Russo dedicated to him and that Conte transforms into a little gem of technique and imagination. He continued with "Round Robin", a very swinging piece, on a fast tempo, written and performed in 1950 by Shorty Rogers, when he was a member of Stan's orchestra. Conte gives a masterful interpretation of it, overcoming with ease all the difficulties of the written part and following with one of his most beautiful improvisations.

"Eager Beaver" (s.: Zoot Sims) is reminiscent of one of Stan Kenton's early orchestras (1943). Composed and orchestrated by Stan himself, this piece has lost none of its vigour or swing. Zoot is no stranger to this, of course, nor is the powerful Stan Levey. Don Bagley quickly quotes "Salt Peanuts" and the finale slightly parodies Les Brown.

Another talented soloist, Frank Rosolino, launches into Bill Russo's dreaded "Frank Speaking", which he transcends with his usual ease. It is a triumph!

The arrangement of "Taboo" (s.: Frank Rosolino, Dave Schildkraut, Conte Candoli and Stan Levey) is due to the immense Johnny Richards who also possesses the genius of orchestration and knows how to solicit the musicians to the maximum of their possibilities. A fanfare entrance, an explosive Stan Levey, dominating brass instruments and a boosted hall.

Gifted in his relationship with the public, Kenton humorously introduces the musicians who have not had the opportunity to perform as soloists (Stan Levey is the most applauded) and then it's time to announce the great June Christy. June, who has been leading a brilliant personal career for the past two years, but

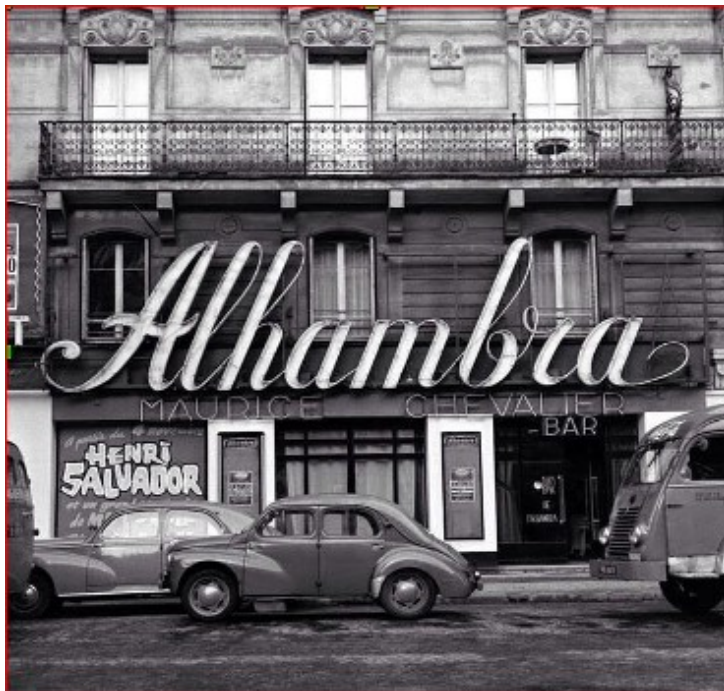
whom she wants to limit to California, has, however, agreed to replace Chris Connor for the European tour. The French public was waiting for her and gave her a warm welcome.

First of all, it's a particularly well taken "Taking A Chance On Love", in Bill Russo's arrangement. It is followed by "I'll Remember April" taken on a very slow tempo and a wonderful phrasing of which June has the secret, punctuated by contrasting interventions of the orchestra due to Pete Rugolo who also arranged a very swinging "Great Scot" and the magnificent "Willow, Weep For Me", a classic in June's repertoire which ends in scat on "How High The Moon" and it's the explosion. We can even imagine that many fans came just for her!

At the end of this great concert at the Alhambra, Stan immediately follows up, at the piano, with his own "Concerto To End All Concertos" whose origin dates back to 1942 (s.: Zoot Sims, Don Dennis, Dave Schildkraut and an impressive Don Bagley).

Remarkable, the energy that the orchestra, after such a performance and the demands of the tour, still puts into this last piece. The audience, standing up, gives it back with applause and enthusiasm.

Truly delighted with this concert, Stan thanks Charles Delaunay and the Parisian public for the warmth of his welcome and his frank acceptance of this resolutely modern, even truly avant-garde jazz. He expresses his great hope to come back to Paris.

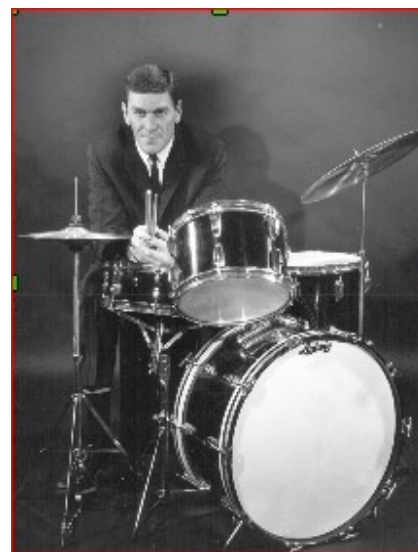


The Alhambra Paris of the 50s (supposed)
(Photo: Pinterest)

The return to the Alhambra will take place, first in 1956, with a new formation, young musicians, other arrangements, especially by Bill Holman, in short, a jazz still quite different: the "Contemporary Concepts. »



André Hodeir
(Photo: Egroj World/Savoy)



Stan Levey
(Photo: Modern Drummer Magazine)

The day after the September 18th concert, the very serious French musician and musicologist André Hodeir (1921-2011) gives his impressions (Jazz Hot n° 81 - October 1953) on the music that Stan and his orchestra offered to Parisian music lovers.

André Hodeir's analysis "L'Orchestre Kenton: du Super Artisanat" is very nuanced and contains a few rare reservations, especially on the trombone phrasing. On the level of the soloists, he underlines the punch of Stan Levey, the excellence of Don Bagley and the quality of the interventions of Frank Rosolino, Zoot Sims and Lee Konitz but, according to him, played below its real value. About the arrangements, he gives a somewhat strange opinion: they are "*well written but without much musical interest*" except those of Gerry Mulligan.

It is obvious that André Hodeir's jazz, which was certainly very innovative for the time, had a very different aesthetic than the one proposed in 1953 by Stan's powerful staff of arrangers and composers. One may consider that his appreciation, although strictly personal, is nevertheless a little short for a man with such a vast musical background. He wishes to make it clear, however, that under his pen, the word 'craftsmanship' does not take on any pejorative nuances.

André Hodeir continues:

"Technically, Kenton's orchestra represents a summit. In addition to a prodigious fusion of its various elements, it astounds the listener with an absolute control of the musical facts ... The virtuosity of the soloists is such that it can hardly be guessed.

Anyone unfamiliar with the technique of wind instruments cannot measure the prowess of a Frank Rosolino: he succeeds, by dint of his ease, in persuading the audience that he achieves nothing but very simple and easy ... One can say, of the Stan Kenton Orchestra 1953, that he occupies a place, certainly, very enviable among the great current formations ... of which we know, in Europe, no equivalence in terms of jazz. »

That's clear!

On Saturday, September 19, everyone boards a ship for England. A short stop in London to allow Stan and Lee to take part in the recording of the "Jazz Club" show with Teddy Wilson, Jack Parnell, Ted Heath and Tony Hall, led by David Jacobs.

The journey continues to Sculthorpe in Norfolk, where the orchestra is to play for the US Army and then it is off to Dublin. There, two concerts are to take place on Sunday 20 September, one in the afternoon and the other in the evening, at the Théâtre Royal, a 3,500-seat hall.

As with the Brussels concert, the arrival of the orchestra in Dublin provoked a veritable invasion (plane and boat) of Irish soil by fans from England; for some, the journey took 36 hours. From Sunday morning, several thousand of them roamed the streets of Dublin in search of hotels where they could meet Stan, June, or even some of the musicians of the orchestra. The city's cafés and tea-rooms are sold out; the wait is long, the impatience is great because the first concert does not start until 3pm.

Mike Nevard, publisher of Melody Maker, attended both concerts:

"Contrary to the legend, we have proof that Stan Kenton's music is not just for the record. These 18 Americans are happy to blow on our heads a real brass tornado alternating with periods of lull due to the saxos, punctuated by the revival of energetic percussions. But the one we didn't really know was Stan Kenton. A man full of vitality, a man whose strong personality enabled him to lead an orchestra made up of exceptional musicians, real stars, a man whose way of conducting has magnetised us all. He really is the conductor of the orchestra. As soon as you see him, you understand that he is the orchestra. Without him, there would be no orchestra! »

Mike brings us the words of Stan Kenton himself:

"All the concerts on the European Tour were exciting. We didn't expect so many people: we played in front of huge crowds and I thought, at that moment, that there were maybe more jazz lovers in Europe than in America. We ended in Dublin with the two most impressive concerts, with all these fans coming from England. After an intensive five-week tour we were all on the verge of total exhaustion but when I walked onto the stage of the Theatre Royal and heard the screams of the audience, I

thought my legs were going to give me away... We did the two craziest gigs of the tour! »

But the European programme is not over. There are still two performances to be made for the United States Air Force, one at Burtonwood Camp in England on the 21st and the other at Keflavik Air Force Base in Iceland on the 23rd.

RETURN TO THE STATES

On September 24, everyone got back on the plane because the orchestra was expected in New York for a concert at Carnegie Hall on Sunday, September 26, 1953. Sal Salvador returned to the guitar.

After Carnegie Hall, it was the Carousel Ballroom in Manchester, New Hampshire, on September 29th, followed by an engagement at Birdland in New York City from October 8th to 28th. Finally, a short stop at the travel fever.

But from October 31 to December ¹, the orchestra takes part in the first tour of the "Festival of Modern American Jazz" organized by Cress Courtney.

In addition to its own programme, the orchestra accompanies some of the festival guests: Candido, Slim Gaillard, Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie and June Christy.

Erroll Garner plays in a trio.

And on November 11th, it's the accident! The two buses were travelling on the Pennsylvania Turnpike when the first one, in which all the musicians of the orchestra and their wives were present, collided violently with a trailer truck. Several musicians were injured, some of them very seriously, and had to be hospitalized: Ziggy Minichiello, Frank Rosolino, Sal Salvador, Stan Levey, Bob Burgess, Tony Ferina and the wives of Conte and Frank.

Fortunately, thanks to a few local substitutes and the urgent recall of, among others, Lee Konitz and Bill Russo, the two Pittsburgh concerts can take place.

As soon as the "Festival" tour is over, several musicians express the wish to leave the orchestra.

Thus we see the arrival of, among others, Bill Perkins to replace Zoot Sims, Charlie Mariano and, later, Lennie Niehaus following the departure of Lee Konitz, also Sam Noto and Stu Williamson for Conte Candoli. All these new soloists were young but no less talented.

Bill Russo is leaving the trombone section but is very happy to stay on the staff of Stan Kenton's arrangers and composers; long tours really prevent him from doing what he likes best: writing music. Apart from the special circumstance of the accident, his last appearance in the orchestra was at the end of October at Birdland.

Let's end this panorama of the Kenton Tours with a beautiful 2 CD Artistry (4009) "Stan Kenton and His Orchestra - The Concepts Era - Live" box set with no less than 38 very effective tracks that perfectly illustrate this period of Kentonian creativity. The excerpts were recorded live at concerts given between 1952 and 1956 in a series of American cities plus Frankfurt.

