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Artie Shaw died December 29, 2004 at the age of 94.

## ARTIE SHAW -- JOURNEY OF SELF DISCOVERY J

JAZZ RHYTHM / Dave Radlauer



BEFORE HIS HUGE SUCCESS OF THE LATE 30s ARTIE SHAW WAS JUST ANOTHER HARDWORKING, VERY TALENTED MUSICIAN. MUSIC WAS ACTUALLY HIS SECOND CAREER CHOICE WHICH HE INITIALLY ENTERED ONLY TO MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO FOLLOW HIS REAL ASPIRATION, WHICH WAS TO BECOME A WRITER. ON HIS WAY TO SIMPLY EARNING A LIVING, DEEPER INVOLVEMENT IN MUSIC SEIZED ARTHUR JACOB ARSHAWSKY'S FERTILE MIND AND WILLING HEART.

DURING SHAW'S NEARLY TWO DECADES IN THE ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS, THE MUSIC ALWAYS CAME FIRST. FOR HIM FAME, FORTUNE AND BECOMING AN AMERICAN ICON WERE HARMFUL TO HIS PRIMARY DRIVE: WHICH WAS TO CREATE MUSIC.

## **[SHAW ON PLAYING A HORN:]**

"SO YOU'RE TRYING TO PLAY A HORN, AND HERE'S THIS CLUMSY SERIES OF KEYS ON A PIECE OF WOOD AND YOU'RE TRYING TO MANIPULATE THEM WITH THE REED AND THE THROAT MUSCLES, AND WHAT THEY CALL AN EMOUCHURE. YOU'RE TRYIN' TO MAKE A SOUND THAT NO ONE EVER GOT BEFORE, OR A COMBINATION OF SOUNDS CREATING . . . **AN EMOTION FINALLY.**

IT'S LIKE ASKING A POET HOW DO YOU GET THIS COMBINATION, HOW DID YOU GET THESE WORDS? WELL YOU DO THAT IN MUSIC. YOU'RE TRYING TO TAKE NOTES AND MAKE THEM COME OUT IN A WAY THAT MOVES YOU.

IF IT MOVES YOU, IT'S GONNA MOVE OTHERS: IF YOU KNOW IT'S RIGHT AND YOU FEEL: 'THIS IS SOMETHING I MEANT.'

THAT HAPPENS. BUT VERY RARELY DOES IT HAPPEN, AND YOU REMEMBER IT FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. WHAT CAN I SAY, IT'S THE MOST EXUBERANT EXPERIENCE YOU CAN HAVE. IT BEATS SEX. IT BEATS GREAT FOOD. IT BEATS ANYTHING."

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## **CONFLICT WITH SUCCESS**

BECAUSE OF HIS FREQUENT DEPARTURES FROM THE MUSIC BUSINESS, SHAW IS SOMETIMES PERCEIVED AS TEMPERMENTAL. ACTUALLY, HE SIMPLY RESENTED NON-MUSICAL DISTRACTIONS THAT THREATENED TO COMPROMISE HIS MUSIC SUCH AS DEMANDS OF THE RECORD COMPANIES; THE PRIVACY-INVADING HASSLES OF CELEBRITY; OR THE LIMITING EXPECTATIONS OF FANS.

THE HUGE SUCCESSES OF 1938-40 SUCKED SHAW INTO A MAELSTROM OF CELEBRITY THAT WOULD TEST THE STRONGEST PERSONALITY. AT THE PEAK OF SUCCESS HIS REPORTED WEEKLY INCOME WAS \$30,000 WEEK -- IN 1938! IT WAS SURELY OVERWHELMING FOR SHAW, AN INTELLIGENT, ERUDITE AND WELL-READ PERSON, AND STRESSFUL COPING WITH A PUNISHING SCHEDULE OF APPEARANCES, PERFORMANCES, TRAVEL, RECORDING & BROADCASTING.

## **[SHAW ON SUCCESS:]**

"SUCCESS IS A VERY BIG PROBLEM, BIGGER THAN FAILURE. YOU CAN DEAL WITH FAILURE. BUT SUCCESS IS AN OPIATE AND YOU GET VERY CONFUSED. THINGS HAPPEN THAT YOU HAVE NO PREPARATION FOR, MONEY COMES IN AND PEOPLE THROW THEMSELVES AT YOU. AND YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE INTO. IT BECOMES NUTS, I COULDN'T HANDLE IT, I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

WITH IT.

