

BOOK LOOK

(University of California Press). Revered by many, detested by some, not always an easy man to approach or get along with, Norman Granz was a larger than life presence on the Jazz scene for some fifty years, and in his activities as promotor/impresario always championed, as the book's title strongly suggests, his personal convictions in regard to racial justice. Hershorn, in fact, opens the book with a Prologue in which he recounts the story of a rather nasty racial stand-off at a Michigan restaurant in 1947.

And the author tells us that it was Coleman Hawkins' recording of "Body And Soul" which Granz first heard in 1939 that turned him "decisively toward Jazz." By 1942 he had produced his first record session, which featured Lester Young. The book is impressively detailed and the scholarship of the author's research is made evident by almost 40 pages of notes referring back to the text. The writing is clean and clear with Hershorn only tripping over a cliché occasionally, as when he describes Granz finally having the opportunity, in 1955, to sign Ella Fitzgerald away from the Decca label: we read that Granz "swooped in like a hawk." Elsewhere, Hershorn refers to Ella as the "Hope Diamond" of Granz' career. Norman Granz' stewardship of Ella's career is thoroughly delineated. She was, for him, the sine qua non of Jazz singing. Among the book's 24 photos is one of a smiling impresario sitting in front of a 1970 Picasso sketch of Ella, the photo snapped by Hershorn himself in 1987. The smile is obviously one of prideful ownership, even though the sketch itself looks as though it might have taken Picasso all of a minute and a half to complete.

In his brief Foreword for the book, Oscar Peterson writes that he "would like people to remember (Norman Granz) as the most honest and musically upright impresario ever in the Jazz field." Tad Hershorn's book lends strong support to that view.

Alan Bargebuhr

CLARK (University of California Press; 336 pages; \$34.95) is the autobiography of **CLARK TERRY**, written, as noted on the book's cover, with his wife, Gwen Terry. It is essentially his own very personal oral history which he spins out in a comfortably conversational stream. Born in 1920, he starts the story in 1931, searching a junkyard for scraps from which he made his first trumpet—a coiled up old garden hose bound in "three places with wire to make it look like it had valves." Terry explains that he made that junkyard trumpet right after he heard Duke Ellington's band play



Ira Sullivan by Mark Ladenson

BOOK LOOK

“on a neighbor’s graphophone at a fish fry.” (At that point in his young life, he apparently had no idea that he would be a member of Ellington’s brass section for the best part of the 1950s?)

But before Ellington, Terry had stints with Charlie Barnet and Count Basie, and in the course of his 70 year long Jazz odyssey, there are very few of the music’s acknowledged greats and near greats with whom he did not play and perspire. He succeeds in bringing many of them to life, making no particular effort to press their trousers or shine their shoes. He recalls, for example, interceding between Juan Tizol, armed with a six inch frog sticker blade, and Charles Mingus, armed with a fire axe lifted off the wall. (The argument had started over whether Mingus was supposed to play an A-natural or an A-flat.) Terry says “it took all my strength to keep them from killing each other.” His reminiscences about his time with Ellington provide some of the book’s most valuable documentation. He remembers that Billy Strayhorn and Ellington rarely spoke on the bandstand or in the studio. It was “like they could read each other’s minds.” And he notes that Duke gave his sidemen “the freedom to express ourselves in our own ways.” He spread the solo assignments around liberally, instructing his copyist to put specific names of the soloists on their parts—i.e., “Rex” (for Rex Stewart), “Cat” (for Cat Anderson), “Root” (for Ray Nance) and “Clark” for . . .well, you know who.

The book includes some three dozen black and white photos, a Preface by Quincy Jones, a Foreword by Bill Cosby, an introduction by David Demsey, ten pages of acknowledgements, eight pages listing all of Terry’s honors and awards, a list of his original compositions, and a list of 371 recorded releases by Clark Terry, including sessions where he was either leader or sideman. The list was compiled by the eminent discographer, Tom Lord, and while it’s captioned as a “Selected Discography,” it gives scant details about the recordings listed—no recording dates, locations nor personnel. There is an index but no chronology, which would have been useful since, in his narrative, Terry is not always clear as to precise time frame.

Alan Bargebubr



Clark Terry by Jimmie Jones



Johnny Scott by Frank Muggianu