Bill Russo is represented by 16 compositions/arrangements:

You Go to My Head / 23° N 82° W / Fascinating Rhythm / All About Ronnie / I Got It Bad / Talk of The Town / Blues Before and After / Sweets / Portrait of A Count / Frank Speaking / A Study for Bass / Love Me or Leave Me / My Lady / An Aesthete on Clark Street / Autumn in New York / Gone With The Wind.

A selection well representative of his art of orchestration in performances that are always as perfect as ever. Everything is there, even the swing!

BOTH BILLS

In March 1954, Stan had the excellent idea of paying tribute to his two arrangers, Bill Holman and Bill Russo, under the unifying theme "Kenton Showcase : The Music Of Bill Holman And Bill Russo", whereas the two Bills did not claim the same musical references in their compositions, Bill Holman being mainly turned towards Count Basie and a more present swing, while Bill Russo always declared himself a great admirer of Duke Ellington and proposed a more structured jazz, sometimes even very complex and promising his future orientation towards classical music, but capable, nevertheless, of moments marked by the purest and most efficient swing.

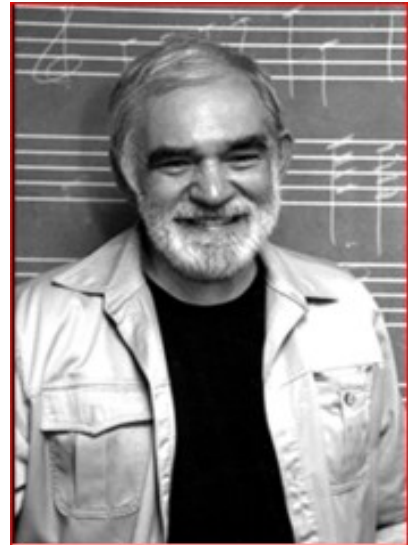
Very interesting, this dilemma between two great musicians, two different visions of jazz.

The first session takes place on March 1st and covers four compositions or arrangements by Bill Holman: "Of All Things", "Lover Man", "In Lighter Vein" and "My Funny Valentine". The viola soloist was to be Charlie Parker, who took part in the second tour of the "Festival of Modern American Jazz" in January-February with the orchestra.

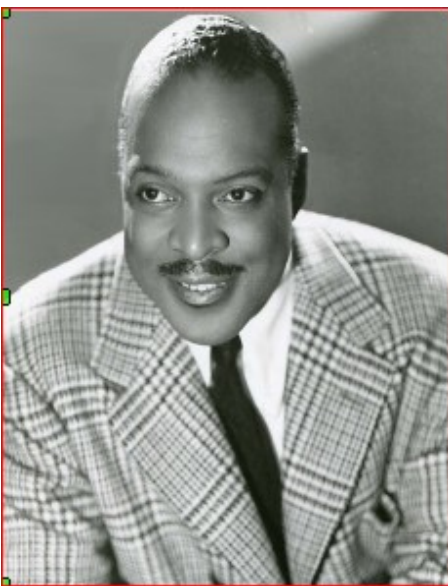
But as Bird is not available, Lee Konitz takes the solos, only for this session. It seems that, of the two arrangements of "Lover Man", Lee has a slight preference for Bill Holman's?



Bill Holman
(Photo: Wikipedia)



Bill Russo
(Photo : You Tube)



Count Basie
(Photo: Count Basie Center for the Arts)



Duke Ellington
(Photo: Wikipedia)

As noted above, the orchestra has undergone several changes:

The trumpeters are Buddy Childers, Vic Minichiello, Sam Noto, Stu Williamson and Don Smith; the trombones, Bob Fitzpatrick, Frank Rosolino, Milt Gold, Joe Ciavardone and George Roberts; on sax, Dave Schildkraut, Charlie Mariano, Bill Perkins, Mike Cicchetti and Tony Ferina; Bob Leshner, guitar; Don Bagley, bass; Stan Levey, drums and Stan on piano.

The next day at 1 p.m., the session begins with a theme by Bill Holman, "Hav-A-Havana" with Candido Camero (conga) and Sam Noto as soloist.

Next, three compositions by Bill Russo: "Bacante", soloists: Frank Rosolino, Charlie Mariano and Candido; "A Theme Of Four Values", soloists: Stan and Bob Fitzpatrick; "Dusk" with Bob Fitzpatrick and Stan.

At 5.30 pm, four pieces by Bill Holman: " Solo For Buddy " for Buddy Childers ; " The Opener " with Frank Rosolino, Charlie Mariano and Sam Noto ; " King Fish ", soloists : Don Bagley, Bill Perkins, Stu Williamson and Dave Schildkraut (who comes out of the shadow of Lee Konitz); "Fearless Finlay" with Sam Noto, Dave Schildkraut, Frank Rosolino and Stan Levey.

The last two sessions, on March 3, 1954, were devoted to Bill Russo, who was present (unlike Bill Holman) and very actively involved in supervising the recordings.

Start at 11:15: "Sweets", soloists: Buddy Childers, Milt Gold and Dave Schildkraut; "A Study For Bass" with Don Bagley (double bass) and George Roberts (bass trombone); "Blues Before And After", soloists: Sam Noto and Dave Schildkraut.

Resume at 3:00. The first part of the album is a new song : " Egdon Heath " with Bob Fitzpatrick and Dave Schildkraut, then " Thisbe " for the trombone section (lead : Bob Fitzpatrick) plus rhythms.

The orchestra was disbanded until mid-September 1954.

A magnificent Capitol Jazz 25244 CD (pictured on page 32 right) contains all these recordings, in studio quality, plus a few titles due to Bill Holman but previously burned.

The music of Bill Russo is also present, among others, in the very beautiful series of CDs that the firm Classics Records (France) devotes to Stan under the title "The Chronological Stan Kenton and his Orchestra".

The booklets that accompany the CDs are very well detailed except, perhaps, about the soloists and arrangers. The recordings are perfectly reproduced and Anatol Schenker's comments reflect his excellent knowledge of Stan Kenton's career and his music.

As for the Mosaïc firm (Michael Cuscuna and Charlie Lourie), which specializes in Intégrales, they published, in 1991, a splendid 4 CD MD4-136 box set entitled: "Stan Kenton: The Complete Capitol Recordings Of The Holman And Russo Charts".

Published in 7,500 copies, it would, unfortunately, be out of print.

It contains, in chronological order of sessions, all the recordings (Capitol only) of the scores written, by the two Bills, for Stan Kenton's orchestra (41 by Bill Russo and 31 by Bill Holman) with mention of dates, arrangers, soloists and staff of the different

formations.

The box set also contains a beautiful 36-page large-format album (28x28 cm.) which allows one to follow and understand the Kentonian adventure of this period thanks to several texts by Will Friedwald, a particularly prolific American author and music critic, who in 1996 received the ASCAP prize for his biography of Frank Sinatra. The album also features some beautiful photos of the orchestra and interviews with Stan Kenton by Bill Russo, Bill Holman and Lee Konitz.

Let's take a look at some of Bill Russo's thoughts:

"My years with Stan Kenton were very important to me. I learned how to compose, I was paid to compose and I was composing for first-rate musicians ... The Innovations Orchestra brought together classical and jazz composers and performers in an amazing and revolutionary way. The level of performance was incredibly high. And this orchestra was a huge success, contrary to what one might think. The Innovations were, I think, one of the most important cultural events of the twentieth century ... Being with that orchestra was one of the great moments of my life (Maynard Ferguson's opinion is the same) ... I am also very grateful to Pete Rugolo for what he offered to American music and for the influence he had on me ... and also for having launched me on this journey with Stan Kenton, a journey that lasted throughout my life as a composer. »

Finally, the producer of the box set, Ted Daryll, is a philosopher of some importance of certain great moments (the Renaissance, for example) in our History, whose exceptional artistic and cultural creations accelerated the evolution of the Society. For him, the jazz of the 1950s deserves to be recognized (if it isn't already) in the same way, by the extraordinary level of its creativity, its spirit of discovery and its countless individualities.

As early as 1945, with the collaboration of Pete Rugolo and June Christy, Stan Kenton already met these criteria and his effort to diversify jazz continued, in 1950, thanks to Bill Russo and Lee Konitz, to orient it more towards the concert hall, rather than the dance hall.

Let's not forget that in 1954, Bill was still only 26 years old but his stay with Stan allowed him to gain a solid experience, both as an orchestral musician and as a composer, and he will remain marked by it throughout his career, we can even say that Bill Russo will export, wherever he goes, the philosophy of the jazz big band that is peculiar to Stan The Man.

In the famous "Prologue" recorded in September 1952, Stan introduced him not only as a trombonist but also as an arranger-composer and even went so far as to predict to the 24-year-old that he would become a leader. And it will be the case!

The scores Bill wrote during these years are among the most beautiful of all his jazz repertoire; he also brought a real musical renewal to the orchestra, just as Pete Rugolo had done before him and Bill Holman and then Lennie Niehaus (who followed the Mulligan model) and how many others, such as Dee Barton and Hank Levy, will do after him.

The musicologists who talk about Bill Russo always refer, first, to his time with Stan Kenton before talking about other moments in his career which are not without interest, quite the contrary.

According to Alain Tercinet (1935 - 2017) :

"Bill Russo's arrangements for Kenton are among the most audacious and convincing performed by the ensemble" (Le Nouveau Dictionnaire du Jazz - Robert Laffont Bouquins).

Furthermore, in his analysis, Terry Vosbein states that:

"Bill Russo's musical contribution to the Kenton Orchestra was never in the mainstream genre, even at his best swing. His rhythms, at times, go against the natural tendency of jazz phrasing. In "23° N. - 82° W. "Russo introduces several seven-beat phrase repetitions while the rhythm section continues in four beats. For the finale, he notes the trombones in seven-four while the rest of the orchestra continues in four-four. »

Bill confirmed it to Steven Harris:

"I wasn't writing things in the general language of the jazz idiom. I know that most of the guys not only had some difficulty playing my pieces but they didn't like them too much. »

These "Kenton Years", very important to Bill, therefore deserved some attention.

In 1966, he was reunited with Stan in the creation of the fabulous Los Angeles Neophonic Orchestra.

On March 7, 1966, he conducted Concert No. 7, whose program included, according to Steven Harris (The Kenton Kronicles): a piece by Franklyn Marks, "The New World"; another by Paul Ruhlan, "Contemplations", and also "Tangents", by Dick Grove, articulated in four movements, 'Movin' Out', 'Canto', 'Time Table' and 'Montuno'. The soloists are the musicians of the Cal Tjader Quintet: Cal Tjader, vibraphone; Armando Peraza, Latin percussion; Al Zulaica, piano; Monk Montgomery, bass and John Rae, drums.

After the interruption, Bill Russo conducts Richard Peaslee's magnificent

"Stonehenge" (see under his name on the site) and ends with his own "Requiem / In Memoriam" for orchestra and choir, an excerpt of which can be heard in the recording of the "Kenton à la Russo" concert in February 2000.

In confidences he gave to Steven Harris in 1998, Bill said:

"I was very much influenced by Stan: his knowledge of human nature, his dynamism, his ambition and his faith in music. His sensitivity to human behaviour and his ability to deal with it. I think he had great confidence in me but would have liked me to be more 'like Rugolo'; it was asking a lot more of me than I could or wanted to do in that sense. That's one of the reasons I left. I realize now that maybe I should have stayed longer, but I felt that I would not have been able to give him what he needed. I think Stan was very annoyed when I left.