IT WAS HEADY, A VERY HEADY DOSE, IT'S LIKE GETTING DRUNK OR GETTING HIGH, A RUSH, A LOT OF PEOPLE LOVE IT. SINATRA WOULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT. A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE IT HAVE NOTHING BUT THAT IN MIND.

IN MY CASE IT GOT IN THE WAY. I STILL WANTED TO PLAY MUSIC AND THE AUDIENCE WAS SAYING, "PLAY WHAT YOU'RE PLAYING, PLAY THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER, WE LIKE THAT."

FOR EXAMPLE 'BEGIN THE BEGUINE,' WHICH BECAME AN ALBATROSS AROUND MY NECK. I LOVED IT ORIGINALLY; I MADE A GOOD RECORD OF IT. BUT, THE AUDIENCES DIDN'T UNDERSTAND, I WAS THROUGH WITH THAT, LET'S GET ON. AND THEY NEVER COULD GET IT THROUGH THEIR HEADS THAT WHAT THEY LIKED WAS SOMETHING I WAS DOING ON MY WAY TO GETTING BETTER"

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## **SHAW HIRED GREAT TALENT**

FROM AN EARLY DATE SHAW RECOGNIZED GREAT TALENT WHEN HE SAW IT AND HIRED MANY REMARKABLE MUSICIANS AND GUEST STARS:

\*\*ORAN HOT LIPS PAGE: A CHARISMATIC TRUMPETER AND SINGER FROM THE KANSAS CITY HARD-KNOCKS SCHOOL OF JAZZ

\*\*ROY ELDRIDGE: "LITTLE JAZZ" AN EBULLIENT STAGE PERSONALITY AND ONE OF THE SUPREME TRUMPETER TALENTS OF THE SWING ERA WHOSE SOUND POINTED THE WAY TOWARD BOP.

AND WHILE BENNY GOODMAN FREQUENTLY RECEIVES CREDIT FOR RACIALLY INTEGRATING HIS BAND, MOST OF US KNOW THAT PLENTY OF JAZZ MUSICIANS MIXED IT UP AS WELL -- ARTIE SHAW INCLUDED. HE WAS A PIONEER IN HIRING BLACK MUSICIANS INTO HIS BANDS: BENNY CARTER, BASSIST BILLY TAYLOR & RED ALLEN.

ONE OF HIS MOST DARING ATTEMPTS TO INTEGRATE HIS BAND WAS HIRING SINGER BILLIE HOLIDAY. HE ADMIRERED HER AS A SINGER, COURTED HER AS A FEMALE, BUT ULTIMATELY, COULD NOT SHIELD HER FROM THE RACIST ASSAULTS OF AMERICA IN THE THIRTIES.

### **[SHAW ON BILLIE HOLIDAY:]**

"WELL, I KNEW BILLIE HOLIDAY FROM MY YEARS AROUND HARLEM, WHEN I WAS LEARNING MY OWN TRADE, WHEN I WOULD SIT IN WITH WILLIE "THE LION"

SMITH AND GUYS LIKE THAT AND SIT IN WITH ALL THE BANDS, CHICK WEBB AND ALL THESE FELLAS. THEY WERE FRIENDS OF MINE. AND BILLIE WAS A KID AROUND SINGING, AND I SAID TO HER ONE TIME, "SOME, ONE DAY I'M GONNA HAVE A BAND, YOU'RE GONNA SING IN IT." SHE SAID, "YEAH, THAT'LL BE THE DAY."

BUT CAME THE TIME WHEN I HAD A BAND AND I'D GONE THROUGH ALOT OF SINGERS AND I COULDN'T FIND ANYBODY WHO MATCHED THAT BAND. FOUND OUT THAT BILLIE WAS OUT OF WORK. SO I DROVE DOWN TO HARLEM ONE NIGHT FROM BOSTON AND I SAID TO HER, "COME ON, YOU'RE GONNA JOIN MY BAND."

SHE SAID, "OH, COME ON."

AND I SAID, "YEAH, GET DRESSED, LET'S GO." THIS IS THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. SHE GOT DRESSED, CAME WITH ME, WE REHEARSED A COUPLE OF TUNES. THE NEXT DAY SHE WAS PART OF THE BAND.

SHE WAS VERY YOUNG AND HEALTHY AT THAT TIME. SHE HE WASN'T ON ANYTHING, OH A LITTLE MARIJUANA, NOW AND THEN, YOU KNOW, BUT EVERYBODY DID THAT.

