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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EXPERIENTIAL  
FACTORS AND PERCEPTS OF SELECTED  
PROFESSIONAL MUSICIANS IN THE UNITED  
STATES WHO ARE ADEPT AT JAZZ IMPROVI-  
SATION.

The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D.,  
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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EXPERIENTIAL FACTORS  
AND PERCEPTS OF SELECTED PROFESSIONAL  
MUSICIANS IN THE UNITED STATES  
WHO ARE ADEPT AT JAZZ  
IMPROVISATION

A DISSERTATION  
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
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BY  
GEORGE SHAW  
Norman, Oklahoma  
1979

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN EXPERIENTIAL FACTORS  
AND PERCEPTS OF SELECTED PROFESSIONAL  
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WHO ARE ADEPT AT JAZZ  
IMPROVISATION

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

A review of curriculum development in the professional field of music education over the last decade reveals a renaissance of interest in improvisation as a means of musical expression. As characterized by a wealth of supportive literature, improvisation is presently viewed as an extension and integration of the compositional and performance components of musical endeavor.

#### Need for the Study

The need for the proposed study derives from the position and importance of improvisation in historical context, the relationship of improvisation to the temporal and expressive nature of the musical art, the importance of improvisation in the development of comprehensive musicianship, and, lack of available information and research concerned with the experiential factors and percepts relative to the systematic development of improvisational skills.

As a sound-in-time phenomenon, it is generally held that music is derived from the inflections of speech. The

first music may have been derived from mating calls, battle cries, signals of the hunt, imitations of the sounds of nature, collective labor, or ceremonies associated with magic or religious rites. The origin of music can be attributed to the human need of emotional expression. Explanations concerning the origin of music share the common desire to relate music to the most profound experience of the individual and the group involved.

In this regard Ferand states that:

The spontaneous invention and shaping of music while it is being performed is as old as music itself. The very beginnings of musical practice can scarcely be imagined in any form other than that of instantaneous musical expression -- of improvisation.<sup>1</sup>

In non-western cultures the distinction between improvisation and composition is less distinct. Frequently, the composer and performer are one and the same. According to Grout, all music prior to the development of mensural notation was largely monophonic in conception and heterophonic in perception and practice.<sup>2</sup> A heterophonic texture, by nature, requires free and varied interpretation of a given melodic and rhythmic structure. Thus, differences between early western and non-western musics were tonal and rhythmic rather than textural. Coincidental with the

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<sup>1</sup>Ernst Ferand, Improvisation in Nine Centuries of Western Music, (Zurich: Arno Volk Verlag Han Gerig Kg. Koln, Reprint 1961), p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Donald Jay Grout, A History of Western Music, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1973), p. 4.



development of mensural notation and organized polyphony, improvisational parameters changed and new, different styles developed. The common denominator between composed, notated music, and improvised music, it can be theorized, is the need for spontaneous musical expression. The inherent limitation of the developing notational system in indicating the subtleties of musical performance tended to inhibit free improvisatory practices. Concerning the inter-relationship of improvisation, composition, and notation, Nettle comments thus:

Improvisation and composition are opposed concepts we are told--the one spontaneous, the other calculated; the one natural, the other artificial. But on the other hand, we are given to believe that improvisation is a type of composition that characterizes those cultures that have no notation, a type that releases the sudden impulse to music through the direct production of sound.<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of its integrity and closeness to the nature of music and temporal expression, it is not surprising that curriculum development in music during the last decade included improvisation as an important cognate area. Both the comprehensive musicianship component of the Contemporary Music Project<sup>2</sup> and the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program<sup>3</sup> view improvisation as a means of exercising musical

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<sup>1</sup> Bruno Nettle, "Thoughts on Improvisation: A Comparative Approach," The Musical Quarterly, LX, No. 1 (January, 1974), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Charles L. Gary and Beth Landis, Comprehensive Music Program, (Washington, D.C.: Music Educators National Conference and American Association of Schools of Music, 1973), p. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> Ronald B. Thomas, Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program Synthesis (Bardonia, New York: Media Materials, Inc., 1970), p. 34.

judgement and an essential component of all music curricula. In the twentieth century, Carl Orff as early as 1924 recognized the value of improvisation as a means of developing musical perception in the development of the Schulwerk concept.<sup>1</sup>

Improvisation, according to Leonard and House, is a creative act optimizing the potential for self-expression.<sup>2</sup> In an article concerned with improvisation as a pedagogical resource in the piano studio, Hood relates that it is unimaginable to teach music " . . . without this [improvisation] most versatile of tools."<sup>3</sup>

While there is evidence of significant interest in the utilization of improvisation in music education programs, an observation by Talmadge in 1960 remains relevant.

Improvisation skills, which are prime objectives in the musical practice of other cultures as well as in the practice of our own folk musicians, have been generally neglected in both public and private music education programs.<sup>4</sup>

According to Baker, the reason for the lack of emphasis on the development of improvisational skills is

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<sup>1</sup>Carl Orff, "Orff-Schulwerk: Past and Future," Source Book III: Perspectives in Music Education, Bonnie Kowall, ed. (Washington, D.C.: Music Educators National Conference, 1966), p. 388.

<sup>2</sup>Charles Leonard and Robert W. House, Foundations and Principles of Music Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959), p. 260-261.

<sup>3</sup>Frances A. Hood, "My Studio--Improvising, A Useful Tool," Clavier, XI No. 2 (February, 1972), p. 42.

<sup>4</sup>W.H. Talmadge, "Teaching Improvisation," Music Educators Journal, XLVII, (November/December 1960), p. 58.

twofold: the popular view that such skills are inherent and not subject to systematic development; and " . . . . fear and ignorance on the part of the teacher."<sup>1</sup>

Relatedly, it can be noted that much of the available material concerned with the teaching of jazz improvisation deals directly with the acquisition of technical playing skills within a stylistic context. Little or no attention is given to the experiences and percepts that help shape the personality and abilities of the improvising jazz musician. The present study represents an attempt to determine what relationships exist between certain experiences and percepts of a selected group of professional musicians adept at jazz improvisation.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to determine what relationships exist between certain experiential factors and percepts of a selected group of professional musicians adept at jazz improvisation.

## PROCEDURES

### The Collection of Data

As consistent with the stated purpose, the study involves the identification and categorization of the

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<sup>1</sup>David Baker, "Jazz Improvisation-The Weak Link," The Instrumentalist, XXVI (November, 1971), 21.

experiential factors and percepts of musicians adept at jazz improvisation. The focused personal interview was chosen as the means for securing data from jazz improvisers. In the research compiled by Jeter, literature pertaining to the interview is demonstrated as one of the most effective means of obtaining information.<sup>1</sup>

The focused interview differs from the unstructured interview in four ways:

1. It takes place with persons known to have been involved in a particular concrete situation.
2. It refers to situations which have been analyzed prior to the interview.
3. It proceeds on the basis of an interview guide which outlines the major areas of the inquiry and the hypotheses which locate pertinence of data to be secured in the interview.
4. It focuses on the subjective experiences-- attitudes and emotional responses regarding the particular concrete situations under study.<sup>2</sup>

In further explanation of the last factor, subjective experiences, it should be observed that jazz improvisation is frequently concerned directly with personality development

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<sup>1</sup>John David Jeter, "An Analysis of Expressed and Observed Difficulties of Beginning Vocal Music Teachers." (Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University, 1966), p. 8-36.

<sup>2</sup>Pauline V. Young, Scientific Social Surveys and Research (3rd ed; Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1956), p. 212.-

involving the jazz improviser's emotional reactions to a particular playing situation. Thus, the relationship that exists between personality development, emotional involvement, and jazz improvisation is inevitably subjective. The focused interview allows for subjective experiences to be discussed in informal conversation. The interview guide utilized for the present study was devised to include the following five areas related to the purpose of the study: (1) improvisational concept, (2) initial improvisational attempts, (3) early experiences that contribute to the development of improvisational skills, (4) recommendations that can be given by the interviewee to a young player who aspires to learn jazz improvisation, and (5) information concerning the current improvisational situations in which the interviewee is involved. Each interviewee was also encouraged to develop areas of his personal interest that were not included in the interview guide.

A criterion list was established for each area included in the interview guide as follows:

- I. Improvisational Concepts
  - A. Definition of improvisation
  - B. Contrast between improvising and non-improvising musician
  - C. Musical expression
  - D. Personal expression
  - E. Stylistic preference

- F. Listening preference
- II. Initial Improvisational Attempts
    - A. Motivation
    - B. Influential Personalities
    - C. Aspirations
    - D. Ambitions
    - E. Complaints
    - F. Recommendations
- III. Early Experiences
    - A. Formal training
    - B. Informal training
    - C. Music at home
    - D. Music at school
    - E. Church music
    - F. Other
- IV. Recommendations
    - A. Formal training
    - B. Informal training
    - C. Environmental music
    - D. Other
- V. Current Improvisational Situations
    - A. Professional involvement
    - B. Required skills

Volunteered information is included if it is relevant.

Twenty-nine professional musicians adept at jazz improvisation were identified for participation in the

study. All participants were either professional recording artists and/or jazz educators of national recognition.<sup>1</sup> The establishment of the list of the most desirable persons to interview was done through personal acquaintances and contacts. The primary data was obtained by means of personal interviews with the twenty-nine participants. The interviews included in the study took place in the following cities:

1. Tulsa, Oklahoma
2. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
3. Wichita, Kansas
4. New Orleans, Louisiana
5. Memphis, Tennessee
6. Baton Rouge, Louisiana
7. New York, New York
8. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
9. Boston, Massachusetts
10. Dekalb, Illinois
11. Washington, D.C.
12. Detroit, Michigan
13. Chicago, Illinois
14. Bloomington, Indiana
15. Los Angeles, California
16. San Francisco, California
17. Denton, Texas

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<sup>1</sup>A complete listing of participants is included in Chapter Four.

18. Dallas, Texas

19. Las Vegas, Nevada

Each interview session was arranged at a time that was mutually convenient to the researcher and the participant and characterized by an open discussion covering the five areas included in the interview guide. Each interview fluctuated in length and degree of privacy. The elements of time and privacy in relationship to each interview were largely dependent upon the location of the interview and the volubility of the interviewee. Locations of interviews included dressing rooms of night clubs, backstage at Carnegie Hall, sidewalks, recording studios, offices, taxicabs, subway trains, airports, restaurants and private homes. In every case subjects were extremely cooperative. Most subjects appeared eager to be interviewed, and all were friendly, helpful, and most cordial to the interviewer.

In conducting the personal interviews, the investigator realized the importance of establishing rapport and a channel for communication with each interviewee. Responses were recorded on tape and transcribed by typewriter.

The data obtained was analyzed. Complete responses were broken down into sections which were then categorized under the broad classifications employed in the interview guide. Commonalities in experiences among the subjects were identified and compared. Conclusions were drawn, based on the comparisons made.



### Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to the identification and categorization of experiential factors and percepts of musicians adept at jazz improvisation. The study was limited to structured interviews with a minimum of twenty-five professional musicians who improvise jazz music. All musicians interviewed were professional recording artists and/or nationally recognized jazz educators.

### Definition of Terms

Improvisation. Music which is simultaneously composed and performed.

Improvising Musician. Musicians currently involved in musical activities which require improvisation.

Experience. Knowledge or practical wisdom gained from observation and actual practice in one's individual environment; the totality of the cognitions given by perception.

Percept. A psychologist's term for sensations that are referable to definite recognizable things.

## CHAPTER II

### JAZZ IMPROVISATION: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Jazz is a style of music indigenous to the United States of America that first arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>1</sup> Jazz utilizes improvisation as a primary element of construction. During each period in its history, highly skilled improvisers shaped the directions in which jazz developed. In fact, the improvisatory manner of performance is about the only element of consistency to be found in the many different types of musics that are called "Jazz."

According to Levey:

Jazz is improvisation. Without the soloist's highly skilled improvisations a musical presentation is not jazz. It may be pop music, it may be dance music, but it isn't jazz. Good jazz scores and compositions are "frozen" improvisation, and they seem to swing because they have the "feel" of being improvised. Still, without the creative improvising soloist a jazz score is just that: a written-down and thus frozen shadow of jazz, a piece of music that at best can only reflect the spirit of improvised jazz.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Frank Tirro, Jazz A History (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1977), p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Jospeh Levey, Basic Jazz Improvisation (Delaware Water Gap, Pennsylvania: Shawnee Press, Inc., 1972), p. 1.

It is often stated that jazz is the music of the Afro-American. Concerning this point Tanner writes:

. . . one point should be made clear and that is each new style (or era) in jazz was pioneered by the American Negro musician. Any talented player of any race can probably learn to play the different styles. Race truly has nothing to do with the developing of the styles after they are once innovated, but it was the American Negro who did (and continues to do) the innovating.<sup>1</sup>

The innovative role of the Afro-American in jazz can be attributed to his direct relationship to the culture that gave birth to the music. As explained by Ellis Marsalis as follows:

To think in terms of improvisation and what it's about, I would have to say that the difference between a musician who can improvise and one who cannot improvise is cultural. For a long time it was common for black musicians to say that the white boys can't play. But we listen to Joe Farrell and Chick [Corea] as well as the Brecker brothers, and we immediately see that is not true. When I was a kid it was not that easy for white kids to get access to the [black] music. Their parents wouldn't allow it. Consequently, it's like the business of not being around the water; your chances of swimming are pretty slim, but due to the breakdown in cultural rigidity,<sup>2</sup> jazz is now being played by individuals of all races.

It is commonly accepted that jazz resulted from a blending of cultures: European, African, and American. However, it may not be well understood that the basic ingredients in that blend that now sounds so smooth and

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<sup>1</sup>Paul O.W. Tanner and Maurice Gerow, A Study of Jazz (2nd ed., Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, Co., 1973), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Taken from an interview with Ellis Marsalis.

sophisticated were not smoothly made. Social customs forced the African to adapt his music to European practice rather than the opposite. It is accurate to say that the African way of experiencing music was, by necessity, filtered through the European system. It rose because of the irresistible creative urge of the black man and woman who resisted all efforts by early slave owners to eradicate African culture. To the White American Christian, African culture appeared to be "heathen," so it was threatening. Slaves who were talented musically preserved what they could of their African concepts of music making by adapting the white master's instruments, styles, forms, hymns, popular songs, tonal harmony and the like. The result was what we now call "spiritual," "jazz," "ragtime," "blues," and so on.