From then on, I continued to study conducting in order to do things my way. This was probably due to my individualistic side and my very strong opinions. But I recognize that Stan had the genius to bring together valuable and motivated people. He made a contribution in the 20th Century that will never be forgotten. »

As early as 1951, Bill said in Down Beat:

"Stan is one of the most wonderful guys I've ever known... His personality doesn't change when he's acting as a leader... He inspires the same kind of loyalty and enthusiasm among his men as when he's with his friends and fans. »

After the publication of the "Kenton Showcase" devoted to Bill Russo and Bill Holman in early 1954, scores by Bill Russo became less and less part of the orchestra's repertoire.

Always in search of a perpetual musical renewal, Stan Kenton will endeavour to make other composer-arrangers known, for example: Joe Coccia, Lennie Niehaus, Bill Mathieu, Ralph Carmichael, Dee Barton, Willie Maiden, Bob Curnow, Ray Starling, Mark Taylor-Fidyk and Hank Levy.

In addition to his own arrangements, Stan also gives the floor to a few 'old-timers' such as Pete Rugolo, Bill Holman, Johnny Richards, Ken Hanna and Gene Roland.

But it often happens that the new sound associations imagined by Bill Russo can still be heard, discreetly, in certain compositions, even among young musicians.

The legacy is there, especially in the West Coast sound!

It must be objectively noted that Bill Russo's scores, interpreted with the perfection that we know Stan Kenton to be, offer today's music lover a lively, ageless music that retains all its freshness and contains incredible innovations in the art of orchestration, which is perfectly suited to today's jazz musician whose training is increasingly based

on a classical foundation.

In fact, classical and jazz are never far apart.

There are countless jazz interpretations that use the three beats of the waltz (Fats Waller, already). Tango, too, is increasingly jazzified.

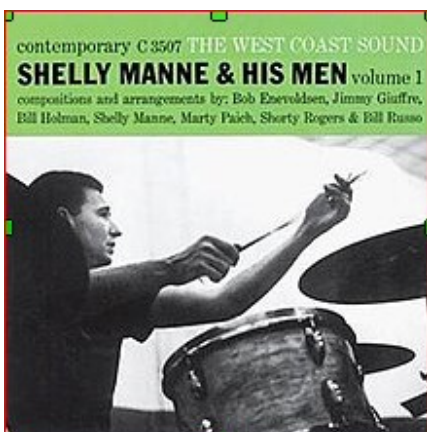
SOLITAIRE

At the beginning of the 50's, Los Angeles is really an extraordinary city; it is the beginning of a new world, and not only musically. Bill Russo is convinced of this; when he hears the recording of the first session made by Shelly Manne for Contemporary, which contains two of her scores, he doesn't hesitate any more and really decides to fly on his own wings.

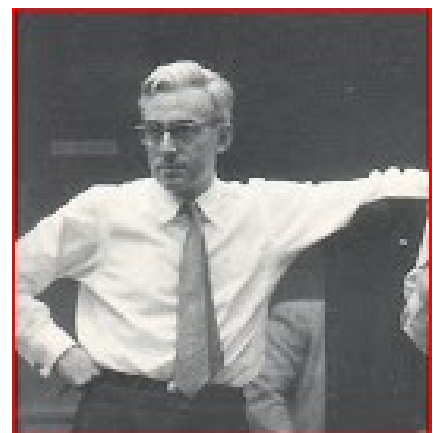
He tells Lillian Arganian:

"The reason I left Stan was that Shelly Manne was recording an album with two of my pieces and he played them so well that I realized that my real wish was to be in a position to control the rehearsals for recording my music. »

The session that Bill talks about, produced by the genius Lester Koenig (1917 - 1977), creator of Contemporary Records, took place on April 6, 1953 in Los Angeles. Shelly Manne had put together : Bob Enevoldsen, trombone, Art Pepper, alto sax, Bob Cooper, tenor, Jimmy Giuffre, baritone, Marty Paich, piano and Curtis Counce, double bass.



(Photo: William Claxton/Contemporary)



Lester Koenig
(Photo: Ray Avery/Jazz Profiles)

The two themes in question are Bill's arrangement of "You and the Night and the

Music" and his composition, "Gazelle", which evolves along lines in counterpoint and skillfully uses the contrast between orchestration and improvisation. "Gazelle" was never recorded by Stan Kenton, but Bill used the same type of writing - the connection between viola, tenor and trombone - in several arrangements for orchestra, notably in "Fascinating Rhythm", at the beginning and end of the piece.

Another session was held on July 20 with Bud Shank and Joe Mondragon replacing Art Pepper and Curtis Counce respectively. A third theme, by Bill Russo, is engraved that day, "Sweets", the title of which was inspired by the Sweets Ballroom in Oakland and which he dedicated to Harry "Sweets" Edison, a talented trumpeter with a very personal style.

All three pieces are on the magnificent CD "Shelly Manne & his Men - Volume 1 - The West Coast Sound" (Contemporary OJCCD-152-2), a true little masterpiece of musicality and intelligence. To listen to, absolutely!

And Scott Yanow's opinion is final:

"Highly recommended; proof, if any were needed, that West Coast Jazz is far from being anemic music. »

It also includes a third session, dated September 13, 1955, with Bill Holman, Russ Freeman, Ralph Pena (bass), Shelly, Jimmy Giuffre, Bob Enevoldsen and Joe Maini (viola) who died in 1964, at the age of 34, playing bad luck at Russian roulette.

In addition to scores by Bill Russo, the CD features compositions or arrangements by Bill Holman (Spring is Here), Shorty Rogers (La Mucura, Afrodesia, Mallets), Marty Paich (Summer Night, You're My Thrill), Bob Enevoldsen (You're Getting To Be A Habit With Me), Jimmy Giuffre (Fugue) and Shelly Manne (Grasshopper) are all musicians who are part of this movement, which is very active in Los Angeles, and whose aim is to make the arranger-composer recognize an artistic status equal to that of the improviser.

During the three sessions, the soloists, as we can see, are of the highest level, but the strongest characteristic of this disc, as the subtitle indicates very well, is the very new, fresh sound of West Coast music, which had already been revealed in 1951 with the recording of "Modern Sounds" by Shorty Rogers and his Giants, on the Capitol label. It should be noted, however, that the same arrangers are perfectly capable of writing remarkably explosive scores for big bands.

We have seen that Stan Kenton recorded two of Bill Russo's themes in a large orchestra version, which creates a very different musical climate: "You and the Night and the Music" in July 53 and "Sweets" in March 54, at a faster tempo, with a dazzling Buddy Childers and a very Kentonian orchestral breadth.

It's another CD that brings us a very interesting surprise about Bill Russo. It's a record also dedicated to Shelly Manne: "Shelly Manne Septet - West Coast Sounds" (The Jazz Factory JFCD 22866) and includes tracks recorded by Contemporary, including Bill's three themes mentioned above, but also the result of two sessions originally produced by Dee Gee (D.G. for Dizzy Gillespie).

The first took place on November 12, 1951 in Chicago. Now, we know that Stan Kenton and the Innovations 1951 are at the Civic Opera House on November 10 and 11, which allows Shelly Manne to bring together some of the orchestra's musicians to record four pieces.

The septet includes: Count Candoli, Bill Russo, Art Pepper, Bob Cooper, Gene Esposito (piano), Don Bagley and Shelly Manne.

Two compositions by Bill Russo: " Pooch McGooch " and " The Count on Rush Street " then two standards: " All of Me " sung (!) by Shelly (Sinatra fears nothing) and " Back in Your Own Backyard " interpreted by Shelby Davis (a Mrs Russo).

On January 7, 1952, in Los Angeles, the second session brought together Conte Candoli and Shorty Rogers, Jimmy Giuffre, Bob Gordon, Frank Patchen (piano), Joe Mondragon and Shelly who sang on "It Don't Mean A Thing". Three other tracks are recorded: "The Princess of Evil", composed by Bill Russo, "Deep People", attributed to Russo-Rogers-Giuffre and "Slightly Brightly" to Russo-Rogers.

These titles, except for Shelby Davis, were released on a Savoy LP vinyl (MG 12045 - Jazz Composers Workshop Series) plus seven tracks performed by the Bill Russo Orchestra and discussed below. The recordings are signed Rudy Van Gelder.

As usual, Bill pays a lot of attention to his orchestrations, even in a small band, switching with flexibility and intelligence from very cool sounds to very open timbres. For his solo performances, he wisely opts for a certain simplicity, without taking risks. On the other hand, the Candoli, Rogers, Pepper, Cooper, Giuffre, Gordon and Shelly, of course, demonstrate radiant creativity aided by flawless virtuosity and exemplary musical sense.

The conceptions Bill Russo defends are very personal, especially in terms of the overall sound he wants to give to the jazz big band by using sections of the orchestra, in whole or in part, which he associates in an unusual way to obtain a "sound" that will very often be characteristic of the West Coast.

But Bill does not linger in California; he travels, and one can consider, very simply, that he "exports" a new musical culture, the fruit of his own convictions, and of which he is, to a large extent, the creator.

BACK TO CHICAGO

In the summer of 1950, the beginning of his long period of temporary absence with Stan Kenton, Bill Russo returned to Chicago with a whole series of new compositions for large, medium and small formations in very diverse and unusual instrumentations.

He formed a progressive jazz quintet with Lloyd Lifton on piano, Dom Carone on viola, Buddy Clark on bass, George Rott on drums, Bill on trombone and Shelby Davis on vocals. Lee Konitz occasionally appears as a featured performer. The ensemble plays Tuesday nights at the Airliner Club.

In February 1951, Bill organizes a new quintet which includes Lloyd Lifton, Kenny Mann on tenor, Al Poskonka on bass, Mickey Simonetta on drums, plus Shelby. They are every Monday and Tuesday at the Hi-Note club in Chicago.

Bill is also preparing two concerts for June 7 and 8 at Kimball Hall. Very interested in the music of 20th century composers, he plans to bring together jazz and classical musicians because he is convinced that, if the orchestration is well done, it is possible to make classically trained musicians swing perfectly.

The band is called "Pulse '51" and the concerts are such a success that Dave Usher, boss of Dee Gee Records, decides to record the band in all its variations.

Thanks to the vigilance of Jordi Pujol, boss of Fresh Sound Records (Spain), we are fortunate to have this recording and many others, in perfect conditions, on a CD (FSR-CD 527) "Portrait of an Intellectual Jazzman: Bill Russo".

As always at Fresh Sound/Blue Sounds, the booklet is very detailed; the relevant musicological comments are by Jordi Pujol.

The perfect organization of the site as well as the abundance and precision of the information relating to each CD or box set should also be emphasized.

The session was held on August 15, 1951 in Chicago under the title "A Recital in New American Music".

Two themes are performed by The Bill Russo Ensemble: Gail Brockman, trumpet, Bill Russo and Bill Porter, trombones, Chris Leuba and Ralph Meltzer, French horns, Clyde Bachand, tuba, Dom Carone, alto sax, Kenny Mann, tenor, Dan Handby, baritone, Lloyd Lifton, piano, Bob Leshner, guitar, Max Wayne, bass and Mickey Simonetta, drums.

