

reference to strict notation, with the demands of jazz, most notably improvisation and swing.

In the two compositions presented tonight, Billy Taylor, to whom jazz is the classical music of the U. S., offers a solution that updates the symphonie concertante a genre of European classical music in which a group of soloists performs with orchestral accompaniment. Taylor uses a trio of piano, bass, and drums to supply the essential jazz ingredients, while the orchestra adds depth and color to the musical material.

"Impromptu" is an early Billy Taylor composition written in two thematic sections one fast, one slow. After a short orchestral introduction, the bass and drums set up a Latin jazz rhythm over which the piano states the first theme. After several variations the orchestra interrupts and switches the mood to a slow blues, which the piano picks up and develops. The bass and drums each take an extended solo, then return to the up-tempo theme. The piece ends with a short piano cadenza and an orchestral coda.

"The Suite for Jazz Piano and Orchestra" (commissioned by Maurice Abravanel for the Utah Symphony and premiered in 1975 in the Mormon Tabernacle with the composer at the piano) also incorporates the jazz trio, although the bass and drums figure less prominently. Written in three movements, the first movement, "Duane" is a lushly scored jazz ballad named for the composer's son. The second movement takes a spiritual-inspired melody through settings in gospel, blues, and modal jazz styles before the final orchestral "amen". The third movement elaborates the Taylor melody "Cote d'Ivoire" and features an extended piano cadenza with some unique style markings: the soloist is expected to make the left hand sound like two hands both hands sound like one hand, and finally both hands sound like more than two hands.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

BILLY TAYLOR

Billy Taylor is a communicator of jazz. Whether playing piano, composing, leading a band, writing magazine articles and instruction books, lecturing, or serving as host of a radio or TV program, Taylor's aim is to impart the richness of the jazz tradition and thereby to stimulate its continued development.

Born in Greenville, N. C., in 1921, Taylor was raised in Washington, D. C. He received a bachelor's degree from Virginia State College in 1943; immediately afterwards he really "went to college" on West 52nd Street in New York City, the center of the bebop revolution in jazz. In 1950-51, Taylor reached the pinnacle of success as a jazz pianist when he served as house pianist for Birdland, the leading jazz club of the time. After leaving Birdland, Taylor formed his own trio with bassist Charlie Mingus and drummer Marquis Foster.

Since then, Taylor has cemented his reputation as a creative musician, through the continued development of his own piano style and through composition. He has written over 300 songs; his works include ballet music for the musical "Your Arms Too Short to Box with God". He is perhaps best known as the bandleader of the David Frost Show (1969-1972) and as the host of National Public Radio's "Jazz Alive" series.

A practicing music educator, Taylor has earned a doctorate in music education from the University of Massachusetts, has written texts introducing jazz piano styles, and has performed or composed for such children's programs as "Captain Kangaroo" and "Sesame Street".

VICTOR GASKIN

Victor Gaskin has spent the last twelve years as bassist for the Billy Taylor Trio. He was, at one time, the bassist for Duke Ellington and participated in the well remembered 70th birthday concert album recorded in concert in Great Britain. He also was a member of the Chico Hamilton Quintet, the notable John Mayall Blues Band and has recently been a part-time replacement with the Count Basie Orchestra.

BOBBY THOMAS

Bobby Thomas was the drummer in the band led by Billy Taylor during the 3½ years of the David Frost Show on television and worked various trio gigs with Billy Taylor at that time. He also worked in groups led by the late guitarist Wes Montgomery and Herbie Mann and has been the drummer with the trios of Junior Mance and Cy Coleman. In addition to working as part of the Illinois Jacquet Big Band, he has been part of the accompanying groups behind such singers as Carmen McRae and Charles Aznavour. Further, he has been the musical coordinator of "Chorus Line", the longest running Broadway musical in history.

From the Program Books of the
Royal Festival Hall, London —

"During a recent test in the Hall, a note played *mezzoforte* on the horn measured approximately 65 decibels of sound. A single 'uncovered' cough gave the same reading. A handkerchief placed over the mouth when coughing assists in obtaining a *pianissimo*".