This music was improvised both because the slaves brought a rich improvisatory background from Africa and because their kind of music was not easily notated in standard western notation. Even if the music had been easily notated the slaves had no knowledge of western notation. Thus, the early "composers" of jazz were all performers who created spontaneously or not at all. They did not try to preserve their creations because it was so easy and pleasurable simply to create a new piece.

The jazz composer still prefers extemporaneous creation of his musical ideas as they are inspired by the musical moment or by other intangible considerations.

This point is addressed by Coker in the following manner:

Jazz improvisation is the spontaneous creation of music in the jazz style. Like traditional composition, jazz improvisation is a craft. It is a conditioning of the mind, body and spirit, brought about by the study of musical principles. This conditioning becomes a necessary prelude to the professional practice of the art, despite the implications of the word spontaneous. Just as spontaneity is combined with conditioning, so is the existing style of jazz combined with originality of expression. One is lost without the other, and so we seldom hear an improviser's solo that does not contain melodic fragments or patterns: from the melody of the tune used, from a fellow performer's solo, from an influential player of the time, from a different tune altogether, from material previously improvised, or from patterns (original or borrowed) currently studied in individual practice. Another obvious combination is creation and performance. The jazz improviser pre-hears in his mind the next musical event, and then has the added task of playing it cleanly and with feeling. This is the process of jazz improvisation.<sup>1</sup>

Three unique factors concerned with jazz improvisation are: 1) the utilization of group improvisation in addition to solo improvisation, 2) the blend of an Afro/European/American style of playing, and 3) the acceptance of any improvisational attempt by a jazz improviser that utilizes or extends the jazz syntax. Jazz improvisation at its peak is an expression of the improviser's feelings about life. Giuffre states:

. . . what hits me is that when the jazz player picks up his horn or sits down at his instrument it is just a continuation of his living. There's no separation and

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<sup>1</sup>Jerry Coker and others, Patterns for Jazz (Lebanon, Indiana: Studio P/R, Inc., 1970), introduction.

I believe this comes through to the audience. Jazz sounds like its being lived.<sup>1</sup>

This personalized element within jazz music thus separates it from improvisation in other idioms.

A musician who has mastered the style of Bach and understands the theoretical basis of the music could convincingly improvise in the style of Bach, provided he has mastery of his instrument. This same degree of mastery in jazz would only at best be an expression of another person's life experience and totally miss the point of jazz improvisation which is expression of one's feelings concerning the life experience. However, one's ability to feel music within the jazz context does not warrant creative license without instrumental mastery.

This is not to indicate that instrumental and stylistic mastery is not a requisite for jazz improvisation. However, jazz improvisation at its ultimate presupposes the mastery of skills and attempts to allow for each individual improviser to make his statement concerning life.

Jazz developed as an improvisatory art form. Improvisation to the jazz musician has always been a means of self-expression. Even though the musical/social context has varied, improvisation remains the essence of jazz. Each generation of jazz musicians has taken the tools and resources of their period and utilized them as advantageously

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<sup>1</sup> Jimmy Giuffre, Jazz Phrasing and Interpretation (New York: Associated Music Publishers, Inc., 1969), p. 61.

as possible to serve the expressive needs of the time and place.

As in any historical reference to an art form, precise division of time in relation to events is impossible.

According to Hodeir:

The arbitrariness of cutting time up into unjustifiable neat slices is in this case [the case of jazz] intensified by the thinness of the slices. Since the career of a musician sometimes lasts much longer than the historical period to which it belongs, it is easy to imagine the confusion to which such a procedure can lead. Nonetheless, jazz has been characterized at given times by important movements.<sup>1</sup>

Jazz has many sources which are derived from many parts of the world. Volumes have been written concerning the combining of the various sources and the periods of jazz history that evolved as a result of jazz innovators initiating different interpretive concepts. With this in mind, the historical perspective that is presented is intended to provide a brief overview of jazz history for the reader with a limited jazz background and is not intended to serve as a comprehensive history of jazz.

### African Origin

Jazz owes its existence to a unique blending of two musical traditions: the west African and the European-American. This blending came about because of musical, as

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<sup>1</sup>Andre Hodeir, Jazz: Its Evolution and Essence (New York: Dacapo Press, 1975), p. 21.

well as social forces in the two cultures. Two of the major social forces bearing upon the origins of jazz were the survival of strong cultural values of the West African Negro and the channeling of these values into the musical forms of North America.

Jazz is cultural in that it involves the usage of phrases that have been handed down by older musicians. It is a part of the oral expression which came over on the slave ships. The cultural infusion with Western civilization subsequently caused certain musicians to play in a particular way. For example, there were no trumpets, clarinets, or trombones in the bush of Africa. However, there was an assortment of nature instruments which consisted of drums, gourds, and animal skin instruments which were used to make music with a heavy rhythmic influence as opposed to European emphasis on harmonic and melodic resources.<sup>1</sup>

The beginning of jazz came about through this unique blending of the harmonic resources of the European-American with the basic percussive elements of African tribal music. Jazz developed as the dance music of Afro-America.

Jazz also developed as a result of attempts made by slaves to express their feelings about their plight through song. More accurately, the inherent musical feeling and interpretive nuances associated with the jazz way of playing developed due to the manner in which slaves approached the performance of music. The slave had been brought to America and stripped of all cultural ties except his music. Wheaton cites this force as "a tremendous reservoir of creativity, energy, frustration, and originality, affecting the world's

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from an interview with Ellis Marsalis.



musical styles as no single source has before or since."<sup>1</sup>

According to Wheaton:

Forced immigration of blacks to the new world, along with the transference of basic aspects of Western culture from the old world via the millions of Irish, Scotch, British, French, German, Jewish, Polish, Italian, Portugese, Spanish and other nationalities created a melting pot of cultural backgrounds and activities that have produced new directions and developments in all of the art-forms. However in jazz, we have the perfect balance between tribal and non-tribal culture; the use of Western European form, harmony and instruments, with African rhythm, syncopation, improvisation, call and response, intonation, and notebending scales and modes.<sup>2</sup>

Music was by far the most vital and demonstrative expression in the life of the Africans who became American slaves.

In African society music was not a luxury; it was an integral part of living. The common denominator for the many different life styles in Africa was the love and total involvement with music that was expressed by Africans.

"Music follows the African through his entire day from early in the morning till late at night, and through all the changes of his life, from the time he came into this world until after he left it."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jack W. Wheaton, "The Technological and Sociological Influences on Jazz as an American Art Form" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, 1976), p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Wheaton, p. 23-24.

<sup>3</sup>Fred Warren and Lee Warren, The Music of Africa: An Introduction (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970. p. 3.

In African society there were traditional songs and dances that were completely necessary to the rituals celebrating each milestone encountered in life. In rituals, ceremonies, and celebrations there was special music designed for the occasion. Music was passed from one generation to the next by word of mouth. It was a means of preserving the traditions, ambitions, and lore of the tribe.<sup>1</sup>

One such example can be seen in the birth of a baby. In an African village, the musical tradition surrounding the birth of a child would begin even before the child was born. The expectant mother approached the village witch doctor for assurance of a successful delivery. The witch doctor then performed a song and dance designed to insure successful delivery. Other instances in African life that required special musical rituals were the naming of a baby, the appearance of a baby's first tooth, the loss of a child's first tooth, a child reaching the age of puberty, and various agricultural festivals.

In addition to ritualistic music, Africans also created music which was explicitly functional. An example can be found in the use of music by certain African tribes to force termites from the ground for purposes of eating them.<sup>2</sup> No matter what the purpose of the music, religious or

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<sup>1</sup>Tanner, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup>Warren and Warren, p. 11.

functional, it was a powerful influence in the life of the African.

The most common form of musical performance in African society was the ensemble performance which included instrumentalists, singers, and dancers. Most of the time only males played musical instruments. The women of the society joined in the singing and dancing. Essentially there was no audience because onlookers participated in the musical activity by clapping hands, tapping the feet, and shouting words of encouragement to the performers. A successful celebration was one in which all members of the community participated and the interaction between the various roles contributed to the manifestation of a perfect whole.<sup>1</sup> This emphasis on communal activity illustrated one of the basic characteristics of the African tradition in music and dance. In the ideal situation, a similar communal spirit is exhibited by an ensemble which has come together for the purpose of playing music in the jazz tradition. "Each individual brings a certain level of expertise and musical understanding to the ensemble. However, it is the total musical offering that occurs as a result of the coming together of the select individuals that is important, rather than each individual statement."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Eileen Southern, The Music of Black Americans (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1971), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Taken from an interview with Milton Hinton.

To say that music was and is important in the life of an African is an understatement. According to Warren:

The African child learns about life through music. His mother sings to him throughout childhood, even when he is a tiny baby. Through songs he learns about the members of his family and the important people, places and events of his community, his tribe and his country. By singing songs which contain a moral, his mother teaches him what his people consider to be right or wrong.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of music in the life of the African helps explain the reliance on music as a means of expression and survival which was exhibited by slaves in America. The oneness with music shared by African society further explains the establishment of a conducive aesthetic environment that could nourish and cultivate a personalized, expressive, improvisational music.

In addition to the African musical aesthetic, Wheaton lists the following nine elements as the basis of African tribal music and as the basic African contribution to jazz.<sup>2</sup>

1. Call and Response: A musical ritual in which a leader shouted a cry and was answered by a response from a group.
2. Syncopation: Accents that do not occur after each bar line in a regularly recurring and predictable way.

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<sup>1</sup>Warren and Warren, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Wheaton, p. 26-37. (Wheaton discusses each contribution in detail).

The African, however, doesn't think in terms of bar lines; therefore, syncopation in African music does not exist from the African's point of view. Syncopation can only occur in the Western context of a regularly recurring accent. "Syncopation constitutes the process of rebelling against the regularly recurring accent."<sup>1</sup>

3. Poly-rhythm: Two or more rhythmic patterns going on at the same time.

4. The Riff: A relatively short melodic phrase that is repeated in ostinato fashion over a changing chord pattern, originally used as a background device, although it later came to be used as foreground material in the riff-tunes of the swing era. In African music the riff is usually a re-occurring rhythmic pattern.

5. Bass Ostinato: A persistently repeated melodic and/or rhythmic figure, often shorter and less complex than the riff, and usually found in the bass. In African music an example can be found in the role played by the supporting drum within an African drum ensemble.

6. Improvisation: Music which is simultaneously composed as it is performed.

7. Audience Participation: In African music, there is essentially no audience. Onlookers participate in the musical activity by clapping the hands, tapping the feet,

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<sup>1</sup>Warren and Warren, p. 35.

and shouting words of encouragement to the performers. This aspect of African music removes it from the realm of a consumer's art to a feeling of little distance between the performers and the audience.

8. Complex Scales and Intervals: The Africans, and many other tribal cultures around the world, do not divide the octave into twelve semi-tones. Some African scales contain as many as twenty-four semi-tones. An example can be found in the xylophone music of the Chopi people of Mozambique.

9. Free Use of the Voice: The African singer utilizes techniques that are different from those of European singers. Africans employ such vocal sounds as moans, wails, shouts, guttural sounds and falsetto. The unique usage of the voice by African singers serves as the basis of the vocal style of playing that is characteristic of jazz.

### European Contributions

While the essential characteristics of African tribal music are easily recognizable in jazz, it would not be jazz with these elements alone. Ingredients from another culture, the culture of Western Europe, help to make jazz the first international hybrid art-form encompassing both Eastern and Western aesthetic concepts.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Wheaton, p. 37.

The primary elements of Western European music that are essential to jazz are melody, form, and harmony.<sup>1</sup> An example of music that influenced the early development of Afro-American music can be found in hymn tunes based on old folk songs of middle Europe which were brought to the colonies and introduced in the church in the sixteenth century. Sea chanties and other folk songs with primary harmonies I, IV, and V<sub>7</sub> and with melodies based on the diatonic scale were also brought to the colonies. The progression of the harmonies used in early colonial tunes was often I-IV-I-I-V<sub>7</sub>-I, a progression that formed the harmonic basis of early jazz.

No one can truly say how the first Africans brought to the United States learned the language or any techniques required for the performance of European music. In the beginning, slaves had no formal education and absolutely no training in European music techniques. Therefore, in trying to repeat songs that they heard the masters singing, slaves probably sang certain notes out of tune or sang different notes altogether. An interesting point is that the Africans probably heard their singing as "correct" and not as a distortion of the original because of the nature of the native music to which they were accustomed.

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<sup>1</sup>Wheaton, p. 37.

The European masters, taking for granted that the "out of tune" singing done by the slaves was just another barbaric characteristic, made no attempts to have them sing the "proper" notes. It was important that the slave did the work properly but not the singing.

In addition to dealing with foreign scales and melodies, slaves were forced to sing in the master's language to calm his often paranoid fears of conspiracy and uprising. The broken English used in early blues songs is just one example of the effect of the alterations made by early African slaves attempting to perform European songs.

Another contribution of European music to jazz is the element of form. According to Tanner, "The musical forms of Europe became standard procedure in jazz works."<sup>1</sup> This point is further substantiated by Wheaton in the following statement.

The essential characteristics of western European music, melody, form and harmony are as essential to the structure of jazz as the African elements . . . . without the superstructure of European form, melody (later altered to fit the more comfortable African vocal scales) and harmony, jazz would be only African folk music transferred to the new world with English lyrics and some new world instruments . . . . The purification and idealization of melody in western European music via centuries of plain-song, the development of form, a by-product of the linear, logical developmental mind of European man, and the use of tension-release via tertian harmony, dissonance resolving to consonance, were the trinity of

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<sup>1</sup>Tanner, p. 16.



musical structure that has lasted over 350 years as a fount of musical expression and meaning.<sup>1</sup>

European instruments were another very important contribution to jazz. Early attempts by African slaves to perform on European instruments or homemade facsimiles resulted in many instrumental inflections that were to become part of the "jazz way of playing."

