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Year's End

At the height of the competition between the proposed "discrete" and "matrix" quadraphonic systems, *High Fidelity* commissioned me to write an evaluation of the systems being promoted by CBS, RCA, and other companies. I studied and listened to them all, guided and aided by Wendy Carlos, whose knowledge of the electronics of sound is enormous.

In the end I concluded that it was all an appalling waste of money, which would ultimately be passed on to the consumer in higher prices for other things. Hearing is a primitive — compared with sight — sense that serves as a warning system. It is charged with emotion, precisely in order that we will react instantaneously to danger. This is its survival value and, I am convinced, the foundation of the mysterious art called music. It is instinctive, even in "lower" animals, to look toward the source of a sudden sound. And it is in our very nature to want, even to need, to keep important sounds in front of us, whether the hissing of a wildcat or the song of the thrush. The bird-watcher with his binoculars is perhaps the perfect symbol of the concert audience.

A quadraphonic system that surrounds us with sound is in conflict with the psychology of hearing. Given this fact — and I think it is a fact — and without even considering a woman's problem of planning a room decor to accommodate two speakers, much less four, all the storm of claims and counterclaims of CBS and RCA amounted to a bad joke, as nitwitted as their earlier conflicts over 45 and 33 1/3 r.p.m. record speeds, which left us saddled forever with expensive and useless gearing in our turntables, and television color, in which the wrong side won and left us with a system much inferior to the systems in Europe. In all these cases, it is obvious that marketplace competition, the rationale of our economic philosophy, did *not* work in the public's best interests. But in this instance, I predicted, we would not be stuck with a bad system, we would have no quad at all: the public wouldn't like and wouldn't buy it.

Had *High Fidelity* printed that article, it could later have taken credit for some accurate prognostication. But they didn't print it, and one of the editors said something far more significant than he realized: "We're rather committed to quad."

But of course. No magazine that is supported by the advertising of high-fidelity equipment manufacturers is likely to go counter to the economic interests of its angels. And its angels were lit up like Christmas trees over the possibility of selling four speakers instead of two, and, for that matter, persuading every music lover and hi-fi freak that his equipment was obsolete and should be forthwith replaced.

The nuance of the situation that fascinated me was the indirect corruption of the thinking of the editors, all good and honorable men, by the advertising process. They had rationalized themselves into enthusiasm for quad because it was in the economic interests of their employer's money sources.

For this reason you can, and should, evaluate a magazine by its advertising. It is the first thing to look at: it tells you who's paying for the publication, which in turn determines its editorial bias.

High Fidelity and *Stereo Review* draw their revenue from hardware makers. (They have never been able to attract much record advertising.) Therefore the editorial policy is shaped (and it is irrelevant whether it is done consciously or otherwise) to round

up the audience that the Sony and JBL and Akai people want to talk to.

Down Beat has a different constituency. It too has had difficulty attracting record advertising. One record executive told me that the only reason he took ads in the magazine was to massage the egos of his artists. Another said bluntly that he felt money was more effectively spent on payola. Consequently, *Down Beat* is heavily dependent on the advertising of instrument manufacturers. And to whom do instrument manufacturers make the bulk of sales, professionals or students? Students, obviously. The situation is analogous to that of photography magazines. If Eastman Kodak and Nikon had to depend on the purchases of professionals, they would be out of business. Therefore photography magazines are aimed at the non-professional camera buff. Since *Down Beat* is so dependent on instrument manufacturers, it would be irrational to expect it to do other than act in the broad interests of those manufacturers. This is one reason it has been such a supporter of the jazz education movement. Any magazine's editorial direction *inevitably* will be determined by the need to attract the audience that its advertisers wish to address. This is not to derogate the jazz education movement (although there are within it teachers who have some reservations about it, which is a subject for another time). It is to identify the invisible motive for *Down Beat's* attitude toward it.

But in order to attract that adolescent audience that Elkhart and South Bend want to reach, *Down Beat* gradually came to compromise its critical standards, praising music that was successful and popular with "the kids" in order not to alienate that audience. This fading of objectivity accelerated when, in the age of rock, guitar became the most popular instrument, and then various electronic keyboard instruments came into vogue. When makers of wah-wah pedals and synthesizers became potential sources of ad revenue, *Down Beat* began to pay attention to and praise some egregious musical crap.

