

## Don Elliott Heard as Soloist With Herb Pomeroy's Band

By Melvin Maddocks

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Last night was jazz night at the Boston Arts Festival, and the brass-tipped chords of Herb Pomeroy's 16-piece band dealt characteristically whipping blows to the still, hot air of the Public Garden, where a large audience, spilling over onto the grass, listened also to Rollins Griffith's smaller nine-piece group and the evening's special soloist, Don Elliott.

Mr. Pomeroy, an instructor at the Berklee School of Music, is a stocky, puckish young man, whose on-stage directing is mostly limited to stomping his ensemble off together and bringing them in on time. When he is not hunching his shoulders to take a short trumpet solo, he is usually attending the sounds of his aggregation with the undisguised delight of a youngster listening to the noisy but disciplined thrum of a diesel engine.

The Pomeroy band must, in-

deed, be sport to hold the throttle on. There is a little Basie and more Kenton to the arrangements in its taut, thoroughly mastered book. Yet it is not derivative. It can make a large, creamy, hushed sound with saxophones and trombones. But bitten-off, blasting trumpet phrases are its hallmark. Soloists play against sections, weaving subordinately in and out of the ensemble with plenty of contrapuntal effects of the fashionable sort and lots of contrasts in volume and tempo.

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Lennie Johnson, trumpet—the star of what is primarily a team—was featured to particular advantage in "What Is There to Say?" He includes several different styles within his range, playing at times with the broad flat tone of another Boston trumpeter, Ruby Braff; at other times squeezing out half-tones like Rex Stewart; and then again spilling out fast cadenzas in the most accepted modern manner. He can be quite lyrical, and he can also be suddenly a bit mechanical and abstracted.

The same seems to hold true for the orchestra as a whole, which does not always relax sufficiently so that its sound may flow instead of coming out in tightly knotted packages.

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Mr. Elliott, who flew in from New York for the occasion, plays the mellophone, an instrument that looks like a French horn. In the jazz context it sounds most nearly like a trombone in its upper range, bearing about the same relation that a pear does to an apple. That is to say, it has a smaller, sweeter, blander tone with little capacity for rasp or other jazz inflections. A soloist has to get by on ideas, and Mr. Elliott in "Satin Doll" and "Bass Blues" showed no shortage, shaping out neat phrases in a style slightly reminiscent of Bobby Brookmeyer and achiev-



**Henri Lazaroff, whose prize-winning "Outdoor Serenade for Young People" will have its premiere Sunday afternoon at the Arts Festival by the Boston Little Orchestra, Russell Stanger conducting.**

ing a climax with a quivering whinny that ought to have called home any cows who still have grazing tenure on the Common.

Mr. Elliott also supplied as cheerfully bizarre a set of vocal impersonations as could be imagined, including his notion of what modern-jazz scat solos by Liberace and Mister Magoo might sound like.

Rollins Griffith's band was a little too much like the Pomeroy orchestra in miniature to give the evening a contrast. But its compact drive was formidable in Mary Lou Williams' "Walking" and the Basie standard "Plymouth Rock." Mr. Griffith, a good bluesy pianist, was far too sparing with his own solos.

The Rev. Norman O'Connor, C.S.P., a smooth and unobtrusive host, helped keep the evening completely free from the delays and hiatuses that have come to seem an annoying part of too many jazz concerts.