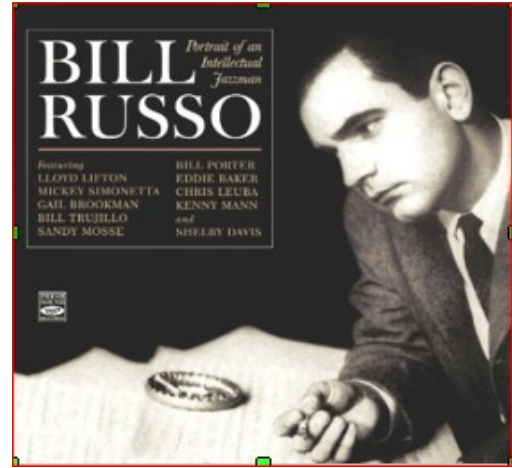
"An Aesthete On Clark Street" has a very light, even aerial swing, rich in beautiful sounds, especially on trombones, and excellent solos by Gail Brockman, Lloyd Lifton, Bill Russo and Kenny Mann. We have seen (p. 24) that the theme was taken up by Stan Kenton in 1953 in a different arrangement.

"S'posin" is pleasantly sung by Shelby Davis surrounded by Kenny Mann, Gail Brockman and a very inspired Max Wayne.



Jordi Pujol
(Photo: Jazz Wax/Marc Myers)

1



Portrait of an Intellectual Jazzman
(Photo: Fresh Sound Records)

The Bill Russo Quintet: Bill, Kenny Mann, Lloyd Lifton, Max Wayne and Mickey Simonetta play two songs, "Cathy" and "Cookie". Three soloists in the first: Bill, Kenny and Lloyd in an atmosphere reminiscent of Lennie Tristano, while the second highlights the excellent pianist Lloyd Lifton, also a pupil of Tristano.

The session continues with the Bill Russo Orchestra: Gail Brockman, trumpet, Bill Russo, trombone, Chris Leuba, Ralph Macciocchi, Leon Mendelshon and Ralph Meltzer, French horns, Clyde Bachand, tuba, Martin Lerner and Larry Molinelli, flutes, Robert Mayer, oboe, Wilbur Simpson, bassoon, Dom Carone, viola, Kenny Mann, tenor, Dan Handby, baritone, Lloyd Lifton, piano, Bob Leshner, guitar, Max Wayne, bass, Mickey Simonetta, drums and Shelby Davis, vocals.

The first theme is the magnificent ballad, "Boredom," composed by Bill, who plays the solo part. Two months later, on October 14, Stan Kenton will record it, at Cornell University, with Innovations 51 and a very different orchestration; Harry Betts will be principal trombone.

Shelby Davis sings two standards made famous by Billie Holiday: "Gloomy Sunday" and "Strange Fruit". In between, the orchestra performs Bill Russo's "Vignette", which makes wonderful use of wind instruments and the horn quartet.

Two tracks are recorded under the name Shelby Davis: "I Can't Get Started" and "My Man", accompanied by Lloyd Lifton, Bob Leshner, Max Wayne and Mickey Simonetta.

The CD also features Bill Russo in three sessions performed much later by Atlantic,

still in Chicago, where Bill is back after leaving Stan Kenton and passing through England and Germany.

The first took place on April 18, 1955. The Bill Russo Septet consists of: Bill on trombone and Bill Porter on slide trombone, Bill Trujillo and Sandy Mosse, tenor sax, Eddie Baker, piano, Israel Crosby, bass and Mickey Simonetta, drums.

Three very casual themes: "Under The Greenwood Tree", by a young musician from Chicago, Jerry Mulvihill, and two compositions by Bill Russo: "The First Saturday In May" and "Speculum".

As usual, Bill creates very original instrumental associations between trombone-tenor or between the two trombones and the two tenors, on a rhythmic structure, syncopated or not, with occasional introduction of counterpoint. In short, even in a small formation, he brings his score to life as if it were a large orchestra. In addition, each musician also has his or her share of solos. The metronomic support of Mickey Simonetta must be underlined.

The next day, April 19, three pieces are recorded by the Bill Russo Quintet: Bill Russo, trombone, Bill Trujillo, tenor, Eddie Baker, piano, Israel Crosby, bass and Mickey Simonetta, drums. The first one is "Bill's Blues" already recorded, on March 20, 1952, by Stan Kenton but with a powerful brass supplement. Here, the interpretation is all lightness and finesse. "L'Affaire Bugs" is by pianist Eddie Baker and "For My Sister" is by Bill Russo. Note the sound, the phrasing and the imagination of Bill Trujillo, who will be found in Stan Kenton in 1958.

The CD, a model of cool jazz, ends with a session on May 6, 1956 for which Bill conducts the Bill Russo Orchestra but in a different instrumentation, closer to the big band he knew from Stan : five trumpets, Johnny Howell, Al Mueller, Porky Panico, Dom Geraci and Dave Mulholland; five trombones, Tommy Shepard, Paul Grumbaugh, Paul Severson, Marc McDunn and Earl Hoffman; two French horns, Phillip Farkas and Frank Brouk; Don Hagner, tuba; eight saxos and woodwinds, Ronnie Kolher, Lennie Druss, Hobart Grimes, Vito Price, Mike Simpson, Gus Jean, Phil Wing and Ken Soderblom; on piano, Eddie Baker; double bass, Mel Schmidt; guitar, Earl Bakus and, drums, Mickey Simonetta.

This is the music for the ballet "The World of Alcina. »

It was in 1953 that Bill Russo had the idea of writing music for ballet that would reflect its jazz context. With the help of his friend Mel Bobick, he imagined a story and began composing in early 1954. The score was completed in August thanks to the advice of John J. Becker, an American composer with whom Bill studied classical music (from 1953 to 1955).

TWO CLASSIC MASTERS

While still at Stan Kenton's, Bill wanted to study classical music, but seriously, with a real composer, and it was John J. Becker in particular that he turned to.

Professor Becker taught at the Barat College of the Sacred Heart, a small Catholic college about 30 miles north of Chicago. In 2001, the college was taken over by DePaul University to become one of the seven colleges of the University under the name Barat College of DePaul University .

John Joseph Becker (1886 - 1961) is an American composer of contemporary classical music who, together with Charles Ives, Carl Ruggles, Henry Cowell and Wallingford Riegger, formed the American Five, known for their 'ultra-modern' music.

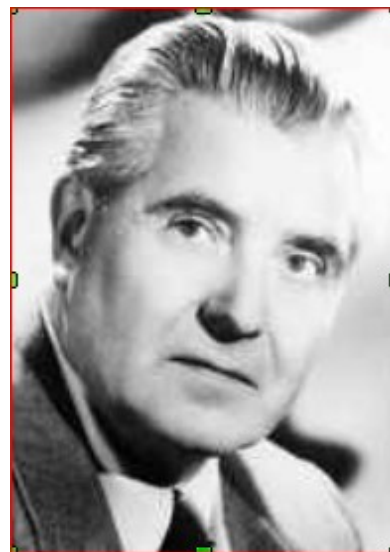
A very original composer, John J. Becker is, however, a bit the forgotten man of this group from which Ives and Cowell received the greatest recognition. But many music lovers, lovers of American music of the early 20th century, firmly regret that too few of the composer's works are included in the record companies' catalogues, particularly his Third Symphony: "Symphonia Brevis", his concertos, dances and songs. John J. Becker's music is modern in harmonic terms but also reveals his great admiration for the contrapuntalists of the 16th Century.

A CD (3-7207-2H1) KOCH International Classics is also available, which includes some scores by John J. Becker: " Concerto Arabesque ", " At Dieppe - a song cycle for voice and piano ", " Sound Piece N° 5 - a short sonata for piano " and " Sound Piece N° 1 ". The Monadnock Music Festival Orchestra is conducted by James Bolle; at the piano, the virtuoso from Rochester (N.Y. West), champion of contemporary music, the energetic Anthony de Mare; soprano Susan Narucki performs "At Dieppe", accompanied by Myron Romanul, American pianist but also a much sought-after conductor.

After John Joseph Becker, Bill Russo studied (from 1955 to 1957) with Karel Boleslav Jirák (1891 - 1972), a Czech composer and conductor born in Prague. In 1947, he was invited to the U.S.A. by the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University to give summer courses; he stayed there for twenty years. In 1967, he became professor of composition at the Chicago Conservatory until 1971. He died in Chicago on January 30, 1972.



John Joseph Becke
(Photo: Wikipedia)



Karel Boleslav Jirák
(Photo: Overgrown Path)

Although he left Czechoslovakia in 1947, Karel Jirák is considered one of the first representatives of modern music in his country. After graduating from the Faculty of Law in 1913, he turned his attention to music, especially composition. A brilliant composer and accomplished pedagogue, he was also very successful as a conductor, choirmaster, music critic and organizer of musical events. Between 1930 and 1945, Karel Jirák was director of the music department of Czechoslovak Radio.

In the field of composition, his main models are Otakar Ostrcil (Czech), Gustave Mahler and Richard Strauss. Although some of his works reveal his knowledge of Arnold Schoenberg's principles, he never freed himself from the great Romantic tradition, even after his arrival in the United States.

From his American period, his "Fifth" and "Sixth" Symphonies, "Four String Quartets", his "Piano Sonata No. 2", his "Requiem" and various vocal, instrumental and concertante pieces are particularly noteworthy.

Among his many theoretical writings, the best known is his "Theory of Musical Forms".

Unfortunately, his music is not very popular in recording studios either.

A CD Bonton Music (71 0623-2) "Karel Boleslav Jirák - Piano Compositions" allows you to appreciate some of his compositions for solo piano: "Little Piano Suite", "On The Divide", "Sonata No. 1", "Sonata No. 2" and "Five Miniatures" masterfully performed by the extraordinary Czech pianist Daniel Wiesner. A music that knows how to show serenity, humour, virtuosity, but also strength and power.

On a Cesky Rozhlas CD (CR0691-2) "Tribute To a Lost Generation - Czech Music for Oboe and Piano", Karel Jirák's "Sonata for Oboe and Piano, Op. 73 (1954)", in three movements, performed by Vilém Veverka (oboe) and Daniel Wiesner (piano)

can be heard. The same musicians also play music by Miloslav Kabelac, Jan Hanus, Klement Slavicky and Jan Klusak.

Both CDs are available on the website of: cdmusic.cz in Prague.

Until now, the elements of classical technique that Bill introduced into his scores, as in "Improvisation", for example, he did so either by intuition or from having read a lot. He would say:

"The best thing that happened in my life after Stan Kenton's orchestra was to study classical music. »

But his imperious need to learn and his natural eclecticism will lead him to build up, in isolation, "*an encyclopaedic musical culture*" (Alain Tercinet) and to approach very different musical genres.

Bill Russo also studied at DePaul University, the University of Illinois, and Roosevelt College (University), where he returned in 1955 to obtain his Bachelor of Arts degree in English.

A BALLET : "THE WORLD OF ALCINA"

Let's go back to the birth of the ballet "The World of Alcina" for which Bill never consulted a choreographer and which, therefore, will never be danced! Luckily, his music is recorded and it is with it that this copious Fresh Sound CD ends.

