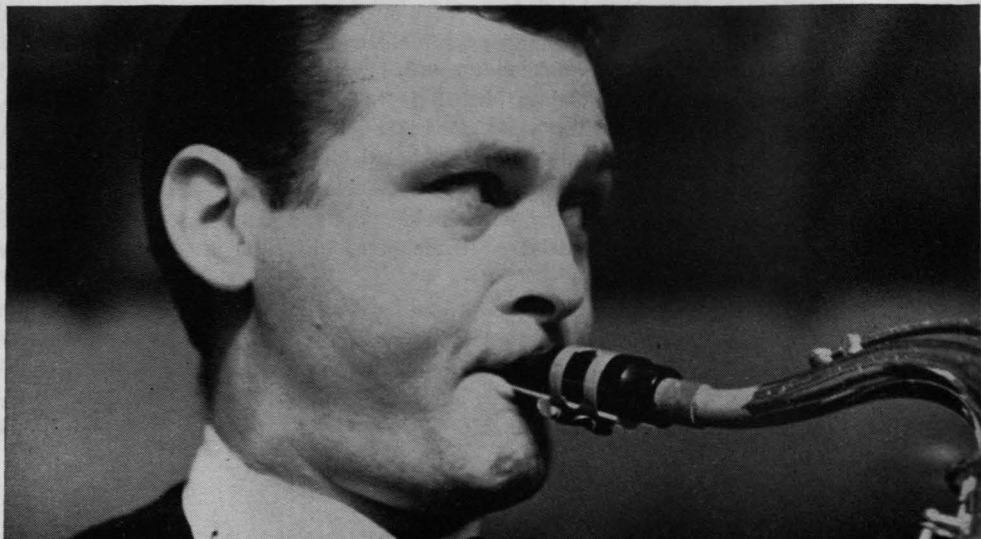


**jazz  
day  
at  
macy's**

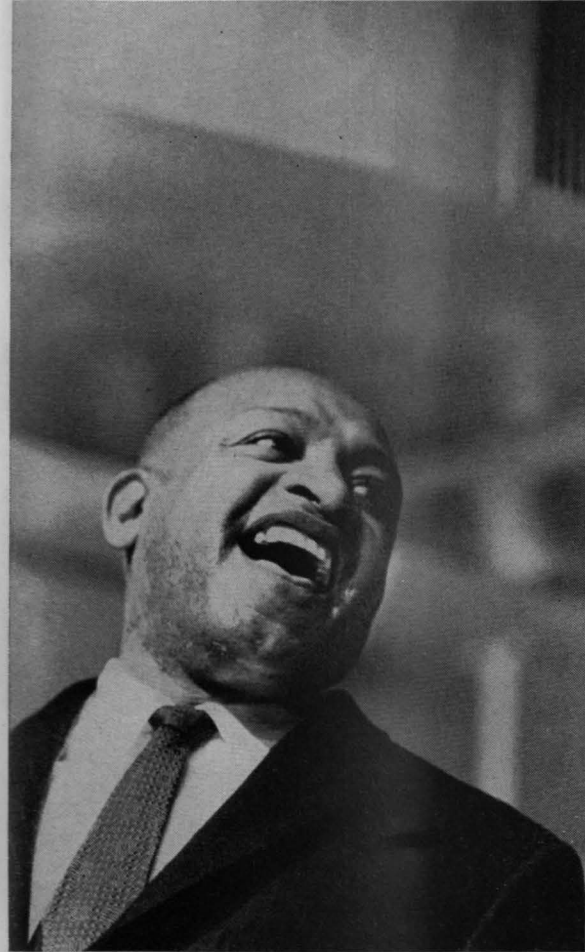
**text by  
dan morgenstern  
photographs by  
herb snitzer**

**L**ike most jazz events, Macy's one-day jazz festival did not start on time. But once under way, an affair that most observers and participants had been inclined to regard as just a gimmick turned out to be a happy, swinging thing indeed. It was a long day, kicking off at 11:35 and ending at 4:40, with some time out for lunch and high tea. The genesis of *Macy's And All That Jazz*, (the trade name for this promotional venture designed to bring people into the big store on Herald Square), is shrouded in corporate anonymity. But we did ascertain that the major catalysts were Joe Liebman, a jazz aficionado and sometime songwriter on Macy's staff, and Lionel Hampton. Joe sold Macy's on the idea of bringing live jazz into the store, and Hamp planned, organized and executed the musical end. It would have been hard to find a better man for the job.

By 11, the announced starting time, a goodly crowd had gathered on the fifth floor of the big store, where a large area had been cleared in front of a well-built, roomy bandstand. Photographers, newspapermen, recording engineers and press agents jockeyed for position, while serious-looking private cops and nervous Macy executives attempted to organize the chaos. None of our great jazz critics were on the scene, but Teddy Wilson, the world's most distinguished-looking pianist, was testing the house piano; Milt Hinton was snapping pictures, and Gene Krupa was setting up. Hamp kept a watchful eye on the proceedings. The crowd, with the High School kids, who had come early, well in front, was expectant but friendly and well-behaved. Benny Goodman had not arrived as yet, but Sol Yaged could be seen at the edge of the crowd, craning his neck and trying to spot his idol. After a while, BG appeared, looking hale and



hearty, ran off a few scales in the manner of a symphony cat tuning up, and with Teddy, Hamp and Gene assembled for the first time since the *BG Story* was filmed, gave the downbeat for *Avalon*. From then on in things swung. *Stompin' at the Savoy* almost brought tears to the eyes of a little lady from Macy's staff (everybody took time out to listen during the long day). "That was the *real jazz*," she said to her younger girlfriend. "Boy, did we dance to this..." Benny and Co. played as if 1937 had been only yesterday. Little Jimmy Rushing, the man with the greatest time in jazz, came on for *Blue Skies*,



and Gene settled down into a *good groove*. Jimmy stayed on for the blues, and *Sent for You Yesterday* set heads a' bobbin' and hands a' clappin'. (There are some who don't dig that kind of response, but these cats knew better.) A fast, flashy *I Got Rhythm* ended the first set. The Macy execs were beaming; they beamed even more when the announcement of an hour's intermission met with no disapproval from the crowd.