SHE WAS A VERY DOWN TO EARTH GIRL, SHE KNEW WHAT SHE WAS DOING. ALL THE MEN IN THE BAND KNEW WHAT THEY WERE DOING, AND THEY ALL RESPECTED HER, SHE RESPECTED THEM. SHE WAS PART OF THE BAND."

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## INFLUENCES ON SHAW

THE INFLUENCES ON ARTIE SHAW'S MUSIC CAN BE SOMEWHAT SURPRISING. AS A YOUNG MAN HE STUDIED CLASSICAL CLARINET, BUT AFTER HEARING LOUIS ARMSTRONG'S HOT FIVE, HE WANTED TO PLAY JAZZ. LATER HE ALSO MENTIONED WILLIE "THE LION" SMITH AND CHICK WEBB AS INSPIRATIONS.

[SHAW ON THE INFLUENCE OF BIX AND LOUIS:]

"I HEARD BIX AND TRUMBAUER AND I SAID, "THOSE ARE THE GUYS." BEING A WHITE GUY, I WAS SUBJECTED TO WHITE MUSIC AND I HEARD BIX AND TRUMBAUER AND THEY WERE THE EXEMPLARS."

"THE FIRST LOUIS ARMSTRONG RECORD I STUMBLED ON WAS 'SAVOY BLUES.' I CAN SING IT FOR YOU RIGHT NOW, I CAN WRITE OUT HIS WHOLE SOLO.

AND SOMETHING ABOUT THAT, I REALIZED I WAS NO LONGER PLAYING MUSIC, I WAS PLAYING AN ARTFORM, SOMETHING BIGGER THAN MUSIC, AND I HAD TO LEARN WHAT THAT WAS ALL ABOUT. IT HAD ITS OWN INNER STRUCTURE. I COULDN'T HAVE USED WORDS LIKE THAT. BUT I KNEW THERE WAS SOMETHIN' GOIN' ON THERE THAT I HAD TO FIGURE OUT. ALL OF THIS WAS INARTICULATE, VERY CHAOTIC IN MY MIND.

I WENT TO SEE LOUIS ARMSTRONG IN CHICAGO, I MADE A PILGRIMAGE AND DROVE UP FROM CLEVELAND. AND I SAT ON A RUG-COVERED BANDSTAND AND JUST WAITED . . .

AND HE CAME ON. THE FIRST THING HE PLAYED WAS 'WEST END BLUES.'

AND I HEARD THIS CASCADE OF NOTES COMING OUT OF A TRUMPET. NO ONE HAD EVER DONE THAT BEFORE. AND SO I WAS OBSESSED WITH THE IDEA THAT THIS WAS WHAT YOU HAD TO DO. SOMETHING THAT WAS YOUR OWN, THAT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ANYBODY ELSE. I WAS INFLUENCED BY HIM, NOT IN TERMS OF NOTES, BUT IN TERMS OF THE IDEA OF DOING WHAT YOU ARE, WHO YOU ARE."

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I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THE STORY THAT ARTIE SHAW AT ONE TIME KNEW BIX BEIDERBEKE WELL ENOUGH THAT THE TWO SHARED A ROOM. LIKE BIX THOUGH HE DISCOVERED THE MODERN TWENTIETH CENTURY COMPOSERS STRAVINSKY, DEBUSSY, RAVEL, AND BARTOK AND SOUGHT TO INCORPORATE THEIR IDEAS INTO JAZZ. AND HIS INTEREST IN CLASSICAL MUSIC CONTINUALLY RESURFACED THROUGHOUT HIS CAREER.

ONE OF SHAW'S FIRST HIGH-PROFILE PUBLIC APPEARANCES WAS IN THE MID-1930s

LEADING A BAND AT A "SWING CONCERT" ON BROADWAY IN NEW YORK CITY WHERE HE PUT TOGETHER A RATHER STRIKING ENSEMBLE THAT INCLUDED A STRING QUARTET. IT WAS WELL RECEIVED AND HAS BEEN CITED AS ONE OF THE FIRST EXAMPLES OF "THIRD STREAM" MUSIC: THAT IS, A BLENDING OF JAZZ AND CLASSICAL.

