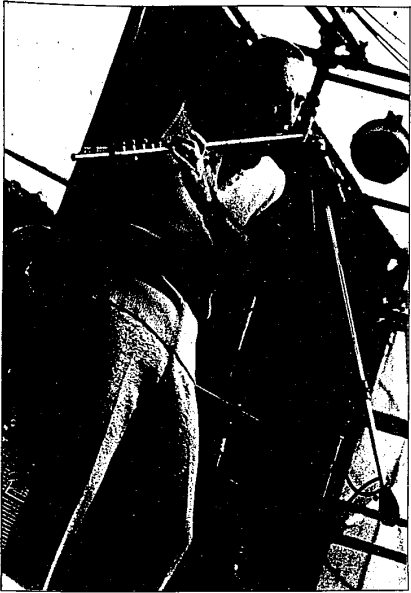


Music is food to jazz flutist Herbie Mann



Herbie Mann's name is synonymous with the flute.

By JIM WINDELL

Food and music have similarities in Herbie Mann's mind. "I find my own music like a bouillabaisse with different spices. Whatever comes to the surface at the moment, that's what I play."

Mann, jazz flutist, will appear in concert with Sarah Vaughan Thursday through Saturday at the Birmingham Theatre.

I talked to him on the telephone one day last week when he was trapped in his plush New York office above the Atlantic Records studio during a torrential downpour. He sounded relaxed, comfortable and secure as he talks a man who has achieved success in life.

The subject of food as a theme for comparisons kept coming up: "If you find a new restaurant, you don't have to eat there every night, just because you had a good meal and an enjoyable evening."

That, he said, is equivalent to the mistake he made after recording the "Discotheque" album with his hit song "Hi-Jack," about three years ago. He

tried to follow it up with four similar albums and he doesn't like any of them.

MANN IS quite satisfied with his current record, "Brazil—Once Again," which he says is doing nicely on the charts.

But Mann is not one to dwell on past hits or accomplishments. "It's like the way I feel about museums. I'd rather go outside and watch what is growing than see what has been preserved from the past."

Mann is the one person, by his own admission, who has done more than any other individual to rescue the flute from the relative obscurity of a neglected past and bring it into jazz and popular music prominence.

Despite frequent put-downs by jazz critics who dismiss most of his new releases with a casual "same old Herbie Mann sell-out," Mann says that he plays and records music that is his style.

"It's my standards that I'm interested in. Just like I don't wear searings or dress like the Funkadelics, I play what I'm comfortable with. No matter

what I do, it's based on my standards.

HIS STANDARDS have been high, and it has been those standards along with creativity, imagination and an openness to new sounds and inspirations that have assured him a wide and receptive audience. He compares himself to Woody Herman and Buddy Rich, who like himself came out of the mainstream of jazz and who surrounded themselves with younger musicians.

"If you are willing to look for the best available players, and even if they are better than you, you are going to have a great band and a contemporary sound," he says.

The style of music that brought Mann a name synonymous with the flute (one of his early stated goals) has borrowed ideas constantly from other peoples and countries. His kaleidoscopic career since 1959, when he formed a small group that combined African and Cuban rhythms, has changed directions with amazing frequency.

After a State Department tour to Brazil in the summer of 1961, Mann became one of the first and perhaps one of the finest jazz interpreters of the bossa nova rhythms.

Brazilian music was particularly suited to the more fragile sound of the flute, and the influence of the South American music has been a source of

compositions and hits.

Even though he has not returned to Brazil, his latest album reflects the changes in his interpretations of Brazilian music and he says, "It's closer to me playing and it's less formalized than other things I've done recently."

Mann is, however, seldom formalized. In the last dozen years or so, he has been influenced by the blues, rock country and western, the music of the Near East and Japanese music.

"My style," he says, "is really no style. By that I mean when I do a Japanese album right after a Brazilian after I've done a Latin, this is really what I'm all about. I'm different kinds of music and different flavors."

When he comes to Birmingham, he will have a new Family of Mann with him. His latest group was formed in January and the music they have played in 30 or so concerts this year is completely different from what is found on "Brazil—Once Again," which was recorded more than a year ago.

Like the hearty, simple, but usually dramatic essences of a good bouillabaisse, Herbie Mann is a musician who has been able to absorb the flavors of different ingredients. While his music is never quite the same because he throws in new and unusual seasonings, he always combines excitement in his rhythms and tasty flute work to entice an appetite willing to try something new.

Film theater slates thriller

"Man on the Roof" will be shown by the Detroit Institute of Arts' Detroit Film Theatre Friday at 7 and 9:30 p.m. in the museum auditorium. Tickets may be obtained in advance at the Art Institute ticket office and at the door.

Swedish director Bo Widerberg, whose credits include "Elvira Madigan" and "Adalen 31," directs a suspense thriller about a police-hating madman loose in the streets of Stockholm. Since its release last year, the film has attracted capacity audiences in New York.

Included in Detroit Film Theatre's weekend line-up will be: Saturday, June 10 7 & 9:30 p.m.

"The Last Laugh" (Germany, 1924) F.W. Murnau, director. Universally recognized as a classic of world cinema, this film, called "epoch-making" by

critic James Agee tells the story, without dialogue or printed titles, of an aging doorman demoted to washroom attendant.

Sunday, June 11 7:30 p.m.

"Small Change" (France, 1976) Francois Truffaut, director. A mosaic of the passions and poignancies of youth, this film appears to be a reconsideration of Truffaut's earlier, "The 400 Blows" but with the decided advantage of 20 years of filmmaking. (Last film in the DFT nine Sunday series)

For further information, call 832-2738.

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