As slaves, black people who wanted to play trumpets, pianos, and the like usually had to teach themselves. They invented their own fingering, embouchures, and positions. The resultant tone quality, intonation, and technical facility lacked refinement, but the performances pulsed with vitality because the performers wanted to play their instruments to express themselves musically. They were motivated by creative desire rather than the orders of a parent who thinks his child should learn to play an instrument.

As in any music, when more advanced tools are gained by the performers of that music, it reaches a higher level of refinement, presentation, and communication. According to Fielder:

The complete European contribution, as far as jazz is concerned, did not manifest itself until Afro-Americans were allowed to study and master the techniques of European music. As a matter of fact, European music is still contributing to experimentalism in jazz by

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<sup>1</sup>Wheaton, p. 37-38.

presenting elements of jazz in European costumes.<sup>1</sup>

### United States Origin

As the Africans brought to America as slaves adapted to their new life, their native music changed. Music was vital to the African slaves as a means of communication, as well as a deep expression of their feelings which could not be otherwise expressed.

The music that was performed by the slaves was directly influenced by the culture of the particular colony to which they were brought. Latin Catholic colonies would allow slaves to play their drums and sing and dance when not working, but slaves in the British protestant colonies were not allowed to perform their native music. The British thought it their mission to convert the heathen slaves to Christianity. Their native music represented their feared non-Christian culture.

Three musical forms resulting in the Africans encounter with America are the field holler, work song, and Negro spiritual. The field hollers and work songs were original creations of the African slave, while the Negro spiritual may have partially resulted by the adaptation of European hymns by the African.

The field holler was a result of slave attempts to communicate with each other by song while working in the fields. Spoken communication between slaves was often

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from an interview with William Fielder.

forbidden. In the field holler the slaves expressed feelings about their work. Many of the songs used words with double meanings in order to fool the overseer. The field holler was also used to communicate over long distances.

The work song was another type of song that was a spontaneous creation arising from work in the fields. It was part of the African tradition and was used to heighten energy, to facilitate physical motion by use of rhythm, and to furnish mental diversion without interrupting labor. Because of its functional nature and therefore constant use, the work song was a major source for the preservation and continuation of the African music tradition in America.

In addition to field hollers and work songs, the musical life of the slave was also affected by his contact with the folk songs of Western Europe and by the hymn tunes of the protestant church. The toil of slavery, European musical influence, and the lack of technical information concerning the production of European music, coupled with the slaves's remembrance of African musical tradition, contributed to the Negro spiritual. Had slaves initially been considered to be human beings, or had European/Americans made positive attempts to facilitate a rapid acculturation of slaves, the Negro spiritual might never have come into existence. According to Jones:

When the first slaves were brought to this country, there was no idea at all of converting them. Africans were thought of as beasts, and there was certainly no

idea held among the whites that, somehow, these beasts would benefit by exposure to the Christian God. As late as the twentieth century there have been books "proving" the Negro's close relationship to lower animals that have been immensely popular in the south. The idea that perhaps slavery could be condoned as a method of converting heathens to the Christian God did not become popular until the latter part of the eighteenth century, and then only among a few "radical" northern missionaries. There could be no soul-saving activities, N.N. Puckett points out in his book Folk Beliefs of the Southern Negro, where there was no soul.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, had slaves been systematically trained in European performance practices, they would have been able to perform the music of the Europeans "correctly" and the consistent "mistakes," along with the hardships of slavery, necessary to produce the Negro spiritual would have never been committed. The uniqueness and beauty of the Negro spiritual was brought to the attention of the world as a result of a European tour in 1878 by the Fisk Jubilee Singers from Fisk University.

In the fashion typical of a bonded people, the slaves revealed through the vehicle of the spiritual their conditions of life, their hope for a better world, and their desire for freedom. Tanner attributes the origin of the spiritual to the impact of Christianity on the slave.<sup>2</sup> Concerning the music produced by Negro Christianity, Jones presents a different view.

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<sup>1</sup>Leroi Jones, Blues People. (New York: William Morrow and Co., 1963), p. 32.

<sup>2</sup>Tanner, p. 19.

The music that was produced by Negro Christianity was the result of diverse influences. First of all, there was that music which issued from pure African ritual sources and which changed to fit the new religion - just as the ring shouts were transformed from pure African religious dances to pseudo-Christian religious observance, or the Dahomey river cult ceremonies were incorporated into the baptism ceremony. Early observers also pointed out that a great many of the first Negro Christian religious songs had been taken almost untouched from the great body of African religious music. This was especially true of the melodies of certain black Christian spirituals that could also be heard in some parts of Africa.<sup>1</sup>

From Christianity the slaves borrowed such leaders from the old testament as Moses, Daniel, Joshua, and Ezekiel. They created spirituals about them such as "Go Down Moses," "Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel," "Joshua Fit The Battle of Jericho," and "Ezekiel Saw de Wheel."

By the mid-nineteenth century, many spirituals had hidden meanings that were understood only by slaves. Some spirituals were used as signal songs to aid in the escape of slaves on the underground railroad. Some songs actually gave travel directions to slaves who were unable to read and had to travel at night. Spirituals using the idea of the river, such as "Deep River," expressed the hope felt by slaves of one day crossing over into the "promised land." The term promised land was often used to refer to the free northern states as opposed to the slave states of the South.

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<sup>1</sup>Leroi Jones, p. 44.

An example of a Negro spiritual that was used as a signal song is "Oh, Mary Don't You Weep."

Oh, Mary don't you weep, don't you mourn  
 Oh, Mary don't you weep, don't you mourn  
 Pharoah's army got drowned  
 Oh, Mary don't you weep

This song was used to advise a slave that the way was clear for an attempted escape. The reference to the army used in the song was to the Egyptian Pharoah's army that was drowned in the Red Sea while attempting to recapture the Hebrew slaves that were being led to the promised land by Moses. The army that was actually being referred to by the slaves was the army that would be sent to recapture a runaway African slave.

The second verse of the song would inform the slaves of the time that they were to be prepared to escape. The time used would change from night to night.

Every night at ten o'clock  
 This old world will reel and rock  
 Pharoah's army got drowned  
 Oh, Mary don't you weep

The well known spiritual "Steal Away" appeared at the time of the slave rebellion led by Nat Turner in 1831. This song had a double meaning and was used to signal slaves to join the revolt.

The early affiliation and identification with religion as the only means of being delivered from slavery helps to explain the importance placed on the church in contemporary black America, and further explains why such a vast majority

of "jazz" performers cite church music as one of the basic influences on the early development of their style.

Even though much of the early slave music in America was vocal by necessity, Southern provides substantial evidence that indicates that slaves played musical instruments. Because little or no records were left by black men in colonial America, the history of black musicians was pieced together with the aid of colonial newspapers, town and court records, legislature journals, diaries, letters, personal narratives, missionary reports, journals, and fiction of white colonists and travelers to the New World. According to Southern:<sup>1</sup>

The colonial newspaper provides a rich source of information about slave musicians. From the beginning, the advertising columns in newspapers (the Boston News-Letter, established in 1704, was the first permanent one) regularly carried listings of slaves "for sale" or "for hire." Numerous listings included references to the possession of musical skills by slaves, for their market value was thereby greatly increased.

Southern cites the following examples of newspaper advertisements:

To be sold a valuable young handsome Negro Fellow about 18 or 20 years of age; has every qualification of a genteel and sensible servant and has been in many different parts of the world. . . . He . . . plays on the French horn . . . He lately came from London, and has with him two suits of new clothes, and his French horn, which the purchaser may have with him.

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<sup>1</sup>Southern, p. 28-29.

To be sold a Negro Indian slave, about forty years of age, well known in town, being a fiddler.

Run Away: A negro named Peter, about 44 years of age . . . he carried away a fiddle, which is much delighted in when he gets any strong drink.

As pointed out by Southern,<sup>1</sup> there were some slaves who toured as concert artists, playing European instruments. However, more often than not, slaves used homemade instruments or attempted to play European instruments, without instructions by book or teacher. The invention of new imaginative and unconventional ways of manipulating European instruments that resulted from the enforced self-instruction of the slave, served ultimately as the basis of the "jazz way" of playing.

The attitude taken by most classical European musicians throughout history toward jazz music and jazz musicians can be traced to the initial opinions held by early European slave masters of the first self-taught black musicians in America. Untrained slave instrumentalists were considered to be incorrect players; therefore, a music based on an ignorant incorrect way of playing by an inferior race would by qualification have to be an inferior music. This attitude has slowly been changed due to the breakdown in cultural rigidity, and jazz is now accepted as one of America's greatest contributions to the world of art.

Even though some slaves were taught to perform

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<sup>1</sup>Southern, p. 251.



European music on European instruments, this was an exception to normal procedure. Southern provides an account of a blind slave who was a concert pianist.

. . . Thomas Green Bethune (1849-1908) was born in Columbus, Georgia, a slave of the Oliver family, and later sold along with his mother, Charity Wiggins to a Colonel Bethune. Blind from birth, Thomas gave no indication of possessing musical talent until the age of seven, at which time he amazed his owners by his ability to play on the piano some difficult exercises he had heard others perform. Although Blind Tom was not given musical instruction, he was allowed free access to the piano and soon developed a large repertory of classical and popular music and, as well, of his own compositions. His musical memory was so highly developed that he could play any piece to which he had listened . . . . On one occasion, at the White House, Blind Tom played correctly a piece twenty pages in length a short time after hearing it . . . . Bethune's recitals typically consisted of eight parts, each with a title, e.g. Classical Selections, Piano-Forte Solos, Fantasias and Caprices, Marches, Imitations, Descriptive Music, Songs, and Parlor Selections. Audiences were given a list of the pieces in his repertory and allowed to select the ones they wished to hear. One program, for example, listed eighty-two pieces,<sup>1</sup> each category including from eight to twelve pieces.<sup>1</sup>

An important influence on blacks after the Civil War was the military band. The military band's importance in all French settlements, was quite influential on the beginnings of jazz.<sup>2</sup> Many early jazz players started out by playing in marching bands. Manuel Crusto, clarinetist with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, states that in his early

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<sup>1</sup>Southern, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup>Tanner, p. 25.

childhood days in New Orleans "any excuse at all was good enough for a parade."<sup>1</sup> A well-known New Orleans tradition called the "second line" developed out of the practice of non-musicians, mostly children, dancing while following a parade band.

An important function of early marching bands was that of playing at funerals. On the way to the cemetery the band would play a slow mournful tune such as "Just a Closer Walk with Thee." After the burial the band would return from the cemetery playing a jazz march such as "When the Saints Go Marching In." This joyous return was to symbolize the departing of a soul to a happier place. The introduction of Africans to European instruments is without question one of the most significant events in the development of the "jazz way of playing."

### The Blues

One of the most important and influential Afro-American idioms in the background of jazz is the blues. Perhaps the blues has influenced jazz more than any other form.<sup>2</sup> Often the blues is acknowledged as being the substance that contributes the very essence and soul of jazz. A contemporary jazz artist, Lou Donaldson observed:

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from an interview with Manuel Crusto.

<sup>2</sup>Hildred Roach, Black American Music Past and Present, (Boston: Crescendo Publishing Co., 1976), p. 70.

Young players come to me all the time that want to play in my band. I audition them and they can play all over their horns. They can play chord substitutions and scales for ever and ever, but when I ask them to play the blues, they can't. They play chords. You see, if you are not playing the blues, you are not playing jazz. Now you may be playing good music that is well executed but it is not jazz.<sup>1</sup>

As in the usage of the word jazz, the word blues has varied meanings and interpretations that are highly dependent upon the context. According to Shockett:

. . . There are many conflicting theories concerning the origin of the blues as a musical form of expression. None are satisfactorily documented due to the almost total lack of early research in either written or notated form. The weight of existing evidence, however, points to beginnings among the early Negro slaves in America.<sup>2</sup>

The blues is virtually a vocal form that was derived from the same emotional and environmental experiences that produced other musical forms of the Afro-American. The vocal style of playing utilized in the blues resulted because of the playing of European instruments by the southern Negro in the only style that he knew, which was a vocal style. The vocal/instrumental interplay idea is one of the fundamental ingredients essential to the blues performance.

Contrary to some popular beliefs, the blues does not have to be sad. When used in jazz the blues usually

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from an interview with Lou Donaldson.

<sup>2</sup>B.I. Shockett, "A Stylistic Study of the Blues as Recorded by Jazz Instrumentalist, 1917-1931", (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1964), p. 12.

refers to a definite musical form which expresses a variety of moods. Like a majority of vocal forms, the blues is strophic. The structure of a single strophe is as follows:

| I<sup>7</sup> | % | % | % | IV<sup>7</sup> | % | I<sup>7</sup> | % | V<sup>7</sup> | IV<sup>7</sup> | I<sup>7</sup> | % |

However, in its initial development, the blues structure varied from player to player and performance to performance. In playing the blues, early performers would sometimes sustain a tonic chord throughout most of the strophe, only momentarily touching on the subdominant chord and returning immediately to the tonic chord, not playing the dominant chord at all. At other times the dominant might be inserted briefly, somewhat extending the phrase.<sup>1</sup>

This concept does not support the popular idea that the blues is derived from the English ballad which is sometimes cast in twelve-bar form. Because the standardized form of the blues didn't really come into its own until the publication and popularization of the blues by W.C. Handy in 1914,<sup>2</sup> it would be more accurate to state that the modern form of the blues from the time of Handy may have been derived from English ballads or other European forms. Many historical discussions of the blues begin with Handy as a matter of convenience when in actuality the "blues

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<sup>1</sup>This opinion is taken from an interview with Muddy Waters.

<sup>2</sup>Roach, p. 70

idea"<sup>1</sup> existed long before Handy or any twelve-bar version of the blues.