## **PIONEERING THIRD STREAM MUSIC**

ONCE SHAW HAD ESTABLISHED A SUCCESSFUL AND POPULAR BIG BAND HE BECAME THE FIRST TO CONVINCINGLY BLEND A LARGE STRING SECTION -- 13 TO 15 STRINGS -- WITH SWING JAZZ. "APRIL IN PARIS" IS ONE OF HIS TYPICALLY SKILLFUL FUSIONS OF STRINGS AND JAZZ HORNS. ANOTHER IS HIS RATHER THEATRICAL, ALMOST CLASSICAL RENDITION OF GERSHWIN'S "SUMMERTIME," FEATURING TRUMPETER ROY ELDRIDGE. BY THE WAY IT WAS SHAW WHO FIRST CONVINCED ELDRIDGE TO USE THE PLUNGER MUTE: HE'D BEEN RETICENT TO "COPY" THE SOUND OF ELLINGTON'S TRUMPETERS WHO CREATED THAT SOUND -- BUT DID SO AT ARTIE'S INSISTENCE. HE LATER ADMITTED TO SHAW THAT ARTIE HAD BEEN CORRECT IN POINTING HIM TOWARD DEVELOPING HIS OWN SIGNATURE WITH THE PLUNGER MUTE.

SHAW WAS ABLE TO SUCCESSFULLY EXPLORE "THIRD STREAM" MUSIC: THE FUSION OF JAZZ AND SYMPHONIC FORM, ADDING INSTRUMENTS LIKE FRENCH HORN, OBOE, VIOLINS AND CELLOS. HE SUCCESSFULLY BROUGHT THESE ELEMENTS TOGETHER IN AN ORGANIC WHOLE, EXPANDING THE JAZZ AND SWING PALETTE BY ADDING A SYMPHONIC DIMENSION -- WITHOUT LOSING A SENSE OF SWING.

HE STUBBORNLY REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE ANY DISTINCTION BETWEEN JAZZ AND CONCERT MUSIC SAYING: "MUSIC IS MUSIC AFTER ALL. THINK OF JAZZ AS A TRIBUTARY TO THE MAIN RIVER THAT WE CALL MUSIC."

### **[SHAW ON CLASSICAL VS. JAZZ MUSIC:]**

"I HAVE A LETTER FROM A VIOLINIST WHO WORKED IN MY FIRST BAND, STRING QUARTET BASED JAZZ BAND. AND HE WROTE ME A LETTER SAYING THAT HE HAD GONE THROUGH ALL THE CONSERVATORIES HE COULD THINK OF. AND HE THOUGHT HE KNEW SOMETHIN' ABOUT MUSIC BY THE TIME HE JOINED MY BAND.

HE SAID HE LEARNED MORE IN THE FIRST REHEARSAL THAN IN ALL THE YEARS HE'D BEEN PLAYING VIOLIN. BECAUSE I WAS TALKING ABOUT MUSIC, NOT ABOUT NOTES -- NOT ABOUT HOW YOU PLAY THEM -- BUT WHERE THEY FIT IN WITH THE REST OF THE BAND.

YOU'RE PLAYING WITH OTHER PEOPLE."

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## **ARTIE SHAW vs. BENNY GOODMAN**

WHAT SET ARTIE SHAW APART FROM OTHER SWING BANDS AND BANDLEADERS WAS THAT HE HAD TERRIFIC TONE, TECHNIQUE AND STYLE AS A CLARINETIST. THOUGH NOT AS JAZZY OR HOT AS GOODMAN, SHAW HAD GREAT STYLE, MUSICAL BALANCE, A RICH AND FULLY DEVELOPED TONE.

HIS TECHNICAL ACHIEVEMENTS AS A CLARINET PLAYER DREW FROM HIS BACKGROUND AS AN ALTO SAXOPHONIST. COMMENTATOR DICK SUDHALTER IN "LOST CHORDS" HAS POINTED OUT A CERTAIN JEWISH FLAVOR. AND SHAW TRAINED HIMSELF TO KEEP HIS TONE FULL RIGHT UP INTO THE HIGHEST REGISTER OF THE CLARINET WHERE OTHER PLAYERS CLARINET TONES THINNED OUT OR BECAME SCREECHY.

OTHER FACTORS SETTING SHAW ARTIE'S ORCHESTRA APART FROM OTHER LARGE SWING BANDS WERE:

\*\*A LIVELY SPIRIT AND SWING: LISTEN ESPECIALLY FOR THE DISTINCTIVE FULLNESS AND COHERENCE IN HIS SAX SECTIONS.

\*\* HIS COMMITMENT TO BROADENING THE RANGE OF BIG BAND ORCHESTRATION THROUGH SUPERB WRITING AND ARRANGING.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHAW AND BENNY GOODMAN -- AS SHAW PERCEIVED IT -- WAS THAT GOODMAN PRIMARILY "PLAYED CLARINET"; WHILE SHAW PRIMARILY "PLAYED MUSIC."

