

EUGENE ON MUSIC

Eugene had downed a few drinks and he was talking about rhythm in music: "We have been relinquishing all rhythm to other races. Black music seems dynamic today mainly because of its driving rhythms. But we have our own rhythms", Eugene declared, banging his hand down on the table for emphasis. "Our rhythms are based in the folk music of the British Isles, the dances and Polkas of Europe, and the grand rhythms of serious composers, like Beethoven. We should be expanding our own rhythms rather than meekly believing that other races have more rhythm than we do!"

"But don't you think there has been a reaction to the dominance of African-American music", I replied. "Look at the new traditional country music and the latest hard rock, which is really white rock".

"That is a healthy sign", Eugene answered, "But white popular music has not reached the level of excellence of modern jazz, which is the black folk music. When Miles Davis was healthy, no one was better. Our guys aren't inspired enough. We need what black music has, and do you know what that is?" Eugene demanded.

"What?" I asked obligingly.

"Racism!" Eugene announced triumphantly. "We need good old proud, bold, emotional, territorial racism! It is racial pride and racial rage which gives the drive to black music today!" Eugene looked around as if he were hoping to find his kind of proud white music in a corner of the room.