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Afternoon of a Georgia Faun  
Marion Brown  
Views & Reviews

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NOTES TO AFTERNOON OF A GEORGIA FAUN:  
views and reviews

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VIEWS

MARION BROWN

NOTES TO AFTERNOON OF A GEORGIA FAUN

Afternoon of a Georgia Faun is an extended improvisation based on structured sections that flow uninterrupted into one another like links in a chain. It is divided into two sections, each of which develops within its own contextual possibilities. The first part represents nature -- raindrops, water, feelings of loneliness in an imaginary forest of the mind (like Tutuola's My Life in the Bush of Ghosts), animals heard and seen, in worship or celebration, voices from afar, the sounds of wind breathing life through trees. It sounds more "primitive" than the second part which begins with Chick's piano interlude -- the contemporary world of electricity and electro-magnetic energy, stop and go, interruptions, earth and moon. He plucks the strings, developing two melodies simultaneously, one harmonic, the other non-harmonic or "free." Staggered percussive keyboard sounds ring poem-like chimes, vibrating icicles. Flutes and voices engage in adolescent courtship, shyly teasing. Careful not to make mistakes, they rise and tumble.

Djinji's Corner is a musical ring-game that utilizes interchangeable discourse. Georgia Faun is a first person experience, as is a dream, told collectively in the musical third person. Djinji's Corner is a third person, group experience, also told in the musical third person of collective improvisation. It involves music, speech, song and movement. Each musician has a station consisting

of his primary, secondary, miscellaneous and other sound-producing instruments and non-instruments. There may also be "constructions," original instruments. Everything is legitimate or, as Leo Smith puts it, there is "equality of all instruments."

Each station is different because each musician is a different person; if, by chance, they play the same instrument, what and how they play will be different. No competition is involved because there are no solos; the event is what matters. The event involved x number of people, not one person!

The introduction consists of four measures. Three are played using whatever notes/sounds the musicians want; the fourth measure is conducted, resolved on a long decrescendo. After the introduction each musician plays a phrase that he will develop, on any instrument at his "home" station. He then proceeds to another station -- it doesn't matter which one as long as there is no one there -- where he plays a continuation of the phrase played at "home." The musicians visit each station, developing and accompanying phrase-fragments played at preceding stations, until a complete cycle has taken place. Then it begins again and may go on for as long as music is desired.

I suggested time units of thirty to forty seconds at each station. This fragmented time-span accounts for the snatches of melody that appear and disappear, yet seem always to hover over the total experience. It is confusing to the listener at first hearing and perhaps many times after, yet it is possible to unravel the threads when one has listened enough to separate the various instruments from each other in terms of timbre.

In order to realize fully what I intend-

ed, it was necessary for me to bring together various aspects of music that have nothing to do with what is created (the result: sound and rhythm), but rather with how it is created (the tools: instruments, organization and purpose).

The necessity of creating new sounds and rhythms led me to instrument construction, as well as to reclassifying other instruments, not according to texture, but by the level of technical proficiency attained by the performer.

1. Primary instrument: one on which the musician has reached "virtuoso" technique.

2. Secondary instrument: one, perhaps closely related (saxophones and clarinet, for example) on which he plays with less skill (technically).

3. Miscellaneous instruments: various sound and rhythm making devices that, although they add color to a composition, require no great skill. These may be assigned to those who are adept at keeping rhythms or making the right sounds at the right places.

There are also "Constructions:" original musical instruments such as my multiple percussion units (made of various materials, such as skin, wood and metals) and the many varieties of such pieces made by performers Roscoe Mitchell, Joseph Jarman, Don Moye, Fred Braceful, Anthony Braxton and Leo Smith. (Not included in this category are flutes of various sizes and textures made by creative musicians like Donald Ralph Garrett).

In traditional African societies, whence we camel, music functions as a unifying force that binds people, artistically and culturally, to a set of values that are passed on orally. Music functions both as a preserver of tradition and a means

of recreation. Djinji's Corner is recreational, that is, it is enjoyed for the sheer fun of engaging in the particular kind of exchange on which it is based (i.e. collective improvisation).

While the music may seem "western" in terms of the sound textures, it is non-western in every other aspect, in the use, for example, of:

1. Instrument construction.
2. Improvisation.
3. Non-musicians as "assistants."

One of the reasons the use of these assistants seems strange to most people, who are doubtful if the idea can work effectively, is that most formally trained musicians are like members of exclusive clubs. They feel that, if they had to spend all that time and money mastering the theory and technique of music, those who have perhaps only "banged on" or "blown" certain instruments for fun are not competent to perform seriously.

Although in formal performance all who participate have reached a common level of proficiency, there will always be those who, with the same training, will be less proficient than others. These differences make it difficult to establish rapport when musicians play together for the first time. Each musician feels the need to be, or to be considered, "the best, first or first chairman." Secondary roles are justified on the basis of harmony, tenure (playing second or third parts) and various other devices. So groups performing formally composed music tend to consist of musicians who have acquired their competence through formal training and performance.

On the other hand a group such as I used on Afternoon of a Georgia Faun may

embrace musicians whose competence may be of a different kind. Professor J. H. Nketia, in his African Music in Ghana, says: "A performing group, therefore, subsists on a nucleus of musicians, although it may include in its composition people of average or even lower ability as well as those who take up the non-musical roles that are required."

Not only is this type of experience rewarding to those fulfilling "non-musical" roles, it even adds meaningful dimensions to a musical experience otherwise limited by the limited knowledge of relative experiences that makes an occasion like the one I am describing significant. Everyone knows the songs and rhythms absorbed as a result of common experience, and this is not the same as memorizing the movements of a symphony.

Whether it is a symphony or not, the music you create is a result of two things: memory and technique. Memory, the mother of the Muses, is reference: the past, myth, stories and folk-songs. Technique, acquired through laborious years and hours of practice, makes possible the realization of what is remembered of past experience. Mind and body are unified through memory and muscle. I remembered things about Atlanta when I was growing up there, the things that kept me warm all those years I spent out in the cold.

Some of those things have changed, but not all. My Aunt Mamie still cooks the kind of meals I'll always remember her for. You get up from the table, stagger to the sofa, then a bit later, as you're about to doze off, she says, "You can lay on my bed if you want to," as if she

knew all along what would happen. And she did know what would happen because she had seen it happen that way so many times and with so many people. My Uncle Emory is as fundamental as he ever was. At 68 he works two jobs and preaches in his own church on every first and third Sunday and at communion.

In memory lie the seeds of improvisation: in technique, the means by which to cultivate the memory, nourished by both tradition in the form of myths, and by whatever science is available, even if it is called religion or magic. Both are present in all musicians to some degree. Where technique is concerned, virtuosity requires specialization, whether a musician is a "primitive" or thoroughly trained in the Western tradition. He maintains status by being "together." In traditional and modern societies there are those who specialize, and therefore excel, on a certain instrument and those who merely "fool around" with it. Professionals earn a living and must give their attention to maintaining status -- they practice. Those who "fool around" with an instrument are never taken seriously and are often the butt of jokes.

What I tried to do with Georgia Faun was see if I could invent a sane sociology of contemporary music by which professionals and those who "fool around" might share musical experiences. This does not mean that everytime a musician is performing he or she may be interrupted by someone who feels like joining in. Occasions have to be created that separate special performances from those ordinary ones when pure entertainment is the goal and "fooling around" the means to achieve it. The participation of non-musicians should be

determined by the occasion and not by impulsive feelings that arise during someone's performance. People are often very obsessed by things they are incapable of realizing under ordinary circumstances. So they get drunk and direct traffic or they run onto football fields and basketball courts with moves so spectacular that the athletes often stand around and watch them. The tendency of people to act like this can be reduced by providing opportunities for these feelings to be released with permission and understanding. They might be provided with musical instruments, which, when played properly, will express their emotions. In this way energy is transformed into harmless and positive activity.

If a piece of music is improvised rather than composed formally, and if it achieves as high a level as composed music may, is it a valid work of art? If artistic achievement is the goal, the answer is yes. If the criterion is artistic self-expression, improvised music, arrived at through mutual cooperation at a folk level, may be as successful as any other kind of music. Those who recognize the creative potential only of formal composition may disagree, as many already have. Those who do as they please will still go on doing so and things will turn out the way they always have. When I tell people that Afternoon of a Georgia Faun is improvised, they don't believe me, but it is and this means that we should approach it rather differently than if it were a formal composition. How it sounds is a result of where the participants were in August 1970. It is what you have to work

with rather than what you do as work that is significant. This is as true of music as it is of anything else requiring dedication.

