

# Pop Music: Folk-Rock's Ethel Merman

Jonl Mitchell has in previous performances stood, flaxen-haired and frail, alone in the spotlight. On Tuesday at Avery Fisher Hall, however, she threw this sedate image aside as she crashed into her first song, backed by the L. A. Express group, a jazz-rock unit dominated by the tough saxophone (both tenor and soprano) of its leader, Tom Scott.

Later a largish string section materialized to take Miss Mitchell farther away from her earlier environs.

But the impact of the violins was somewhat lessened by sound problems.

This is not to say that Miss Mitchell has turned rocker — just that she has sewn her folkishness right onto a gutsier framework, sweet and sour working together.

Miss Mitchell remains earnest in approach, highly serious, a singer of editorials for herself through which a tune may — or may not — be threaded. She is now including songs about being a star (which she is) and feeling guilty about the whole thing.

The Mitchell voice, seemingly delicate, can still cut through the energetic arrangements of L. A. Express, making her folk-rock's Ethel Merman. IAN DOVE

## The 'Pygmy Gamelan' Comes to Town

Paul DeMarinis, a composer from the San Francisco Bay area, has more going for him than his ability to invent cute titles for his works. His "pygmy gamelan," which was installed for a single day Wednesday at the WBAI Free Music Store, 359 East 62d Street, made disjointedly rhythmic, muffled-tinkly sounds that actually did recall both the Indonesian gamelan and African thumb pianos. But the image of a tiny, distant gamelan played industriously by very small people is hard to escape.

Mr. DeMarinis studied with

Robert Ashley and Terry Riley at Mills College in Oakland, Calif., and works part-time now at Donald Buchla's synthesizer factory in Berkeley. "The pygmy gamelan," which was meant originally as an alternative to an automobile's stereo system, consisted Wednesday of four separate sound generators and loudspeakers. Each system produces five different pitches in a fixed rhythm, although the sequence of notes is capable of some variation either manually through touch pads, or more exoically through the electrical disturbances produced by an observer's very presence.

Mr. DeMarinis says he is now working on a piece that will combine electronics with vegetables, thus introducing a natural time limitation in the form of biological decay into his music. He is a man with a lively imagination; one hopes to hear more from him in this city.

JOHN ROCKWELL

## Santamaria's Group Introduces Toko

Mongo Santamaria's customary blend of Afro-Cuban rhythms and jazz has been expanded during his seven-piece group's appearance at the Halfnote this week to include a singer from South Africa.

She is identified only as Toko, and she follows in the footsteps of another South African, Miriam Makeba, singing songs that are sometimes rhythmic chants, decorating her songs with those Xhosa tongue clicks that Miss Makeba made familiar to Americans and dancing with hip-swinging joy when the instrumentalists take over.

She adds still another accent to the international musical brew that Mr. Santamaria stirs up as he balances his four-man percussion section, led by his own conga playing and always including his pianist, against two saxophones and a trumpet. His saxophonists, Justo Almarco

and Hector Venerus, are at their most impressive when they join the trumpeter Luis Ortiz in a display of versatility, forming a flute trio that produces both a lush blend of sound and some bright, bubbling solos.

JOHN S. WILSON

## Dizzy Gillespie Plays Jazz Rep Concert

Although a flyer for the second concert of the New York Jazz Repertory Company last Sunday afternoon at Carnegie Hall held out the promise that Dizzy Gillespie would play "some of the big band arrangements that made him famous" the jazz trumpeter actually performed only two selections, one of which, "Con Alma," fulfilled that promise.

His major effort was an arrangement by Chico O'Farrell of one of Mr. Gillespie's more recent compositions, "The Burning Spear," which with numerous solos, ran on for half an hour. Unlike most extended jazz compositions, this one fully justified its length with one superb solo after another rising out of the rugged, rolling ensemble statements. Mr. Gillespie, of course, was the prime soloist, but he was challenged sharply on his own instrument by young Jon Faddis's brilliantly articulated playing. Quentin Jackson, working a plunger mute on trombone, Norris Turney playing a surprisingly raunchy alto saxophone and Jimmy Heath on tenor saxophone helped to sustain the boiling momentum of the piece.

The program also included two pleasant but derivative pieces by Oliver Nelson, "Soundpiece for Jazz Orchestra" and "Jazzhattan Suite," conducted by Billy Taylor. JOHN S. WILSON