Rolling Stone had no such problem of altered policy. It was founded on the celebration of rock, and although it tries to move away from its origins, it still is caught up in the praise of the successful rather than the detection of the worthy.

The various magazines such as *Guitar Player* and *Frets* and *Keyboard* and *Musician* similarly serve, whether the editors are consciously aware of it or not, the needs of the advertisers.

To a greater or lesser degree, all these publications, including (since the addition of its "Back Beat" review section) *High Fidelity*, cater to the fantasy of the would-be rock musician, namely that of getting rich quick. This is a basic difference between jazz and rock musicians. The jazz musician has an impassioned and sometimes even fanatical interest in and commitment to music, in itself and for its own pure sake. The rock musician is primarily interested in making money.

Billboard serves the entertainment industry — indeed, at one point its chief executive officer was the former president of a record company. Every once in a while it runs a "special issue" on some subject or another, and attracts a prodigious amount of advertising. Its editorial policy is in general in accord with the overall desires of the industry.

The immense amounts of money the record companies realized from the rock phenomenon permitted and perhaps made inevitable the editorial corruption of publications so powerful and

prestigious that one might have thought them beyond reach. The New York *Times*, I am told, now has *four* rock and/or pop reviewers. One suspects a manly ignorance of the "feminine" art of music in its upper editors as the explanation of a tolerance for so much sober writing about the ridiculous. But in the case of the Los Angeles *Times*, something more directly sinister seems to be at work. The record companies and rock promoters spend huge amounts of money on advertising in its Sunday *Calendar* section. *Calendar* reciprocates with huge amounts of editorial space devoted to the glorification of trash and its makers and merchants. And yet the *Times* at first *turned down* Leonard Feather's news story on the historically significant fact that the Monterey Jazz Festival last year was sold out more than two months in advance.

It is important to understand something. Payola is not necessary to this erosion of integrity, although for all I know the more influential rock commentators may be as bought-and-paid-for as Spanish bullfighting critics. The publications, whether *High Fidelity* or *Down Beat* or the Los Angeles *Times*, hire critics who genuinely believe the astonishing nonsense they write. There is nothing so trivial that someone, somewhere, will not take it seriously, and contemporary journalism has taken on any quantity of these articulate idiots whose opinions and passions are

The trouble with good jazz is that there is not enough of it.

—found in a Chinese fortune cookie
by Mathias C. Hermann

in harmony with the corporation's need to assemble an audience for its advertisers. Payola can corrupt only partially. Advertising is able to corrupt journalism *totally*.

There are exceptions to the pattern. One of these is *Variety*. *Variety* draws income from advertising. But *Variety* seems — at least from the outside — to maintain a kind of feisty integrity and editorial independence, which I have always admired.

I did not myself believe, two years ago, that a periodical could exist without advertising. I'm still not sure that it can. But it was time somebody gave it a new try. (*PM* folded.) And I am now cautiously optimistic (as the politicians say) that it can be done. (I am, by the way, going to do some reciprocal mailings with Ray Avery's Rare Records and other companies who in fact offer services to the music lover.) If the circulation can be raised to a mere 10,000, it will be possible to pay writers some formidable fees, which (a) they deserve, and (b) will afford them two luxuries all of us who have written for the various music periodicals have always been denied: enough time to do proper research and then to write slowly and well, and enough space to develop a subject to whatever length it requires. There's an old sad joke on newspapers and magazines: the copy is what keeps the ads apart. And another: everything that fits, we print. And because of this, writers are always being told that their work is too long and has to be cut. It is for this reason that so many subjects are shallowly explored, not — as it sometimes appears — any lack of perception in the writer.

I cannot adequately express the sense of privilege you have bestowed on me in letting me write for you. It is a joy that for the most part has been mine alone, but one I am anxious to share with other writers. To write without restrictions of length or content or interpretation. To explore freely our age and culture in the mirror of its music. I feel like my cat, Kissy, chasing butterflies on the hill.

As I've said, the idea grew out of a conversation by the swimming pool at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, the participants in which included Phil Woods, Clark Terry, and Frank Rosolino. (A few hours later, Frank said something terrifying, about which I have until now maintained silence. But we'll get to that, sad to say, in a minute.)

And so all I can do is thank you, with some very special thanks to some new friends, including Frank Tack, Lyn Murray, and Dr. Terry Rogers, and an old friend, Robert Farnon.

