



A master of two instruments, the piano and his voice.

purely popular, but virtually all, early and late, are the work not of a cynical purveyor of musical pabulum but of a jazz pianist of the first order."

In 1945, Cole was both a jazz star and a pop idol, able to shuttle easily between one role and the other. In the ensuing years, however, that became difficult, Teachout says. "The postwar American popular music scene was dominated by stand-up singers [who played no instruments]. Most of the big bands of the 1930s and '40s had folded, and instrumental jazz, which achieved a certain amount of general popularity during the swing era, lost much of its commercial appeal with the rise of bebop." Cole, Teachout says, chose to move with the times. In the fall of 1951, he quit playing jazz altogether and became a full-time singer. With songs like "Unforgettable," "Mona Lisa," and "Too Young," he achieved the mass popularity he had long sought.

Contrary to the legend, Teachout maintains, Cole's success did not come at the expense of his artistic integrity. "Those who criticize him for giving up the piano fail to recognize that the magic heard in his jazz piano playing of the '40s did not suddenly dry up and blow away in 1951. It was now simply expressed in terms of a different instrument—his voice."

The Passion Of T. S. Eliot

"The Passionate Poet and the Use of Criticism" by Louis D. Rubin, Jr., in *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Summer 1992), One West Range, Charlottesville, Va. 22903.

In his famous 1919 essay on "Hamlet and His Problems," T. S. Eliot (1888–1965) pronounced Shakespeare's masterpiece "an artistic failure." The title character, he insisted, "is dominated by an emotion . . . in excess of the facts as they appear." This, to Eliot, was unacceptable. "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art," he maintained, "is by finding an 'objective correlative'" for that emotion. In his criticism and, as it seemed at the time, his poetry, observes Louis Rubin, a professor emeritus of English at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Eliot presented himself as "the anti-romantic, the severe moralist who would

suppress the brazen assertion of personality through immersion in the literary tradition." Ironically, Rubin says, there is hardly "a poet of any era the rhythms of whose verses throb with more autobiographical passion than Eliot's, while his criticism, which once seemed so calm and magisterial, now appears to constitute a strenuous and even desperate insistence upon personal coherence in the face of near-chaotic emotions."

When the American-born Eliot embraced England and set out to conquer literary London, he left behind him his native land and his family's expectations that he would pursue an

academic career. He was, Rubin writes, "a man in full emotional recoil from democracy, the middle class, religious latitudinarianism, and the cramp of the flesh. His adopted English identity became a badge of virtue to signify his emancipation from vulgarity." And his poetry was a way for him to assert "an intensely personal appetite for suffering, an agonizing fear of sexual appetite, and a shrinking from carnality, along with a desperate need for religious certainty and for civic and social coherence."

What gives "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1917) its power, Rubin says, is "the communicated sense of frustration, the struggle between decorum and libido, the contempt

for mannered response juxtaposed with the dread of vulgarity." And "The Waste-Land" (1922), Rubin adds, "is no diagnosis of contemporary society from outside and above," but rather "the articulated and agonized depiction of a participant sharing in the chaos."

Eliot asserted in another famous essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), that "poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality." His poetry, however, tells a very different story. "His poetry is *not* an escape from passion; it is not *about* the passion," Rubin notes. "It is the passion."

Late-Blooming Architect

"What Louis Kahn Built" by Michael J. Lewis, in *Commentary* (Mar. 1992), 165 E. 56th St., New York, N.Y. 10022; "What Does the Building Want to Be?" by Brooks Adams, in *Art in America* (July 1992), 575 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10012.

Architect Louis I. Kahn (1901-74), "the last great modernist" in critic Brooks Adams' phrase, did not get a prestigious commission (the Yale Art Gallery in New Haven) until he was 50 years old. When the Richards Medical Laboratory, his first project to be internationally celebrated, was built at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, he was nearly 60. Yet during the next 15 years, writes Michael J. Lewis, a historiographer at the Canadian Center for Architecture in Montreal, Kahn "produced a solid body of work that met with almost uniform critical acclaim, something true of none of his contemporaries."

Kahn's best known buildings include the Jonas Salk Institute in La Jolla, California, with its compounds (as Lewis notes) "gathered around a single monumental axis, a mighty crescendo that culminates in a triumphant vista of the Pacific," and the library at the Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, with (in Adams' description) "its amazing well of space punctuated by huge cast concrete bull's-eyes which reveal the stacks behind." But the architect's "grandest spatial conceits," Adams says, are located in India and Bangladesh. "In the official complex, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar . . . in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, the national legislature and mosque are wrapped in glare walls punctured by gigantic triangles and circles." Kahn sought "very archaic-looking buildings," and his huge concrete structures in Dhaka were influenced by the great 18th-century astronomical gardens at Jaipur. In Ahmedabad, India is Kahn's campus for the Indian Institute of Man-

agement, a business school. It has been called a 20th-century successor to Thomas Jefferson's campus ideal at the University of Virginia. Kahn became, Adams says, "a world architect who endowed new capitals and emerging cultures with his most convincing brand of cosmic symbolism."

The architect's spectacular late successes, Lewis points out, overshadowed his failures. Architectural philosophers applauded his "insistence on the collective and the universal, his ideal of an architecture so spacious that it could encompass everyone," but Kahn's clients often did not. In reaching for the universal, many of them thought, he lost the particular. Jewish institutions, for example, entrusted him with a half-dozen major projects in his final decades, but "all that came of them was a small synagogue in Chappaqua, New York, and the Jewish Community Center Bathhouse in Trenton, New Jersey, itself a small sliver of a much larger project from which he was dismissed."

Kahn's experience during the 1930s, when he was extensively involved in public housing schemes, left a permanent imprint on his career, Lewis says. He "learned to make the rounds of government corridors, instead of wooing clients in corporate boardrooms or on golf courses." The architect, according to the catalogue for a retrospective exhibition ("Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture") that began a three-year world tour last fall, "rescued modernism from the banality induced by its commercial success."

Kahn's career indeed was based not on com-