After refreshments for the musicians and assembled free-loaders, things got under way with Hamp, Gene, Milt Hinton, Horace Silver and Stan Getz. This was Stan's first public appearance since his recent return, and on the way down in the elevator, he warmed up on *When You're Smiling*. He sounded strong and happy on the afternoon's opener, *There'll Never Be*

(Continued on page 47)

Adderley is now writing a weekly jazz column for the *Amsterdam News*, and is slated to narrate *A Child's Introduction to Jazz* for Riverside Records . . . Our man *Stanley Dance* is doing a Sunday jazz column for the *New York Herald Tribune* . . . *Harry "Sweets" Edison's* Quintet, currently backing Joe Williams, has Sir Charles Thompson on piano and Clarence Johnston on drums, with Tommy Potter's bass and Jimmy Forrest's tenor remaining . . . *Buck Clayton's* European tour has been postponed 'till April, but Buck played *The Embers* before departing . . . *George Wein* takes Ruby Braff, Vic Dickenson, Pee Wee Russell and Buzzy Drootin to Europe in early spring—it will be Pee Wee's first trans-atlantic trip . . . *Peggy Lee* was so pleased at the unexpected turnout at *Basin Street* on the night of the big snowstorm that she bought the house a drink . . . *Rudi Blesh* is giving a course, *The Recorded History of Jazz*, at the Westfield Adult School in New Jersey . . . *Quincy Jones* composed and recorded the score for Swedish master director Arne Sucksdorff's forthcoming film, *The Boy in the Tree* . . . *Coleman Hawkins* is the featured soloist on *Abby Lincoln's* first album for *Candid* . . . *Jackie McLean* was given a brand-new alto by Carl Fisher Musical Instruments, Inc. before departing for Europe . . . Trumpeter *Johnny Letman* was awarded the *Prix Mondial du Hot Club de France* for his performances on *Stanley Dance's Cascades of Quartets*, a British Columbia release not issued yet in the U.S.

—DAN MORGENSTERN

### jazz day at macy's (continued)

*Another You*, on which Krupa's drumming was tasty indeed. I spotted Pat Jenkins, the fine trumpeter who works week-ends with Buddy Tate's band at the *Celebrity Club*, and for Macy's during the week, in the crowd. When the next guest artist, Arthur Godfrey, was announced, we both winced. But, contrary to expectations, what happened next was a friendly, pleasant experience. Godfrey, not as unhip as many think, knew what kind of company he was in, and he didn't hog the scene. He had brought his banjo, and after a few words from Lionel, he announced that he would do a few bars of *12th Street Rag* . . . "and then you take it from there." But Stan Getz came right on with the melody, and everybody got together. Stan's solo was patterned on Prez's version of the tune with Basie, but yet it was all his own. Godfrey stayed on for a bit of blues. Buddy Rich sat in, played well, and was relieved by Jo Jones, who killed everybody. The crowd was bigger now, a fine cross-section of jazz-lovers and folks who just happened to fall by; respectful and appreciative.

Break-time again. Steak for lunch. And then—Dizzy, Jay Jay Johnson, Gerry Mulligan, the stalwart Hamp, doubling on piano (as did Gerry and Dizzy), and Buddy Rich, who stayed on from then on in, and played with such drive, taste and swing (soloing only once) that he

became the hero of the day, sharing highest honors with Milt Hinton and Lionel, the ever-present sparkplugs.

Sol Yaged finally got his chance on the blues, and the folks in back started to look for BG. Sol should be credited with starting the background riffing which brought back the old jam-session feeling. Dizzy took a while to warm up, but blossomed out on *How High The Moon*, proving once again that a trumpet, in a masters' hands, is the most exciting instrument in jazz. Al Grey sat in, and collaborated with Jay Jay on backgrounds that came off like section work. Gerry dug in on the long, long blues, revived by little Jimmy Rushing, who once again proved that it don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing. That last session ran 'way over the scheduled hour, and even staid, graying executives could be observed shagging in the aisles.

It was a good day for jazz; everybody got a chance to blow, everybody left feeling happy, and Macy's (and Hamp) proved to all and sundry that jazz, as ever, is the greatest music there is for getting people together. They say that more than 10,000 people stopped by to listen that day; young and old, hip and square, black and white. And there were no sullen faces on either side of the bandstand. How's about it, Mr. Gimbel—and all you other cats across the land?

## Notes on Contributors

ROBERT KELLY is the editor of *Trobar*, a poetry review; he has read from his works over WBAI-FM and at coffee houses in Greenwich Village; his first book, *Armed Dissent*, will be published this year by the Hawk's Well Press.

CHARLES EDWARD SMITH is a familiar name to jazz readers; one of the pioneer jazz writers, he edited *Jazzmen*, the first important American book on the subject, co-edited *The Jazz Record Book*, and has contributed innumerable periodicals and anthologies. His contributions will be a regular feature in *Metronome*.

SINCLAIR TRAIL is editor of Britain's *Jazz Journal*, co-editor of the yearly anthology *Just Jazz*, and author of several jazz books. He reported on last year's Newport Festival for the *London Times*.

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