The instrument is the tool of the performer of music. Some instruments are better suited for certain things than others. It depends on where you are at that time and the musical tradition of the area. Instruments found in Western societies are capable of sounding many notes simultaneously. In other societies, an instrument may play only one or two notes at a time, yet the sound produced is so complicated that you think twice about what constitutes complexity.

The instruments used in Georgia Faun were classified according to level of proficiency of the performers and according to the materials used in their construction. Proficiency depends on traditional theory and technique, while the construction of new instruments implies originality, improvisation. My percussion instruments are either simple or multiple. A simple unit utilizes only one material in construction. A multiple percussion instrument utilizes several different materials. If I happen to break or misplace one of the parts, I replace it with something altogether new, thereby creating new potential. This is in part dictated by necessity, since there are no stock parts involved that can be replaced by a trip to the store. What I use can either be found lying around or may be bought cheaply. Since each instrument is made under particular and different circumstances and with different materials, unique sound/rhythm potentials arise with

each one. If they are stolen, who can use a box full of miscellaneous pieces of scrap that can only be assembled by the builder?

In a society where one has learned that "good" music results only from serious composition, it might seem astonishing that music could be produced spontaneously.

It need not be so in a society firmly rooted in folk music. In such communities the creative act provides a vital link between "the skill of the musician and the awakening of the spirit of the listener." Formal music is more concerned with the means of creation than its effect upon the senses of the listener. It was my desire to reach the senses of the listener through the use of immediate imagery rather than planned ones. If you are on the run, you can feel it and think about it, but you don't have time to write things down. If you are on vacation, it's a different story; you can fill your diary with plenty of time to spare.

Getting back to improvisation, Hugh Tracy, in his book NGOMA (a music instruction book for Africans), says:

"Only two hundred years ago, improvisation was a part of the musical skill of European musicians as it is with ours today. Musical examinations in those days always included a test of improvisation upon a set theme.

But nowadays only a few European musicians are able to improvise successfully and this is a great loss to their art. It comes from relying too much upon what's written and not enough upon the spirit of the musician."

The themes he mentions were sometimes folk themes known from childhood. That should have made it easier and more natural for them, but it did not. People became obsessed

JOHN TURNER

with notation, as they are today; music slipped away from the dance and the art of improvisation withered away in a box seat.

If what you create works for you, then it is valid, regardless of how it is constructed. You have to believe in what you do and you have to depend on doing it to justify your existence. There can be no "new-music" without new instruments.

MARION BROWN'S AFTERNOON OF A GEORGIA FAUN

I.

Not merely the title, but the whole form and feeling of Marion Brown's tone-poem invite the listener who is familiar with nineteenth century poetry and music to wonder about the nature of its relationship with two French works of the last century, the poem "Afternoon of a Faun" by Stéphane Mallarmé and Claude Debussy's orchestral "Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun."

The French symbolist poets of the 1870's were enthusiastic admirers of music. They envied its power of suggestion, unhampered by the limitations of language and logic. They felt that poetry should imitate the evocative, non-literal quality of music; their ideal was to move the reader by the suggestive power of symbols or myths. A particularly effective example is the symbol of the god Pan-half goat, half man-who plays the shephard's flute.

Mallarmé's poem was first published in 1876. It is, in part at least, a celebration of the power of music, it deals with the attempt of the artist to transcend everyday reality through his art. "Afternoon of a Faun" is based loosely on a classical myth, that of Pan and the nymph Syrinx. Pan, crazed with love for the nymph, chases her for a long time until at last she pleads with her sisters to save her and is turned into a bed of reeds. In his anguish, Pan clutches at the reeds and his sighs form sounds on them which prompt him to invent the first shephard pipes.

Mallarmé sets his poem in an idyllic pastoral setting on a sultry afternoon. The Faun awakes from sleep to wonder if the two delightful creatures he has been making love to are real or dreamed. Perhaps his imagination created them--one passionate, the other coy--out of the warm breeze and the running water. He pleads with Nature to conjure up the two nymphs and when she refuses, he seeks consolation in the music of his flute, attempting to recapture the substance of his vision through music. He seeks solace then in intoxication with wine and the poem ends as he goes back to sleep in the hope that his delightful dream will continue.

Claude Debussy was inspired by this poem to write his famous tone-poem first performed in 1894. This lyrical composition captures the sultriness of the afternoon and the dreamy quality of the experience. The wind and water seem to be suggested by the flute melodies and the rippling harp. Debussy's work, while strongly suggestive of the wistful quality of parts of Mallarmé's work, lacks the sensuality of the poem.

Marion Brown's Afternoon of a Georgia Faun was recorded in 1970, almost 100 years after Mallarmé's poem was written and two thousand years after the first written versions of the story of Pan's invention of the pipes. Like all myths, the story has a profound effect on all those who come in contact with it, whatever form that contact takes. Marion's treatment of the theme is in some ways strikingly similar to that of the French poet.

The dreamlike quality and the circular form are there but so is the sensuality which is so important to the theme. The form of Marion's composition, awakening as it does out of the simplest of sounds and returning after a passionate interlude

to these same sounds corresponds to the mythic simplicity of the theme as well as to the form of the poem, which begins and ends in sleep. These first sounds, which Marion himself describes as "Wooden Rain-Drops," are gradually filled out by others which seem to evoke a sensual, almost tropical landscape (Georgia in summertime?), complete with animal noises. A crescendo builds up, beginning with passionate activity on bells and cymbals, moving into playful sounds played on the keys and the strings of the piano.

Two voices are heard (Mallarmé's two nymphs?) weaving around each other until the tension between them resolves into the sensual flute solo. This in turn leads into the gradual return to the state of nature, suggested by the raindrops. The cycle is complete. The consciousness emerges, becomes passionately involved and returns whence it came.

In a fascinating way Georgia Faun follows the pattern established by Mallarmé and evoked by Debussy; the sleeper awakes to wonder about his passionate dream and its effects on him and eventually returns to sleep. It is possible to see in Marion Brown's work, at once so innovative and so timeless, essential continuity with the work of other avant-garde artists of different times and different traditions. How far is Marion Brown aware of his role as a link in the continuation of the classical tradition? I was able to talk to him about this and other things one afternoon in Brunswick, Maine.

JT: Had you read Mallarme's poem before your Georgia Faun?

MB: Yes. But, not because I wanted to. I was taking a course at Clark College which was a survey of Western art forms. We dealt with poetry, music, &c. This poem was an assignment.

JT: What did you think of it?

MB: I never really understood it because I have never really understood poetry. I can only begin to appreciate poetry when I hear it read. Then, maybe, I can get some meaning from it. Mallarme's poem did not affect me as much as Debussy's tone poem did. That's probably because I am ear oriented; and, not eye oriented.

JT: Was that at the same time?

MB: That was at the same time.

JT: And you enjoyed Debussy in a way that you could not enjoy Mallarme?

MB: Exactly. As music, I could make the association with Debussy easier because music is my language; and, although the components of that language are basically the same for each of us we use them differently.

JT: Was this generally the kind of music you liked to listen to?

MB: Not really. I have always listened to a variety of music. I had to listen to, and read, certain things that I would never have had to consider otherwise. They were requirements. Some of the things that I read and heard impressed-but not so much so that I would have contrived the same approaches to music as I had to listen to. Prose pieces were easier for me to understand than poetry whose images very often escape me because they are so personal. I could take music of the romantic and impressionist period because it was devoid

of the frills and ornamentation that characterized baroque music.

JT: Yet readers of poetry might say that it is much closer to music than prose is.

MB: Yeah, I know.

JT: And poets always admire musicians.

MB: I know, and I realize that poetry is closer to music than prose is, but that doesn't make understanding it any easier for me. As I said before it is only when I hear someone read poetry that I am able to hear its music.

JT: That was probably important for Mallarme, too. Did you like the other music in the course?

MB: Some yes, some no. At best, all I tried to do was remember names, dates and places.

JT: There wasn't one particular period of classical music that interested you?

MB: Impressionism did, somewhat. I enjoyed Debussy, Ravel and Satie. Satie's music reminded me of the posters Toulouse-Lautrec did of the Moulin Rouge. He was more rhythmic; therefore, more danceable. I never felt the urge to move to Debussy or Ravel, just float, like an object suspended in time and space.