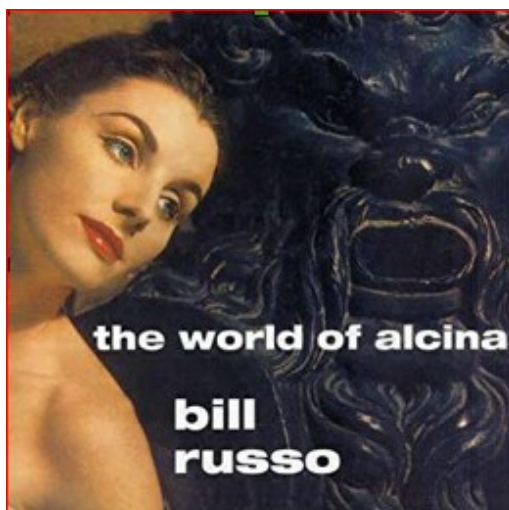
"The World of Alcina" consists of five dances:

1. Solo of Girl, 2. Solo of Boy, 3. Chorus and Solo of Girl, 4. Duet for Boy and Girl et 5. Chorus, Solo of Boy, Solo of Girl, Ensemble.

The ballet's argument is rather sad: the boy is looking for the ideal woman; when he thinks he has found her, he realizes that he is disappointed by her and her entourage but he accepts her as she is; at the end of the ballet, the boy realizes that he has won the woman he wanted but has, unfortunately, lost himself!

Musically, Bill mainly uses the orchestral mass but in many, varied and, as always, very subtle instrumental associations. Some passages are very rhythmic, even 'swinging', others are very slow, blues-like.

A first audition may astonish the jazz lover but, with a little insistence, he will discover all the richness, lyricism and strength that Bill wanted to bring to life each of these five dances.



(Photo: Studio One, Chicago/Adrian Lozano/Atlantic)

Another CD, released by Collectables Records (COL-CD-6916) and entitled "Bill Russo - The World of Alcina" is the exact equivalent of the LP originally released on Atlantic. It contains only the recordings made in 1955 and 1956, namely the six tracks in Septet and Quintet and the five dances of Alcina.

BILL IN LONDON

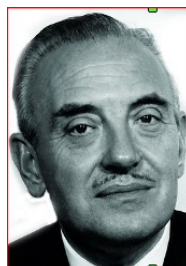
During his stay in England in 1955, Bill was very fond of Ted Heath's and Johnny Dankworth's orchestras (whose wife is the singer Cleo Laine). Of the latter, he declares that it is one of the most interesting jazz orchestras that still exist in the world and that should be encouraged.

From 1949 to 1955, Johnny Dankworth (1927-2010) won the Melody Maker Award in several categories: Musician of the Year, Orchestra, Alto/Soprano Saxos & Clarinet, Composer and Arranger; he was also an actor.

On 31 December 2005, he was knighted "*for services to music*" and became Sir John Phillip William Dankworth, CBE (Commander of the British Empire).

With his big band, assembled in 1953, he made a triumph at the Newport Jazz Festival on July 3, 1959. His success was such that a tour of the U.S.A. was organised, shared with Duke Ellington's orchestra.

It should be noted that, during a concert at the Albert Hall in London, Johnny Dankworth played the arrangement of "What's New" that Bill Russo had conceived for Stan Kenton.



Johnny Dankworth
(Photos: Rank Records/Discogs)

Ted Heath
(Photos : YouTube/London Records)

Johnny Dankworth's record production is particularly abundant and highlights his admirable qualities as an orchestrator: imagination, efficiency, diversity, humour, etc. Many reissues are available, notably on Vocalion, and also with Cleo Laine.

In 1955, Bill Russo composed "The English Suite", a four-movement piece for Ted Heath's orchestra: "Norwich Cathedral", "Point to Point", "Stonehenge" and "Procession".

The following year, relations between the English and American musicians' unions improved and two tours were organised: Stan Kenton in Europe and Ted Heath in the U.S.A. and it was during the latter's concert at Carnegie Hall on ¹ May 1956 that the last two parts of the Suite could be heard: "Stonehenge" and "Procession".

The concert, recorded by Decca, appears today on a Vocalion CD (CDLK 4248) which includes two LPs: "Ted Heath's First American Tour and at Carnegie Hall".

Bill Russo's scores are never easy to perform, but for Ted Heath's musicians, there is really no problem.

The first theme, "Stonehenge," is a kind of slow meditation for tenor saxophone. Red Price is the soloist. His magnificent sonority, very Getzian, creates a powerful contrast with the attacks of the orchestra.

As for the second piece, "Procession", which is faster, it features a masterful counterpoint of trombones, saxophones and trumpets, Bill Russo's signature sounds, very precise brass and an impeccable end point by the impressive drummer Ronnie Verrell.

The concert also features trumpets Bobby Pratt, Bert Ezard and Eddie Blair, viola Ronnie Chamberlain, bassist Johnny Hawksworth, pianist Frank Horrox and the extraordinary virtuoso Don Lusher on trombone.

Like many others by Ted Heath, this is a record you can't get tired of. We can only regret that the booklet doesn't mention the names of all the musicians.

From the age of 12, Ted (1902 - 69) plays, as trombone, in many English brass bands and orchestras but, fascinated by Glenn Miller's orchestra, he decides, in 1942, to break with his peaceful family life and to run the risk of creating his own orchestra. Very good idea on the artistic level but less happy on the financial side because, to reach the quality he aspires for his orchestra, Ted, the perfectionist, hires only the best musicians and the salaries are, of course, of the same level.

The whole Ted Heath thing is all-knowing and all-perfect. His immense discography proves it: variety and dance music but also exciting jazz big band supported by excellent arrangements, always very swinging, and wonderful soloists; his concerts recorded at the London Palladium are the proof and, the one at Carnegie Hall, the confirmation.

He has received rave reviews from Count Basie, Stan Kenton, Woody Herman, Tony Bennett and others.

Ted Heath's U.S.A. tour was organized in the form of a big American-style show: "Record Star Parade of 1956" in which June Christy, Nat "King" Cole and The Four Freshmen also took part. It is a triumph!

Among the English orchestras, let's not forget the spectacular drummer Jack Parnell (1923 - 2010) who worked with Ted Heath from 1945 to 1951 and was one of those who encouraged him to orient his ensemble more and more towards a real jazz big band.

Jack Parnell's band includes many jazz musicians, including some from Ted Heath, but also people like Ronnie Scott, Pete King and Jimmy Deuchar.

By 1956, Jack was primarily involved in music direction for A.T.V. television shows. He studied conducting with George Malcolm and for 25 years he directed approximately 2,500 shows involving artists such as Sammy Davis Jr., Barbra Streisand and Lena Horne (The Muppet Show).

In 1982, Jack Parnell returned to jazz and formed a small ensemble with his friend, trumpeter Kenny Baker. Two of his sons are also drummers.

Still in England, where the orchestral tradition, especially for dance, is not new, trumpet player Syd Lawrence and Scottish trombonist/arranger Johnny Keating have also each conducted excellent big bands, some of which are still available.

More recently, the brilliant drummer Pete Cater, a disciple of Buddy Rich, leads a particularly effective orchestra in new arrangements by today's musicians such as the very active Frank Griffith.

COLOGNE

Bill Russo's 1955 trip to Europe also took him to Germany.

On August 14 and 18, he is in Cologne and records "Made in Cologne" with the Bill Russo-Hans Koller Combo: Bill Russo, trombone; Hans Koller, tenor sax and, depending on the tracks, Emil Mangelsdorff, viola (brother of trombone Albert Mangelsdorff); Willie Sanner, baritone; Roland Kovac, piano; Attila Zoller, guitar; Johnny Fischer, bass and Rudi Sehring, drums.



Hans Koller
(Photo: Westdeutscher Rundfunk 3)

The excellent sax player, Hans Koller (1921-2003) is of Austrian origin but, since 1950, he has built most of his career in Germany and is very active, playing in the company of the best European and American musicians.

Sessions scheduled with Bill Russo include four of his compositions and arrangements: "Cathy", "Bar In The Air", "Made In Cologne" and "Bill's Blues", plus "Indiana", "These Foolish Things", "Passacaglia" and "Together".

These 8 interpretations are among the 225 tracks of an impressive box set (LP or CD) Mod Records Cologne "Jazz In West Germany 1954-56" (CDBE 605363) whose price can exceed 250 €.

For completeness, let's also mention that these musicians also recorded the following songs: "When Your Lover Has Gone", "Jutta", "Sophisticated Lady", "Pennies From Heaven", "Rose Room", "Long John", "Autumn In New York" and "EVG" but which would no longer be available.

Small precaution: not to be confused with the German-born English pianist Hans Thelonus Koller (1970), much appreciated in the New Jazz orientation.

On August 24, 1955, we find Bill in Hannover with the New Jazz Group Hannover:

Bernd Rabe, viola; Gert Mann, piano and vibraphone; Heinz Kitschenberg, guitar; Eberhard Pommerenke, bass and Helmut Perschke, drums to record four tracks : "Night in Tunisia", "An Aesthete on Clarck Avenue", "Sweets" and "You Go To My Head" on a Brunswick 45 rpm EP (10032 EPB) entitled "An American In Hannover", a record that has become extremely rare and whose value is estimated at around €80.

In Germany, Bill Russo also wrote for the exciting orchestra of Kurt Edelhagen (1920 - 1982), a great admirer of Stan Kenton, who also performed the music for the ballet "The World of Alcina".

Thanks to the professional side of his musicians, Kurt Edelhagen can afford to be very versatile in his musical choices. In jazz, the different sections of his orchestra are undeniably efficient and the soloists have perfect instrumental technique as well as a very personal and sometimes even really subtle imagination.

NEW YORK : Lee & Julian

After completing the recording of his ballet "Alcina" in Chicago in 1956, Bill Russo became openly involved in classical music and published, in 1957, an "Allegro for Wind Band" (Op.12), an "Entertainment for Flute, Clarinet, Two Trumpets, Trombone, Timpani, Three Violins and Piano" (Op.13) and his "Symphony Nr. 1, for Orchestra" (Op.15).

The year 1958 is, for Bill, marked by important works of writing for two great jazzmen (alto saxes), two very strong personalities, but two styles very different from each other: a series of compositions and arrangements is dedicated to Lee Konitz, another is dedicated to Julian Cannonball Adderley.

For Lee Konitz, Bill has chosen to create a musical context that is often lyrical, even contemplative, adopting rather slow tempos for the most part, and a very simple orchestral ensemble, consisting of a string quartet, which participates actively in the musical action, and a rhythm section used very discreetly to punctuate certain passages and create surprise; a serious music, therefore, a sort of 'chamber jazz' supported, however, by a dynamic, modern writing, made of research and intelligence, which makes listening always interesting.

Lee evolves, in this atmosphere, with his usual ease, his dazzling technique, a very well captured aerial sound and an admirable fluidity; the scores are really written for him, by someone who knows him perfectly well and for a very long time. Bill admits:

"It's very difficult for me to write for the alto saxophone without thinking of Lee, but I think he's more lyrical than he sees himself, so the music here has a bit of a retrospective side."

And this series of recordings allows us, indeed, to appreciate the wonderful melodist that Lee Konitz can be but also the brilliant swinging improviser that he can become, as in the second movement of the "Music for Alto". Sublime in his presentation of "What's New", supported, among other things, by a double bass very present and that we find besides in the "Blues for Our Children" that Lee spontaneously prolongs with two choruses just for fun (dixit Bill). Also worth mentioning is the beautiful harmony between Lee and the musicians of the string quartet, four virtuosos led by violinist Gene Orloff.

Bill Russo conducted the session on February 6, 1958, for the Verve firm, which released an LP entitled "Lee Konitz with Strings: An Image".

