

Maynard Ferguson enjoys

Maynard Ferguson radiates so much enthusiasm when his band is playing that one wonders if it's all real or partly show business.

So one meets Maynard Ferguson to find that out. And in conversations he has enough additional verve and good cheer to cause his listener to walk around with a brighter spirit all day.

A New York Times review of a Newport Jazz Festival concert this summer began, "The brass glory of Maynard Ferguson's orchestra shone brilliantly." And about the leader it continued, "He heightens anything he plays, even when it is not inherently dramatic, by seeming to almost kiss the last note as he leaps back holding his trumpet triumphantly in the air."

"I'm a performer and I openly know that and enjoy it and think that is part of my art," Ferguson says. I'm a great lover of audiences and I really enjoy what I do.

"When I teach in the schools, I try to teach them to enjoy as they learn. I get some very serious young people, getting too serious. I think of music as mostly hooked into joy and pleasure."

Ferguson, born in 1928, has silver hair framing a face with muscles kept boyishly plump by blowing his trumpet. In a short talk, one finds out that he's delighted about all sorts of things, small and great.

Frank Sinatra's lawyer has phoned his manager and asked, "How much for the kid?" and Ferguson, nearing 50, is tickled to be called the kid.

Ferguson was on camera two-and-a-half minutes as the flag lowered and flame was extinguished at the Olympics in Montreal. He, a Canadian, played music written by a Canadian and the whole thing was televised and sent by satellite to an enormous audience.

His last two LPs and last two singles have been the biggest hits of his career. *Primal*

Scream hit the pop charts and *Conquistador*, which followed it, has sold more than 400,000 copies and is the best-selling big album in years. *Gonna Fly Now*, the theme from the movie, *Rocky*, was a single hit for Ferguson. In Italy, it was a bigger hit than the version by Bill Conti, the Italian who wrote it. It played it on the soundtrack and had the biggest hit with the tune in the United States.

Ferguson's new single, *Star Wars*, is selling well. So are versions by the London Symphony and Meco.

About his playing, Ferguson says, "I'm probably stronger than ever before." Asked what is the highest note he can hit on the trumpet — and nobody even asks anymore whether anybody else can play as

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high — Ferguson says, "It's limitless, really. It depends on the day, the need and the inspiration. In the last year and a half, trumpeter Don Ellis says I've added another octave."

But Ferguson, who also is a family man, does not "live" his trumpet. "There are people, if you take the horn away from them, they'd be lost. For me, that horn stays in the case unless I'm involved in writing."

"I do not practice three hours a day. I do a lot of swimming and keep myself in good physical shape. On the road I drink only good wine, and not too much good wine. I do breathing exercises."

Ferguson and Jay Chattaway wrote *Conquistador*, which is longer when done on stage than on the album. "Four trumpet

solos by four different guys in the band aren't nearly as effective on an album; it sounds like one trumpet solo. In person, you have the realization of the identities changing and different approaches.

Conquistador has a feel of romantic old Spain and it's definitely a showcase for the Ferguson trumpet. Ferguson says he and Chattaway, his record producer, write well together. He, playing a single-note instrument, spins out romantic melodies. Chattaway's contributions, on piano, are vitally important but hard to define, Ferguson says. They work in one room, playing, trading ideas, with a tape recorder running.

Performing used to be fun but making a record was too much like taking an examination in school, Ferguson says. But now that he knows more about recording, he enjoys that too. He records with his own band instead of with a studio band, Ferguson says, because they're so good. Everybody has been with him two years and some for five or six.

But the most important thing, he says, is "the fact the band is not married to any one sound. A new sound is a thrill to everybody. Being involved in a today thing is pleasure and fun and creative as opposed to saying we should do the same old things."

"Our band is based on excitement and feeling young and being today. Not all wine that gets old gets better and that's the way I feel about music."

A new album, to be released in October, his ninth for Columbia, something like his 50th total, will include *Airegin*. Ferguson says, "That's Nigeria spelled backwards. It's a Sonny Rollins composition. It's basically the Mike Abene arrangement from the *Color Him Wild* album in the early 1960's. We now play it about twice as fast."

"I consider that a vintage arrangement within my book."

Lasky examines presidential offenses before Watergate

By MARION SOURS
of the News Tribune staff

In the course of Victor Lasky's best selling new book, *It Didn't Start With Watergate*, Missouri Sen. Thomas Eagleton is quoted in a statement about Watergate which could summarize the theme of the whole book:

"All political parties spy on one another; the Republicans got caught at it."

Newsman Lasky, a friend of former President Nixon, does not, in his book, attempt to defend the actions of the former president and his colleagues. What he does attempt to do is show that the actions of Nixon were no worse than those of his predecessors in the White House.

The difference was that the media had suppressed or ignored the many scandals involving Democratic Presidents Franklin D.

