

High-Note Trumpeter Back In Spotlight

It was halftime, the Vikings were comfortably ahead of the Detroit Lions, and a trumpet player — knees bent forward and back arched from the waist — was hitting some extremely high notes.

The average football fan, heading for the kitchen and a beer and sandwich, might not have even heard the music, but if he did, more than likely assumed that it was Doc Severinsen, who in recent years has become somewhat of a fixture at football half-times.

But if the viewer looked, he noticed the trumpet player was a stranger — a stranger, that is, if the viewer is not a jazz fan, especially a jazz buff 30 years of age or older.

The trumpeter reaching for and making those stratospheric notes in Tiger Stadium was Maynard Ferguson, the 44-year-old Canadian who more than 20 years ago burst upon the national jazz scene as the high-note specialist with Stan Kenton's powerful and innovative orchestra.

Yes, Maynard is back — back in the United States, back in the jazz spotlight. He has released three albums on Columbia and is in the midst of a national concert tour, which will



bring him to St. Paul's Prom Center on Oct. 11 for an 8:30 concert.

Ferguson, born in Verdun, Quebec, is another jazz musician who started studying early (at 4) and studied a variety of instruments at the French Conservatory in Montreal before settling on his favorites (saxophones, clarinet, oboe, French horn were among those studied; trumpet and valve trombone are his instruments now).

And as is the case with many jazz and rock musicians, he did not wait long to start a career. When he was 15 he was leading a band in which the average age of sidemen was 30.

Ferguson came to this country in 1948 and worked with, in succession, the bands of Boyd Raeburn, Jimmy Dorsey and Charlie Barnet, before joining Kenton in 1950, where he stayed and became nationally known the next three years.

He then formed a band composed of some of the top jazz musicians in New York City, and used as home base the now defunct world-famous jazz club at 52nd and Broadway — Birdland. It was one of the greatest modern jazz bands ever put together.

After gaining further national attention, Maynard hit the road with a bunch of young, eager, and sometimes brilliant musicians, with whom he traveled for about 11 years until late 1967 when he went to England to tour with an all-star British band. That first year in England, he formed his own musical instrument company in Bradford, Yorks., where trumpets, mouthpieces, and so on, all bearing his name, are manufactured.

Also that year, while visiting Manchester, Maynard met a long-time fan and trumpet player, Ernie Garside, who at the time owned the legendary "Club 43" there. Maynard and Garside formed a band, the forerunner of the one Ferguson now has, and with it, toured Sweden, Holland, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The band also did some TV gigs and became probably the most successful (and some

critics say the best) band in Europe.

Somehow, fortunately, it came to the attention of Columbia records, a company which recently has been giving an increasing amount of time and money to jazz (the Weather Report albums; Bill Evans; the Bessie Smith collection, and more), and with the release of the latest album just about a week ago ("M. F. Horn Two" KC 31709), Maynard has three albums out. The other two are "M. F. Horn" C 30466, and "Maynard Ferguson" C 31117.

Each one, in my opinion, has been better than the first — and it was good.

Ferguson, when he was fronting a band and a sextet containing such future stars as Bill Chase (of the current jazz-rock group of the same name), Don Ellis (himself now leader of a big band that is enjoying much success), Rufus "Speedy" Jones (drummer with Duke Ellington); Willie Maiden (saxophonist and arranger with Stan Kenton); Frank Vicari (outstanding tenor soloist with Woody Herman); and many, many more, played the music of the top pop and jazz writers of the time. He's doing the same thing now, with exciting and really different charts on some of the best of Laura Nyro, James Taylor, Paul Simon, John Lennon and Paul McCartney, Jimmy Webb and others.

Hearing a 20-piece band, sometimes with six trumpets and four trombones, or five of each, will make the hair stand on the back of your head. You've heard Kenton's and Herman's "Hey, Jude." Check out Ferguson's version — on record and then in person at the Prom.

all bad when it allows the same man who thrilled a generation of jazz fans in the early 1950s to do the same thing to jazz — and rock — fans 20 years later. That's what has happened to Maynard Ferguson.

HALF-NOTE: Buffy Saint-Marie will be in concert Oct. 23 in Northrop Auditorium to open the American Indian Art exhibition which will be at the Walker Art Center and the IDS Building in Minneapolis through

sions at 7 p.m. in the St. Paul Civic Center.

Saturday: Carlos Montoya at 8:30 p.m. in the St. Paul Civic Center theater.

Oct. 11: Maynard Ferguson and his British Jazz-Rock Band at 8:30 p.m. in the Prom Center, St. Paul