Three standards are on the program: "Round Midnight", "I Got It Bad" and "What's New". A beautiful theme by Bill Russo: "The Daffodil's Smile" and the "Blues For Our Children" attributed to Lee and Bill. But above all, the disc includes two great pieces composed by Bill Russo: "Music For Alto Saxophone And Strings", in three movements, and "An Image Of Man", in seven parts, in the form Theme and Variations, with Billy Bauer on guitar and a very beautiful solo, in the third variation, played by Alan Shulman on cello.

The other rhythm musicians are not named, except Lou Stein on piano.

The English firm, AvidJazz, which specializes in bringing together four LPs of an artist on two CDs (at a reduced price) in its Four Classic Albums series, had the very good idea of bringing together, in the same box set (EMSC 1074), four excellent vinyls by Lee Konitz: "An Image", "You and Lee" (magnificent arrangements by Jimmy Giuffre), "In Harvard Square" and "Konitz".



Julian Cannonball Adderley
(Photo : NPR)

Later in 1958, on August 20 and 21, recordings were made of the ten arrangements Bill Russo wrote for a nine-member ensemble featuring the wonderful viola Julian Cannonball Adderley (1928-1975).

The EmArcy LP "Jump For Joy" is released in 1959.

The orchestra, conducted by Bill Russo, consists of: Emmett Berry, trumpet; Leo Kruczek and Gene Orloff, violins; Dave Schwartz, viola; George Ricci, cello; Bill Evans, piano; Barry Galbraith, guitar; Milt Hinton, bass and Jimmy Cobb, drums. Cannonball is therefore the soloist.

Of the ten themes, six are by Duke Ellington: "Just Squeeze Me", "I Got It Bad", "Jump for Joy", "Blip-Blip", "Chocolate Shake" and "Brown-Skin Gal", three by Paul Francis Webster: "Two Left Feet", "If Life Were All Peaches and Cream" and "The Tune of The Hickory Stick" and one by Sid Kuller: "Nothin".

This recording has a history. At the beginning of the 1950s, the tendency among some jazz musicians was to play as a soloist with string accompaniment; it was a bit of a challenge, as he found himself alone, in front of the orchestra, constantly challenging his imagination.

There are several examples that have remained famous: Charlie Parker (1950) on arrangements by Jimmy Carroll, Joe Lipman and Jimmy Mundy; Dizzy Gillespie (1954) playing the scores of Johnny Richards; Clifford Brown (1955) playing Neal Hefti, and so on. Even today, many young musicians still use the "with strings" formula.

At this time, the monthly record production was equivalent to that of a year, a few years earlier. Firms must therefore be original in their creativity. Thus, in the summer of 58, Jack Tracy, from Mercury, suggested that Julian should do something completely new with a string quartet, but avoiding the overly popular standards. Julian suggests: "*Let's take the themes from Jump for Joy!*"

"Jump For Joy" is a show imagined by Duke Ellington in 1941, which is more authentically black than George Gershwin's "Porgy and Bess".

Luckily, "Jump For Joy" reappeared in Miami at the beginning of 1958, with the participation of the Duke's orchestra, then in Los Angeles.

To write the necessary arrangements, Bill Russo is the perfect choice: well known since his work with Stan Kenton and, what's more, a great admirer of Duke Ellington, he takes up the challenge with his usual boldness and succeeds brilliantly in a very personal way.

The use, once again, of the string quartet with, in addition, a fifth voice, that of the

double bass; an excellent jazz rhythm section; Emmett Berry's mute hovering over the violins and Cannonball's very parkerian alto sax playing the pizzicato of the strings used, sometimes even as percussion, make this little gem an ensemble that one has more and more pleasure in hearing and rehearing. And it swings, ... even the strings!

Here we find confirmation of what Bill always claimed:

"You can make a whole symphony orchestra swing, if the orchestration is well written! »

"The coming together of two amazing personalities on the themes of Duke produces music that is unlike anything Cannonball and Bill Russo have ever done before" (Leonard Feather).

The ten tracks are released on a CD with twelve pieces recorded in October 1955 by Cannonball with a string orchestra, in arrangements written and conducted by Richard Hayman. These are beautiful, well-known American ballads, performed in a very pleasant way and in which Julian evolves with ease. We find ourselves, however, in a totally different musical world from the one that belongs to Bill Russo.

The CD is published by Verve, in the Jazz Collection Folio (EFVEi-003) under the title "J. Cannonball Adderley and Strings - Jump for Joy/Jump for a Dream".

A GREAT SYMPHONY : "TITANS"

During 1958, Bill Russo also worked on his "Symphony number 2 (Titans)" commissioned by Leonard Bernstein (1918 - 1990), an immense classical musician and great jazz lover, who conducted its world premiere at the head of the New York Philharmonic.

Four concerts were scheduled for April 16, 17, 18 and 19, 1959 at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

On the programme: a piece by Irving Fine, "Serious Song - A Lament for String Orchestra"; by Ned Rorem, the "Symphony No. 3" and, by Bill Russo, the "Symphony No. 2 (Titans)".

After the interruption, Isaac Stern performs Beethoven's magnificent "Violin Concerto".

In Bill Russo's mind, the 'Titans' are the 'Humans', potentially capable of such great, even heroic, things, in a positive sense of course.

The work consists of four parts: "Allegro", "Theme and Variations", "Scherzo" and "Finale".



Leonard Bernstein
(Photo: WQXR)

In this last movement, Bill uses a trumpet soloist who is none other than the phenomenal Maynard Ferguson, whose exceptional possibilities in the high register of the instrument are highlighted here with an extreme intensity that is not without reminding us of certain pieces from the Kentonian "Innovations".

Very impressive! For the soloist, it is a formidable tour de force that is particularly demanding, even for a virtuoso of the calibre of Maynard Ferguson, a veritable 'Titan' of the trumpet.

In this regard, we recall the appreciation pronounced by an eminent trumpet professor (quoted from memory, perhaps Claude Gordon?) :

"Two musicians have revolutionized the technique of the instrument: Dizzy Gillespie, by playing impossible phrases, and Maynard Ferguson, by reaching impossible notes. »

The score of the symphony is perfectly structured, powerful, even percussive, requiring a titanic orchestra. The charismatic Lenny gives it, obviously, all the relief it deserves; he will say that it is jazz but Bill does not share this opinion.

Maynard will keep excellent memories of these concerts with the Philharmonic, even when Lenny, with his usual courtesy, stopped him (in rehearsal), when he had only played a few simple notes, to say to him :

"Mr. Ferguson, maybe you didn't notice it, but I think it's supposed to be played mezzo-forte. »

But, before Maynard could answer, William Vacchiano, then first trumpet of the

orchestra, told Leonard Bernstein :

"Maestro, ... THIS IS Mr Ferguson's mezzo-strong ! "»,

which provokes a great burst of laughter from the whole orchestra and also from the conductor.

It seems, however, that when Leonard arrives at the first rehearsal, he is a little nervous because, having gone through the score, especially the fourth movement, he asks Bill Russo :

"Are you sure Maynard can do it ?"

"Of course I am !"

answers Bill, who knew, from Stan Kenton, the trumpeter's astonishing technical possibilities and had taken them into account when writing the solo.

For his symphony "Titans", Bill Russo was awarded the Serge Koussevitsky Prize in 1959, a prestigious recognition that officially marked his entry into the world of classical music.

The complete recording of "Titans" can be found in a large boxed set of 10 CDs, 13 hours of music, (\$195 new, but also available, cheaper, on the second-hand market) published in 2000 by the New York Philharmonic "Bernstein Live" (Ref. 34318).

Bill Russo is in the company of some of the greatest composers of the baroque, classical and modern eras, of European and American origin.

It should be noted that the Production had the elegance of not placing any of Leonard Bernstein's many compositions in it. Other boxes are dedicated to him.

Excerpts from these recordings are available on a single CD (Ref. 2014) "Bernstein Live - Selections" which features the fourth movement (with Maynard) of the "Titans" symphony as well as parts of works by Wagner, Schumann, Bruckner, Shchedrin, Prokofiev, Hindemith, Mozart and Ives (77 minutes).

On YouTube, Ulrich Dünnebach has posted the complete audio recording of "Titans" with several photos by Leonard Bernstein.

Not to be confused with Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 1 'Titan'.

YouTube also allows you to see and hear many other very interesting moments dedicated to William Russo.

Contents of the 10 CD box set :

Track Listings

Disc 1 (78:44)

- 1-4 STRAVINSKY: *The Song of the Nightingale*, 1956
- 5 ELGAR: *Cockaigne (In London Town)*, 1963
- 6-8 RACHMANINOFF: *Piano Concerto No. 3* (Berman), 1977

Disc 2 (74:32)

- 1 THOMSON: *The Seine at Night*, 1961
- 2-4 MOZART: *Piano Concerto No. 23* (Janis), 1960
- 5-10 WEBERN: *Six Pieces for Orchestra*, 1958
- 11-18 HINDEMITH: *Symphony, Mathis der Maler*, 1956

Disc 3 (77:36)

- 1-15 BRITTEN: *Spring Symphony* (Vyvyan, Sarfaty, Lewis), 1963
- 16-18 SCHUMANN: *Cello Concerto (du Pré)*, 1967
- 19-20 SIBELIUS: *Songs for Soprano and Orchestra* (Curtin), 1965

Disc 4 (77:40)

- 1 MOZART: *Overture to The Magic Flute*, 1966
- 2-3 BEETHOVEN: *Piano Concerto No. 3* (Kempff), 1966
- 4 FOSS: *Quintets for Orchestra*, 1981
- 5-8 COPLAND: *Dance Symphony*, 1981

Disc 5 (72:56)

- 1-2 PROKOFIEV: *Piano Concerto No. 2* (Ashkenazy), 1958
- 3-11 MARKEVITCH: *Leare*, 1958
- 12 VARÈSE: *Arcana*, 1958

Disc 6 (78:47)

- 1 BARBER: *Second Essay*, 1959
- 2-6 RUSSO: *Symphony No. 2 ("Titans")* (Ferguson), 1959
- 7-8 RUGGLES: *Men and Mountains*, 1958
- 9-10 IVES: *Symphony No. 2*, 1951

Disc 7 (78:41)

- 1 SHCHEDRIN: *Mischievous Folk Ditties*, 1967
- 2-4 STRAVINSKY: *Capriccio* (Lipkin), 1962
- 5-7 HENZE: *Symphony No. 5*, 1963
- 8-10 BEETHOVEN: *Triple Concerto* (Bernstein, Corigliano, Varga), 1959

Disc 8 (79:30)

- 1-3 BACH: *Brandenburg Concerto No. 5* (Wummer, Bernstein, Stern), 1959
- 4-7 BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 6*, 1976

Disc 9 (79:42)

- 1-3 Introduction and comments by Leonard Bernstein
- COPLAND: *An Outdoor Overture*, 1962
- 4-6 Introduction and comments by Bernstein
- XENAKIS: *Pithoprakta*, 1964
- 7-8 Introduction by Bernstein
- BRANT: *Antiphony One*, 1960
- 9-10 Introduction by Bernstein
- BOULEZ: *Improvisation sur Mallarmé I* (Nixon), 1960
- 11-12 Introduction by Bernstein
- CAGE: *Atlas Eclipticalis* (Tudor), 1964

Disc 10 (79:57)

- 1-4 WAGNER: *Scenes from Götterdämmerung* (Farrell, Thomas), 1970

THE RAVINIA FESTIVAL

Bill Russo's "Titans" symphony was also performed at the prestigious and exceptional Ravinia Festival (Illinois) on July 30, 1967, during one of the Sunday afternoon "Four O'Clock" concerts by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by Seiji Ozawa with the virtuoso trumpeter, a former Kentonian (from 1958 to 61 + 66) and also very comfortable in the high-pitched register, as soloist: Bud Brisbois, who died much too soon (1936-1978).



