Helm in a Changing Tradition

By Richard Hadlock

PAROCHIALISM — The tendency to reject as meaningless all but men's own special interests — is a strong and discordant force in the jazz realm.

There are traditionalists who distinguish between "real" jazz and hop and there are moderunos who prefer to modern jazz. If the two had nothing at all in common, the other group's music would never quite qualify as authentic stuff.

I thought about this while down in New Orleans, a center of jazz activity and development, and I considered it. Does this mean that for modern jazz, there is no middle ground? Is the only way to achieve "real" jazz to completely reject everything else?

One man who seems to have found a way to bridge this gap is Bob Helm, his clarinet smile under a cloud of fog, his hair tousled by the wind. There is a new look in his eyes, a freshness that seems to come from within.

Helm is not a traditionalist, nor is he an avant-garde fan. He is simply a musician who loves music for what it is, without trying to define it or label it. His approach to jazz is one of exploration and discovery, rather than strict adherence to any particular style.

Helm's music is a reflection of his love for traditional jazz, but it also incorporates elements from other styles. He is not afraid to experiment and try new things, which is evident in his performances.

The clarinet is Helm's instrument of choice, and he plays it with a passion that is infectious. His playing is a testament to his dedication and love for music. He is a musician who truly understands the beauty and complexity of the instrument he plays.

Helm's music is a blend of traditional and modern styles, and he is not afraid to push the boundaries of what is considered "real" jazz. He is a musician who is constantly evolving and growing, and his music is a reflection of that.

The next time you hear a new piece by Helm, take a moment to appreciate the beauty and complexity of his music. It is a reminder of the power of music to bring people together, regardless of their background or beliefs.