In the early blues, form and content were so nearly the same that the form varied with the content. It did not become the fixed form illustrated on page twenty-six until established by W.C. Handy in the early twentieth century. Whatever the length of musical idea was needed to express a given emotional idea, it was used. The phrase structure, along with harmonic background, was lengthened or shortened to accommodate.

Any blues form constructed before the appearance of the standardized blues form would by necessity not be considered a predictable or fixed form because each performance would unfold a different form. The improvisation of form, as applicable to jazz, can be traced to African tradition in that "the form of some of the music is largely determined by the context in which the performance is presented."<sup>2</sup>

The improvisation of content and form by early blues performers was a result of the attention given by them to "subjective spirit energy" or free, spontaneous invention governed entirely by emotion and feeling, rather than objective technical considerations and rational procedures.

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<sup>1</sup>The blues idea is mentioned in reference to early improvised blues forms as opposed to predetermined blues forms such as the eight, twelve, sixteen and thirty-two-bar blues.

<sup>2</sup>Taken from an interview with Kwasi Aduonum, citizen of Ghana.

Early blues players found it easiest to be controlled by "subjective spirit energy" and to alter form to fit the needs of content because many were self-taught and any technical observations were made from an individual, subjective point of reference.

The early improvised blues form consisted of no set number of measures for each harmonic, and rhythmic change called upon the player for free expression of spirit energy and creativity. That is why, to modern ears, many older blues players appear to be playing in the wrong meter and entering with the vocal lines in the wrong place. Each player developed his own system and technique of playing to express his musical ideas which were generated entirely by emotions. The musical content produced in the expression of these emotional ideas was later analyzed objectively and standardized forms were developed for convenience of notation, publication, popularization, and duplication. As happened with other musical forms in history, the emotional idea preceded the notation, publication, popularization, and duplication process; practice preceded theory.

With the standardization of the blues form in the twentieth century, the emphasis shifted to the player's ability to make a precise statement of the blues within a given space and over a given harmonic background (with little regard to changing and evolving forms) rather than place emphasis on the use of space and harmonic background for total

communication of "spirit energy."<sup>1</sup>

Modern examples of the blues idea, as departing from the commonly accepted traditional twelve-measure blues form, can especially be found in the performances of James Brown, Sly Stone, The Commodores, and other contemporary popular performers and composers who utilize what is currently referred to as the "funky vamp" style in their compositions. The conception of the early blues, as well as the modern use of the blues, is a way or manner of playing, rather than a form. As previously stated, the standardized blues form was a result of the analysis of the musical content used to express certain emotional needs. The acceptance of the blues as a manner of playing further explains why players like Charlie Parker could play the blues on any song form.

Extended blues forms and other applications of the blues idea are discussed in later sections of the study. The blues as presently discussed is limited to the standardized twelve-measure blues form. To non-musicians and to many untrained blues musicians the standardized blues form is known primarily by the structure of the text. It consists of three lines, which form a rhymed couplet in iambic pentameter, with the first line repeated; for example:

For you my love I'll do most anything  
For you my love I'll do most anything

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<sup>1</sup>This idea is developed further in the section on free jazz.

I love you baby and hope you feel the same<sup>1</sup>

The adaptation of a couplet in iambic pentameter from Shakespeare could produce a usable blues test as follows:

The quality of mercy is not strained  
 The quality of mercy is not strained  
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven.<sup>2</sup>

Initially the blues as a vocal form was entirely spontaneous. Blues singers are often renowned for their ability to improvise verse after verse of the blues without repeating themselves. To many modern blues enthusiasts, such a virtuoso display seems impossible. However, the singers who improvise in this fashion do not start from point zero, but have the following commonly accepted unstated rules as a point of departure.

The first line of the blues states a problem or presents a situation. The thought is then repeated in the second line for emphasis. Sometimes a minor change may be made in the line for the placement of additional stress. The problem or situation is then concluded in the third or punch line, as this example from "Stormy Monday Blues" illustrates:

They call it stormy Monday, and Tuesday's just as bad  
 Yes, they call it stormy Monday, Lord, and  
 Tuesday's just as bad  
 Wednesday's worst and Thursday's oh so sad.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Traditional blues.

<sup>2</sup>Taken from Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice.

<sup>3</sup>Traditional blues.



In a standard phrase of four measures in 4/4 meter, the blues text is finished on the first beat of the third measure. The rest of the third measure and all of the fourth are instrumental.

Many blues traditionalists feel that the standardization of the blues form by Handy and others, while simplifying the problem of writing down the blues for preservation, destroyed the true essence and nature of the style. "The standardization of the blues form is consistent with the line of western thought which attempts to allow for the possibilities of exact reproduction."<sup>1</sup>

The concept of western thought versus non-western thought also explains why the early blues performers, still close to their African roots, could spontaneously invent a style of singing entirely governed by feeling and need of expression rather than rational analysis. The modern standardized blues form can thus be attributed to the typical thought process of western man who wants to analyze in order to understand the blues, rather than act in the tradition of the earlier African slaves, and improvise an unstructured blues simply for expressive satisfaction.

A point of interest to students of the blues tradition is the usage of bent or freely inflected pitches by

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from an interview with Alvin Batiste.

the blues singer. As pointed out by John Duncan, twentieth-century authority of Afro-American music, this "worrying" of the tones was a result of the flexible African conception of a scale. Perhaps because they produced music by singing and playing percussion instruments, they did not entertain the concept of a fixed scale as built into western instruments like the piano, trumpet, clarinet, and soon it did not offend the sensibilities of the early blues singers when they would seem to slide into various pitches of the diatonic scale, because in their way of thinking there was no such thing as a diatonic scale, and the western concept of being in tune was meaningless.

In the early stages of the development of the blues, any pitch could be "worried." However, as attempts were made to adapt the blues way of playing and singing to western notation and integrate the worried tones into the western diatonic system, the blues scale came into existence with its "blue" notes. The "blue" notes were arrived at by flattening the third, fifth, and seventh degrees of the major scale and omitting the second and sixth degrees.



Even though the "blue" notes are commonly explained as coming on the third, fifth, and seventh degrees of the diatonic major scale, in practice any tone can be slightly

flattened or sharpened and does not have to have a pitch variation of a half step.

### Ragtime

Ragtime was basically minstrel band music transferred to the keyboard. It emerged in the late 1890's when clubs and cabarets began replacing the expensive minstrel bands with a pianist.<sup>1</sup> The music they played was at first, largely improvised. Later, when it became popular, hundreds of piano rags were written down and published.

According to Tanner:

Ragtime, then, was a piano solo that coexisted with the early New Orleans Dixieland era. It influenced the interpretation of jazz by shifting the rhythm from a flat 4/4 to the 2/4 interpretation mentioned and by additions to the jazz repertoire, such as "Maple Leaf Rag" and "Tiger Rag."<sup>2</sup>

A pianist, who was hired in place of a six- or seven-piece band had to develop a solo style of playing which would imitate the sound of the full band. This need for a full sound forced the pianist to develop what was considered to be a set of novel techniques for the time as described by Tanner.

. . . The left hand was required to play both the bass notes and the chords. Leaving the right hand free for highly syncopated melodic lines. This was much more difficult than merely accompanying for a vocalist or instrumentalist where it was only necessary for the pianist to be responsible for the bass notes with his left hand and the chords with his right.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Roach, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Tanner, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>Tanner, p. 49.



example one accounts for the common practice by ragtime pianists of accenting the off beats in each measure. These off-beat accents, whether intentional or not, contribute much to the characteristic rhythmic motion of ragtime music.

### New Orleans Dixieland

According to Walton, as well as many other contemporary authors, New Orleans is the birthplace of jazz.<sup>1</sup> However, this view is not unanimously held by all writers and musicians. Some believe that jazz was developing simultaneously in many different locations all over the United States. Even though this point remains controversial, the fact remains that "New Orleans bred more jazz and more important names in jazz than any other area at the beginning of the twentieth century."<sup>2</sup> Of the many players in Dixieland history, Louis Armstrong is often given credit for synthesizing this idiom. "With a genius for placing the right note in just the right place - or just rightly out of place - Louis stated the basic framework for later players to explore."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ortiz Walton, Music Black, White and Blue: A Sociological Survey of the Use and Misuse of Afro-American Music (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1972), p. 50.

<sup>2</sup>Tanner, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Bob Gilkerson, "Aesthetics of Jazz," (Unpublished paper, Oklahoma City University, 1977), p. 29.

Walton further explains the early concentrated development of jazz in New Orleans in terms of the status anxiety that grew out of the unique social structure.<sup>1</sup> New Orleans, originally settled by Indians, became the property of France in 1718. The Spanish took over in 1763 and the United States gained control with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. From the time of French Territory in 1718, New Orleans was inhabited by African slaves. In the process of changing hands and cultural rule, the ethnic-cultural mixtures for which New Orleans is noted came into existence. According to Walton:

Before the Louisiana Purchase, the ethnic-cultural mixture of Spanish and French gave rise to a group termed creoles. Most of the creole families were also the product of African and/or Indian ancestry. Interbreeding was increased by placage, whereby the white male possessed a concubinage of two or more families mothered by both white and black females . . . . biological integration, coupled with massive foreign immigration, led to intense competition and group crisis. Jazz helped to create a sense of common cultural identity and uplift of morale in Afro-American communities where conditions had been made ripe for intra-group conflict.<sup>2</sup>

Dixieland developed during the same time span as ragtime. Both styles of music had common ancestors, but their differences are readily apparent. Ragtime is usually for the piano, while Dixieland is written for an ensemble consisting of clarinet, cornet or trumpet, trombone, and a

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<sup>1</sup>Walton, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Walton, p. 50.

rhythm section consisting of drums, a plucked string bass or a tuba, and a guitar or banjo. No piano was used in the first Dixieland groups because they were often the same groups that played for street marches or funeral processions.<sup>1</sup>

Another major difference in ragtime and Dixieland is the homophonic texture of ragtime in contrast to the polyphonic texture of Dixieland. The difference becomes more apparent upon examining the specific roles of the instruments in the Dixieland ensemble. The cornet usually plays the melody because it is one of the loudest instruments. The player can take the liberty to embellish the melody as he sees fit. However, he does not stray so far from the melody that it cannot be easily recognized. The clarinet's function is to improvise a counter-melody in an obligato style to the melody played by the trumpet. While the trumpet and the clarinet play the melody and counter-melody of a composition, the trombone improvises a ground bass largely based on the chord tones in the harmonic progression, strongly emphasizing the roots. The basic role of the rhythm section is to provide rhythmic/harmonic accompaniment.

The typical structure of a Dixieland arrangement is an amalgamation of the statement-departure-return procedure of the sonata allegro form with elements of the concerto.

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<sup>1</sup>Tanner, p. 43.

At first there is an ensemble chorus followed by solo choruses which are followed by a return of the ensemble chorus.

### Chicago Dixieland

Chicago Dixieland is a type of music that appeared during the 1920's in Chicago and other northern cities. The style is a variation of the type of Dixieland that was played in New Orleans earlier. Many theories are proposed concerning the manner in which Dixieland jazz left New Orleans and moved north, but the most plausible explanation singles out the Mississippi river-boat traffic which provided jazz bands for the entertainment of the passengers.

When, after the first World War many Storyville establishments that supported jazz groups were closed, the musicians took jobs playing in bands aboard river boats. Some took jobs with boat bands just to travel. Others moved north, primarily to Chicago, because during the prohibition era all of the better speakeasys maintained jazz groups. The migration of southern non-musicians north provided the demands for jazz. Although Chicago along with New York's Harlem gets most of the credit for supporting jazz in the 1920's, the truth is that jazz bands flourished in most of the important commercial cities in the north.<sup>1</sup> Because most of the recordings were made in Chicago and New York, the impression is created that these two cities were the sole

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<sup>1</sup>Tanner, p. 55.



supporters of the jazz scene. This impression is somewhat distorted.

Personalities important to the development and performance of Chicago-style Dixieland were located in major cities from coast to coast. One of those who moved from New Orleans to Chicago was Kid Ory, jazz trombonist and composer of "Muskat Ramble." He is given credit for the first jazz records by a Negro band. Ory was also among the first to make a jazz radio broadcast. As a trombonist, Ory helped free the trombone from its role as a glorified tuba to assume a more melodic place in the Dixieland jazz ensemble. The contrapuntal texture of his bands was noticeably more complex than that of his contemporaries.

Even though Chicago-style Dixieland was being played in other northern cities, Chicago's thriving night club and speakeasy industry provided an insatiable demand for jazz dance music. As in New Orleans, jazz in Chicago was played against a colorful background. Al Capone and other organized criminals provided the excitement of the vicarious thrill of observing the gangster life style at one level and an atmosphere of fun and carefree living for the general public at another level. The "roaring twenties," as they are often called, were for many people just one, big party with entrepreneurs laboring to provide them with new playthings. This period saw the invention of the first "talking movies" in 1926 and the first jukebox in 1927. The latter

provided a new and large market for jazz records.

The need for party entertainment in Chicago during this period provided a promoter by the name of Harry James with a reason to visit New Orleans in 1916 in search of bands. One was an all-white band called the "Original Dixieland Jazz Band." This band is famous for making the first jazz records.

Joseph "King" Oliver was another important jazz performer in Chicago during the 1920's who capitalized on the great demand for jazz musicians by performing in two establishments a day for many years. Oliver started playing the cornet around the age of thirteen in New Orleans where he was born. After working with various local groups and perfecting his jazz style, he became a recognized great along with Buddy Bolden, Freddie Keppard, Bunk Johnson, and others.

A very important influence on the Chicago style was a band called "The New Orleans Rhythm Kings." Even though this band was called the "New Orleans Rhythm Kings," it is reported that, as a group, they had never played in New Orleans. The Rhythm Kings, unlike other non-Negro bands of the day, openly acknowledged the King Oliver style as the basic style that they copied.

