

Her Mass Scheduled Jan. 21, 28
At Rochester Immaculate Conception

Jazz Heals the Soul

By LAURENCE E. KEEFE

"Jazz is love, it's part of God himself," said the almond-eyed woman whose career has been entwined in several "golden ages" of jazz and who now has made the hard comeback with a reliance on her faith.

Mary Lou Williams left her piano behind in 1954 in the midst of a three-year religious crisis that climaxed in her conversion to Catholicism. She walked out of a Paris nightclub that year to give everything she owned to the poor.

"Jazz heals the soul like a priest heals the soul," she said in an interview over lunch last week. The discussion ranged over a long career that started in the twenties and how she found a new direction for her work in religion.

Several priests have been influential in persuading Miss Williams to return to work, among them Father Anthony Woods, SJ, a professor at Columbia and editor of *Metronome*; and her road manager, Father Peter O'Brien, SJ.

Father O'Brien, stationed at St. Ignatius parish in New York City, has been granted permission to travel with her "whenever it's necessary." The two of them

have been close friends for 10 years, and have worked professionally together for 2½ years.

"This is the longest I've been out, playing and doing tours," said Miss Williams about taking up jazz piano again.

Miss Williams composed a jazz Mass in 1969 which has been performed as a ballet by the Alvin Ailey Dance Company. It will be done as a Mass at Immaculate Conception Church in Rochester at 12:15, Jan. 21 and 28.

Miss Williams' religious experience surfaces regularly as she discusses jazz. The gospel music and the spirituals that she learned at her mother's knee, are for her, the soul of jazz.

"Jazz can't be taught," she said. "I almost wish I couldn't read music. When you're playing, the spirit takes over. You have to teach yourself, otherwise you'll just be playing technically. School can destroy your talent for jazz."

Jazz as an art form is in trouble in America, she feels, and that's one reason she came back. "The black musician has lost the heritage out of which the music was born," says Miss Williams.

"There was always one era after another, there was ragtime

and swing and bebop, but then there came along this thing they call 'free music,' she said with more than a touch of scorn.

"Free music" means that if you can't hear, if you can't play, then you can sit down at the piano and move your fingers, and that's fine.

"Coltrane and Miles Davis," she added, "were the only ones who knew what they were doing then."

Miss Williams got her greatest exposure working 12 years for the Andy Kirk band, part of the Kansas City school of jazz during the swing era.

Despite the jazz musicians today who "can't hear," said Miss Williams, "Jazz will never die out. That's why we're here, to bring back jazz." Everywhere she goes she tries to bring jazz to youngsters.

"Because the world is messed up," she offers, "the kids think that the older folks did it. But maybe it's just a bad era."

She talks with great feeling of her religious conversion. "The worst thing that happened to me during that time was to realize what God had done for me. I looked at the world around me, at life and spent a lot of time being sorry for not even thanking Him."

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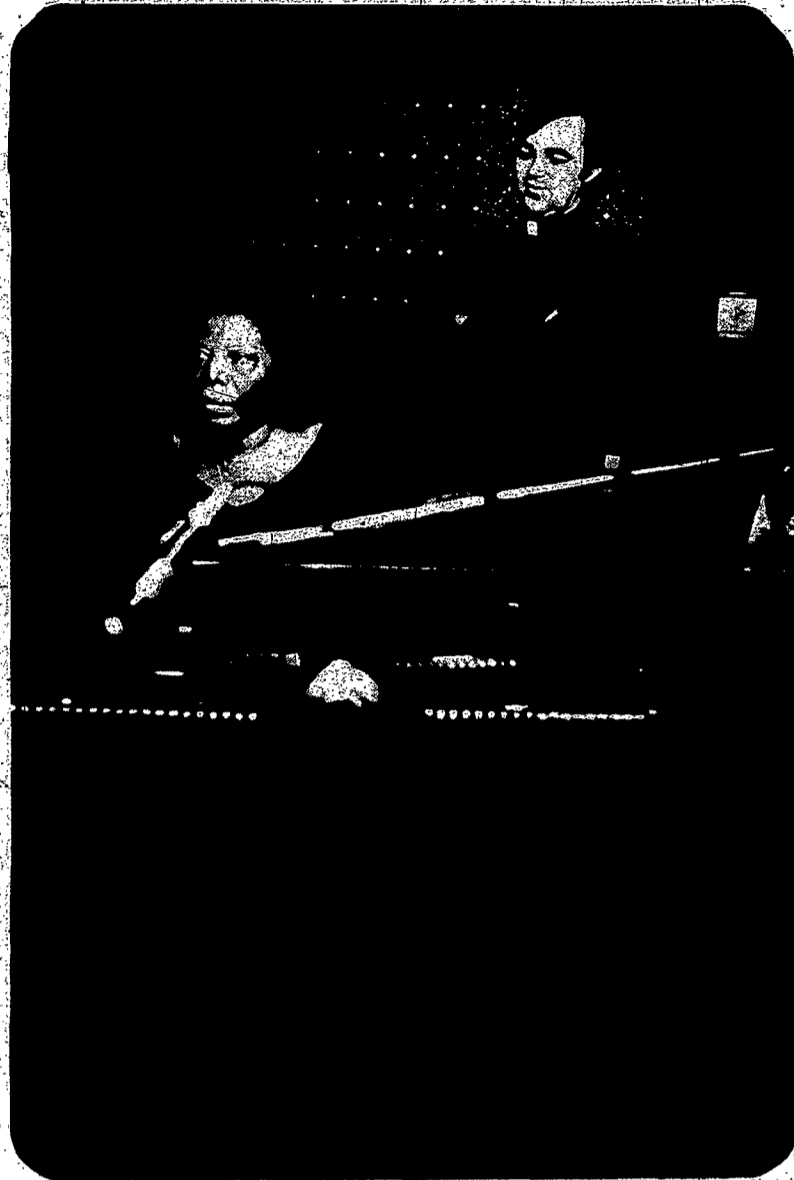