JT: Did you ever consider becoming a classical composer or musician?

MB: No. But, in terms of what that means, everyone studying music formally is becoming, or may become a classically oriented musician. Although the music that I have played all my life comes directly from within the black community, I did study formally; and, basically, that's what classical music is concerned with: formalities. The art of improvisation is the basis of my tradition. Classical music reaches its highest level at the hands of

the composer.

JT: How much of Georgia Faun was written down?

MB: None.

JT: How did you control the work?

MB: I didn't have to control it. It was controlled by all those who participated. It was improvised collectively. Each musician understood exactly what was supposed to happen when we recorded. The first two rehearsals we had were verbal. We discussed what I had in mind and considered how it could be realized.

JT: So you really didn't give any precise directions to any of the musicians before the performance?

MB: No. The only thing that I did was decide how I wanted the piece to be structured and what the purpose of it was. Each section was based on the sounds of various, and yet similar materials, as sound-music making potentials.

JT: Was there an order in which the musicians were to play?

MB: Yeah. Everything happened in a particular order.

JT: So that you completely set up the sequence?

MB: Right.

JT: Did you ever think of that sequence as being narrative?

MB: In the sense that narration for me means the way the music moves, movement in general, that is: rhythmic, melodic and textural. (i.e. interchangeability of instruments and stations).

JT: Like in poetry?

MB: Perhaps. But more in terms of shifting visual experiences, or, mime-like dance.

JT: No, I meant to say that, in poetry, movement takes place in the same sort of way; it is not as tightly narrative.

MB: On a grander scale, I visualize Afternoon of a Georgia Faun as a spectacle involving music, song, dance and movement.

It will utilize a set designed specifically for that occasion.

JT: And costumes, of course.

MB: Mostly personal art, body painting.

JT: Would you design the costumes yourself too?

MB: I really couldn't do that, because I didn't design all the music. But, I'd have something to say about them.

JT: Would you ask the same people to do the costumes or would you get people who are into costumes?

MB: No, I wouldn't do that. I think I would let the people who do those parts do their costumes, or at least decide how they should be done.

JT: And you could see it acted on the stage?

MB: Sure. It would be done just as the recording was: with people who are neither actors, dancers, or anything in particular just people who want and have the need to express themselves within such a context.

JT: Have you ever seen a classical ballet?

MB: No. But, I once saw Carmen Delavallade on TV.

JT: Are you interested in it?

MB: No. For me, basketball is ballet. I have never seen any dancer execute more beautiful moves than certain basketball players. If I were a dancer and felt the way about things as I do as a musician; I would definitely get into it, or see as many games as possible.

JT: I don't think of the average ballet dancer attending basketball games.

MB: They don't. But, I am sure that if he or she did, movement would be seen in a completely different light. You have to see and feel what's happening when people like Kareem Jabar, Julius Erving, Nate Archibald, &c. play; they would understand

that it has the same components (as the notes that I share with other composers): rhythm, grace, quickness and expression. The only thing missing is music; and, you get some of that at the beginning of games; and, when a member of the home team scores a point or blocks a shot.

JT: You know Kareem, don't you?

MB: I met him, once.

JT: Does he admire your music as much as you admire his dancing?

MB: Basketball playing.

JT: Isn't it the same thing?

MB: Perhaps. We spoke of many kinds of music, not just mine. I got the impression that he was an eclectic. I have also read that Connie Hawkins has a set of drums that he plays when not on a basketball court. It's a rhythm game. You can tell what's going to happen by the rhythm of ball movement and the way play unfolds sequentially. What you see is a story that only the players know-it's the same thing with music. What you hear is not what a musician actually feels; that is, unless he tells you so. You don't need the story.

JT: Talking about stories, when you read Mallarme, did you understand the myth of Pan?

MB: I learned about it during the time that I was taking the course I mentioned earlier, I had seen graphic representations of a creature that was half-goat, half-man, playing on bamboo pipes.

JT: Did you think of that story when you composed Georgia Faun?

MB: No, I forgot it immediately, right after school.

JT: That's what happens in survey courses.

MB: I have a set of Pan pipes. I know the myth not so much in terms of Pan being a satyr, as him being a musician, the pastoral

flutist.

JT: But, you didn't think of that story when you composed Georgia Faun. You named it, then, for Debussy?

MB: No, I named it for myself. It was accidental. My Faun merely revisits his home, where he grew up as a boy, and seeing it again, how it has changed, after ten years, or if it has changed at all. These things had nothing to do with people, or communicating with them. They were things that were not only a part of my life but shared and enjoyed by everyone: the things you see each day, the smell of magnolia and honeysuckle, walking along eating fruit from tress, picking pecans from the ground on the way to school, throwing rocks at pigeons and squirrels; and at each other. It was also about the things that my ears enjoyed: birds singing outside my window, dogs barking, a rooster crowing in the morning, crickets in summer, the sound of people having a good time in one of the houses where those good times were had, standing outside the sanctified church at night enjoying music and the sound of happy feet stamping furiously, in tune with the preacher and themselves. Those are the things that were in my mind when I conceived Afternoon of a Georgia Faun. Then, there was the excitement and expectation of the arrival of a baby. I had nothing at all in my mind in any way to classical mythology.

JT: How do you react when I see it there?

MB: That's okay. You're perfectly welcome to see it there because we all have a tendency to read things we think and feel into the work of other artists. You identify, or sympathize with them and in some cases, people become extensions of what they think and feel a particular's works and life are

concerned with. If you, or others, see images there that tell you something specifically, then I can say that evokes images in the mind of the listener. In spite of that, the listener can't share the particular experiences that the one who creates the work has.

JT: You don't mind that they are not the same images?

MB: No. I don't mind, and I hope the listener doesn't mind because sometimes listeners are disappointed when they find out their images (ideas) are not what the musician had in mind. At that point, one becomes a critic.

JT: How would you react if someone suggested that since you had heard about the myth of Pan and had to read Mallarmé's poem, at one time, although you say they had no impression on you then, that at some level more memories remained than you were conscious of.

MB: I understand what you mean. In any case, I have stored bits of melodies, along with other memories, away in my mind; and, when necessary, I can call on them as reference to past things. You may not need these things for a long time, nevertheless they are there when you do. What I needed at that time could only be found in Atlanta. Those were the things that gave me my first impression of life. I had been away for ten years. Those were ten years away from what was for me, everything.

JT: All these different memories become part of your culture.

MB: Right. My culture involves two things: the education I got from school and Sunday school; and, the life that I lived outside all of that. And they are both very different.

JT: In what way would you define the

uniqueness of Georgia Faun?

MB: The uniqueness of it is not so much the music, how it sounds; but, how it was organized. It is structured in such a way, and played at such a level of understanding by the musicians that it defies classification. Although it is an improvised piece of music, it is not heard very often on jazz radio stations and several leading jazz magazines have not reviewed it since it's been out. That's three years now. It is a very tight piece of music.

JT: I think I know what you mean.

MB: That happens when you love and understand what you're doing. It's also involved with the use of miscellaneous instruments to what some would call the extreme. Yet, that extremity becomes a whole new realm of possibilities for those who get to them. We play on instruments that some of us have made ourselves. I used people who had no formal musical training. And, it was improvised.

JT: How do you react to the observations that, in some ways, this piece sounds more "classical" than a lot of other improvised Black music?

MB: It sounds "classical" because of its pace. The deliberation. The feeling of miles of road to be covered with only sandals for transportation. It moves as though someone was conducting or showing the way. It never "swings." It doesn't have to since I was not aware of that aspect of our music during the times I tried to recapture in my piece, Georgia Faun. At that age I was involved in church music. I had heard some blues on the radio and on phonograph records at my grandmother's house. The music that lived was in the church, right where everyone could get at it. And all it cost was a little bit of love.

JT: You could, in a sense, direct another performance of it, couldn't you?

MB: Yes. But it wouldn't be the same. It would be structured the same, the events would happen in the same order, but the music (how the performers feel) will vary from performance-to-performance, that is, from place-to-place.

JT: Were you playing the wood-blocks for the raindrops?

MB: Yes, I played them.

JT: So you could control the end of the piece with those?

MB: The beginning also. They were very important in setting the mood.

JT: Did you think of them as raindrops before they were recorded or only after?