One of the chief early Chicago groups was the "Wolverine Orchestra" led by the cornetist, Bix Beiderbecke. Leon Bismarck Beiderbecke was born in Davenport, Iowa, in 1903. His

family was very well to do and provided him with piano lessons at an early age. He later taught himself to play the cornet by listening to recordings of the original Dixieland jazz band and King Oliver's band.

In each stylistic period of jazz history certain instrumentalists developed a particular style which served as a model for their contemporaries and the next generation, like Monteverdi and Beethoven in Europe. At other times, an outstandingly gifted artist appears when one style has matured to a point near its peak, like Bach and Handel in Europe. Louis Armstrong occupies the latter position in the development of Dixieland jazz.

Louis Armstrong was born in New Orleans in 1900. At the age of twelve he was sent to the Colored Waif's Home for Boys because he shot off his father's .38 caliber revolver celebrating New Year's Eve. While in the home he learned to read music and play the drum, bugle, and cornet. After several years of playing in New Orleans, Armstrong moved to Chicago, joining King Oliver's band in 1922. From this point on his career is filled with many successes which included records, movies, club and concert engagements, some of which, like his performance for King George V in London, represented the ultimate social acceptance of this dance idiom with the unsavory beginnings.

One person that was noticeably influenced by Armstrong was the jazz pianist Earl "Fatha" Hines. Hines developed

a style of piano playing called "trumpet style" which was based on Armstrong's melodic style.

Through years of application and experimentation the great performers of Dixieland arrived at a basic style of Chicago Dixieland that was different from the New Orleans style in many respects. A table of a comparison of the two styles, New Orleans and Chicago Dixieland, follows.

#### NEW ORLEANS STYLE DIXIELAND

##### 1. Instrumentation

Clarinet, cornet, trombone, banjo, tuba, drums (piano used in later New Orleans Dixieland bands).

##### 2. Playing Style

- (a) Easy, relaxed playing style.
- (b) Simple arrangements.
- (c) Solos were often no more than extended elaborations of the melody as played by the cornetist.
- (d) Regular accentuation.

#### CHICAGO STYLE DIXIELAND

##### 1. Instrumentation

Clarinet, cornet, trombone, tenor saxophone, guitar, string bass, drums and piano.

- (a) The tenor saxophone is added, the guitar is used in place of the banjo, and the string bass is used in place of the tuba.
- (b) The piano and string bass could be used because the bands no longer had to march.
- (c) Banjo players could easily switch to guitar because the first guitars only had four strings and were tuned like banjos.
- (d) The tenor saxophone gave more body to the ensemble and added another solo color. Its role was similar to the clarinet.

##### 2. Playing Style

- (a) More tension and drive.
- (b) More elaborate arrangements with extended introductions and endings.
- (c) Individual soloist became more important.
- (d) Accented off-beats by rhythm section.
  - (1) The placement of accents in Chicago Style Dixieland was largely due to the addition of piano players who were accustomed to playing off-beat accents.
  - (2) String bass players observed the practice of following the piano player's left hand rather than playing on all four beats in the same fashion as the tuba player of New Orleans Dixieland.
  - (3) Guitar players accented beats 2 and 4 or just did not play 1 and 3 altogether, following the style of the piano player.
  - (4) Snare drum accented the off-beats, bass drum maintained a steady beat.

Chicago Dixieland is still played today. However, the musicians that perform the music often perform it in a manner that shows the influence of other musical styles to which they have been exposed.

### Boogie-Woogie

Boogie-woogie is a piano style based on ostinato principles which utilize eight eighth-notes to a measure. The characteristic jumping feeling of boogie-woogie is created by a jumping bass line of dotted eighth-notes followed by sixteenth-notes.



Often the pattern is used in the melody as well. Sometimes the written patterns are all eighth-notes, but even these are performed as dotted eighths followed by sixteenths. The chords were often the same as those used in the blues. (I, IV, V).

There are two basic methods of playing boogie-woogie: one in which the left hand plays a single line basso ostinate in dotted rhythms as illustrated above, and the other in which the left hand plays chords also in dotted rhythms. In both cases the right hand functions independently of the left, often creating the effect of two pianists. The right hand sometimes plays in the riff style that was later to become very important in the big bands of Kansas City.

The full style of piano playing in boogie-woogie became popular at a time when economic factors necessitated using fewer musicians as in the ragtime style. The style was most often played by untrained pianists who could not read music and who could only play in the boogie-woogie style.

Boogie-woogie is a style that has not changed rhythmically to this day. However, it has been successfully transferred to big bands.

### Swing

"Swing" refers to the era of the 1930's and 40's during which large dance bands played written arrangements. The arrangements were usually based on ensemble and solo improvisations previously established by accomplished soloists and ensembles. The arrangements also allowed for additional solos to be improvised extemporaneously by individuals within the ensemble. Many of the arrangements called for fast tempos; however, ballads were also performed at moderate to slow tempos. The term "swing" is often used in conjunction with all jazz music to designate an underlying drive and vitality in the music.

Whatever the style, ensembles of creative performers who think alike musically usually "swing" while lesser groups do not. Because of its vague usage, the term sometimes causes as much confusion as the word "jazz" itself. As used here the term "swing" applies to the musical style of the era of big band jazz referred to above.

Some of today's connoisseurs feel that all of the big bands of the swing era sounded alike, and, because improvisation was suppressed, were not really playing jazz. However, Tanner<sup>1</sup> explained that a major concern of the big bands of this period was to establish an identifying trademark, a recognizable sonorous personality, as it were. Improvisation was too "accidental." The Tommy Dorsey band, for example, was characterized by his beautiful solos, and the Glen Miller band featured a clarinet lead accompanied by the saxophone section.

As previously mentioned, the written arrangement was very important to the success of the big bands of the swing era. Unlike the small Dixieland combos of New Orleans and Chicago that could rely almost totally upon group improvisation for the creation of content and form of the music, the bigger bands of the swing era had to call upon the services of professional arrangers to provide written-out parts for each member in the ensemble except the soloist. This was done to prevent what might become chaotic improvisations endemic to large groups.

Fletcher Henderson, himself an accomplished jazz pianist, was the foremost arranger of the era. His arrangements established a pattern that was imitated by others. Henderson, born in Georgia in 1897, was a schooled pianist who went to New York in 1920 for post-graduate study in

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<sup>1</sup>Tanner, p. 68.

chemistry at Columbia University. While in New York he became so interested in music that he dropped chemistry in order to pursue it full time. He had a varied career, playing with W.C. Handy in 1920, and later with Ethel Waters. He led his own band after 1923, and served as arranger for Isham Jones, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and others.

To meet the need for more control that came with the enlargement of the band, Henderson produced his first pioneer arrangements. He established the independent use of sections within the band. For example, they would often play short, repeated riffs behind a soloist in the style of African ostinatos. This composed riff style, in turn, grew out of the earlier practice of big bands who improvised in riff style to accompany soloists. It provided a simple, formulaic means of writing for a large group of musicians who were playing without notated parts.

Many great jazz musicians went through the Henderson band. Among them are Louis Armstrong, Roy Eldridge, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, and Don Redman who was himself a pioneer arranger. Redman was born in West Virginia in 1900. He studied at the Boston Conservatory. As in the case of Henderson, it was his conservatory training that provided him with the theoretical basis essential to his arranging technique. Before starting his own band in the 1930's Redman played saxophone in Henderson's band and



with McKinney's Cotton Pickers. He is also credited with leading the first black band to play on a sponsored radio series. The name of the series was Chipso which was done in 1932.

Another important figure of the swing era was Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington, born in Washington, D.C., in 1899. Ellington is remembered today in the world of jazz as one of the greatest jazz bandleaders, pianists, and composers who ever lived. His composition and arranging styles did much to synthesize European and jazz musical languages. The "Ellington sound" became one of the most famous ever in the history of jazz. It is more difficult to describe than the Tommy Dorsey or Glenn Miller sounds because it was more subtle and sophisticated. Former Ellington band members report that this sound was largely based on the individualistic approach taken by Ellington in writing for each member in the band. Much of his and Billy Strahorn's arrangements consisted of unstated versions of solos improvised extemporaneously by band members.

The many contributions of great band leaders and bands of the swing era are far too numerous to be discussed within the scope of the present summary. However, the writer must mention such names as William "Count" Basie, Paul Whiteman, Benny Goodman, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Glen Grey and the Casa Loma Orchestra, Woody Herman, Glenn Miller, Harry James, Gene Krupa, Lionel Hampton, Teddy Wilson, and

Stan Kenton. Further research into the contributions of these band leaders and their organizations will establish the overall picture of the swing era with greater clarity.<sup>1</sup>

### Bebop

The bebop era started to develop towards the end of the swing era in the late 1940's and early 1950's in New York. The music of the period is clearly a revolt against the musical ideals of the previous big-band period. For large ensembles with several persons on one part, the arrangements necessarily had to be completely notated. Players who liked to improvise were eager to return to the small ensemble format.

No one can actually say where the style first began or who its initiators were; however, Charlie Parker, a pioneer of the bebop style, is reported as saying that he heard early bebop played by Buster Smith in Dallas in the late 1930's and early 1940's. Bebop music usually utilized an A B A form which consisted of a unison melody played by improvised choruses which were then followed by a return of the initial melody played by saxophone and trumpet. The word "bebop" itself may have been invented as a vocal imitation of the percussive, rather emphatic, sound of a typical phrase ending in this style.

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<sup>1</sup>An excellent source is "A Study of Jazz" by Paul O.W. Tanner and Maurice Gerow.

## A more extensive comparison of swing and bebop

follows:

### SWING

#### 1. Written Arrangements

- (a) Music for dancing.
- (b) Tempos vary from fast to ballads; predominantly quarter note movement.
- (c) Four tone chords.
- (d) Regular accents occurring on the beat.

#### 2. Rhythm Section

- (a) The snare drum was used to play off-beats while the bass drum played on-beats one and three.
- (b) Piano player usually played in a steady eighth note style with accents sometimes on beats two and four.
- (c) The guitar played steady eighth notes, and was used primarily as a rhythm instrument.
- (d) The string bass played straight quarter and eighth notes and was used primarily to keep the pulse.
- (e) The overall role of the rhythms section was to keep the pulse primarily for dancing.

### BEBOP

#### 1. Extemporaneous Arrangements

- (a) Music for listening.
- (b) Mostly fast tempos; predominantly eighth and sixteenth note movement.
- (c) Extended harmonies (use of 9th, 11th, 13th as well as altered chord tones and poly-chords).
- (d) Off the beat accents.

#### 2. Rhythm Section

- (a) The drummer began to use the bass drums for off-beat accents.
  - (1) Use of eighth notes on the cymbal.
  - (2) Accents often placed on the fourth beat of the measure or much syncopation used.
- (b) Piano: use of irregularly spaced chordal punctuations in place of the steady eighth note rhythm.
- (c) The guitar became a more melodic instrument and players started to play more single live solos.
- (d) The string bass is used to keep the pulse; however, the melodic line is more interesting and chordal punctuations became more pronounced.
- (e) The overall role of the rhythm section is still to keep the pulse; however, the duplication of the individual instruments is not as important. Each instrument within the rhythm section is now free to perform specific tasks.

Bebop players changed the phrase length and rhythmic construction. In the place of the neat symmetrical phrases of "swing," phrases were substituted that seemed uneven and unnatural by comparison. These changes in rhythmic concept and phrase construction help account for the changing role of the rhythm section.

Another important stylistic difference between swing and bebop is the level of tension. The increase in tension in bebop is brought about largely by the increased variance in harmonies, tempos, and degrees of rhythmic complexity. Increases in the complexity of these basic elements forced musicians to gain a much more thorough knowledge of harmony and acquire greater technical facility than had been necessary to play in a big band.

Another important change in the music of the bebop era occurred in the use of standard tunes over which new tunes were written. In other words, bebop players would vary the harmonies and melodies of well-known tunes to produce completely new tunes. Many times more than one, new tune would be invented from the same standard tune.

Example:

I Got Rhythm - Anthropology  
Cheers  
Oleo  
Kim

How High The Moon - Bird Love  
Ornithology  
Slightly Dizzy

The bebop era is considered by many authorities to be the common practice period for the study of jazz. The bebop era produced many colorful personalities. Some of them are Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Bud Powell, Lou Donaldson, Clifford Brown, Fats Navarro, Sonny Stitt, Barry Harris, J.J. Johnson, and Thelonious Monk.

### Cool Jazz

The Cool School of Jazz practiced a new stylistic concept of jazz interpretation towards the end of the 1950's. Just as bebop was a revolt against the swing era, the cool jazz school and all non-mainstream bebop interpretations were revolts against bebop proper. In contrast to the extroverted overstatement of bebop, cool jazz was characterized by conservatism and understatement. Jazz became restrained chamber music that was to be listened to and enjoyed by the very relaxed, "cool," and "laid back" listener. As in the bebop era, drugs were often used to produce the necessary state of mind for performance and enjoyment of cool jazz. This association has led to the popular misconception that drugs are a necessary ingredient for improvisation and musical enjoyment. Additional comparisons of bebop and cool jazz school follow:

## BEBOP

1. Instrumentation

- (a) Rhythm section with two or three horns, usually trumpet and saxophone.

2. Form

- (a) Form achieved through use of standard tunes, usually A A B A.

3. Playing Style

- (a) Strong attacks to accommodate the heavily accented, punctuated line.

4. Meter

- (a) Consistent regular duple meter.

## COOL JAZZ

1. Instrumentation

- (a) Small chamber jazz group. Could contain as many as eight to ten players.
- (b) The introduction of instruments not associated with jazz. (Flute, French horn, oboe, fluegelhorn).
- (c) Introduction of strings to jazz.
- (d) Introduction of the tuba in a melodic role.

2. Form

- (a) Through composed form.

3. Playing Style

- (a) Smooth phrasing with characteristic delicate attacks.
- (b) Not much use of the extremes of the instruments.
- (c) Little or no vibrato was used.
- (d) More traditionally schooled players became interested in jazz.
- (e) With the invention of long playing records in the 1950's, longer jazz compositions and improvisations could be recorded.
- (f) As in bebop, the harmony parts were conceived horizontally which produced more independence of line.