Austin Dean "Bud" Brisbois
(Photo: Sound Cloud)



Seiji Ozawa
(Photo : Spotify)



(Photos: Ravinia Festival/Time Out Chicago/Saryan)

In addition to "Titans", the programme includes Vieuxtemps' "Violin Concerto No. 4" by the South Korean violinist Young Uck Kim, the world premiere of Lucas Foss' "Baroque Variations" and William Schuman's "Symphony No. 3".

Established in 1904 and located on Ravinia Park Road in Highland Park (north of Chicago on Lake Michigan), the Ravinia Festival is the oldest outdoor music festival in North America. A non-profit organization, it attracts more than 600,000 music lovers during the 120 to 150 events organized each year during the summer months from June to September. The program consists of classical music, light music, jazz, musical theatre, etc.

Outdoors, the Concert Pavilion can accommodate 3,350 people. Inside, the Martin Theatre has 850 seats and the Bennett Gordon Hall offers 400 seats for chamber music lovers.

Thanks to the Festival's income, the Organization's main mission is to make good music known to as many people as possible through voluntary teaching: 75,000 people benefit from it every year.

Official website to discover : www.ravinia.org ; click on 'Schedule' then 'Printable' to

discover the fabulous program of the season (three months and a half).

THE BLUES REVISITED

Let's go back to 1959; Bill composes a "Fugue for Jazz Orchestra", Opus 18 No. 2.

The same year, the Columbia firm had the excellent idea of commissioning an original composition and an arrangement on the Blues from four talented young musicians who represent this school of modern music whose objective is to orient jazz towards the concert hall thanks to scores based on tradition but whose writing is more diversified and elaborate.

The four elected are Manny Albam, Bill Russo, Teddy Charles and Teo Macero, the latter being A&R at Columbia and the director. They will each direct their own work.

The first session took place on April 30, 1959, in New York City, and featured an excellent octet: Donald Byrd on trumpet, Bob Brookmeyer on trombone, Hal McKusick, alto sax and flute, Frank Socolow, tenor and oboe, Teddy Charles, vibraphone, Mal Waldron, piano, George Duvivier on bass and Ed Shaughnessy on drums.

Teddy Charles composed "Swinging Goatsherd Blues" and arranged Harold Arlen's popular "Blues in The Night".

Bill Russo has signed an original "East Hampton Blues" and an arrangement of Bix Beiderbecke's "Davenport Blues".

The second session was held on May 15 with a different but perfectly comparable staff: Art Farmer, trumpet, Frank Rehak, trombone, Phil Woods, viola, Al Cohn, tenor and baritone, Bill Evans, piano, Eddie Costa, vibraphone, Addison Farmer, bass and Ed Shaughnessy, drums.

A composition by Manny Albam: "Night Crawlers" and his arrangement of the "Tin Roof Blues" attributed to Paul Mares, Walter Melrose, Mel Stitzel, Leon Rappolo, George Brunies and Ben Pollack (New Orleans Rhythm Kings).

As for Teo Macero, he wrote "Blues for Amy" and arranged W.C. Handy's classic "St. Louis Blues".

The musicians of both ensembles are great jazzmen who are no longer presented and who improvise marvelously but also know how to dominate, without the slightest hesitation, the innovative and sometimes a little surprising writing that our four heroes use in their treatment of the Blues.

Bill Russo says:

"Blues doesn't only belong to traditional jazz; it is also for us, with its lyricism and nobility. »

His composition, "East Hampton Blues", is dedicated to the writer and biographer Jeffrey Potter, who lived in the city of East Hampton (Long Island - New York) and whose house is considered by Bill as a true refuge.

In this score, Bill tries to bring out the emotional and religious qualities that the Blues can contain.

We find there the musical architecture dear to Bill Russo, namely a very elaborate orchestration, even in small groups: introduction to the oboe, calm, serenity, entry into swing through exchanges between trombone, flute and trumpet (mute), piano solo, viola solo, ensemble, trombone solo, trumpet solo (open), drum solo, ensemble, vibraphone solo, exchanges by the ensemble, finale by flute, oboe, trombone and trumpet (mute) and all this in five minutes. Wonderful!

His arrangement of "Davenport Blues" is part of a similar, very diversified approach: entry into the traditional blues by trombone, bass, piano, saxophones and trumpet; swinging by saxophones with dominant viola, vibraphone solo, short exchanges trumpet - trombone, viola solo, trombone solo then back to the quiet for the finale by oboe and trombone.

It's thoughtful, spontaneous and very beautiful at the same time.

The other scores are equally worthy of interest. The styles are different, but all four of our friends are achieving their goals brilliantly, even if some opinions give a slight advantage to the more advanced music of Bill Russo.



Manny Albam, Bill Russo, Teo Macero, Teddy Charles...
(Photo: Fresh Sound Records)

Here again, the document is saved, by Jordi Pujol, a first time on a Fresh Sound

Records CD (381) under the title "Something New, Something Blue". A second time, under the same name (CD 539) but with, in addition, arrangements by the versatile Teo Macero and Teddy Charles on Frank Loesser's musical "Swinging Guys and Dolls".

MUSIC AND INTELLECT

In 1957, Bill Russo created his own orchestra, dedicated to "*the excitement of the intellect*", with which he gave concerts and played at New York's Birdland.

The year 1960 was a very busy year for Bill.

He published a "Concerto Grosso for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra" and the "Variations on the American Theme 'When the Saints Go Marching In' for Orchestra.»

On March 7, he conducts his orchestra at Bell Sound Studios in New York for the recording of his suite "School of Rebellion".

Why this title? Bill Russo explains, this time as a philosopher:

"Rebellion is an attack on the established order. It can take two forms: the first destroys and denies everything, the second retains, from the past, what is good and builds something new with what is worthwhile.

This orchestra represents a rebellion in the second sense: an affirmation of the world and the aspiration towards a good life. It is also a school for composers, musicians and listeners.

We seek to sensitize the intellect: discipline, technique, control and form lead to passion. Passion cannot be separated from intelligence. As the poet said: "The brain feels and the heart thinks..."

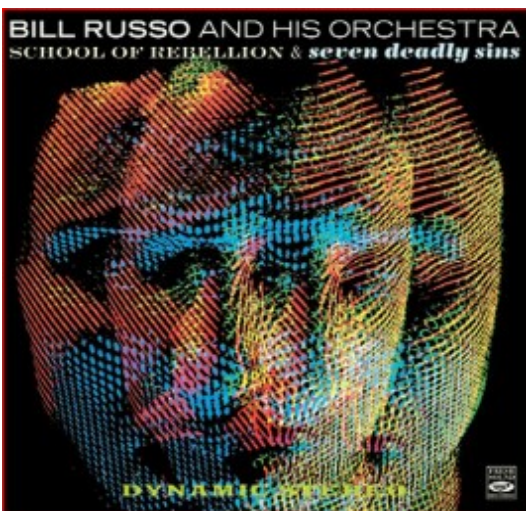
The orchestra assembled for "School of Rebellion" is magnificent. It has twenty-two musicians (including Bill). Four trumpets: Burt Collins, Don Stratton, Johnny Glasel and Lou Mucci; four trombones: Bill Elton, Don Sebesky, Eddie Bert, Al Robertson plus Paul Faulise, bass trombone; five saxophones: Dick Meldonian and Tony Buonpastore, violas; Frank Socolow, tenor and oboe; Larry Wilcox, tenor and Tony Ferina, baritone; Al Schackman, guitar; Irv Manning, double bass; Ed Shaughnessy, drums; and four cellos: Seymour Barab, Alan Shulman, Julius Ehrenwerth and Charles McCracken.

The ensemble is designed as a traditional big band. The cellos are there to soften a little the effect produced by all these blowers.

The layout in the studio is designed to promote stereophony; the orchestra is cut in

half, by section, half left, half right, and the scores are written in the form of dialogues between the two groups.

The entrance is solemn with "The Golden Apple", short solo by Burt Collins (muted) and intervention by Bill Elton. Bill follows with an arrangement of Dizzy Gillespie's "Manteca" which allows us to hear a very lesterian solo by Frank Socolow, then it is "Theme and Variations" with the excellent soloists Don Sebesky and Larry Wilcox plus Ed Shaughnessy and Lou Mucci. "What is the Difference" is taken, by saxophones, trombones and trumpets, on a fast tempo well supported by Irv Manning's bass, Ed Shaughnessy offers himself a very energetic break then it is the calm transition of Seymour Barab, on cello, followed by some amusing exchanges between clarinet, oboe and brass. The piece ends on a very nice medium swing. The next theme, "Introduction", is a beautiful meditative page introduced by Frank Socolow (oboe) and Bill Elton; the orchestra's interventions are very moderate. "Sonatina", another fast tempo, features beautiful trombone ensembles, a very lively solo by Don Sebesky followed by the excellent Larry Wilcox. "Pickwick", a kind of counterpoint, gives the floor to the little known Frank Socolow and Don Sebesky. Dick Meldonian begins, very gently, a magnificent "Tanglewood", which Bill dedicates to his daughter Camille. The orchestra provides a splendid background to this beautiful melody and finally gives the floor back to the soloist. To end the rebellion, we find the theme "An Aesthete on Clark Street" in an even different arrangement: trombones enter, then trumpets with a very marked stereo effect. Solos by Larry Wilcox and Don Sebesky, always in great form.



School of Rebellion + Seven Deadly Sins CD
(Photos: Fresh Sound Records/Roulette/Len Gittleman)



Seven Deadly Sins LP

Originally, this recording day is published on a Roulette LP. Thanks to the genius of Jordi Pujol, we can have it on a Fresh Sound CD (FSR-CD 609 Dynamic Stereo) with, in addition, the music of another suite by Bill Russo: "Seven Deadly Sins" (The

Seven Deadly Sins), also from a Roulette LP recorded, on August 2, 1960, still in the Bell Sound Studio in New York.

The orchestra is similar to that of " Rebellion ", only a few names change : the trumpets are Burt Collins, Danny Stiles, Johnny Glasel and Lou Mucci ; trombones : Bill Elton, Don Sebesky, Eddie Bert, Mike Zwerin and Kenneth Guffey, bass trombone; Dick Meldonian, alto sax and clarinet, Tony Buonpastore, viola, Larry Wilcox and Don Mikiten, tenors and Tony Ferina, baritone; Howard Collins, guitar; John Drew, double bass; Ed Shaughnessy, drums and all four cellos, Seymour Barab, Avron Coleman, Lorin Bernsohn and George Koutzen.

Bill approaches such a serious subject (Deadly) with the utmost seriousness. The music is mostly very written, in the form of themes and variations, and includes rare improvised solos (by Don Mikiten, Don Sebesky, Dick Meldonian and Burt Collins). Other passages for soloists are written entirely by Bill Russo.