MB: After. I conceive the sounds first, and name them afterwards, when I have heard them back. I did not realize they were wooden raindrops until I heard the tapes and felt the unreal quality of imagination. They were wood-blocks. But, for me, they became, in my mind's ears, the sound of wooden raindrops, a figment of my imagination.

JT: Then you became a critic in a sense?

MB: Right. I am the very first, and most accurate critic of what I have done.

JT: And, you're probably a harsh critic too.

MB: Right.

JT: It sounds a little like a tropical rain-forest with all the animal noises. It feels hot in some way that is hard to describe. Would you do this sort of piece again?

MB: Yes. I plan on doing more things like it and like Djinji's Corner. They both involve several kinds of improvisation that I am very much involved with. Georgia Faun is very introspective; one

can dream to it. It evokes thought. Djinji's Corner is the opposite, it's playful. A piece of musical recreation. You do what you want within a prescribed area that is, in fact, a musical playground where stations are stocked with the most wonderful sound and rhythm making potentials one can imagine. You're back in a candy store with a pocket full of pennies and can't decide what to buy, so you say give me a penny's worth of those and two cents worth of these; and, please put them in a bag for me.

JT: You talked about critics and what they find in a work. Their interpretations differ from your own, you said. What role do you think they play?

MB: I really don't know. Most of them have other jobs. There are some who are really understanding when it comes to what an artist had in mind. That is, they understand musically. Many are also very competent musicians. Most find it hard to be objective because that means going outside one's self.

JT: You're a teacher, too, and in a way a critic or interpreter for other people. Or do you see the teacher's role as being very different?

MB: I see the teacher's role as I see the musician's role: an act of giving what you have to those who want it; and to some who do not, so that they may use the information. I give in such a way as not to say "do what I do."

JT: But isn't a part of being a teacher to encourage a critical awareness so that the student will know good music from bad?

MB: We strive for that.

JT: And in that way you're being a critic too, because you're saying, "that's good and this is not so good," even in

the choice of what you teach.

MB: I don't choose what I teach in my course on the history of Afro-American music; history chooses that for me. Before I began teaching, I chose what I listened to and read on the basis of my own personal taste. I can't get into that with students. But, I never say "this is good." I say "this is this," what it is called, referred to &c. I advise them that when they hear music similar to "this" or "that", it is probably "this" or "that" genre of Black music. I can't say anything other than this is what it is called, this is how it is!

JT: I find it hard not to pass my own prejudices on to the students. I mean, there are kinds of poetry I like and kinds that I really don't like.

MB: I don't pass my opinions on to students because my personal opinions are too constricted; this is, centered, to expect others to be interested, or willing to deal with them. I'm one person in the class room; and, another in my studio. The question of grades disturbs me because most people want more in terms of that than they are willing to give otherwise. I'm more interested in students who are willing to work for the sake of learning, which is the reverse of teaching, that is, receiving. Examinations don't mean anything where people are concerned who are only trying to pass, or get a picture of something. As I mentioned earlier, I remembered names, dates, places, &c. only because I was expected to in order to pass my courses and maintain my band scholarship. I spent most of my student years engaged actively in the performance of some kind of music. There were days that I spent ten to twelve hours playing music. Not only days, years

to be exact.

JT: Yes, ideally the teacher should be the last person you ask to grade the students, I agree.

MB: I relate to them only on the basis of what I am expected to do simply because not too many are willing to consider the time necessary in order to be able to perform intelligently. I'm expected to give information, try to motivate, things like that. Giving information is easy when you have it to give. Inspiring, or motivating is hard when people are not able to see that mastery over any thing takes time. I never discuss what I do in music.

JT: You don't ever play your own music in class, for example?

MB: Never.

JT: I think I'd find it hard to resist the temptation.

MB: I never play it at home either except when I have a tape of a recent performance and I'm examining it for content, &c. In that case (or when I have a new release) I may play it consistently for several days, then put it away, only to bring it out on special occasions. I spend most of my class time dealing with the past. At home, I only listen to what other musicians have recorded.

JT: How do you think about it when you play your own music?

MB: The act of performing is too much of a total experience (unity of body, mind, time, place, action, &c.) to have the time to think about it, or analyze what's happening at the moment. It is only after a performance that one can examine a creative experience that reaches its maximum through spontaneity and total commitment to what is taking place. Afterwards, it is possible to listen to tapes, &c., to see what really happened. Since what I play is im-

provided for the most part, it is possible for me to listen to tapes of my playing as a photographer would examine contact sheets. He may have shot ten rolls, yet only select ten prints as representative of what is best. It goes the same for me: I find it easier to copy from myself than to get hung up on what other people are doing. I know right away how I played something when I'm listening to playbacks. Otherwise, I would first have to figure out what was played and how a person played it. I know people like that who have transcribed hundreds of solos by John Coltrane, and Charlie Parker, perhaps others, who have mastered playing those transcriptions to the extent that they become perfect character actors.

JT: And Leo listens critically to the tapes too?

MB: Sure.

JT: So in a way you are practicing together but apart? Did you ever play together when you are not performing?

MB: Yes. When Leo and I first began playing together, we practiced nightly in my basement. At that time I was living in New Haven, Connecticut. Now there are long intervals between performances and the times we can get together. I was with him during the spring break in Woodmont, Connecticut, where we began developing some music that I am recording soon.

JT: I was amazed when I saw you at Brandeis University and the two of you just walked on stage after not having seen each other for about six months and gave a concert that was as intricate and together as I can imagine a performance between two people ever being.

MB: It happens that way all the time. Since we rarely get performances, we have a lot of time to practice; and, since we

are in tune to the same vibrations, naturally we are thinking the same things musically even though we are no longer living close enough to each other to be able to get together often.

JT: Had you spoken to each other on the telephone about what you were doing?

MB: No. Long distance telephone calls are too expensive for us. When we speak to each other long distance, our conversation is a rapid outburst that is only concerned with information as to where, when, we play; and, how much we are getting paid. That takes less than the three minute cost limit, so we sometimes have a minute to speak about other things. There are times when it is necessary to compose and spend a great deal of time spelling out things technically, especially when we are making a commercial recording or a broadcast for radio or tv.

JT: If you did make a cue-sheet or something and decide a few things before hand, what sort of things would they be?

MB: It's not easy to say. It depends on the occasion, instruments used, what sort of mood should prevail, what should be written; and, how it can be written; that is, by either using conventional notation or otherwise.

JT: When you and Elliot Schwartz played together, he wanted to try to arrange certain patterns and you didn't seem to want to.

MB: What you heard was what is different about both of us in terms of who we are, what and how we do what we do. He is basically a composer. In duo playing no two lines should proceed in the same direction using identical note values. Parts have to compliment each other. Sometimes that can only be accomplished by playing a-

gainst each other. That's what was happening. People have a tendency to think that in cases such as the one we're speaking of-both parties should play the same things, except perhaps where harmony is concerned. That can be different.

JT: Have you played with classically trained musicians before?

MB: Yes. In Paris. When I was a resident at the Cite Internationale des Artistes, I performed on a program with the contemporary Roumanian composer, Georges Costensecou. We played his composition, et les mêmes autres, a composition for alto saxophone, Ondes Martenot, piano and string bass. It was a premier performance; and, although I enjoyed the experience, there wasn't enough time in rehearsals and performance to really get to know the composition. I would have liked to have known it well enough to have been able to play my part by memory.

JT: Do you enjoy playing with classical musicians?

MB: I'm a musician, you see? And, being so, I should be able to do whatever the situation calls for. I can read and I can improvise. It doesn't matter so long as the experience is a creative one, such as the program that you mentioned where Elliot Schwartz and I played together. I prefer playing the kinds of things that I am presently doing with Leo Smith and Steve McCall.

JT: Do you think of what Elliot Schwartz is doing as being similar in any way to what you're doing? In terms of your both being on the frontier?

MB: Somewhat. We are contemporary men, if not contemporaries. We have to deal with certain common elements as members of contemporary society. He works with

electricity and I work with acoustics. Sometimes what we arrive at sounds the same.

JT: So that it doesn't surprise you that Elliot Schwartz and you understand each other perfectly well in music, although your training was quite different?

MB: Because we speak the language of music. In other words, we have the same tools to work with, if not the same techniques. If you remember, I played instruments that I made myself. That's different!

