

casting. Take the guys to some wild animal compound like Lion Country Safari, in Laguna. That's a huge facility 40 miles south of Los Angeles where the animals are allowed to roam free over the well-guarded grounds while visitors are "caged" in their autos. You can drive through, but you're not even allowed to open your windows.

"Groovy," Stan thought to himself (I hope my quote is accurate), and proceeded to make use of Lion Country Safari for sidelining. That's the process whereby musicians simulate playing while listening to themselves on a pre-recorded tape. Trombonist Dick Nash described the abortive "take" for *Baby Elephant Walk*. "Stan placed all the guys on this huge pile of rocks between two lagoons, and while a line of elephants walked behind us, we were 'playing' our instruments. Of course, we were a little frightened, but everything was going all right until one big elephant came right up to us and began trumpeting real loud. Must have been just a few feet away from Tommy Johnson (tuba player) and suddenly Tommy jumped up and ran like hell. After that we all got up and ran. That wasn't bad enough—Stan comes out of the truck (remote control booth) and yells, "That was a complete waste of time and tape!"

Mancini, recalling the incident, also recalled a remark by Tommy Vig (percussionist) when Stan was trying to get the elephants to walk by again. "In his inimitable accent, Tommy yelled, 'Hey Stanley, why don't you make the sun set?'"

Even more harrowing was the experience of Dick Klein, also at Lion Country Safari. Inspired by Mancini's music for *Hatari*, Harris had some of the sidemen on branches of trees while rhinoceroses "tiptoed" below them. Klein (whose father is trumpeter Man-nie Klein and whose mother, Marion, is contractor for the show) was playing French Horn when he suddenly lost his grip. He barely managed to hand his horn to another musician and grab the branch with his free hand. But for a few seconds it was touch and go, hanging on to a branch while rhinos were sauntering by underneath.

A couple of close-call stunts at the same park had nothing to do with the music, yet there are two trombonists who are still talking about them, and the misguided publicity man who set them up. The victims were Dick Nash and Terry Woodson: the flack (who they thought was a park employee) shall remain nameless. He arranged for a good shot by throwing chunks of meat on the hood of their car, then driving through a pride of lions. Four huge lionesses jumped on the hood and Terry, in the back seat, took a photo of Dick in the front seat playing trombone while the hungry beasts were frolicking inches away, on the other side of the windshield. Another time, he suggested they get a good photo standing near some rhinos. So they confidently marched out of their car and began setting up when a legitimate park employee (Nash and Woodson knew he was real when they spotted the rifle) came running towards them shouting "What the hell are you doing out of the car?"

A lot of guys must have asked themselves variations on that same question. I'm sure Dick Klein must have had unprintable thoughts running through his chops when that giraffe stuck his inquisitive nose up the bell of the French horn. No doubt another French

hornist, Marilyn Robinson, had similar thoughts—when they were taping aboard a huge ship in Los Angeles harbor and she was so sea-sick she remained prone for the entire voyage.

It was while the band was aboard that ship that Tommy Vig got the word that his long overdue wife Mia (one of the three Kim Sisters) was finally giving birth to their first baby. Putting one of his various contingency plans into motion, Tommy got on the ship-to-shore phone, had a helicopter waiting at the dock to whisk him to Van Nuys Airport, where a waiting cab completed the relay to West Valley Community Hospital. Tommy arrived just as Roger Lee Vig arrived—all 10 lbs. 7 oz. of him!

Stan Harris' penchant for heights inspired two other stunts that a couple of acrophobic sidemen will never forget. There's a structure called the Sky Tower at Magic Mountain (a mini-Disneyland about 20 miles north of Los Angeles) which is close to 400 feet high. There's an elevator that goes to the top; there

is also a narrow, twisting staircase. You've probably read enough about Harris to know what's coming. The musicians and the camera crew rode up to the top; only the camera crew rode down. Harris decided it would make an ideal film sequence if he could shoot the musicians inching their way down the tower while "swinging."

Swing they did. While the weather was nice at ground level, a jet stream provided a howling counterpoint 400 feet up. The way it was planned, reedman Ethmer Roten was the first to descend. Don Menza, who was right behind him, told me, "Roten took three steps, just three, then froze! He couldn't take another step. When it was my turn, I nearly froze myself. But we made it. And then I learned later that the way Stan put the thing together, I could have climbed up 20 steps from the bottom and walked down!"

Mancini recalled the time on the ship when he asked Chuck Domanico to climb up to the crow's nest. Domanico, whose fear of heights is so strong that he plays everything in the bass clef, politely but firmly refused. Hank did what any self-respecting band leader who knew there were plenty of bass players in Hollywood would do: he said, "You go up there and I'll give you 25 bucks. So Tommy

Johnson kept pushing Chuck up the ladder, and it's amazing, but it only took 25 dollars to erase his fear of heights."

Perhaps the most amazing anecdote to come out of all the location taping involves Shelly Manne and a simian swinger that he really went ape over. For one of Mancini's *Hatari* numbers, Shelly was teamed with a cute little chimp. The drummer held the chimp's hand (paw?) and helped it strike a cow bell. "But," as Shelly told me, "I found when I let go of the chimp's hand, he struck the cowbell himself—in tempo!" Either Shelly's a good raconteur, or a good teacher. If it's the latter, this could create rather awkward union problems.

Getting back to the show, within the normalcy of a studio situation, there are no problems when it comes to jazz outlets for Hank's sidemen. "We have what we call 'mini-solo spots.' You see, the show sponsor, Chevrolet, has a few commercials, and there are spots where the station can sell time to other sponsors. So Stan Harris came to me and said we have to have something that lasts one minute so it can be lifted by the station without destroying continuity. So I said we have a lot of jazz guys. Why not introduce a different one each show and let him do three, four choruses. So we give the guy a shot and it's been Bb blues all the way. Funny thing, though. While that minute was set up to be lifted out, not one of those minute spots has been taken from us. That's 26 shows. (They're in the middle of their 13 re-runs now.) A small step for mankind, but a giant step for jazz!"

Such enthusiasm for his jazz-oriented sidemen is one of the main reasons the average studio musician loves to work for Henry Mancini—even at the risk of being rhinoceros dessert. Related to Mancini's magic to see his men get a chance to stretch out is his insistence that it all be done with a sense of immediacy, and within a framework of professional dignity.

"You know of course, our band members are pre-recorded at RCA, and they're done well, thanks to Joe Reisman, my producer, and Mickey Crofford, who engineers and mixes everything. But we leave open tracks for the solos. It's not like that Timex show where the guys in the Ellington or Basie bands pre-record their solos. It just didn't match. Our solos are live and there's nothing like soloing when the camera's on you and you're a little nervous and you know 'this is it.' If you pre-record a solo in the studio, you might cop out and play something that's easy to finger. Live solos lend an immediacy to our show.

"Furthermore, people appreciate the spontaneity. They know that what they hear coming from his instrument comes from his body—and it's an extension of himself, and that skill took as long for him as it did for any engineer or doctor. You just don't open your mouth and blow that kind of knowledge out."

Hopefully some Chevrolet executives are reading this. With renewal time at hand, maybe they'll realize that very same concept when they look at the last of the re-runs. Hank doesn't need the loot, but TV needs quality shows. There are enough stripped down, "assembly line" packages already on the tube. We could do with more de luxe models—like a '73 Mancini.