And this is who we are:

Michael Abene, Sharon Aday, Eleanore Aldrich, Will Alexander, Mousie Alexander, Asa B. Allen, Steve Allen, David Allyn, Lloyd O. Anderson, Bill Angel, Ron Anton (BMI), Ted Arenson, Hubert Arnold, Mr. and Mrs. Irvin Arthur, Kenny Ascher,

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There is no expedient to which a man will not resort to avoid the real labor of thinking.

—Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792)

McGlohon, Greg McIntosh, Ladd McIntosh, Paul McNamara, Marian McPartland, Ray Medford, Ginger Mercer, Donald Miller MD, Larry M. Miller, Deborah Miranda, Steven H. Moffic MD, Lois K. Moody, W. Stephen Moore, George Morgan, Henry Morgan, Bill Morrison (Raleigh *News and Observer*), Chris Morrison, Nye Morton, Ray Mosca, William Mowbray, Ben Mozee, Gerry Mulligan, Lyn Murray,

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Vi Redd, John Reeves, David H. Rehmeier, Michael Renzi, Alvino Rey, Gary S. Reynolds, John M. Reynolds, Bob

Don't play me no sevenths,
no augmented elevenths —
just let that E chord ring.

—Thumbs Carlille

Richardson (Auburn University), Jerome Richardson, Randy Richie, Mick Richmond, Terry R. Rogers MD, Herb Rosen, Richard Ross, Ann Johns Ruckert, Norbert Ruecker (*Jazz Index*), William Ruffa, Howard Rumsey, Peggy C. Russell,

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Masaki Yoshino, Betty Zaroni, Marshall Zucker, Michael Zwerin (*International Herald-Tribune*),

and the following colleges:

Abilene Christian, Ashland, Austin, Bethany, Bishop, Boise State, Cabrillo, Chabot, Chaffey, Charleston, Coe, Claremore, Colorado, Dartmouth, De Anza, Del Mar, College of the Desert, Drury, Eastfield, El Camino, Elon, Emporia, Foothill, Glassboro State, Golden West, Hutchinson Community Junior, Jarvis Christian, Kilgore, Los Angeles City, Modesto Junior, Mountain View, Mary, Monterey Peninsula, Murray State, Oberlin, Olympic, Pasadena City, San Francisco, Santa Monica,

and universities:

Albuquerque, Angelo State, Arizona State, Arkansas, Baylor, Bowling Green State, Bridgeport, Brigham Young, Bucknell, Butler, U. of California at Berkeley, UC Davis, UC Irvine, UC Los Angeles, UC San Diego, UC Santa Barbara, California State Fresno, Cal State Long Beach, Cal State Los Angeles, Cal State Sacramento, Cal State San Diego, Cal State San Jose, Cal Arts Northridge, Capital, Chicago, Cincinnati, Colorado, Colorado State, Connecticut, Cornell, Delta State, Denver, De Paul, Drake, Duke, Duquesne, East Texas State, Fairfield, Fairleigh Dickenson, Florida, Florida A&M, Florida State, Fort Hays, Kansas State, Kent State, Lawrence, Louisiana Tech, Loyola, Memphis State, Miami, Michigan, Michigan State, Millikin, Montana State, Midwestern, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Northern Illinois, Northern Iowa, Notre Dame, North Texas State, Ohio State, Oklahoma, Pacific, Princeton, Redlands, San Francisco State, Southern California, Stanford, Tucson, Washington, and Washington State.

Ah Wilderness

The music biz tale I am about to lay on you is true. With the exceptions of Allyn Ferguson, who drew it to my attention, and Dick Hazard and Pat Williams, both innocent bystanders, the names have been changed to protect the composers involved from the pique of the boobs they must work for.

Cole Sober was called on to write music for the pilot of yet another private eye TV series set in an earlier era, this time the 1940s. Since the locale was New York City, somebody came up with the idea of using *Harlem Nocturne* as the theme. Cole thought this was a good idea and did indeed use the tune in the main title music, assigning the melody to alto saxophone.

When Cole played the music in a production meeting, Nimrod Nephew, the young department head — what is being called “new blood” in the current studio press releases — said, “The saxophone doesn’t test well.”

“What?” said Cole.

“The saxophone doesn’t test well with audiences. They can’t relate to it. We found that out with a pilot for a new series starring Mickey O’Finn. The saxophone played the theme and the audience didn’t like it.”