JT: Getting back for a minute to the myth of Pan which I think is in some way behind the narrative structure of Georgia Faun, you said that you were aware of the myth of Pan as the inventor of pipes. Did you know the other details of the story, the nymph Syrinx who turns into a bed of reeds, and Pan playing his music on those reeds? This makes it a myth of the discovery of music. Did you think of your piece as being in any way about the discovery of the power of music?

MB: No. As I said before, I paid little attention to details. I tried to learn specific things about the poem such as who wrote it, when and what movement in poetry it was a part of. Later, a friend of mine, Lloyd McNeil, a painter and a flutist, played a piece that I liked very much and he told me that the name of it was Syrinx, and that it was a composition for solo flute that was written by Debussy. Even then I didn't recall the myth. I think with Afternoon of a Georgia Faun and Djinji's Corner, I discovered something about music that best fits what I have to work with; and, that I have definitely arrived at a point at which I can begin creating music that is distinctive.

JT: You are the Faun in the piece. It's your recollections of an experience.

MB: Not one experience, but many. Things that I saw and heard each day going to and from my house to school, church, visiting, roaming with my dog and a BB gun looking for birds to shoot. We cooked them over open fires in thick patches of woods near where I lived. I was good with a sling-shot and was a fair combatant in rock fights.

JT: Which was where your musical awakening took place? So it isn't surprising that there is a parallel between Pan's experience and your own.

MB: It included not only being able to hear music, but to be able to see and smell it as well. I knew nothing about poetry and painting then, only music. So I walked along whistling tunes as I marvelled at all those things.

JT: The two voices in your piece seem to occupy the same place in your piece as the two nymphs in Mallarme's poem.

MB: Are the two in the poem? I forgot that too! I had only intended to use one vocalist, Jeanne Lee. However, one day when we were rehearsing, another young lady attended. At first she sat listening. Then she copied some music from a piece of manuscript that she had. As we were listening to a play back of the Faun, she began singing. That's how I met Gayle Palmore. After that, I asked if she'd like to make the recording with us and she said yes.

JT: Strange, too, that your piece is so much more sensual than Debussy's which I think of as rather ethereal. And in that way your music is more reminiscent of Mallarme than it is of Debussy. It appears to be by accident, but perhaps not.

MB: By the same token, someone may write a poem about Afternoon of a Georgia Faun that

may remind one more of Debussy than of Me.

JT: The poem is I suppose about what it means to be an artist, specifically a musician. Do you think Georgia Faun is about what it means to learn how to play music?

MB: Yes. In the sense that it is an experience where we, or some of us, saw new ways of approaching old problems, and some new ones too.

JT: What purpose do you think music serves in your life? That's a big question.

MB: It serves many purposes. Right now it's mostly a means of making a living. I rarely have time enough to enjoy what I am doing. Performing under most circumstances is a hassle.

JT: But you would do it even if you didn't get paid at all?

MB: Yes. But, only for myself, nothing publically. I'd have to continue that way because music is the only thing that gives my life meaning. Any job will do as long as you're able to get satisfaction from some form of musical endeavor. If I am not able to make a living by performing, then I can concentrate on teaching. Or, I can combine both if necessary. That creates a reasonable balance between material and spiritual needs. I can express myself publically in concert, or privately in practice, or other situations where only musicians participate.

JT: Musicians, and for that matter, poets have often, even usually, been poor. What does that say about society?

MB: It says that there is nothing for poets and musicians to gain by being what they are. That's because in the West there's not that much utility in such things.

JT: It doesn't say anything else?

MB: That's it. That's what it says.

JT: What is it that the artist does?

MB: I often wonder. What you have in the end is a frozen representation of something that once lived and was born, and dies again in the process of execution.

JT: An experience.

MB: But they can't be shared to the extent that the outcome (a song, a poem) can. The experience is personal. The outcome is public.

JT: We agreed before that the experience of the reader or listener need not be the same as the experience that went into the piece. Experience seems to go into a work of art which then exists on its own and someone else, with imagination, can come to it and get something out of it. It's a complicated relationship, because you're creating something which grows beyond what you were aware of and therefore stands on its own and doesn't relate to you any more.

MB: That happens almost with every performance. Especially in totally improvised ones. You create something that stands out; and, after that, it can't be done again the same way.

JT: And it would be different each time you hear it, probably?

MB: That's the nature of our music.

That's what is unique about Black music.

JT: Isn't that the effect of all music?  
MB: Yes, when it is developed to its highest levels.

JT: Good music is good music, no matter what the tradition.

MB: Sure! But, it has to be developed to that level; and, it can only be done by people who engage themselves as result of that tradition, a good deal of time, if they are not professionals. That's why I used

those people I termed "assistants." They are people who are not musicians in the same sense as the others on the recording. They listen a lot and understand what they are hearing. They tend to get more involved vicariously than say, critics, who, for the most part, only listen. The former usually own "little instruments," drums of various types; and, are able to play certain things on the piano. They sometimes own as many records as critics do.

JT: So you couldn't use people with no musical awareness.

MB: No. Not as musicians anyways. I could use them to do other things that are related to the experience, but not necessarily, or primarily as musicians. When I taught in the New Haven School System, one of my most memorable experiences was working with those known as "special education" students. That is, those thought to be arrested in their mental development. Using rhythm instruments, as I did in all classes, they were able to do many more things and more independently than those who were thought to be brightest.

JT: Can I bring the coffee?

MB: If you want to.

STEVEN JAMES

ON THE AFTERNOON OF THE GEORGIA FAUN

gazelle leaps  
in hot African sun  
dust bowls upward  
herds migrating  
on the afternoon of a georgia faun.

long limbs  
black limbs  
sweat  
squinting against hot sun  
arrows poisoned  
wooden spirits crying  
long-g-g  
on the afternoon of the georgia faun.

in heaven they wait watching  
slowly listening  
for us are they crying?  
sighing?  
sighiiiiing  
FEAR HEIGHTENS IN THE SUN  
IT IS HOT  
IT IS HOT  
WHERE'S MY GUN?  
noses bend softly  
gainst the soft young--tender shoots  
sprung newly up  
herds shimmer  
far away young cows frolic gladly  
morning lowly into noon  
on the afternoon of a georgia faun.

last night i dreamt  
of rain  
falling on leaves  
of half way mountain trees  
of mossy mice  
and yesteryear  
where underneath damp leaves  
we ran  
naked  
catching rain drops on our noses.

oh dear but look at what the heat  
does to your dreams  
shimmering far away  
the heat!  
it brings out the colors in the market place.  
where old ladies cluck  
each other down  
old hash dealers corner their market  
on deserts  
where camels once trod  
nothing but gangle

caravansari!  
the sun makes madness of our men  
so hot so cruel  
and reassuring after freezing desert night  
where old men dream of  
valentino  
even though he was italian  
and far away

shimmering hot  
beyond these mud dried caves  
in the sun  
covered with the snakes of our past  
is this tomorrow?  
or today?  
down these mean streets  
steaming  
on this afternoon of this georgia faun?

we conjure up forgotten things  
call them down from the stars  
cook them thru this afternoon  
this golden dawn  
conjure up the sunset  
oh man we can't do no wrong  
but watch it man, watch it  
that sun so fuzzy  
so warm  
yeah man you know what this is.  
yeah man!  
the afternoon of the georgia faun

under rocks

where snails live there live i  
hard shelled  
moist.

ferns hang down  
flies buzz  
lazy  
on hot afternoons

down sad morning streets-waking up  
bankers crawl

trucks rumble  
like earthquake

going dry  
and that lazy fly

still buzzes on that hot afternoon  
buzzing round some old dead  
rabbits eye  
past his prime  
life still stands watching  
shivas dance  
marking time to old dead  
rabbits lie

far away over the  
savannah  
thunder cries its rending roar

PREPARE!  
IT IS COMING!

but that fly don't mind  
his buzzing  
has paid off  
his truth reckoned

float tree  
hanging in the morning  
i lie thinking  
high blue sky fasting in the sun  
breath flows in  
the air is filled with music  
dropping lightly on the flower tops  
lighting  
oh-so-lightly  
on the flower tops  
far up  
the pebble bounces

and here we are again  
hung in the morning sun to dry.

## REVIEWS

It is doubtful that anyone other than a jazz connoisseur or historian would be reading this; and, this makes my load both heavier and lighter. It is heavier because us jazz fanatics are used to labels that conjure up certain images, and both Marion and his music defy labels. It is lighter because those who are really into jazz can afford to take a few things for granted, such as the need for truth in music, and any historian holding this book is expected to do some research to discover our other "givens." I must, therefore, apologize to those who are only slightly versed in jazz. I cannot treat you gently, but neither does Afternoon Of A Georgia Faun.