**[SHAW ON BENNY GOODMAN:]**

"BENNY GOODMAN AND I WORKED TOGETHER QUITE A WHILE IN RADIO. HE WAS A WEIRD GUY.

I TALKED TO HIS BROTHER, FREDDIE, WHO RAN MY BAND ONE TIME, AND I SAID, "WHAT WAS BENNY LIKE GROWING UP?" HE SAID, "STUPID."

I SAID, "OH, COME ON. HE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN TOTALLY STUPID, HE'S . . . LOOK WHAT HE DID WITH A HORN." CAUSE HE WAS A SUPERB TECHNICIAN.

AND FRED SAID, "THAT'S WHAT HE DID, HE DID NOTHIN' ELSE." IT'S LIKE, HE'S . . . NOT EXACTLY IDIOT SAVANT, BUT SOMETHING LIKE THAT. IT'S WHAT HE KNEW. THERE WAS NOTHING ELSE.

BENNY GOODMAN ONCE SAID TO ME, "THIS THING WILL NEVER LET YOU DOWN." WHICH WAS A STRANGE THING TO SAY ABOUT A PIECE OF WOOD WITH SOME KEYS ON IT. I DIDN'T THINK OF IT AS HOLDING YOU UP. BUT THAT'S WHAT HE SAW IN THE CLARINET.

AND I THINK IT WAS HIS LIFE. HE FOCUSED ON THAT AND HE DID IT EXTREMELY WELL. BUT HIS PROBLEM WAS HE HAD A LIMITED VOCABULARY IN MUSIC. ALTERED CHORDS WERE SOMETHING BEYOND HIS PERCEPTION. IF YOU LISTEN TO HIS PLAYING, IT'S SUPERB . . . BUT IT'S LIMITED."

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**CLARINET EMERITUS**

BY THE END OF THE '40s SHAW WAS AGAIN DISENCHANTED WITH POPULAR MUSIC. HE SWITCHED TO CLASSICAL CLARINET, STUDIED, PERFORMED AND RECORDED MUSIC OF THE SYMPHONIC CLARINET LITERATURE -- BY DEBUSSY, SHOSTAKOVICH GERSHWIN AND OTHERS. HIS CAREER AS A CONCERT SOLOIST CULMINATED IN A PERFORMANCE OF THE MOZART CONCERTO WITH LEONARD BERSTEIN AND THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC.

SHAW'S SMALL BAND KNOWN AS THE GRAMMERCY FIVE -- A SEXTET ACTUALLY -- WAS A GREAT SMALL JAZZ COMBO NAMED FOR THE NEW YORK PHONE EXCHANGE OF THAT DAY. THE ORIGINAL GRAMMERCY FIVE INCLUDED TRUMPETER BILLY BUTTERFIELD; DRUMMER NICK FATOOL; AND THE UNUSUAL INCLUSION OF A HARPSICHORD PLAYED BY JOHNNY GUARNIERI. SHAW DISBANDED AND REVIVED GRAMMERCY A COUPLE TIMES . . . AND IT WAS ALWAYS A STELLAR JAZZ CHAMBER MUSIC ENSEMBLE.

HIS LAST SESSION AS A JAZZ MUSICIAN WAS AN EARLY '50s GRAMMERCY FIVE THAT INCLUDED YOUNGER PROGRESSIVE MUSICIANS: PIANIST HANK JONES AND GUITARIST TAL FARLOW. THAT WAS IN 1954 WHICH WAS THE YEAR SHAW GAVE UP PERFORMING JAZZ FOR GOOD, THOUGH HE STAYED INVOLVED IN CLASSICAL MUSIC FOR A FEW MORE YEARS.

EVENTUALLY THOUGH, SHAW SOUGHT PEACE AND QUIET ON HIS DAIRY FARM IN UPSTATE NEW YORK, TRIED TO EVADE THE PUBLIC EYE AND BEGAN TO FULFILLING HIS DESIRE TO WRITE. SO DEPENDING ON WHETHER YOU VIEW THE GLASS AS HALF FULL OR HALF EMPTY, SHAW DIDN'T QUIT MUSIC SO MUCH AS RETURN TO HIS FIRST LOVE: "I DIDN'T STOP PLAYING, I BEGAN WRITING."

HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR CALLED, "THE TROUBLE WITH CINDERELLA", WAS PUBLISHED TO CRITICAL ACCLAIM IN 1953. BUT THE "RED SCARE" IN THE FORM OF INVESTIGATIONS BY THE CONGRESSIONAL HOUSE UNAMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE SOON DRAGGED SHAW MOST UNWILLINGLY BACK INTO THE PUBLIC LIMELIGHT. HE FELT SO VIOLATED BY THE UNFOUNDED ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HIM THAT SHAW LEFT AMERICA TO SELF-IMPOSED POLITICAL EXILE IN SPAIN FOR SEVERAL YEARS.

HIS WIFE DURING THE LATE FIFTIES, EVELYN KEYES, HAS DESCRIBED SHAW'S MANY ENTHUSIASMS: MASTERING CHESS AND CRAFTING HIS OWN CHESSBOARDS; MAKING HIS OWN GUNS AND AMMUNITION; BECOMING A CRACK MARKSMAN; WOOD CARVING, PAINTING, ICE SKATING . . . EVEN FIXING THE HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES.

IN THE SIXTIES SHAW RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES, TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WHERE HE SETTLED -- RECLUSIVELY AT FIRST -- BUT EVENTUALLY RE-EMERGING AS A SCHOLARLY COMMENTATOR, LECTURING AND GIVING SEMINARS ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES ABOUT ART, CULTURE AND MUSIC. OCCASIONALLY HE DABBLED IN MUSIC OR GRANTED INTERVIEWS TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT ABOUT HIS PAST, OR TO OFFER CLARIFYING INSIGHTS ON THE EARLY DAYS OF JAZZ AND BIG BAND SWING.

AFTER HE BEGAN GIVING SEMINARS SHAW RECEIVED MORE THAN ONE HONORARY DEGREE, AND CONTINUED TO BUILD HIS REMARKABLE BOOK COLLECTION WHICH EXCEEDED 15,000 VOLUMES.

AS A WRITER, MUCH OF SHAW'S WORK IS MEMOIR OR THINLY DISGUISED AUTOBIOGRAPHY -- INCLUDING SEVERAL SHORT STORIES AND A UNPUBLISHED NOVEL , REVEALINGLY TITLED: "THE EDUCATION OF ALBIE SNOW."

LATER IN LIFE ARTIE SHAW BECAME VERY ACTIVE AS A BOOK COLLECTOR AND

WRITER; A MUCH SOUGHT-AFTER LECTURER AND COMMENTATOR ON AMERICAN CULTURE AND THE ARTS; AND HE SELECTIVELY GRANTED INTERVIEWS, INCLUDING HIS EXCELLENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE "KEN BURNS JAZZ" DOCUMENTARIES. IN MY OPINION HE WAS ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BURNS SERIES.

WHILE IT'S TOO EARLY FOR A PROPER BIOGRAPHY OF SHAW, I SUSPECT THAT MORE THAN ONE IS IN THE WORKS. PERHAPS IF WE'RE LUCKY RICHARD SUDHALTER WILL DO IT: SUDHALTER HAS INTERVIEWED SHAW EXTENSIVELY AND WROTE TWO CHAPTERS ABOUT HIM IN HIS TOME, "LOST CHORDS: WHITE MUSICIANS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO JAZZ."

SUDHALTER ALSO WROTE EXTENSIVE COMMENTARY FOR THE 5 CD SET ON BLUEBIRD RECORDS (FORMERLY RCA VICTOR, NOW PART OF BMG RECORDS) ENTITLED "SELF PORTRAIT" FOR WHICH ARTIE SHAW SELECTED THE MUSIC AND WROTE COMMENTARY.

TODAY IN HIS NINETIES, ARTIE SHAW IS A PERCEPTIVE & OPINIONATED OBSERVER OF THE MUSIC BUSINESS, AMERICAN LIFE, AND HIS OWN PLACE IN OUR CULTURAL HISTORY.

CLEARLY ARTIE SHAW IS A REMARKABLE MAN, A FABULOUS MUSICIAN, AND CERTAINLY A GUY WHO THOUGHT FOR HIMSELF. HE REFUSED TO GO ALONG WITH ANYTHING THAT HE THOUGHT INTERFERRED WITH HIS DESIRE TO EXPRESS HIMSELF IN MUSIC.

ARTIE SHAW'S HAS BEEN A TRULY AMERICAN LIFE IN MUSIC AND A JOURNEY OF SELF-DISCOVERY.

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**JAZZ RHYTHM / Dave Radlauer**

1600 - 25th Ave. #1, email: [dradjazz@aol.com](mailto:dradjazz@aol.com), San Francisco, California, 94122, US

Phone: 415-682-7560

[dradjazz@aol.com](mailto:dradjazz@aol.com)

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