“What do you mean, they didn’t like the saxophone?” Cole said, incredulous. “I mean, maybe it was a lousy tune.”

“No,” said Nimrod, “they specifically said they didn’t like the saxophone.”

“Look,” Cole said, “Pat Williams used a saxophone in the *Lou Grant* show. The saxophone played the entire melody. And that show was a hit.”

Pause, while Nimrod wrestled with that one. And then he said, “Yes, and if he hadn’t, the show might have run another two years.”

This left Cole in a state of baffled silence. He had made the mistake of arguing rationally.

Cut to a Los Angeles restaurant. Allyn Ferguson is dining with Dick Hazard (who has nothing to do with this story; he just happened to be there) and a composer we’ll call Balfour Adano, and their wives. Ferg told them the foregoing story.

Again, a pause. Then Balfour Adano said, “I wrote that score for the Mickey O’Finn pilot. And it *was* a lousy melody. When I was hired, the producer told me I had to use a theme written by his eighteen-year-old son, who plays rock guitar. I tried to fix up his changes and do a few more things, but the music was still pretty bad, and the kid said it wasn’t the way he wanted it.”

“That’s incredible,” Ferg said.

“Yeah,” Balfour said, “And besides, it wasn’t a saxophone I used on the theme. It was a clarinet.”

Needless to say, I told the foregoing tale to Pat Williams who, after his laughter subsided, told me another story of music in the movie biz.

The rough cut of a film was shown to an executive producer. A temp track, as it’s called — a temporary musical score — had been dubbed into the picture. The music was by Ravel. Several composers were suggested to score the picture, including Michel Legrand, all of whom were vetoed by the producer, who finally said, “Why don’t we use the guy you’ve got already?”

“But that’s Ravel,” he was told.

“I don’t give a shit,” the executive said, “get him.”

Why?

There are those, Don Menza among them, who to this day find it all but impossible to talk about what happened in those early hours of November 26, 1978. But there has been an evolution of circumstances, and now it becomes necessary to talk about what,

by one of those bits of mental prestidigitation with which we protect our sanity, we had succeeded in not even thinking about. We pushed it into some closet in a back room of the mind, and shut the door.

I cannot explain, and neither can the Van Nuys homicide detectives, all the inner mechanics of what happened. But I’ll tell you, as I told them, what I know.

Frank Rosolino was among the best-loved men in jazz. One of the finest trombone players in the history of the instrument, he had a superb tone, total facility, a deep Italianate lyricism, and rich invention. Frank was, very simply, a sensational player. And he had a wonderful spirit that always communicated itself to his associates on the bandstand or the record date.

He was one of the funniest men in the world, with a wit that literally wouldn’t quit. Frank bubbled. Quincy Jones remembers touring Japan with a band that included Frank and Grady Tate. “With those two,” Quincy said, “you can imagine what it was like. The band was always in an uproar.”

Frank was one of many fine musicians, (another is Donald Byrd) to come out of Cass Tech in Detroit, a superior high school which drew its students from all over the city. Only the exceptional could even get into it. Frank always had the air of a mischievous kid looking for some hell to raise or trouble to get into, and this trait apparently had emerged by the time he went to Cass Tech. Giggling in that way of his, he would in later years recall swiping cars for joyrides.

Like everyone who knew him, I remember vividly the last few times I saw Frank.

We were at Dick Gibson’s Colorado jazz party. Frank played superbly throughout the weekend. At one point he played with Carl Fontana and Bill Watrous, and the music was gorgeous. In another unforgettable set, Frank and Clark Terry did several scat-singing duets. They kept making each other laugh, and I remember urging them, afterwards, to record together, not playing so much as scatting — assuming of course they could find a record label interested in such an album. Frank was one of the few people who could in fact scat on the same bandstand with Clark Terry.

The main events of the party were held in the Broadmoor Hotel, noted for exciting scenery, dull food, and sullen service. After the last performance, we all travelled by bus back to Dick Gibson’s house in Denver. Frank and his girlfriend, Diane, were in the seat behind my wife and me.

We did not know it at the time, but Frank’s third wife, the mother of his two sons, had gone into their garage, shut the door, turned on the car’s engine, and sat there in the fumes until she died. I do not know her motive. And Frank, in the seat behind us, seemed to be talking about following her, killing himself and taking the two boys with him, since he could not bear the thought of leaving them behind in this world. Were we hearing him correctly? Diane was saying, “Don’t talk that way, Frank,” or words to that effect.