This is not tea and crumpet music nor, as much as I love them, is it chitlin and cornbread music. This music is for those seeking new knowledge about the world in general and oneself in particular. In other words, the music demands strict attention. There is no shuckin' or jivin' to the man, and you can be sure the same is true with the music. Label lovers have called him "one of the eastern ecclectics." That's a fancy way to say he uses several different techniques. Labels are supposed to cover the subject, and those who know Marion's music are quite aware that as noncommittal and broad as "eclectic" is, it is insufficient. Marion Brown's music comes at the listener

from all directions and is like nothing else you will hear if you listen to 20,000 albums from any number of directions. This music is new, bold, startling, intimate and as pure as the richest, blackest virgin soil.

Marion's music is about his life.

Hopefully it is about your life. The way of music is the way of love. If you can't share your love you will never make music. I invite you to read this review again after you make love to the music, or maybe before you sway with it the next time. At any rate, read nothing as you have intercourse with the "Faun." If love making demands anything, it is concentration.

By the way, put away all your score cards. This music, like the sweetest relationship is about imagery not mechanics. What follows are my images.

#### Side I - Afternoon of a Georgia Faun

This side takes you through the forest in three stages that is your mind. The first stage begins with the trickle of rain, the sound of life. Truly, nothing lives without water; whether it is man-made or merely the sound of nature, to the one who seeks life it is all music. Some sounds may be harsh and others melodic, but any affair that knows but one note is doomed. The prologue to this life-music is gentle and sweet like fresh rain on a sweltering summer day. One can easily see a forest coming to life. A vast assortment of birds and animals awake from a noon nap in a beautiful concerto of lush sounds.

After the rain the air is fresh. Marion and his fellow musicians are also fresh. Originality abounds for rain gives life to creation. The metal instruments follow the wooden rain drops. They depict the light. Sunshine springs forth. Daylight is no less beautiful than the darkness that served as a companion for the rain-filled moments. Chick Corea plays a piano solo that is stripped of all frills. The simplicity of his tone portrait speaks to those who mistrust the sincerity of embroidery. He is followed by two vocalists with the phenomenal Jeanne Lee in the forefront. She does not sing in the conventional sense. She plays a soulphone that, by coincidence, in her case is called vocal chords. Anthony Braxton and Bennie Maupin sing flute solos before the Zomari enters, sounding like the love call of a great animal. Its greatness as a lover is attested to by the reply of what sounds like a whole forest.

The forest of sound bears witness to the interrelatedness of nature. Corea's playing recalls the love of god for his creation, gentle, but firm. Such a love summons the two enchanting queen mothers of the forest. Both Jeanne Lee and Gayle Palmore are possessed of mind-blowing voices. Both behind and in front of the forest-ensemble, the women build the atmosphere within your mind until it is ready to explode. The flutes sometimes resemble the wind blowing through three trees in some remote part of the forest (your mind). At other points, they resemble animals at play. Marion's percussion concept borders on the unbelievable. He is like a music center that orchestrates your soul to the beauty of life. There can be little doubt to

serious jazz fans, that more than playing innumerable hosts of instruments, he plays one's mind.

The ability to reach that height is the sole mark of a master musician. It goes without saying that few can ever attain that level.

#### Side II - Djinji's Corner

Baby sons are dynamite, as is this side devoted to Marion's son, Djinji. Djinji is now a little man approaching nursery school age, but the music still fits him. It has an air of mischief about it and therefore it is about more than Djinji. It is about many of us when we were small. I know it is, at least, about me. The mysterious investigations of childhood days are perfectly captured here. Once again, we can experience old attempts to experience a world that unfolded more and more daily. This music explores much of the known and unknown worlds.

Marion, the complex creator, leads his musicians in what can best be called constructive destruction. All previously accepted rules are challenged with the knowledge (called hope in childhood) that vaults of wisdom are opened to those willing to seek the secret combinations.

Chick sounds like a child who accidentally plays all the right notes. Marion plays an alto sax solo halfway through that sings of love and wisdom. Like most of his

impressions, it is short but enduring. Soon after Marion, the incomparable Jeanne Lee reappears with her soulaphone, which is perhaps the most mature and seductive in all jazz. With Gayle Palmore, she brings two dancing winds into the tree tops. They call you to fly with them as though you actually had those wings you longed for in childhood. At other times, they are like a double-barrelled conscience reminding you of the roads you planned to explore in your childhood and the ones you settled for in later years.

The interplay between the musicians at the close is to be savored. The two women duet again at the end and a journey into music closes-for now. We are stronger for the travel. We are thankful for the guides.  
ASHANTE!

Marion Brown's 1p Afternoon Of A

Georgia Faun needs no verbal clarification. Unlike some recent "schools" of visual art which require reams of theory to bolster their meaning, giving an ironic twist to the adage about one picture being worth a thousand words, Georgia Faun stands on its own. If words are desired, there are Marion's liner notes which describe so succinctly as to become an extension of the music. Images like "wooden rain drops" remind that Brown is an exceptional being, a poet as well as a musician, fully conscious of what he's about and able to articulate it better than any commentator. Read his liner notes first; you won't need to read anything else.

All I can offer are my responses.

The title work has been regarded as a landmark by some reviewers. To me, it's a simpler meter, less historic than specific and poetic. Just what Marion says it is. A tone poem. A lovely piece of music, impressionist and pastoral, full of geechie recollections (Faun seems a metaphor for Brown himself), dappled sunlight, the scent of rain and fresh damp earth. Entirely successful within that genre. The players, most of them strong personalities who can tear up heads in other contexts, bend gracefully to its disciplines. It lacks the rhythmic impetus and emotional involvement associated with jazz and most African and Mideastern music, but you might as well fault a rose for not having fur. The genre has its own emphasis, its own strengths; delicacy, beauty, a serene flow and development. Perhaps the most telling moment of this

music follows the final note. Like Zen meditation, it resolves in silence.

Djinji's Corner is a dark carnival of sounds; rich, pulsing, and pungent; a funhouse with surprises lurking in shadows, voices trailing like feelers, themes jumping up around every bend. Unfortunate that reviewers have paid less attention to this piece than to Faun' it seems more pertinent to the future of Black music. In this single work, Brown introduces three innovations. One is his employment of "assistants," technically non-musicians, who join successfully in the music. Second, the most effective use of human voices yet heard in contemporary jazz; haunting, expressive, dream-fragment voices that talk in tongues and have the weight and solemnity of modern opera. Finally there is the assignment of "stations," Brown's system of "interchangeable playing," a well-conceived answer to the paradoxical problems of collective free improvisation; formal yet spontaneous, rhythmically compelling but flexible, allowing each player his own voice while in concert with others. Amid the ranting and raving, the hip fashions of "avant-garde" jazz, Marion Brown continues to create individualistic and striking solutions, marking a quiet sure path.

JINICHI UEKUSA

I gave five stars to the album Mu by Don Cherry. Thus, it is tempting to give another five stars to this album by Marion Brown. Let me describe my feelings concerning this album.

First, I want to talk about the simply designed black album cover. When I was asked to listen to this album, I realized at once, that it was Marion's new album, but I thought the jacket's design too simple for him. The doubt went away when I turned to the backside of the album and saw the photographs and read the liner notes.

This album was recorded on August 10 of last year at an unknown studio called "Sound Ideas" in New York City. He probably used his summer vacation to record since he is teaching in Georgia, his home state. (reference: World Jazz Biographical Dictionary) Did his wife go to New York City with him?

These questions came into my mind because recently he was married and had become the father of a son, and the album itself has to do with this good news. The photograph showing him and his wife was taken by recently published black writer, William Melvin Kelley. The cover drawing is by a German painter, Dieter Henkel. The recording producer, Manfred Eicher, was unknown to me. The cover, somehow, shows us Marion's musical taste.

The A-side consists of one piece 17 minutes long, entitled Afternoon Of A Georgia Faun. Looking at the names of the eleven

performers, I thought it was a jazz ensemble, but I was wrong. Contemporary music made by percussion sounds rise in forms of definite rhythmic patterns. The sound is not loud. I immediately associated it with Debussy's L'Après-midi d'un Faune. On this album it is raining. The strange sound of thumping the edge of the drum. Therefore, I thought, it isn't L'Après-midi d'un Faune, but impressions created in the opening section reminded me of it. The sound of rain made by the wooden percussion reminds me also of Debussy's Jardin dans la Pluie. Chopin's rain music is a little too weak. But I was really amazed when I heard Debussy's creation of rain sounds with the piano.