4. Meter

- (a) Use of odd meters that could vary or switch back and forth within a composition.

Personalities who have made significant recordings in this style are Miles Davis, Claude Thornhill, Gil Evans, George Shearing, Lester Young, Stan Getz, Chet Baker, and Gerry Mulligan.

Funky Jazz

The style of playing called "funky jazz" is one of the newest, most controversial, jazz-styles today. No one knows where and when the term emerged, and it is difficult

to write a convincing definition because its proper performance depends on the emotional attitude or the feelings of the performer.<sup>1</sup> Critics have questioned the jazz artistry of "funky" players.

The style is based on a rhythmically simplistic usage of each instrument in the ensemble. The "funky" feeling of a composition is produced through the almost hypnotic repetition of several extremely simple, but individual, rhythmic-harmonic ostinatos played by each member of the ensemble. The composite sound of all these ostinatos is called the "groove."

In the initial stages of "funky" jazz, such as that played by Horace Silver's band, the sound often resembled gospel music. Also important is Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, which, at one time, featured trumpeter Lee Morgan. Morgan, even though very thoroughly schooled in the "bop" styling of Clifford Brown and Dizzie Gillespie, became a very influential player in developing the funky style of trumpet playing that today characterizes many of the recordings of contemporary trumpet artist Freddie Hubbard. Morgan's recording of "The Sidewinder" became a nationwide success and helped open the eyes and ears of the jazz player to possibilities of wide musical acceptance by the general public and commercial success.

To some extent "funky" style can be viewed as the

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<sup>1</sup>Taken from an interview with Kelley Cunningham.

result of interaction between rock-and-roll and jazz.

Interesting also is the influence of rhythm-and-blues bands like the James Brown band of the 1960's that helped establish the "funky" jazz market. James Brown's band was one of the first to utilize the big band instrumentation in a truly "funky" sense. His early music was characterized by a repetitive riff-style over which he used vocal sounds to stimulate the listener. The music was supportive to the voice and geared to unthinking, gut-level emotions. Therefore, its repetitiveness, although objectively boring and even irritating to unsympathetic listeners, was a secondary factor that was not distracting to the sympathetic listener. However, a person who likes music to display imaginative harmonic and melodic designs would consider this funky style to be coarse and inartistic.

No matter what the artistic views of some critics, the fact remains that the experiments in "funky-style" by bands like James Brown's in the 1960's helped pave the way for the success that is being enjoyed in the 1970's by Herbie Hancock, Miles Davis, Freddie Hubbard, Grover Washington, Jr., and many others. Also stemming from this movement are many groups that are primarily composed of "funky-style" players with little jazz background. Groups like the Ohio Players, the Commodores, Parliament, and Sly and The Family Stone fall into this category.

At present the most successful jazz artist as



measured by record sales and public following is the player who plays "funky-style" in some form. This has caused many artists to accuse the players of "funk" of commercialism. However, at every point of change in the history of any music--baroque to classical, classical to romantic, Dixieland to swing, or swing to bebop--there is much controversy and accusation of lowering standards for quick success. Time will tell whether or not this criticism is valid.

The older styles did not die, however; the new style blended with them. A case in point is Randy Brecker's "Some Skunk Funk." It utilizes bebop phrases, a "funky" rhythmic ostinato, and a melodic line based on traditional harmonies. In addition, at various points the composition incorporates obscured tonal centers in a fashion that is often employed by classically oriented composers.

Brecker is among the first generation of jazz-oriented musicians who matured during a period when an unusually wide range of jazz styles were being played. It is an especially rewarding experience to listen to players of this generation improvise in a new idiom combining ragtime, blues, hot jazz, "funky," bebop, and electric. Here one must not forget Bob James who arranges the music of Bach, Purcell, Pachelbel, Moussorgsky, and other European composers in "funky" style. The success of these arrangements helps clarify the fact that "funky" is a style

of interpretation rather than a notated style.

### Free Jazz

"Free Jazz" also called "New Music" or "Black Music" is the most radical development since the introduction of bebop. It is probably the most varied stylistically, because the stylistic guidelines are set up ad hoc by the individuals who happen to be involved in a given musical situation. This music is invented and shaped by the recognition of, and sensitivity to, certain recognizable unifying factors previously agreed upon.<sup>1</sup> The performers try to expose their emotions as well as exhibit their playing abilities. Thus, interaction and communication are of first importance. In other words, the emotional process of each individual within an ensemble that is performing free jazz is more important than the end result.

Personalities who have made significant recordings in this style are Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, Don Cherry, Eric Dolphy, Charles Mingus, Cecil Taylor, Albert Ayler, Sam Rivers, Mulhal Richard Abrams, and Sun Ra.

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<sup>1</sup>This concept is further developed in the interview typescripts of David Baker, Dave Holland, Dave Leibman, and Sam Rivers.

## CHAPTER III

### PEDIGOGICAL SOURCE MATERIAL

The study was concerned with determining what relationships exist between certain experiential factors and percepts of a selected group of professional musicians adept at jazz improvisation. The present chapter reports on selected books and related material used for teaching jazz improvisation. In view of the vast number of jazz improvisation method books currently available, the only books included in the study are those that could be consulted as primary sources.<sup>1</sup> Also included is a review of studies which are relevant in design or content to the present study. All material listed is contained in the Bibliography.

The chapter is divided into two parts: Part One - an examination and classification of the method books; Part Two - a review of related studies. Each method was examined with respect to physical and teaching data.

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<sup>1</sup>For a more complete listing of jazz improvisational books and related materials, see the series of articles in the National Association of Jazz Educators Journal, April/May, 1975-December/January, 1977-78, by Dr. John Kuzmich, "Survey of Teaching Material for Jazz Improvisation."

The results are summarized in the following format.

- I. Number of pages
- II. Teaching level
- III. Teaching approach
- IV. Inclusion of record
- V. Teaching method
- VI. Inclusion of discography and/or bibliography

The method books are divided into two classes: (1) Complete Method Books and (2) Supplemental Method Books.

PART ONE - EXAMINATION AND CLASSIFICATION  
OF METHOD BOOKS

# A NEW APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION: VOLUME I

by

Jamey Aebersold

A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation consists of exercises and jazz compositions that are to be played with a pre-recorded rhythm section. The method is founded on the premise that one element essential to the learning of jazz improvisation is the playing of jazz compositions with other musicians.

The record includes a blues in F, a blues in B<sup>b</sup>, a 24-measure composition, a cycle of dominants, and six tracks employing various minor, major, and dominant seventh scales and chords. All of the recorded tracks are constructed in two-, four-, and eight-measure phrases. Written chord charts are provided for each instrument.

- I. 28-page booklet plus a 20-page supplement
  - II. Beginning
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Ear Training
    - Scales/Chords
    - Rhythmic and Melodic Patterns
  - IV. Play-along record
  - V. Individual and Class Method
  - VI. Discography and Bibliography included
- Classification: Complete Method

## A NEW APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION: VOLUME II

Jazz and Rock  
Nothin' But Blues

by

Jamey Aebersold

Volume Two of A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation deals with the blues in several of its many forms. The book contains two slow blues in the keys of G and F, two medium-fast blues in B<sup>b</sup> and F, one minor blues in C, one 6/8 blues in C minor, one medium blues in C, three rock blues, and one blues using substitute chords written in the key of F.

Chords and scales to be used in playing the blues structures are provided.

- I. 25 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Ear Training
    - Scales/Chords
    - Rhythmic and Melodic Patterns
  - IV. Play-along Record
  - V. Individual and Class Method
  - VI. Discography and Bibliography included
- Classification: Complete Method

## A NEW APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION: VOLUME III

## The II-V-I Progression

by

Jamey Aebersold

Volume Three of A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation deals with the II-V<sup>7</sup>-I progression as applied to jazz improvisation and composition. Side one of the play-along recording contains four tracks: (1) The II-V<sup>7</sup>-I progression in all keys, (2) II-V random progression in all keys, and (3) V<sup>7+9</sup>-I progression in all keys. Side two contains four recorded tracks: (1) G minor blues, (2) bebop tune, (3) II-V<sup>7</sup> progression I in three keys, (4) F blues with an eight-measure bridge.

- I. 32 pages with a 16-page supplement
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Ear Training
    - Scales/Chords
    - Rhythmic and Melodic Patterns
  - IV. Play-along records
  - V. Individual and Classroom method
  - VI. Discography and Bibliography included
- Classification: Complete Method



A NEW APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION: VOLUME IV  
MOVIN' ON

by

Jamey Aebersold

Volume Four of A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation offers an opportunity to practice jazz improvisation with a play-along record consisting of nine compositions that provide a more complex harmonic and tempo challenge than Volume I, II, and III. The record and book contain two bossa novas, a waltz, two up-tempo pieces in 4/4, three medium tempo Latin tunes, and one tune which alternates between 7/4 and 3/4.

Chords and scales accompany each composition.

Aebersold also includes suggestions for use of the book.

- I. 37 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Ear Training
    - Scales/Chords
    - Rhythmic and Melodic Patterns
  - IV. Play-along records
  - V. Discography and Bibliography included
- Classification: Supplemental Method

A NEW APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION: VOLUME V  
TIME TO PLAY MUSIC

by

Jamey Aebersold

Volume Five of A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation contains seven songs written by Aebersold and one song written by Dan Haerle. The purpose of this volume is to give the student of improvisation an opportunity to play complete compositions that represent a cross section of jazz/rock. Suggestions for improvising on each song are provided.

- I. 33 pages
  - II. Intermediate - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Ear Training
    - Scales/Chords
    - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
  - IV. Play-along record
  - V. Individual and Classroom Method
  - VI. Discography and Bibliography included
- Classification: Supplemental Method

A NEW APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION: VOLUME VI  
ALL "BIRD"

by

Jamey Aebersold

The purpose of Volume Six of A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation is to provide a pre-recorded rhythm section for students who wish to study Charlie Parker's music. The compositions in this volume represent ten songs ranging from blues to Latin. The tempos are medium to fast with most falling into the medium category. Scales that should be played against certain chords are written below the chord symbols. The compositions on the album are: "Now's the Time," "Billie's Bounce," "Yardbird Suite," "Confirmation," "Dewey Square," "Donna Lee," "My Little Suede Shoes," and "Ornithology."

- I. 40 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Chords/Scales
    - Ear Training
    - Melodic and Rhythmic patterns
  - IV. Play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. Discography and Bibliography included
- Classification: Supplemental Method

A NEW APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION: VOLUME VII  
MILES DAVIS

by

Jamey Aebersold

The purpose of Volume Seven of A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation is to provide a pre-recorded rhythm section for students who wish to study the music of Miles Davis. Historical notes concerning the compositions utilized in this volume are included. Scales accompany chords that may be questionable to the student. The songs included in this volume are: "Four," "Tune Up," "Vierd Blues," "The Theme," "Solar," "Dig," "Milestone," and "Serpent's Tooth."

I. 33 pages

II. Advanced

III. Teaching Approach  
Theory  
Chords/Scales  
Rhythmic and Melodic patterns  
Ear Training

IV. Play-along record

V. Individual or Classroom method

VI. Bibliography and Discography included

Classification: Supplemental Method

A NEW APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION: VOLUME VIII  
SONNY ROLLINS

by

Jamey Aebersold

The purpose of Volume Eight of A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation is to provide a pre-recorded rhythm section for students who wish to study the music of Sonny Rollins. Historical information concerning Rollins and information concerning the compositions utilized in this volume are included. Scales accompany chords that may be questionable to the student. The songs included in this volume are: "Doxy," "St. Thomas," "Blue Seven," "Valse Hot," "Tenor Madness," "Solid," "Pent-Up House," "Airegin," and "Oleo."

- I. 32 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Chords/Scales
    - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
    - Ear Training
  - IV. Play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. Bibliography and Discography included
- Classification: Supplemental Method

A NEW APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION: VOLUME IX  
WOODY SHAW

by

Jamey Aebersold

The purpose of Volume Nine of A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation is to provide a pre-recorded rhythm section for students who wish to study the music of Woody Shaw. Historical information concerning Shaw and information concerning the compositions utilized in this volume are included. Scales accompany chords that may be questionable to the student. The songs included in this volume are: "Little Red's Fantasy," "Katrina Ballerina," "Blues for Wood," "Moontrane," "In Case You Haven't Heard," "Tomorrow's Destiny," "Beyond All Limits," (Bossa Nova), and "Beyond All Limits," (Swing).

- I. 46 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Chords/Scales
    - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
    - Ear Training
  - IV. Play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. Bibliography and Discography included
- Classification: Supplemental Method

A NEW APPROACH TO JAZZ IMPROVISATION: VOLUME X  
DAVID BAKER

by

Jamey Aebersold

The purpose of Volume Ten of A New Approach to Jazz Improvisation is to provide a pre-recorded rhythm section for students who wish to study the music of David Baker. Historical information concerning Baker and information concerning the compositions utilized in this volume are included. Scales accompany chords that may be questionable to the student. The songs included in this volume are: "Aulil," "Le Roi," "Black Thursday," "Bossa Belle," "Soleil d' Altamira," "Le Miroir Noir," "Kentucky Oysters," and "Passion."