That evening in Denver, there was a final informal party at Gibson’s house. Frank seemed utterly cheerful, further undermining my certainty about what I’d heard. My wife and I had to leave early to get back to Los Angeles, and so did Frank, who had a gig the next morning. We took a cab to the airport together, and Frank was as funny as always; the conversation overheard on the bus seemed like the morning memory of a nightmare, and indeed in time became forgotten.

We were told at the airport that the flight would be boarding late. My wife and Frank and I wandered around with little to do. But Frank shattered the impersonal tedium that hangs in the atmosphere of all airports: he had us laughing so hard that a salesgirl in the bookshop, watching us with suspicion, pointed us out to a security guard, presumably suggesting that he keep an eye on us.

Part of it was Frank's delivery. It has been said that a comic says funny things and a comedian says things funny. Frank was both. He had a lazy low-key way of talking, the epitome of cool, that was either the archetype or the mockery of the classic bebop musician of Shorty Pederstein fame. You never knew who Frank was putting on, the world or himself. Or both. And he had a loose-jointed rag-doll ah-the-hell-with-it way of walking. Frank could even move humorously. He seemed to relish the role of the bebopper, even as he made fun of it.

Having exhausted the airport's opportunities for amusement, we went into its coffee shop. It had a U-shaped counter and a terrazzo floor that someone had just mopped with a hideous disinfectant. And the air was full of flies, drifting back and forth in lazy curves. We slid onto stools. A waitress about thirty approached us and Frank said in that unruffled-by-anything drawl of his, "I'll have a bowl of those *flies*, please."

And the waitress, surprisingly, tossed the ball right back at him: "We only serve them on Thursdays."

"Then I'll come back Thursday," Frank said, and we all laughed, including the waitress.

Finally, late, we were told that we could board the plane, a TWA flight on stopover between Chicago and Los Angeles. And on the plane, returning from an engagement, was, to our delighted surprise, Sarah Vaughan. And Red Callender and his wife were with us. We all sat together and talked, waiting for the take-off. And the pilot's voice on the sound system told us that there was fog in Los Angeles and the flight would be further delayed. Frank got funnier, Sass got helpless with laughter. Frank asked a pretty stewardess if we could have drinks. She said that it was against regulations for her to serve them before takeoff. But Frank soon had her laughing too, and she left to get us drinks. Frank said, "I have to be careful. I wouldn't want her to lose her gig over it, 'cause then I might have to marry her."

At last we left. Sass wanted to sleep, but Frank kept up his jokes and she said, "Frank, *stop* it!" Finally, shaking her head and laughing, she moved farther back in the plane to escape him.

And at last weariness overcame him and, mercifully for all of us, Frank too fell asleep, sprawled across two or three seats of the nearly empty aircraft.

I awoke in daylight to the sound of the pilot's voice telling us to fasten seat belts for the descent into Los Angeles. I peered around the back of the seat ahead of me and saw that Frank was still sleeping. Frank was not tall. He was quite handsome. By this time in his life, his thick, dark curly hair had become almost white and he had a full iron-gray mustache. And yet, asleep, he looked like that bad boy at Cass Tech, looking for a little action. I shook his shoulder and said, "Frank. Frank. Wake up, we're home."

He opened his eyes and said, "How'd that happen?"

I turned on the television that morning to watch the news, then drifted back into that soft state between sleeping and waking. And then there was a voice saying, "The internationally celebrated jazz trombonist Frank Rosolino took his own life last night. Police in the Van Nuys division say that Rosolino shot his two small sons and then turned the gun on himself. One of the children is dead, the other is in critical condition, undergoing surgery. Rosolino, who became nationally known with the bands of Gene Krupa and Stan Kenton, was..."

I shouted, "No!"

But I knew it was true. I remembered his words on the bus.

I got up and, after staring at the floor for a while, called the Van Nuys police division and asked first for homicide, then for whomever was handling the Frank Rosolino "case". After a while a man came on the line and gave me his name and I gave him mine. I asked him if he could tell me any more than I had heard on the

If you will observe who are the most influential people in the cities and who are the most successful in business, you will usually find that they are the least talented.

—Montaigne (1533-1592)

news. "Did you know him, sir?" he asked.

"Yes, I did."