When the rain stops, the sun shines from little slits in the clouds. These effects are created by metal percussion. Then, beasts appear in the forest. They are depicted by the use of natural flutes and a double-reed instrument called a Zomari, which was given to Marion by someone in Tanzania. As I listened, I realized this was a piece of impressionistic musical poetry.

Side-B, Djinji's Corner runs 18 minutes and is even better. One of the reasons is probably because it is more complicated in terms of sound. This album is performed by excellent musicians such as Chick Corea, Andrew Cyrille, Anthony Braxton and Jeanne Lee. Marion explains the sound system as follows:

"It starts with a phrase of three measures" which as motive becomes a mass collective improvisation. But the unusual thing is that each member of the ensemble plays more than one kind of instrument. They show us a unique improvised performance. During

the performance, there are seven stations (The French word, *étape*, is more adequate. It means "Halting place"), so if there are seven performers, you are presented with the possibilities of 7 X 7 = 49 themes.

ALAIN GERBER

One or the other of us has repeatedly deplored here, that Marion Brown, especially in his recorded work, has often been unequal to his promise of five or six years ago. We had been very impressed both by his lucidity in interviews and by the high quality of his first recordings with Archie Shepp, or with his own group for ESP. But his later work was disappointing. Today, however, when jazz seems at a turning point (witness the series of records put out by ECM) Marion comes again to the forefront.

Afternoon of a Georgia Fawn is very characteristic of the newest trends that are setting the microcosm of Afro-American music on its ears. It is also the most fully realized of Marion's efforts, especially the title side. This cut confirms the tight relationship between the most contemporary jazz and all the other trends of today's music. It is obviously beyond the limited scope of this review to attempt an in-depth analysis, a description of all the aspects of present developments in jazz, however urgent such an undertaking obviously is, for it is not merely the elements that have changed here, but the structure itself, and beyond the structure, the way the musicians see themselves and their projects. No circumstantial evidence would be sufficient here, although some of it may be highly significant, once it is related not to any contingent aspect of the musical experience but to its totality. One such element is Marion's interest in the musicians making instruments that he plays (Milford

Graves pioneered this attitude some ten years ago); another is his theory that music must be made (can) by all, not by a privileged few who will be called "musicians" -- In the name of what? It has always been true that jazz was to be not just heard, but lived. Today, one goes a step further; it must be lived actively, that is, it must be played.

This is why Marion insists that within the group, the musicians must be interchangeable. The piano player blows a horn, the horn player plays drums, etc... The results can be heard on Djinji's Corner. They are rather less convincing than Afternoon. But that's a listener's point of view. One should have asked the musicians. They may very well have felt that they "played more music" on Djinji's Corner.

Before you put Afternoon Of A Georgia Faun on the turntable, you should listen to Debussy's Prelude a l'après-midi d'un Faune. It is no wonder that many new musicians such as Herbie Hancock and Roland Hanna, show an interest in French Impressionism, and this interest leaves recognizable traces. Marion Brown has also cast a free glance backward. His "Faun" is as compelling as Debussy's, who was inspired by a poem written by the symbolist poet Mallarme. But Marion's impressionism is closer to that of the economical, wry individualist, Erik Satie, than to the main representative of the impressionistic style, Debussy, with his note-rich streams of sound.

Georgia Faun (which shows no direct influence by Debussy) sounds loveliest in the voices of Jeanne Lee and Gayle Palmore. The various percussion instruments weave a carpet of sound which grows progressively richer. The music awakens like a peacock which strides piping and hissing through acoustical space. This recording is also a feat of sound-engineering. Before Jeanne Lee enters, Marion blows archaic sounds on the African Zomari. After Chick's piano solo, (which is reminiscent of Satie), a duet unfolds between Jeanne's soulful timbre and Gayle Palmore' soprano voice. The effect is hard to describe. Braxton with the C-flute, and Maupin with the alto flute, join the duet. A harmonic exchange takes place similar to that between Debussy's flute, clarinet, oboe, and horns. Only sounds remain in the air. Just as Debussy

created a new orchestral language with his "Faun", Brown has here created a masterpiece of the new music.

ALAN OFFSTEIN

With Afternoon of a Georgia Faun, Marion Brown vividly points out an aspect of music many people caught up in the politics of Black arts may have forgotten. Namely, that beauty for its own sake is a self-justifying motive and the end product of the search for beauty has the same intrinsic values in the culture that produces it as does any other creation, however motivated. Moreover, its broader and less specific implications free the listener from rhetoric, enabling him to appreciate a work from a variety of subjective viewpoints and likewise evaluate it without restrictions.

On this recording by imitating sounds of nature he comes close to recalling the emotion evoked by nature. If the artist is skillful in his use of pure image he can move the observer to intense feelings that are themselves pure. By pure I mean without attenuating IDEAS, and you infer correctly that I separate emotion from intellect when talking this way.

Afternoon of a Georgia Faun gives no indication that the music is concerned with IDEA, and as a longer work this feature distinguishes it from other long pieces like A Love Supreme and Portrait of Robert Thompson (as a young man). It is different also from Chappaquá Suite where Ornette Coleman's concern over form is so concentrated it is almost impossible to listen to the music in one sitting.

When he recreates the forms found in nature through imagery, Marion Brown

does not attempt to comment on them; rather; certain that he selected what poets call "le mot juste" or "exact word," he moves on to further explore the landscape. Interpretation of content is not the artist's job. He does his part by presenting it accurately and restraining himself from conditioning in any way the observer's reaction. With the burden of interpretation removed, the artist enjoys the freedom to surrender himself to his ambience and creative instincts.

For listeners, especially those unaccustomed to this imagistic approach, a number of problems exist. First of all, they must get used to the idea that there is no right or wrong way of looking at a woodland setting. This may be the first time Black music has allowed an observer such liberties; it is wholly missing in Bop which is self consciously trying to impress the listener with exhibitionistic reaction to the music; listener-freedom cannot be found in the "cool jazz" of the fifties and sixties which played down the outrageous display of Bop with equally egotistical understatement and quasi-refinement; and it is certainly absent from Cecil Taylor's art where every sequence includes comment on his attitude to form and individualism.

Secondly, listeners have to come to grips with the very real fact that Afternoon of a Georgia Faun attaches no overt importance to IDEA. IDEA might also be called chord changes, blues, diatonic scales, improvisation, piano, or, Marion Brown -- in other words, anything nameable that does not exist in the image being created or that might interfere with the emotion that images is capable of evoking. So one cannot say about

Afternoon of a Georgia Faun, "Ah, yes, that is Marion Brown playing his composition which describes a moist leafy morning in the south and it makes me feel all tingly inside." That kind of reaction would be entirely true of Mingsus' Song with Orange, or Ellington's Black and Tan Fantasy, but here, everything preceding the feeling is intellectual and unnecessary, hence excluded.

That is not to say that there is no intelligence behind the creation of music. To the contrary, I believe an enormous leap has been made be sheer intellectual effort and personal necessity by the artists who have developed this art over the last ten years. There are powerful forces acting like gravity on the Black artist that have him bound to certain conventions which have emerged from the rapid changes within his area. We have as example a group style that is popular among A.A.C.M. players, the African polyrhythms phenomenon of Paraoh Sanders that is rapidly becoming cliché, as is his particular spiritual message, in the hands of incompetent imitators. Political as well as spiritual unity accounts for moving works like Liberation Music and Ghetto Music and various other calls to arms which nevertheless appeal in a language whose jargon is "collective improvisation," "playing free" and "new music."

It is the intellectual recognition of just such inhibiting factors that mothered the need to break out of their hold armed with the reassuredness that the social revolution is being led by great consciousness, the way Marion Brown has, to events of universal rather than particular meaning. His freedom to look away is a measure of the

success of the revolution and a positive indication that the sacrifice of Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Albert Aylmer and Ornette Coleman has been worthwhile.

