

Ella, Count blend exceptional talents

By BEN SHAW

The Meadow Brook Music Festival opened its Friday night jazz series last week with a powerful one-two combination of Ella Fitzgerald and Count Basie and his orchestra. The first lady of song and the Count blended their talents so delicately that the two and one-half-hour program passed in a wink.

Ella was as awesome as ever when delivering her flawless scat rendition of "Day by Day" and "The One Note Samba." She remembered her dear and closest friend, Duke Ellington, with "I Ain't Got Nothin' but the Blues" and "Satin Doll."

However, it was her velvety tones in the ballads "My Old Flame" and "Feelings" which recalled the bygone era of the big bands and Ella's elegance to stardom.

The night was sultry and Count Basie just added to the heat with his pulsating rhythms. The Count, looking much younger and more refreshed than in his last few visits into the area, brought a seventeen-piece ensemble which has basically been intact over the last three years.

His soloists of note include tenor saxophonist Eric Dixon, trumpeter Wayne Reed and drummer Butch Miles. Miles replaced Sonny Payne

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about two and a half years ago and has been laying down the Basie beat ever since.

Dixon performed beautifully on "Body and Soul," particularly down in the low register where his glistening had the audience murmuring. An unexpected bonus was the appearance of Detroit vocalist Dennis Roland. Basie had heard him sing at a local club and has made him a permanent fixture with the band.

It was evident what the Count was thinking when Roland let go. The young vocalist styles and phrases exactly like Joe Williams in his prime. Roland performed with "Our Day Will Come," "I Got It Bad and That Ain't Good" and the Joe Williams hit "Every Day I Have the Blues."

This initial offering of the Friday night jazz series played before a sell-out house. Chapter two of these concerts resumes this Friday with jazz greats Oscar Peterson and Dizzy Gillespie.

Schickele puts on a lunatic show

By JOHN LUTTERMOSER

All the world loves a lunatic. And from his initial entrance to the close of his performance, Peter Schickele's act is pure lunacy.

Schickele is a composer who does comedy based on classical music. He made his fourth annual appearance at the Meadow Brook Music Festival Sunday night, once again under the guise of "Professor" Peter Schickele of the University of Southern North Dakota at Hoople.

Professor Schickele is noted for his discovery of the music of PDQ Bach, the son of Johann Sebastian Bach, PDQ, the zlot of Johann's offspring, failed to inherit his father's talent. "Faded genes," Schickele explains. Schickele uses this premise for four distinct types of comedy. There are one-liners about PDQ and his music, the hilarity of music itself, the titles to the music, and slight gags which are often performed by the entire orchestra—at Meadow Brook, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

THE TONE FOR the evening was set before Schickele even appeared. His assistant, William Walters, announced that Schickele had not arrived and that the orchestra would begin without him, with Charles Ives' "Central Park in the Dark."

With a cry of anguish, Schickele made his entrance—by running out of the woods, vaulting the rail into the pavilion and racing down the aisle.

Schickele then went into a monologue touching on the story of his discovery, life on "the campus of USND at H," and his biography of PDQ Bach. He listed Bach's accomplishments, including "Hansel & Gretel" and "Ted & Alice," which he described as "an opera in one unnatural act."

The stand-up routine gets the audience in the proper mood for PDQ Bach's music. The program on Sunday began with a suite from his opera "The Civilian Barber."

HIGHLIGHTS WERE the "Fanfare for the Royal Shaft," played by the horn section on the removed mouthpieces of their instruments and "Her Majesty's Minuet," which uses every horn imaginable—including a bicycle horn and an air horn.

The next selection was Schickele's own composition, the "Chaconne A Son Gout." Schickele admitted that this work shows how PDQ's "manic plagiarism" has rubbed off on him. "Every single melody in the piece happens to have been thought of by someone else," he said.

The first half of the program ended with Schickele's most outrageous and perhaps best-known act, "New Horizons in Musical Appreciation." Schickele and Michigan State Sen. Jack Faxon sat at the side of the stage and gave the "play-by-play" for the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony.

For "New Horizons," members of

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the act and proved he can be a pretty good straight man. He helped Schickele out of one rough spot on piano by guiding him down the aisle like a parking attendant.

Later, the violin section had some difficulty, playing the same note over and over again like a broken record. Schickele solved the problem by turning the page in Greenberg's music book.

According to the program, that was the end of the show. But the audience, naturally, refused to let Schickele leave (Schickele aided them by returning to the stage for another bow every time the applause seemed to be dying).

He answered the musical question, "What do you do for an encore?" with a dance suite in the Japanese form, "Karate." One member of the audience was prompted to say that he'd never seen anyone kick a keyboard before.

Conductor Philip Greenberg got into

Things slipped a little after the intermission. The second half of the show was PDQ's "Concerto for Piano vs. Orchestra," which, according to Schickele, is written for two left hands.

THE FUNNIEST THING about the concerto is the names of its movements—"Allegro immoderato," "Andante on Mr. Moto" and "Vivace Libera."

Conductor Philip Greenberg got into

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