Photo by Laurence E. Keefe

MARY LOU WILLIAMS, FATHER O'BRIEN

Principals Hear Report On British Open Schools

By BARBARA MOYNEHAN

More responsibility for children, more responsibility for teachers, and principals who are real instructional leaders characterize the British open schools, according to one local principal who spent a month last summer studying them.

Sister Barbara Fox, SSJ, principal of Immaculate Conception and St. Lucy's, reported last week to the Rochester Association of Catholic School Administrators her observations of innovative early education in England.

Many of the schools represented at the principals' meeting have been experimenting with innovative non-graded programs: open classroom, or "schools without failure," which are all less structured and more individualized than the traditional classroom learning experiences.

Sister Barbara studied nine schools and what she saw in each was "interest, enthusiasm, great self-motivation and no turned-off kids."

But what really endeared her to the system that her schools have been working with for a few years is, "the language development, ability to write and read, at five and six years of age. They are expressing themselves, so I think it's worth all of it."

As for the work the youngsters do, sewing and crafts are a part of everyday, the school cafeteria and library are run by children, head librarian is a 12-year old boy.

"The school day is 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., longer but more relaxed," as is the school year.

Sister Barbara said an argument against adopting open schools in this country is that British schools start with different traditions and conditions, that British children are more obedient, with less tendency to disrupt.

"I don't think the way children learn is that different," she commented, adding that children have curiosity in common.

In the British open schools, Sister Barbara noted, there is a different way of looking at children, each school is autonomous and the British "are not hung up on administration," so the principal plays a big instructional role to both children and faculty.

The approximately 30 principals gathered at Soul Pole, St. Lucy's youth center, for their bi-monthly meeting, also heard a report on alternative grading systems from Sister Irene Gardner, RSM, assistant superintendent for instruction.

Father Mosier Marks 25 Years

Father Nicholas Fowler Mosier, CSV, a Rochester born member of the Viatorian Community, will return to his home parish, St. Augustine, to celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving to mark his 25th anniversary of ordination, Sunday, Feb. 4, at noon.

Father Mosier, the son of Mrs. Fowler Mosier and the late Mr. Mosier, was ordained by Cardinal Patrick O'Boyle at the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, D.C., Feb. 7, 1948.

Father Mosier's posts have been chaplaincies at Manteno State Hospital, Kankakee, Ill., where a foundation to treat mental illness has been established in his name, and at St. Mary's Church, Yonkers Island, S.C.

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Publicist Extols 'Image' To Catholic School People

By CHARLES RANDISI

The publicity director of the New York State Catholic Committee was at Cardinal Mooney High School on Tuesday, Jan. 9, to address a group of diocesan educators.

Dick Dowd of Albany, who is also editor of *Crux* magazine, spoke to Catholic high school and elementary school principals, and the staff of the diocesan education department, on "the need of public information in the promotion of Catholic education."

He said that "good Christians" tend to look down on public relations. They see it as "somehow un-Christian."

He, however, presented what he considers a Christian view of public relations work, and how it can be effectively used for Christian purposes.

Public relations, he said, "can be a mirror of faith, which instills a spirit of the love of God in people."

He talked of the "crisis of confidence" on the part of Catholic parents.

"I do not hold with the concept that we cannot provide the funds to promote education," he said.

"We must convince people," he went on, "that Catholic education is worth the effort and the money. We must especially convince those who have the money to provide it for those who do not."

Dowd said that Catholic education can succeed through public relations. "But what can we do?" he asked. "How can we increase the confidence of parents and teachers?"

He feels that the most important, and most difficult task in



DOWD

public relations is "personal contact." He spoke of various "publics," or groups of people with whom one comes in contact from day to day.

Knowing who these "publics" are, and being able to "shine for" them, is Dowd's key to personal contact.

Dowd said that people are going to judge schools by the

way they judge the people who are connected with schools, namely, faculty, students, and administrators. "These are people who are exemplars of the Gospel," he said.

He also spoke of resources, or "means of passing the word." He said, "We must use every resource that we can."

He then asked the audience to suggest possible resources that can be used in the promotion of Catholic education. Some of the offerings were "more open houses, more meetings with parents, shared faculty meetings, monthly bulletins to be sent to interested 'publics,' letting outside organizations use a school's facilities, and press releases.

Regarding the last suggestion, Dowd emphasized the importance of "building up a contact" and maintaining it.

Dowd's appearance was hosted by the Rochester Association of Catholic Secondary School Administrators.

New Members Seated In Priests' Council

After much confusion over voting procedure and mailing delays, the fourth Diocesan Priests' Council is elected and meets for the first time today.

Twenty priests were voted in by their fellow priests covering three areas or representation: regional geographic areas, religious orders and age blocks.

The regional representatives are Fathers David Callan of the Tompkins/Cayuga area, Elmer

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