Marion Brown has parted, and remarkably so, in the direction of imagism. Remarkable that it should occur in Black music at a time when the struggle is far from over, when suppression, poverty and ostracism from the larger society shows no sign of abating. It implies that people can take time to appreciate beauty for its own sake without twisting it into didactic spiritualism (Coltrane) or rhetoric (Shepp). This monumental optimism, a turning to the world dispirits people everywhere.

Is Afternoon of a Georgia Faun the first time this change can be seen? The answer is, of course, no. For many years, but noticeably in recent times, there has been a positive trend away from what I call jazz or Black music as it was historically performed by musicians who learned their craft in the early years. Cecil Taylor and Ornette Coleman were the great innovators of the new era, the first to break out of music that had been dominated by popular taste on the one hand, and the last great jazz star, Miles Davis, on the other. By the time these two giants had penetrated the consciousness of other musicians, the public had just gotten around to conferring honors on Thelonious Monk (if a Time magazine cover is honor conferred). Nevertheless, the music had altered and collectivism seemed more and more the heir apparent to jazz, especially in the middle period of John Coltrane's career, spawning works like Meditation (Impluse AS 9110).

ESP records provided a major impetus

for new music. It came to life with a catalogue of sounds never heard before from Suna Ra, John Tchicai, Noah Howard, and Sunny Murray, giving their music its first widespread distribution. Other artists KNEW the music was right; unpaid and unnoticed they persistently developed their concepts in the States and Europe. Some keynote records are Spiritual Unity by Albert Aylmer and New York Eye and Ear Control. It was simply a case of militant artistic voices abandoning degenerate art forms and replacing them with something new.

This happens constantly to art forms in every culture; it is a cyclic phenomenon and although as old as Ghandaran art in India, people still react to these changes instead of being promised new life. It must be kept in mind that the artist is on the side of life, and because of that he risks everything whenever he speaks. If there is no risk, he is no longer creating new things, but merely producing artifact safe in the arms of public acceptance. In the former direction we are led to regeneration and rebirth; in the latter, status and spiritual atrophy.

The small record companies did not enjoy enormous success, and the dissemination of new ideas from artists to the people was limited. I am inclined to think that this may explain why the record under discussion is so important; perhaps because of Marion Brown's relative obscurity. Afternoon of a Georgia Faun points more directly to the changes in the music than do those records that have gradually seeped half-noticed into our awareness. His early playing was published on ESP; Marion Brown Quartet, I022, and Burton Greene Quartet, ESP I024, published in 1968, Why Not?, I040 was released in 1969. Brown left America to live and learn in Europe. He was well received and

allowed to pursue his art unimpeded by the debilitating social pressures of the U.S.A. and simultaneously falling under the influence of Continental avant-gardists. Some European recordings were made but only a few North Americans were able to obtain them on this side.

Everything Marion Brown recorded for ESP and his work with Archie Shepp on Fire Music (Impulse AS 86) contributed to his stature. Many listeners were impressed with his pure tone, his restraint, ability to capture a fleeting mood or a passionate urgency with economy and ease. During his absence an increasing number of people turned towards the new music and heroes were made of certain figures whose records sold quite well. Marion Brown, in spite of his qualifications, was not one of them, and his name stayed relatively unknown.

From a listener's standpoint, it is separateness that contributes to the force of Afternoon of a Georgia Faun. We can see with great clarity the difference between it and other current publications -- a difference that might have been veiled had he continued to be productive in U.S. music circles. Since listeners never had a chance to become accustomed to Marion Brown's style, they never had the opportunity to label him, nor elevate him to the status of folk-hero. Hence, when he now reappears with this recording, there is no crystallized image of the artist to be broken or discarded before the new creation can be accepted.

To digress slightly, for the sake of elaborating this thought, take the case of Miles Davis who did become a folk-hero. Were it not for his incredible genius to create, his resistance to unfavorable public

opinion and his refusal to be categorized for very long, it is unlikely that he could have survived, the criticism surrounding his progress. Looking back from Bitches Brew (Columbia GP 26) across twenty years we see storm after critical storm menacing his music. The introduction of John Coltrane to the group brought outrage. The use of the electric piano and rock n' roll figures elicited contempt. Bitches Brew itself left many fans wondering what to do with Sketches of Spain. Miles had to be redefined every time and he withstood mainly because he appealed to successive generations as their jazz spokesman. Musicians like Lennie Tristano were less fortunate, and the critics murdered him. With Marion Brown, while there are no pages to reread that throw much light on his current music, neither are there any books to burn. So we can attend him with fresh unbiased ears and hear what he says.

From the liner notes, Afternoon of a Georgia Faun, by Marion Brown, 1970: "The music you're listening to is a collective experience involving six players, two vocalists, and three assistants. Although I am responsible for initiating the music, I take no credit for the results. Whatever they may be, it goes to the musicians collectively. The people that I chose to assist are not actually musicians, but people who have a sense of rhythm and melody. My idea here is that it is possible for non-musicians to participate in a musical experience without being technically proficient in a theoretical sense. In the future, I intend to use some non-musicians for the same reasons. It works. Try it sometimes."

From the liner notes, Burton Greene Quartet, by Burton Greene, 1965, on which

Marion Brown plays: "I've noticed that as long as the free improvisation musicians transcend any petty egotism, their mutual empathy produces a combined expression, a product far greater and more intense than anything could be achieved by a single mind, that ten or fifteen musicians really playing this music can achieve the sonorities of a seventyfive to one hundred piece orchestra."

Marion Brown speaking of his pianist, on the liner notes first quoted: "Like Oriental poetry. Precise, simple, yet profound and filled with transcendental wisdom." Burton Greene from the later liner notes: "What is truly beautiful to me is that the basis of this music is so human, so simple and direct."

You see that seven years ago the principles at play in Afternoon of a Georgia Faun were in the experimental stages. Now, they are well established and can themselves form the basis for further expansion towards the egoless art collectivized music seems to be, so much so that there is room for the non-musician within the organizational structure. This is the death of IDEA and the realization of freedom, a direct pointing to the true source of beauty and its referent in the hearts of the people.

I believe we have come to the point where arguments over which period of jazz is better, and whether or not such a thing as jazz exists are archaic. We can enjoy the wonderful variety of forms and styles that have gone before in a relaxed atmosphere of historical perspective, admitting that what was once jazz actually did become "new music" and the new music has given rise to yet another form and there is little in the

past of sufficiently compelling force that justifies our ignoring the present state of music. The history of Jack music is a "world ground" out of which grown men like Marion Brown whose contributions are pertinent to the present state of man in the real world and whose consciousness finds expression in music. If the listener does not understand perhaps it is because he has lived so long with the old ways. Modern music is Afternoon of a Georgia Faun, and there is no getting away from this fact; an effort to understand it is, in essence, the struggle to depart from the comfort of familiar surroundings, the intellectual work of devising a new esthetic or sense of order, and involvement. It means embracing the truth that Black music is no longer jazz but more than that, for it draws its images and derives its meaning from the entire natural world, something jazz did not do. Afternoon of a Georgia Faun says EVERYTHING is suitable content for Black art, unqualified and self sufficient. There is no turning back from this point and every reason to look forward to even more elaboration from those who choose to follow Marion Brown's lead.

As for the particular forms we can expect to encounter, we must remember that change is the paradoxical constant of life. Collectivism will inevitably degenerate and there may be a need (social, political, esthetic?) for a powerful ego, dominant and aggressive, bold and self-assertive to pick up the fibres of non-distinct music and bind them into an identifiable fabric. It is no more possible to conceive any terminal form of what has been called jazz and is now just music, than it is to imagine a highest number. All music may revert to primitive thumping on a hollow log. What

we should realize now is that if it adequately expresses the consciousness of the person making the music it is therefore, entitled to respect.

Classical music, which is Western, does not adequately express the consciousness of Black cultures. Jazz, which is American, does not adequately express the consciousness of East Indians. Therefore, it cannot be said that one is better than the other, or more anything. Just different. And within each form of expression the feelings and moods of the people are more or less adequately stated, more or less beautifully elaborated, more or less honestly presented. It is on these bases that we evaluate them as art, allowing each to thrive and referring to each as an entrance into the spirits of our fellow man. Any argument over form is overshadowed by this larger purpose of art.

Afternoon of a Georgia Faun was recorded August 10, 1970 in New York City at Sound Ideas Studios, engineered by GEORGE KLABIN. It was produced in Munich, West Germany by MANFRED FICHER for ECM RECORDS, and is distributed in the United States by JCOA, 6 West 95th Street, New York, New York, 10025.