- I. 40 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Chords/Scales
    - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
    - Ear Training
  - IV. Play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. Bibliography and Discography included
- Classification: Supplemental Method

JAZZ IMPROVISATION - A COMPREHENSIVE  
METHOD OF STUDY FOR ALL PLAYERS

by

David Baker

The purpose of this book is to provide a course of study concerned with jazz improvisation that will fit the needs of the teacher, student, amateur and professional musician. It contains twenty chapters which cover the following areas:

- Chapter I - Nomenclature
- Chapter II - Foundation Exercises for the Jazz Player
- Chapter III - The Use of Dramatic Devices
- Chapter IV - An Approach to Improvising on Tunes
- Chapter V - The II-V Progression and Other Frequently Used Formulae
- Chapter VI - The Construction of Scales and the Technique of Relating Them to Chords
- Chapter VII - The Cycle
- Chapter VIII - Turn Backs
- Chapter IX - Developing a Feel for Swing
- Chapter X - Developing the Ear
- Chapter XI - The Blues
- Chapter XII - Constructing a Melody
- Chapter XIII - Techniques to be Used in Developing a Melody
- Chapter XIV - Constructing a Jazz Chorus
- Chapter XV - Chord Substitutions



Chapter XVI - The Rhythm Section - Piano

Chapter XVII - The Bass Violin

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Chapter XVIII - Drums

Chapter XIX - A Psychological Approach to  
Communicating Through An Improvised  
Solo

Chapter XX - Some Advanced Concepts in Jazz  
Playing

I. 182 pages

II. Beginning - Advanced

III. Teaching Approach  
Theory  
Scales/Chords  
Rhythm and Melodic patterns  
Ear Training

IV. No play-along record

V. Individual or Classroom method

VI. Discography and Bibliography included

Classification: Complete Method

TECHNIQUES OF IMPROVISATION, VOLUME I  
 A METHOD FOR DEVELOPING  
 IMPROVISATIONAL TECHNIQUE

(Based on the Lydian Chromatic Concept by George Russell)

by

David Baker

This book consists of a set of exercises based on George Russell's "Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization for Improvisation." All exercises are written in the key of C and organized in the following manner:

- Section I - Exercises for all Scales Except Blues Scales
- Section II - Exercises for the Major and Lydian Scales
- Section III - Exercises for the Auxiliary Augmented Scales
- Section IV - Exercises for the Auxiliary Diminished Blues
- Section V - Exercises for the Lydian Augmented Scales
- Section VI - Exercises for the Blues Scales
- Section VII - Exercises for the Lydian Chromatic Scales

The student is advised to transpose all exercises to all keys.

- I. 96 pages
- II. Advanced
- III. Teaching Approach  
       Scales  
       Melodic patterns
- IV. No play-along record

V. Individual or Classroom method

VI. Discography included

Classification: Supplemental Method

TECHNIQUES OF IMPROVISATION, VOLUME II  
THE II-V PROGRESSIONS

by

David Baker

This book deals with exercises structured to help familiarize the student of jazz with the commonly used II-V progression. All exercises contained in the book are written in the key of C. Baker suggests that all exercises be transposed to all keys.

- I. 75 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach  
    Melodic and Rhythmic patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Supplemental Method

TECHNIQUES OF IMPROVISATION, VOLUME III  
TURNBACKS

by

David Baker

The purpose of this book is to aid the student of jazz in the mastery of a familiar jazz progression called the turnback. The reasons for using the turnback in jazz are outlined by Baker in the foreward. Also included are examples that show where the turnback pattern can be introduced.

This book consists of written examples of turnback formulae and exercises for realizing them. All exercises are in the key of C. However, the student is advised to transpose them to all keys.

- I. 84 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Supplemental Method

TECHNIQUES OF IMPROVISATION, VOLUME IV  
CYCLES

by

David Baker

This book presents exercises that utilize the movement of chord roots up a perfect fourth or down a perfect fifth. The manner in which the cycle of dominant sevenths may be used in playing situations is outlined in the foreward. Baker also makes suggestions for utilization of the book. Exercises contained in the book cover triads, seventh chords, extended seventh chords, diminished scales, and melodic minor scales.

- I. 250 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach  
Theory  
Melodic and Rhythmic patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. Discography included. No Bibliography.
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## JAZZ STYLES AND ANALYSIS: TROMBONE

by

David Baker

This book traces the development of the trombone as it relates to jazz. It is designed to show:

1. The depth and breadth of jazz trombone playing
2. Who the players of a particular era are and to give an indication of their relative importance.
3. The enormous diversity of styles and approaches
4. Historical, bibliographical, biographical discographical information about each player

Included in the introduction of the text is a transposition chart, stylistic categories of jazz trombonists, an explanation of against-the-grain playing, and suggestions for using the book.

- I. 144 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Ear Training
    - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. Discography and bibliography included
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## JAZZ IMPROVISATION METHOD FOR STRINGS

by

David Baker

This book is geared to the study of jazz improvisation as it applies to the particular needs of the string player. It is in two volumes: Volume I for Violin and Viola, and Volume II for Cello and Bass.

The opening section of each volume is devoted to a discussion concerning the string player's relationship to jazz and a discussion of an approach to jazz string playing. Also included in each volume is theoretical information and its jazz application, foundation exercises for each instrument, approaches to improvisation, transcribed solos, suggested assignments, records involving strings and a bibliography of suggested readings.

- I. 156 pages per volume
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Ear Training
    - Scales/Chords
    - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. Discography and Bibliography included
- Classification: Complete Method



## ADVANCED IMPROVISATION

by

David Baker

Advanced Improvisation is a method book which addresses the needs of the professional jazz musician, the advanced student, and the teacher who desires to study advanced improvisational concepts and their particular relationships to jazz. The book is concerned with six general areas: improvisational concepts, ear training, and techniques related to specific instruments. Some of the explanations and examples presented in each area of the book are as follows:

Pitch Material

1. Scales and modes of all varieties
2. Quartal harmonies and patterns
3. Polytonal structures
4. Bitonal structures
5. 12-tone technique
6. Atonality
7. Pantonality
8. Microtones

Rhythmic and Metric Materials

1. Nonmeter
2. Polymer
3. Multimeter

4. Panmeter
5. Metric modulation

#### Ear Training

1. Development of accurate listening techniques
2. Transcribing solos from records
3. Group improvisation and accompanying

#### Improvisational Concepts

1. Learning to improvise
2. Improvisation and scale relationships
3. Improvisation using a thematic referential
4. Vertical structures

#### Dramatic Effects

1. The use of dramatic devices
2. A chart of components for sound mixtures
3. Multiphonics
4. Avant-garde techniques

#### Techniques Related to Specific Instruments

1. Circular breathing
2. Multiphonics
3. Varied Vibrato
4. Tonguing techniques
5. Expanded range
6. Expanded emotional range

Selected reading list, suggested assignments, and recorded examples follow each chapter. An additional feature of Advanced Improvisation is the inclusion of 20 original compositions, all specifically composed to provide the improviser with practice material geared to explore some of the problems encountered in contemporary jazz. A 90-minute play-along cassette accompanies the book.

- I. 256 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory/Composition
    - Ear Training
    - Scales/Chords
    - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
  - IV. Play-along tapes
  - V. Individual and Classroom method
  - VI. Discography and Bibliography included
- Classification: Complete Method

## CHORDS AND PROGRESSIONS

by

Bugs Bower

This volume contains chord and scale exercises that can be utilized by all instruments. It is divided into two sections: Book One and Book Two. Book One consists of exercises concerning chords that contain from three to seven parts. Book Two contains exercises based on chord progressions.

- I. 95 pages
  - II. Intermediate - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Chords/Scales
    - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No discography or bibliography
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## PATTERNS FOR JAZZ

by

Jerry Coker, Jimmy CaSale, Gary Campbell and Jerry Greene

The purpose of this book is to provide the student of jazz improvisation with a collection of patterns that will aid the development of the ability to improvise within the jazz idiom. In the first portion of the book rudimentary exercises are stressed. The rationale used in doing this is that the student should first absorb the foundations for patterns, such as scales, modes, simple chords, and four basic kinds of chord movement: (1) cycle of fifths; (2) chromatic; (3) stepwise; and (4) in minor thirds. Accompanying chord symbols are placed above each pattern.

It is suggested by the authors that the book be used by an instrumentalist regardless of the range of clef normally used by the respective instrument.

- I. 173 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Patterns
    - Chords/Scales
    - Ear Training
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. Discography included
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF IMPROVISATIONAL RHYTHMS AND PATTERNS

by

Charles Colin

This volume is composed of the following books:

1. Rhythms Complete by Dr. Charles Colin and Bugs Bower.
2. Advanced Rhythms by Joe Allard.
3. 35 Original Studies in Modern Rhythms by Dr. Charles Colin.
4. Famous Improvised Jazz Patterns edited by Hale Smith.
5. Rhythms and Improvisation for All Instruments by Bugs Bower.

The primary purpose of this book is to provide exercises for the study of jazz rhythms. Chord symbols accompany each rhythmic exercise.

- I. 194 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach  
Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography included
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## JAZZ ROCK FOR KIDS

by

Joyce Collins

This book consists of a series of fifteen songs written in the jazz/rock style. The student is instructed to use the following procedure.

1. Learn the song
2. Play the record and listen to the song being played by the author
3. Play the same song with just the bass and drums

Theoretical information is provided with each song.

- I. 30 pages
- II. Beginning
- III. Teaching Approach  
Imitation  
Theory
- IV. Play-along record
- V. Individual and Class method
- VI. No Discography or Bibliography

Classification: Complete Method

## POLYTONAL RHYTHM SERIES FOR ALL INSTRUMENTS

by

Emile Decosmo

The books included in this series are:

1. The Cycle of Fifths
2. The  $II^7-V^7$  Progression
3. The Polytonal Guitar
4. The Blues Scale
5. The Diminished Scale
6. The Dorian Mode
7. The Ionian Mode
8. The Tritone Mode
9. The Byzantine Scale
10. The Lydian Mode
11. The Aeolian Mode
12. The Mixolydian Mode
13. The Diatonic Mode
14. The Harmonic Minor Scale
15. The Augmented 11th Scale
16. The Arabian Scale
17. The Phrygian Mode
18. The Locrian Mode
19. The Melodic Minor Scale

Each book in this series contains a chosen progression, scale, chord, or mode which is developed into melodic



motifs which form musical phrases that should be listened to, played, and sung every day.

The books contained in the series can be used in conjunction with any method. The purpose of each book is the systematic mastery of the particular cycle, progression, scale, or mode being used.

The exercises are presented using no time signature. Rhythm patterns are given that are to be applied to each exercise.

- I. Each book contains approximately 30-50 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Ear Training
    - Scales and Chords
    - Rhythm patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual and Class method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## BUDDY DEFRANCO ON JAZZ IMPROVISATION

The purpose of this book as stated by the author is to "provide important information slanted towards modern jazz as played on the clarinet." Also included is some essential information concerned with basic clarinet playing which can be applied to the performance of any style of music.

The book is divided into five sections:

### Section A

1. Tone Production
2. "Legit" Tone and "Jazz" Tone
3. Hand Position
4. Clarinet Practice
5. Tonal Characteristics and Registers of the Clarinet
6. Modern Jazz and the Clarinet
7. Analysis and Comparison
8. Standards for Modern Jazz
9. Free Form Jazz

### Section B

1. Scales and Intervals
2. Scale Studies

### Section C

1. Chords
2. Inversions; Altered Chords

3. Resolutions of Chords; Test
4. Extended Chords
5. Chord Symbol Equivalents

#### Section D

1. Rhythm
2. Syncopation
3. Scale Studies

#### Section E

1. Modern Jazz Improvising; Vibrato; Form; Test
2. Blues in F
3. Blues in C
4. Blues Progression with Melodic Line
5. Blues in C Concert
6. Recommendations on Interpretation and Construction of the "Line"; Larger Jazz Forms
7. First Endings; Second Endings
8. Chromatic Study
9. Technical Study; Melody in G
10. Test
11. Superimposed Chords; Melody in D
12. A Blues Construction in C Concert
13. The Clarinet as Related to Concert Key
14. Dual Chord Symbols
15. Jazz in Three-Four Meter
16. Jazz in Five-Four Meter

17. Concluding Remarks
  18. 32 Bar Song
  19. 3/4 Jazz
  20. Minor Blues
- 
- I. 114 pages
  - II. Intermediate - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach  
Theory/Composition  
Patterns  
Chords/Scales
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual method
  - VI. No discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method

## IMPROVISATIONAL CONCEPTS AND JAZZ PATTERNS

by

Maury Deutsch

This book consists of nineteen chapters. Chapters One through Three contain a discussion of intervals, scales, and chords. Deutsch considers mastery of this material to be the primary requirement for the study of improvisation. Chapter Four, "Basic Principles of Melody," is a discussion of the construction and elaboration of the melodic line. Chapter Five is a discussion of harmonic progressions. Chapter Six, "Extended Tonality," discusses harmonic progressions that momentarily change keys. Chapters Seven and Eight discuss chromatic harmony and procedures of modulation.

Chapter Nine, "Improvisational Progressions," provides examples of harmonic progressions that can be utilized in developing skills at improvisation. Chapter Ten, "Techniques of Melodic Development," presents ways in which a melodic line can be developed. Chapters Eleven through Eighteen contain the following discussions:

- |                  |   |                               |
|------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| Chapter Eleven   | - | Modal Harmony                 |
| Chapter Twelve   | - | Neo-Modality                  |
| Chapter Thirteen | - | Twelve Measure Progression    |
| Chapter Fourteen | - | Twelve Tone Row of Schoenberg |
| Chapter Fifteen  | - | Hindemith System              |
| Chapter Sixteen  | - | Schillinger Tonic             |

Chapter Seventeen - Poly-Harmony, Poly-Tonality

Chapter Eighteen - Aleatory Improvisation

Chapter Nineteen is a discussion on the development of absolute pitch. Exercises are provided. The final section of the book is a dictionary of seven-part chords.

- I. 128 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Patterns
    - Chords/Scales
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method

A SYSTEM OF TONAL CONVERGENCE FOR  
IMPROVISERS, COMPOSERS AND ARRANGERS

by

Ted Dunbar

The system of tonal convergence as explained by Dunbar is based on specific relationships of the notes within the chromatic scale. Dunbar feels that the removal of a tone from the chromatic scale represents a tonality or key center and that all remaining intervals, chords, and scales have a certain type of converginal relationship in a cadential motion sense to the key center.