"Then perhaps you can help *us*," he said. "We're just puzzled."

"So am I," I said, "but not totally surprised." And I told him about the bus trip in Colorado.

"Is it possible that drugs were involved?" the detective asked carefully.

"I don't know," I said. "Although nowadays, you always wonder that." I told him what kind of person Frank was, how loved he was, but even as I said it I questioned how well any of us really knew him. I had known there was a dark streak in Frank, but I had never dreamed that it was this dark. And, as Roger Kellaway said later, "When somebody cracks four jokes a minute, we all should have known there was something wrong."

The conversation with the detective ended, as unsatisfying to him as it was to me.

In the course of that day and the next, I learned a little more. Diane has wanted to go to Donte's to hear Bill Watrous. Donte's is a nightclub in North Hollywood, a hangout for musicians and one of the few places in Los Angeles where the best studio players can go to play jazz and remind themselves why they took up instruments in the first place. Frank said he wanted to stay home with his two boys, Jason, who was then seven, and Justin, who was nine.

I met those boys, once, at a party at the home of Sergio Mendes. They were full of laughter and energy and mischief, like Frank. They were wonderfully handsome and happy little fellows, scampering around like puppies amid the hors d'oeuvres and among the legs of all the people, having a high old time.

Diane went to Donte's with a girlfriend who was visiting from Rochester, New York. They came home toward four o'clock in the morning and were sitting in the car in the driveway when they saw a flash of light in the boys' bedroom. Thinking the boys were awake, they got out and went into the house. As they entered they heard the last shot, the one Frank put into himself. He was still alive. I do not know and do not want to know the further details. And in any case, he soon died.

Frank had gone to the bedroom where Jason and Justin were sleeping and shot each of them in the head, then put the pistol to his own head. Justin was dead. Jason was not. He would undergo fourteen hours of surgery.

The autopsy deepened the mystery. The coroner's report said that there was no significant amount of alcohol or drugs in Frank's system.

And one of Frank's friends, who had in the previous weeks been recovering in the hospital from brain surgery, said that Frank had visited him every day, making him laugh, telling him he was going to recover fully, and talking warmly of the joy of living.

A service was organized for Frank's friends. His two brothers, Russell and Gaspar, had flown out from Detroit to take Frank and Justin back with them for burial. I do not remember the name of the funeral home, but I can see its polite and muted decor. A lot of us, including Don Menza, Shelly Manne, and Conte and Pete Candoli, were standing around in little groups in the lobby, watching our friends arrive. It seemed everyone in town was there. I don't think any man ever had fewer enemies and more friends than Frank Rosolino. J.J. Johnson and Herb Ellis came in

together; I can still see their bleak faces. Med Flory said, "Well, Frank sure took care of Christmas for all of us."

Finally, because it seemed the thing to do, I wandered into the chapel. The two coffins were in the customary place at the front of it. Roger Kellaway and I walked apprehensively toward them. The cosmeticians had done well. Beautiful little Justin truly did look as if he were merely sleeping on that velvet. Frank too looked asleep, and I remembered him asleep on the plane over Los Angeles.

Roger said something softly as he was looking at Justin. Later he told me it was a prayer. Then he looked down at Frank and said, "You asshole," expressing the strange compound of love and grief and anger we were all feeling toward Frank.

I couldn't face sitting through a service. What was there to say? And so Roger and I headed for a nearby tavern and had a couple of Scotches. For, as Roger put it, "I've had friends who killed themselves before, but I've never had one who killed his child." He stared into his drink. The bar was lit softly. The upholstery was red. He said, "You can make that decision for yourself, but you have no right to make it for anyone else." After a time we went back to the chapel. The service, which had been very short, was over.

There was a wake of sorts afterwards at Don Menza's house in North Hollywood. Don and I talked for a while about Verdi. And about Frank.

Frank had fought his share of the jazz wars. He had been through financial hard times, and lived to see himself and other musicians of brilliance and in many cases genius struggling to pay their telephone bills while grungy illiterate singers rode around in limousines, with expensive whores, and demolished hotel rooms and recording studios and told their underlings to put it on the bill. He had even lived to see their likes earnestly analyzed as artists in the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times* and *Rolling Stone* and *Newsweek*.

But things had been improving, Menza told me, including Frank's financial condition. He had wanted to play more jazz, and he was doing it. Don said that he and Frank had been scheduled to make an album, and there was more work of that kind on Frank's calendar. Don was mystified, and shattered, like all of us. He and Frank had been very close.