The opening theme, "Seven Deadly Sins", is imposing and calm, heralding a great reflection on the subject. "Greed" (Avarice) creates a very reserved atmosphere for Lou Mucci's intimate mute and Don Mikiten's beautiful tenor. Bill continues directly with " Lechery " (Luxure) introduced by Bill Elton, followed by Seymour Barab, Dick Meldonian on clarinet and then Don Mikiten. "Gluttony" (Gluttony) is more abundant, more lively, in the fugue genre. "Anger" (Anger) really gives the image of an anger that rumbles but above all of an anger that comes back, that waits generously but still ends up exploding with the brass instruments to fall down thanks to the strings. "Envy" (Envy) starts on a more lively tempo: feverishness, envy of everything, sounds reminiscent of Lennie Tristano, swinging trombones and a magnificent solo by Don Mikiten. The music of "Sloth" (Laziness) perfectly illustrates the subject; we are in the low and slow tones that show how desperate laziness is. On the other hand, "Pride (Pride) - Epilogue" is in a rhythmic, hectic, even triumphant mode, led, by an efficient double bass solo, towards a calm, tranquil finale that takes up the initial theme, the serene spirit: it is forgiveness.

About this CD, Jeff Sultanof, musician, arranger, publisher, American music historian and immense musicologist, tells us :

"These recordings are the first of an orchestra that Bill Russo organized for a new approach to big band music. The music that Bill Russo wrote during this period has a rather austere atmosphere, but as this CD shows, he is creating fascinating, wonderful music that means a lot to him. He was still telling me about it, many years later, when the two LPs were no longer in the market, with the hope that one day they would be reissued. "

Jordi Pujol did it!



Jeff Sultanof
(Photo: ejazzlines)

A LITTLE VOCAL

Between the recording sessions devoted, on the one hand, to "School of Rebellion" and, on the other hand, to "Seven Deadly Sins", Bill Russo conducted, on June 23 and 24, 1960 in New York for the Roulette label, the arrangements he wrote for the singer Wanda Stafford for her first album "In Love for the Very First Time" and her New York debut.

Originally from Indianapolis (Indiana), Wanda was only 20 years old at the time, which sometimes explains a certain fragility in her voice, especially in ballads. On the other hand, she already has a good jazzy experience, for the phrasing and the rhythm, because she sang in bars and clubs when she was still a teenager.

And it was during one of these auditions that a pianist advised him to listen to, among others, Ella Fitzgerald, June Christy and Chris Connor. Full of admiration, she chose to follow their example and adopt, according to her own sensitivity, the sound of the cool school. In 2011, she is recording a CD entitled "Something Cool" (W. Inc. Records 884501646222), based on the model of June Christy, which has been admired by the specialist critics.

Wanda Stafford's discography includes several CDs produced either in the studio or in public, with accompaniment by small jazz ensembles.

For the Roulette sessions, Bill Russo uses three types of training whose musicians are of the highest level both as soloists and sidemen:

a big band (5 tracks) which includes trumpets Bernie Glow, Burt Collins, Louis Mucci and Johnny Glasel ; trombones Bill Elton, Don Sebesky, Eddie Bert and

Kenneth Guffey ; Dick Meldonian, clarinet and viola, Tony Ferina, baritone; Howard Collins, guitar; John Drew, bass; Ed Shaughnessy, drums and, on piano, the unexpected Bill Evans who, at the time, was playing in trio in New York clubs; a septet (4 tracks) with Bill Elton, Don Sebesky, Kenneth Guffey, Dick Meldonian, Bill Evans, John Drew and Ed Shaughnessy ;
 puis un quintet (3 plages) : Burt Collins, Bill Evans, Howard Collins, John Drew et Ed Shaughnessy.

Au programme : « In Love for the Very First Time », « I Feel Pretty », « Hooray for Love », « At Long Last Love », « The Most Beautiful Words (in the World) », « Ridin' on the Moon », « Let There Be Love », « I Enjoy Being a Girl », « Come by Sunday », « The Late, Late Show », « I Only Have Eyes for You » et « Love ».

The tracks chosen are part of the great repertoire of American song but, as usual, Bill Russo completely renews them thanks to his extraordinary inventive power which goes from the simple ballad to the most percussive swing and the use, on several occasions, of a very solid blues, in the manner of Count Basie, supported by a particularly effective rhythm.

If we refer to the interview given by Wanda Stafford in 2014 to the musicologist Marc Myers (Jazz Wax), we can imagine that, despite the ease of adaptation that the singer knows how to adapt, the great diversity contained in each arrangement posed some small problems during the performances:

"The arrangers ask you to integrate yourself into their score. Bill Russo wasn't a very friendly guy; I don't think he'd ever even heard me sing. So he designed the arrangements the way he wanted them, and it was my problem to fit into that context and get out of it. I rehearsed the songs for two weeks with my friend, the pianist Al Plank. When I first tried them out in the studio, Russo said, 'You have to be in the right places; you can't be after the beat' and it was natural for me to get behind the beat (apparently Bill would have rightly admitted this point of view). There I realised that it wasn't a straight jazz session; I was a bit upset and thought it was Wanda Stafford accompanying Bill Russo's arrangements. Bill wanted the recording to be very eventful behind me. Luckily, it was successful!

I discovered the arrangements when I arrived at the studio and we worked two nights in a row, from 7 to 11 pm. I was a bit isolated by acoustic panels, but I sang live with the orchestra because, at the time, there were no electronic arrangements... Bill sometimes gave me a bit of freedom but, in the slow tempo passages, I had to follow him very carefully. All the tracks are 'first takes'... For 'I Only Have Eyes for You', I was only accompanied by piano, bass and drums but when I received the album, I noticed that an inappropriate flugelhorn (sic) had been added. Peter Kameron, the producer, assured me that it wasn't Burt Collins playing but Bill Russo himself. I have no idea why he did this. »

Listening, it is hard to imagine that the passages, quite virtuoso, superimposed, were performed by Bill Russo, who was a trombonist. He probably wrote them; the record cover mentions Burt Collins as a contributor to this track. Who knows?

Despite everything, we have here a very nice recording which proposes a young talented singer who fits perfectly into Bill Russo's subtle and contrasted scores but who the record market has tended to forget a bit.



Wanda Stafford
(Photo: Jazz Wax)



(Photo: Fresh Sound)



Patricia Scot
(Photo: Fresh Sound)

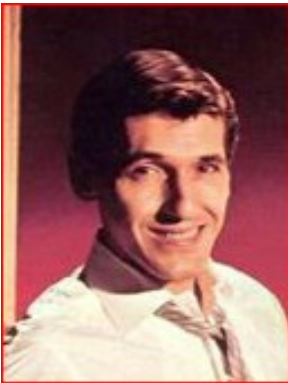
Once again, Jordi Pujol saves the day; extending his already copious 'Vocal Jazz' catalogue, he inaugurates his new series "The Best Voices Time Forgot" (<https://www.freshsoundrecords.com/13912-best-voices-time-forgot-records>).

by a Fresh Sound CD (FSR V101) "Wanda Stafford & Patricia Scot" which re-releases two LPs, namely: "In Love for the Very First Time" by Wanda and "Once Around the Clock" by Patricia Scot, another exciting young singer (28 years old in 1959), born Charlotte Anne Shealy and originally from Milwaukee (Wisconsin).

We discover, here, the 12 tracks recorded by Patricia, on August 15, 1959, under the direction of Creed Taylor, in particularly dynamic arrangements by Kenyon Hopkins (1912-1983), the author of numerous film scores in the jazz idiom.

In the same series, Jordi Pujol brought up the name of Bill Russo as arranger for the first recording, in February 1959 in Chicago, of the young crooner Frank D'Rone (1932 - 2013).

The CD Fresh Sound (FSR V201) offers the contents of two Mercury LPs: "Frank D'Rone Sings" from 1959 and "After the Ball" recorded in 1960, the latter in arrangements by the genius Billy May conducted by the no less great Benny Carter. In "Sings", Bill Russo signs and directs only three tracks: "Yesterdays", "My Foolish Heart" and "Sophisticated Lady".



Frank D'Rone
(Photo: Vintage Bandstand)



(Photo: Fresh Sound)



Mark Myers
(Photo: Jazz Wax)

Frank D'Rone explains this slimming diet in the words of Marc Myers, a great jazz interviewer on his giant blog <https://www.jazzwax.com/> :

"At Mercury, I was hosted by producer Jack Tracy and my first album was 'Frank D'Rone Sings', Nat 'King' Cole wrote the liner notes. I had complete freedom in the choice of titles, so I proposed the recording schedule. The firm turned to Bill Russo for the arrangements but when we recorded Bill's scores in Chicago, Mercury management felt that the music was too syncopated and that there was too much Kentonian sound behind me. Three tracks were reworked by Dick Marx; Jack Tracy recorded them in Chicago with studio musicians such as bassist Johnny Frigo and saxophonist Kenny Soderbloom. Five tracks were recorded in Hollywood, in March 1959, with Bud Shank, Barney Kessel, Jimmy Rowles, Red Mitchell and Shelly Manne that Pete Rugolo, Mercury manager for the West Coast, put together for the occasion. The quintet's accompaniment is more discreet but Mercury has, in spite of everything, kept three performances with Bill Russo. I like both formulas. »

Although Bill Russo's participation has been significantly reduced by Mercury, the CD is very pleasant, very varied: ballads, swing, small ensembles, big bands and Frank D'Rone is very comfortable in all styles, especially with Billy May (he's a year older), despite, sometimes, a slight vocal instability, which indicates how delicate the human voice is, also in classical singing.

INTELLECTUAL, MODEST AND GOOD LIVING

At almost 32 years of age, Bill already introduces us to an exceptional personality whose development and curiosity will continue throughout his life: an incredibly broad and free mind, a multiple thought, a being open to literature, psychology,

philosophy, religion, all forms of art, jazz, classical music and later on to theatre, opera, cinema, dance (already with Alcina); he will even have an ear turned towards rock.

He enjoys Brandy and Pernod, listens to Bach, Scarlatti, Mozart, Prokofiev and Hindemith and enjoys reading Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, John Donne, Thomas Hardy, William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens, Plato and the philosopher Elijah Jordan. His friends call him the "Catho of the Left"!

In June 2000, in an interview with Cheryl Lavin (Chicago Tribune), he adds that his favourite artists are Duke Ellington, Fritz Kreisler, Peggy Lee and David Byrne; his personal heroes are Plato, Socrates, Nelson Mandela, Kofi Annan and the Reverend Jesse Jackson; he would give anything to meet Johann Sebastian Bach; he drives a 1995 Silver Oldsmobile Aurora; his favourite food : his own pasta prepared with a real Italian sauce; he is very proud of his Yamaha grand piano but also very humble because he regrets not being a good enough pianist; he says he is shy but at ease in conversations dealing with general subjects; his most irrational decision was to leave Stan Kenton's orchestra, at the age of 25, after only four years of presence; in short, three words can describe him: funny, intelligent and clumsy. Who can say better?



(Photo: M.I.F.A.)

In short, and as Jordi Pujol understood very well, he is a true intellectual, authentic and reserved, without pretension or boasting, a creator, a real one!

But also a great humanist because he firmly believes that the human being is a noble creature and that art can make the world a better place.

He even goes so far as to ask himself some surprising questions, such as why, for example, his real first name 'William' is used to list his classical works, whereas in jazz, only his diminutive 'Bill' is used; both are equally important to Bill Russo.

For the rest, please see Part 2. Thank you for your time.