"It Didn't Start with Watergate"
By Victor Lasky
Dial Press. 438 pages. \$10.

Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson, but pounced on Nixon's Watergate action full force.

If the media had revealed the many scandals which had occurred before the Nixon years, Lasky reports, Watergate would never have been blown up to the extent that it was.

In example after example, Lasky points out the incredible license of the presidents before Nixon, and the duplicity of the press in covering up for them.

Wiretapping, for instance, was used extensively by Roosevelt, Kennedy and Johnson. Johnson, especially, went overboard in the use of wiretaps. He enlisted the aid of the FBI for this purpose and to obtain "security checks" on his

opponents. Any derogatory information the agents gathered was, of course, leaked to the press.

Johnson even ordered squads of FBI men to spy on persons during the 1964 and 1968 Democratic National Conventions.

As one top FBI official stated, such antics placed the Nixon Administration in "a very favorable light."

The practice of prying into tax returns of opponents was greatly criticized during the Nixon affair. But this, it turns out, was a frequently used device of Kennedy.

In fact, Kennedy even confided such actions to his friend Benjamin Bradlee who saw nothing wrong with it, nor with Kennedy's wiretapping, election fraud or misuse of federal agencies.

This is the same Benjamin Bradlee who, as editor of the Washington Post, was so pitiless in his drive to topple Nixon, who had committed far less crimes. Curious, isn't it?

Many things appear curious in the course of the book. Political cover-ups have occurred on a massive scale in administrations previous to Nixon's. Yet, the inquiring press never turned them up — though they often knew about them.

Why did they fail to report these scandals? Because, Lasky says, they were friends of the Democratic presidents. The press and Nixon were not on friendly terms. The press waited for the first chance it could get to hound him, and then, when that chance came, it never let up until it had driven him from office.

Perhaps, if Americans had known about Kennedy's many girl friends while he was in office; about Roosevelt's wiretaps of his opponents, including Charles Lindbergh; about the fake ballots employed by Johnson and Truman to get themselves elected; and about the many other scandals that concerned the presidents preceding Nixon, they would not have been so quick to jump on Nixon, nor would his offense have been regarded as impeachable.

Veteran stars work dinner theatre

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Old movie stars never die, they simply go out and play dinner theaters.

They are a fairly recent phenomenon in American show business. The gimmick: you pay about \$13 for a passable dinner served buffet style, then watch a play starring a Hollywood name. The play may be a standard like *The Odd Couple* or *Barefoot in the Park*. Increasingly the theaters are presenting original, non-Broadway shows that are wholesome, sure-fire and somewhat hokey.

The Drury Lane operation of Tony DeSantis in Chicago was the pioneer in the field; he now has three theaters operating year-round. Similar theaters have sprung up all over the country, often in new, affluent suburbs of metropolitan areas. Agent Ben Pearson, who books name talent, estimates there are 50 to 60 such theaters.

Among those who regularly work the dinner theater beat: Mickey Rooney, Van Johnson, Myrna Loy, Ann

Sothern, Robert Cummings, Dorothy Lamour, Cesar Romero, Richard Egan, Don Ameche, Forrest Tucker, Carolyn Jones, Pat O'Brien, Broderick Crawford, Gig Young, Cyd Charisse, Virginia Mayo, Gale Storm, Ann Miller.

"I play 'em because they're fun and I make a lot of money," explained Cesar Romero, whose career is now largely devoted to dinner theaters. In the past year he has played the same show, *Never Get Smart with an Angel*, for 14 weeks in Chicago, 10 in Florida, six in Phoenix. Just returned from Houston, he is leaving shortly for a run in Seattle, then Louisville, returning here Nov. 12.

"You can play the circuit from now until Doomsday," Romero added. "And the money is there. If you don't believe me, look at this." He displayed a contract that specified \$5,000 a week — "that's double what I made when I was under contract to Fox."

In *Never Get Smart with an Angel* he plays an Italian shoe manufacturer who can't understand why his daughter wants to marry a non-Italian. *Abie's Irish Rose* covered the same territory.

The new career has changed Romero's life style. For 37 years he lived in the same rambling house he

built in Brentwood. He recently sold it for a handsome profit and moved to an apartment nearby.

"It didn't make any sense to keep the big house, since I was seldom there," the New York-born actor explained. "I did a picture in Rome last year and another on location in Phoenix, plus some TV here and there."

Though the handsome hair has whitened, Cesar Romero at 70 still looks as if he could tango all night. He enjoys going out to meet the audiences who remember his long string of movies — musicals with Betty Grable and Sonja Henie, adventures like *Captain from Castile* and *Vera Cruz*.

"They're the people who come to our plays — the older, mature people," he said. "You don't see the middle-aged waiting in line to see *Star Wars*."

Bookmobile schedule

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