

ENTERTAINMENT

BY SANDY CARPENTER

ROUND AND MISSING MIDING HT



n Round Midnight tenor saxophonist Dexter Gordon is more convincing in the role of Dale Turner, an alcoholic bebop genius, than a veteran Hollywood star with years of acting experience would be. Why? The answer is simple. Gordon has lived the broad sweep of what he plays on screen in his movie debut. In addition, he is a fusion of the late jazz giants — pianist Bud Powell and sax player Lester Young, who are celebrated in the film.

Round Midnight is a film about Black American bebop musicians who immigrate to Paris in the late 1950s. Dale Turner arrives in Paris in 1959. Gordon himself, no doubt, can also identify with this aspect of the character he plays on screen since the legendary bebop artist himself spent 14 years in Europe, returning to the U.S. in the mid 1970s.

Jazz aficionados will recognize cameo combinations of the bebop players' lives, music styles, and even the clothing that became part of their signatures. Musicians are said to communicate best through their music. Bud Powell could go for a whole week speaking only five or six words. His thundering, yet melodic piano style, stunned, then captivated those who could hang.

Lester Young so amazed his listeners that those who could not dig his alternately cavernous honking and laid-back melodic style were so jarred that they took to bad-mouthing his playing. This so hurt and confused Young, tagged the "Prez," that he complained, "I don't think anybody likes me," and often hid out in his hotel room until it was time for him to go down into some small smokey club to play for those who were ahead of their time and appreciated his music. Perhaps to escape the pain, Powell and Young, like so many musicians of their era, drowned their sorrows in alcohol.

Gordon captures the essence of these experiences on film. There are scenes of Dale Turner sashaying about Paris by day in a mellow alcoholic daze sporting a pork-pie hat a-la Lester Young and a great billowing Sherlock Holmes raglan coat, a Bud Powell trademark. There are funky scenes of Turner laid up in his hotel room pickled, soused and in no condition to know his name let alone blow his sax. But, when he does appear on the bandstand, it is like the king returning to Camelot. He is transformed by his talent. No matter how wrecked and burned out he is by drink, he can run riffs and weave

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magic melodies on his sax that send chills down the spines of his awestruck subjects.

urner's star-struck fan Francis Borier, played by Francois Cluzet, stands outside the Blue Note (he lacks the bread to go inside) mesmerized by Turner's music. Cluzet turns in a convincing performance as Turner's loyal fan and nursemaid who worships his jazz giant who lives up to this description in music as well as in size. In fact, when the tall, powerfully-built Gordon first hopped on the bebop scene over four decades ago, the 6'5" handsome, aristocratic sax player was affectionately dubbed "Long Tall."

To the screen Gordon also brings a noble grandeur that is perhaps a reflection of his background and his physician father's influence. Even when mooching drinks in the Blue Note, Gordon-as-Turner is as gallant as royalty to those loyal fans who love and appreciate his music. He also shows impish humor on eyeing a fellow drinker fall from the bar zombie-style. He leans over to the person who is paying his bar bill and declares, "I'd like whatever he just had." Even though Bud Powell, unlike Turner, was not noted for his humor, he did have the same kind of loyalty in an avid fan who also worshipped his King of Jazz and ended up like Francis in the movie, taking care of his favorite artist.

The music, like the story, has its authenticity. The late, great jazz pianist Thelonious Monk, composer of Round Midnight, prophetically commented: "Not everybody can do bebop; it is such free music." Herbie Hancock who composed the eloquent, yet gutsy, music for the film points out: "Every night jazz musicians must be inventive and do their best before their fellow musicians." Hancock added that the music is like having a noose around the musicians' necks because they have to jump in and do their best in their playing while fearing they will hang themselves — of course, they never do.

Without a doubt the movie's director, Bertrand Tavernier, captures the world of the jazz musicians, of yesterday as well as of today, many of whom appear on screen (Ron Carter, Freddie Hubbard, Cedar Walton, Tony Williams, Sandra Reaves-Phillips, Lonette McKee, plus a host of other current greats). Tavernier toasts their talents in a fitting tribute that celebrates why they were not the buffoons or mere entertainers as Hollywood portrayed them, but were the artists they wanted to be known and remembered as.

FEEDBACK

NEW DAWN

SURVEY

We invite our readers to speak out on issues that shape our world. Please tell us what you think about this month's article on:

South African Sanctions:

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Please check only I box per question. The results of this survey will be published in a future issue of this Magazine.

- I. Sanctions hurt Black South Africans more than Whites and therefore should be avoided.
- AGREE DISAGREE

 2. The issue of sanctions is not
- the loss of Black Jobs, but the loss of life and justice, therefore sanctions are justified.
- ☐ AGREE ☐ DISAGREE
- 3. Sanctions will pressure White South Africa to dismantle apartheid.
- ☐ AGREE ☐ DISAGREE
- 4. Instead of sanctions, the U.S. should provide more assistance to help promote jobs and education for Blacks.
- ☐ AGREE ☐ DISAGREE
- ☐ I generally agree with
 Senator Orrin Hatch
- I generally agree with
 Representative William
 Gray

And furthermore:

Please clip and mail this survey to:
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295 Madison Avenue
Suite 1028, New York City 10017

... Recipes Continued from page 18

Cream soft butter with confectioners' sugar and orange rind. Gradually blend in orange liqueur. Spread about 1/2 teaspoon of mixture over side of crepe that was

browned second (this is the less attractive side). Roll up crepes with orange mixture inside. Place remaining mixture with orange juice in large skillet or chafing dish, using Sterno

canned heat for high temperature. Heat until bubbly. Add rolled crepes and heat, spooning sauce over. Add orange sections and heat just 2 or 3 minutes longer.



17 mg. "tar", 1.3 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking By Pregnant Women May Result in Fetal Injury, Premature Birth, And Low Birth Weight.