

Religion

Jesus was a jazz musician

Third Sunday in Lent
John 2:13-25
March 3, 1991

Jesus was a jazz musician. No, we have no recordings of his playing, just accounts of his work by four fellow musicians, who also, thankfully, transposed some of his solos. It's not the same thing of course; if only we had his own work to listen to, but it's pretty good.

They either played with him, or knew people who played with him.

Yes, he was a jazz musician like all others: He knew the tradition. He knew both the old tunes and the old players. He was perhaps the best interpreter of Jeremiah that we've ever seen. He played all the greats, Ezekiel and Isaiah, of course, but also Hosea and Zechariah.

He'd listened to them all; he



Religion and Reality
by Jim Ryan

want stale, listen to CHUM AM or hire a D.J. Jesus never played the same tune twice.

Maybe that's why he never recorded anything.

The other thing is that he was black-balled by the recording studios.

Oh, you didn't know?

It's not new either.

You know, the old story: somebody gets hold of something and won't let go.

Jazz always thrives on competition. As soon as someone lays back and rests on their reputation then jazz dies. Show me a scene where newcomers can't work, and I'll show you a dead scene.

Well, to be specific, Chief Priest and his Big Band had the town all sewn up. No one could work without their say so. You had to play their way, or you couldn't play at all.

It had been that way for years.

And then Jesus came along.

He'd been playing all over the country in small towns, little clubs. And one day he arrived in town in a dusty, old Plymouth station wagon, with his band.

There was a big jazz festival on in town. It was called Passover.

They couldn't get any work, even though they'd been preceded by ecstatic reports in the local media.

Chief Priest had sent word around.

No one would touch them.

Well, Jesus wasn't one to walk away, especially when it came to jazz.

So one night he went over to the Temple. That was the name of the club where Chief Priest played with his band.

It was a busy night. Standing room only. They were making a bundle.

Jesus walked up to the stage during one of their sets and sat in.

It didn't take long. You've heard how it ended, he blew them away. It was beautiful.

That wasn't really the end, but it wasn't long after that.

Things didn't turn out as you'd expect though. We're taking the long view, right?

John, one of those fellows who played with Jesus, reports that the Temple was closed down not long after. Some investors from Rome foreclosed on them. It hasn't been opened since.

Ironically, Jesus hasn't stopped playing. I mean, can you imagine a jazz musician retiring?

He's still playing. That's what jazz does to you. You never stop.

Current concerns to be discussed

"March forth!" say the generals. And on March fourth, you can hear an old friend of many in Halton Hills talk about the Persian Gulf, Third World debt, and how the two are related. Eldon Comfort, formerly active in many peace and justice groups here, will return to muse on current concerns at Trinity United Church on Highway 7 in Acton, beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, March 4, presented by the 10 local churches of "Ten Days of World Development," which Eldon founded here. Everyone is welcome.

knew their work, and when he wanted to, late at night, with friends, he'd play them "funny."

It was great.

Oh yeah. Like all great players, he never played anything except he made it new. I mean, he might have played a tune a million times, but it was never old. Every time was fresh, as if for the first time, as if created out of nothing for you alone.

Stale? Are you kidding? If you



Last Sunday, 16 Brownies and Cubs received the coveted Religion in Life emblems and certificates at the annual Baden Powell church service held at St. John's United Church. Presentations were made by Rev. Nancy Knox and Rev. Karen Wigston, assisted by Leaders Ken Nokes and Chris Dowpagne. Pictured above are Stage I recipients

Melanie Southworth, Arden MacLean, Tracey Campbell, Annie Harlow, Corey Costello, Isaac Ferguson, Alan Fiddler, David King, Graeme Leverette, Errol Smith, Kraig Anderssen and Jeff Curren. Stage 2 recipients included Jason Jacks, John Stapleton, Darrel Hansman and Shaun Hansman. (Photo by Jean Layman)

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