Med Flory was right. Christmas was dreary that year.

At first we heard that Jason would be both deaf and blind. For a long time he was in a coma. We heard that he would come out of it and scream and then lapse into unconsciousness again. You found yourself thinking some strange thoughts. What would happen to him if he should indeed be both blind and deaf? What communication could he have with the world? Would he be a vegetable? Or would he be not a vegetable but a sentient conscious being trapped in a black silence with memories of sight and sounds and no way of knowing why and how they had suddenly ceased? Or had he been awakened to see his brother killed?

After a while we heard that Jason could hear. He was living by now with relatives. And gradually I stopped thinking about Jason. And Frank. And about November 26, 1978. Every once in a while, however, something would happen to remind me.

Roger Kellaway and I were on our way to an appointment in Tarzana — an area of Los Angeles near the west end of the San Fernando Valley. We saw a little boy, about three, crying in the

street. We stopped the car. The boy was lost. Roger and I decided that he would go on to our appointment while I tried to learn where the boy belonged. There was an apartment complex nearby. I asked passing people if they knew the child. Gradually a crowd gathered. A tall, handsome man in his late fifties introduced himself. He was a cop. A lieutenant. He lived in the building. We went up to his apartment. He gave the boy something to eat. The child stopped crying. The man picked up the phone, dialed, and identified himself. He was head of homicide, Van Nuys division.

While we waited for a police car (which did in fact find the little boy's home), I asked the lieutenant if he had handled the Rosolino case. He said that two of his men had handled it. And I found myself going over it again.

The lieutenant told me that one inevitably becomes inured in his line of work, but the two detectives who had gone to Frank Rosolino's house that night had come back to the office almost in tears.

"Yeah," I said, "they were beautiful little boys."

And after that I banished Frank from my thoughts almost completely. I never even listened to his records.

But horror breeds horror. The rings keep spreading on the water. The energy doesn't simply cease to be, it is transferred. Jason Rosolino did not cease to be. He is twelve now.

He was adopted by his mother's cousin, Claudia Eien, and her husband, Gary. And caring for him has exhausted the family's resources, emotional, physical, and financial. Jason goes to Braille school, but he has psychological problems. Is anyone surprised? Would you like to explain to him why he is blind, and why his father shot him, and why his father shot himself, and shot his brother, and why his mother too killed herself?

Jason has been receiving psychotherapy. But he needs more specialized care. And there is no institution in California equipped to handle someone with Jason's compound problem of emotional disruption and blindness. He has rages. Is anyone surprised?

Don Menza's wife, Rose, says, "He's beautiful." And Don says, "He's smart as a whip. He has all Frank's fire and energy." And he is musical. He has tried trumpet and trombone and piano. But he has no patience. Is anyone surprised?

On October 30, 1983, between five p.m. and midnight, there will be a concert at the Hollywood Palladium, sponsored by Musicians' Wives, Inc. of Los Angeles. The concert is in tribute to Chuck Piscitello, who died in May at forty-three of a heart attack. Chuck had made Carmelo's, in Van Nuys, one of the best jazz rooms in Los Angeles. The proceeds of the concert will be divided:

Half the money to defray medical expenses for Jason Rosolino Eien; one quarter to a scholarship fund in Chuck Piscitello's name; and one quarter to the medical expenses of others, including critic Jim Liska, whose six-month-old baby needs heart surgery in Boston at a cost of \$100,000.

The present roster of performers includes Stan Getz, Al Cohn, Teddy Edwards, Joe Rocissano, Bill Berry, Jack Sheldon, Pete and Conte Candoli, Sarah Vaughan, Don Menza, and Ernie Andrews, but it can be expected to grow by the date of the concert.

Rose Menza, who is in charge of this event, can use help of all kinds in staging the concert. You can call her at (213) 985-8059.

If you would like to contribute something, you can send it to: Musicians' Wives, Inc., Jason Rosolino Fund, Post Office Box 4685, North Hollywood, CA 91607. Donations are tax-deductible.

And those of you in broadcasting or writing for newspapers might as well tell the story. It can't hurt Frank now, and perhaps it can help Jason. Maybe we've all been silent too long.

Frank. Wake up, we're home.

We are like hell. We're lost out here in the stars.

Notice

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