The book is organized into the following sections:

1. The Effect of Lydian Concept of Tonal Organization by George Russell
2. Conceiving this Convergene System (Scales and Their Chords)
3. Scale Justification Sheets (24)
4. Scales of the System and Some Constituent Chords and Their Resolutions
5. Scale Examples of Convergence
6. Chord Examples of Convergence
7. Scale-Chord Mixed Convergence Examples
8. Chord on Chord Convergence Emphasis
9. Convergence on the Seventh Chord, Minor Chord

- I. 80 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual Method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method



## JAZZ PHRASING AND INTERPRETATION

by

Jimmy Giuffre

The purpose of this book is to acquaint the student with principles of jazz phrasing which can be applied to performance situations. Each problem concerning phrasing is taken in order of importance. The student is advised not to proceed to the next lesson until each lesson is satisfactorily performed.

Exercises are presented in traditional notation as well as notation that includes detailed illustrations of jazz phrasing indications.

- I. 61 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach  
Theory/Composition
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual and Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## IN SESSION WITH HERB ELLIS

by

Guitar Player Productions

This method consists of a play-along record with an accompanying set of written compositions. The student is provided with a notated second guitar part to be utilized with a recorded first guitar part and rhythm section. Instructions are provided concerning fingerings, positions, and chords. Opportunity is provided for the student to develop the ability to accompany as well as solo.

The album contains the following compositions:

"Bossa Ellis," "Kari Grows Up," "Mitch's Lament," "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Perdido," "It Could Happen to You," "Patti Comes Home," and "Cherokee."

- I. 16 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Imitation
    - Improvised Composition
    - Ear Training
  - IV. Play-along record
  - V. Individual method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## LEARN TO PLAY JAZZ SOLOS

by

Lou Fratturo

This method book consists of nine chapters. Chapter One, entitled "Basic Knowledge," contains all of the necessary information and tools considered by Fratturo to be essential to developing efficient jazz improvisational skills. Fratturo also points out that much emphasis should be placed on learning to improvise the blues because the blues is important to all jazz improvisation.

Chapter One consists of a theoretical explanation of scales and chords. The key of C is used. An explanation of the blues is presented using the following sequences: (1) explanation of blues progression, (2) example of arpeggiated chords of the blues progression, (3) blues chords in the key of C using non-chord tones, and (4) explanation of non-chord tones leading to an explanation of the chromatic scale.

Chapter Two, "Primitive Improvising," contains examples that use rhythmic alterations in developing improvisations. Each example progressively adds chord tones, passing tones, and blues notes to aid the author's explanation of melodic alterations. Students are given opportunities to use a compositional approach to complete examples.

Chapter Three, "Thematic Development," presents

examples which show the alteration of a melody in the following ways: (1) rhythmic, (2) intervallic, (3) rhythmic and intervallic, (4) inversion, (5) augmentation, (6) diminution, (7) elision, (8) interpolation, (9) embellishment, (10) elongation and/or embellishment, and (11) combinations of any of the alterations. The chapter is concluded with an explanation on how to develop rhythmic ideas that swing.

Chapter Four, "Listening," contains a list of jazz artists that the student should listen to. Also included are a listening guide and ear training examples.

Chapter Five, "More and Different Progressions," present the blues progression with the addition of substitute chords. Scales are also presented with the chords. Included in this chapter is a method of transposition which includes a transposition chart.

Chapter Six presents written jazz phrases to be memorized by the student. Also presented is a method for developing themes within a solo.

Chapter Seven, "New Blues Progressions," presents examples of variations on the standard blues progression.

In Chapter Eight, "Turn-arounds or Cadences," cadential formulae are presented with examples of melodic treatments of the various formulae. The student is encouraged to write individual melodic ideas using the formulae that are presented. A brief explanation on how to find substitute chords and chord progressions is also presented

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in this Chapter.

Chapter Nine contains sequential exercises. The exercises are presented in the following order: (1) Jazz sequences cycle of 5ths; (2) chord sequences, (a.) major, (b.) minor, (c.) augmented, (d.) diminished; (3) scale sequences, (a.) 7th scales, (b.) minor 7th scales, (c.) augmented scales, (d.) diminished 7th scales.

Presented at the end of the book are all major, minor, diminished, and augmented scales and chords.

- I. 86 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Compositional/Theory
    - Ear Training Exercises
    - Patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual and Class method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method

## DICK GROVE IMPROVISATION COURSE, VOLUME IV

Volume Four of the Dick Grove Improvisation Course contains eight lessons with accompanying worksheet/examinations based on each lesson. The areas covered in this volume are: The dorian mode, diatonic sequences, mixolydian mode, phrygian mode, neighbor tones, the concept of modal harmony, transcriptions and analyzations of recorded music, and horizontal lines.

- I. 238 pages, plus 84-page workbook
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Ear Training
    - Scales/Chords
    - Rhythm patterns
    - Theory/Composition
  - IV. Play-along records
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method

GUIDELINES TO IMPROVISATION  
QUICK STEPS TO POP PIANO, BOOK I

by

Marvin Kahn

This book is the first in a series designed for the student of music who has studied the rudiments and wants to learn something about improvisation. The book is based on presenting information designed to help the student gain a thorough knowledge of chords and chord constructions. The book is divided into three parts: Chord Structure, Chord Inversions, and Flat Chords.

- I. 40 pages
  - II. Beginning
  - III. Teaching Approach  
Theory/Composition  
Chords/Scales
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual and Class Piano method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method

GUIDELINES TO IMPROVISATION  
QUICK STEPS TO POP PIANO, BOOK II

by

Marvin Kahn

Guidelines to Improvisation, Quick Steps to Pop Piano, Book II, is the second in a series designed for music students with a rudimentary knowledge who want to learn to improvise.

This book contains all of the seventh chord formations and inversions and presents them through examples in standards, original compositions, and drills. Melodic improvisation is introduced by utilizing neighboring tones. The beginning of style is taught through the use of left hand bass patterns for the waltz (3/4) and fox trot (4/4) meters.

The book is divided into three parts: Seventh Chord Structure, Waltz Patterns, and Fox Trot Patterns.

- I. 40 pages
- II. Intermediate
- III. Teaching Approach  
Theory/Composition  
Chords/Scales
- IV. No play-along record
- V. Individual and Class Piano method
- VI. No Discography or Bibliography  
Classification; Complete Method



GUIDELINES TO IMPROVISATION  
QUICK STEPS TO POP PIANO, BOOK III

by

Marvin Kahn

This book presents ninth chords and their applications in melodic improvisation. Voicings for both hands are presented. Alterations and extensions in the form of flattened ninths, elevenths, and thirteenth and suspended fourth chords are also presented. The use of the pedal point and the art of playing from a lead sheet are explained. Technical material is illustrated using standard songs.

- I. 40 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach  
Theory/Composition  
Chords/Scales
  - IV. No play-along records
  - V. Individual and Class Piano Method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method

## BASIC JAZZ IMPROVISATION

by

Joseph Levey

Basic Jazz Improvisation contains nine sections. The introduction consists of a philosophical statement on improvisation and its importance to jazz. Musical examples to be used in the study are mentioned.

Section Two, "The Original Melody," explains improvisation as a melodic activity with harmonic and rhythmic implications. In this regard, melodic improvisation is emphasized.

Section Three, "Elaborating The Original Melody," provides an explanation of certain musical devices that can be used in developing interesting melodic ideas within the framework of a melodic skeleton.

Section Four, "Creating a New Melody," discusses the skills which must be mastered in order for a player to create new improvised melodies based on set harmonic and rhythmic progressions.

Section Five, "Improvising the Blues," discusses an improvisational approach which utilizes the blues as a point of departure. The application of scales to the blues progression is also treated in this section.

Section Six, "Other Factors in Improvisation," discusses additional subjects of importance in learning to

improvise jazz. Topics discussed include the importance of tempo, a command of style, coherence, the jazz rhythm complex and planning the solo.

Section Seven, "Summary of Skills to Develop," presents a comprehensive outline of the skills that are considered important in developing the ability to play jazz.

Section Eight states the author's conclusions and Section Nine presents selected examples of exercises that can be used in practice sessions.

- I. 51 pages and Appendix
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Ear Training Exercises
    - Scales and Chords
    - Rhythm Patterns
    - Theory
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Class method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method

## THE TIME REVOLUTION

by

Henry J. (Hank) Levy

The major concern of this book is to provide insight into the usage and evolution of changing time signatures as related to jazz. The purpose of this book, as stated by Levy, is to provide foundation for the student who is interested in exploring rhythmic possibilities.

The first section of the book discusses playing and counting in odd meters. Meters are discussed in the following order: (1) playing in five, (2) alla breve five, (3) extensions of five, (4) all breve seven, (5) playing in seven, (6) straight ahead seven, (7) other extended meters, (8) clapping-counting etudes, and (9) mind benders.

Discussions one to eight contain written examples to be counted and clapped. An explanation of the correct metric division is provided. Discussion nine, mind benders, consists of very complex metrical exercises which are theoretically possible but not commonly used.

The second part of the book consists of musical etudes that utilize the rhythmic concepts discussed in part one.

- I. 71 pages
- II. Advanced
- III. Teaching Approach
  - Theory
  - Rhythmic Patterns

IV. No play-along record

V. Individual and Class method

VI. No Discography or Bibliography

Classification: Complete Method

BASIC JAZZ/ROCK IMPROVISATIONS FOR ALL  
TREBLE CLEF INSTRUMENTS INCLUDING GUITAR

by

Rod Matson

This book is divided into two parts: harmony and improvising. Part One, harmony, presents the basic fundamentals of music theory. The topics covered are: (1) scales; (2) intervals; (3) chords; (4) chord studies; (5) inversions of chords. Assignments are provided at the end of topics one, two, three, and five. Topic four, chord studies, provides written out examples of various quality chords.

Part Two, improvising, discusses rock style, jazz style, improvisation, passing tones, improvising on given melodies, and the blues. The discussion of rock and jazz styles presents certain identifying characteristics unique to each style. Written examples are also provided.

Matson discusses improvisation from the standpoint of using chord tones to structure an improvisation. Passing tones are also incorporated.

Standard blues progressions are presented with variations.

- I. 31 pages
- II. Beginning
- III. Teaching  
Theory/Composition.
- IV. No-play along record

V. Individual and Class method

VI. No Discography or Bibliography

Classification: Complete Method

JAZZ IMPROVISATION, VOLUME I  
TONAL AND RHYTHMIC PRINCIPLES

by

John Mehegan

This book utilizes melody, harmony, and rhythm in an attempt to describe the process that occurs when a jazz musician improvises. More specifically, the function of this book is to explore fully the tonal material which forms the basis for jazz rhythm.

The book contains twelve sections which consist of 77 lessons. Section One covers scalar and chordal material. Section Two presents the chord progressions to selected standard tunes in various keys. Section Three discusses inversions. Section Four covers modulation. Sections Five and Six cover arpeggios in various rhythmic combinations and scalar and chordal material in rhythmic combinations.

Section Seven discusses chromatic tones, sensitive tones, basic syncopation, and accents. Section Eight presents the blues. Patterns are discussed in Section Nine. Section Ten discusses minor scales and arpeggios. Section Eleven presents selected voicing considerations. Section Twelve discusses ear training, memorization, sheet music conversion, and touch-technique.

I. 207 pages

II. Beginning - Advanced



- III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory/Composition
    - Scales/Chords
    - Ear Training
    - Rhythm Patterns
    - Melodic Patterns
  - IV. No play-along records
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
- Classification: Complete Method

JAZZ IMPROVISATION, VOLUME II  
JAZZ RHYTHMS AND THE IMPROVISED LINE

by

John Mehegan

Volume II of Jazz Improvisation deals with the schematic history of two important facets of jazz which are rhythm and the improvised line. In this volume the rhythmic genesis of improvisation is presented by means of transcribed solos. Various schematic outlines trace the evolution of jazz rhythm, harmony, and the improvised line.

- I. 137 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach  
Theory/Composition  
Rhythm Patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual and Classroom method
  - VI. Contains a list of Jazz Artists
- Classification: Complete Method

JAZZ IMPROVISATION, VOLUME III  
SWING AND EARLY PROGRESSIVE PIANO STYLES

by

John Mehegan

This volume consists of a stylistic analysis of the piano styles of Teddy Wilson, Art Tatum, Bud Powell, George Shearing, and Horace Silver. The volume is divided into five sections. A section is devoted to the style of each artist.

The theoretical considerations that contribute to an understanding of each individual's style are presented.

- I. 175 pages
- II. Advanced
- III. Teaching Approach  
Theory
- IV. No play-along record
- V. Individual and Classroom method
- VI. Contains a list of Jazz Artists

Classification: Supplemental Method

JAZZ IMPROVISATION, VOLUME IV  
CONTEMPORARY PIANO STYLES

by

John Mehegan

Volume IV of Jazz Improvisation consists of a survey of the history of jazz piano from 1950 to the present. Included is a systematic analysis of the piano styles of Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans, and other leading contemporary jazz pianists.

The book is divided into three sections. Section One deals with the piano style of Oscar Peterson. Sections Two and Three include illustrations of left-hand voicings, right-hand modes, solo piano techniques, comping, turn-arounds, modern funky piano, harmonic distortions, modal fourths, minor blues, and modal fragments. Solo transcriptions are included.

- I. 288 pages
- II. Advanced
- III. Teaching Approach
  - Theory/Composition
  - Scales/Chords
  - Patterns
- IV. No play-along record
- V. Individual or Classroom method
- VI. Contains a list of Jazz Artists

Classification: Supplemental Method

## JAZZ STYLES AND ANALYSIS: ALTO SAX

by

Harry Miedema

This book traces the development of the alto saxophone as it relates to jazz. It is designed to show:

(1) the depth and breadth of jazz alto saxophone playing, (2) who the players of a particular era are and their relative importance, (3) the enormous diversity of styles and approaches, (4) each player's career background.

Included in the introduction of the text is a glossary, a transposition chart, a fingering chart for the altissimo register of the saxophone, an explanation concerning transcribing solos, stylistic categories of alto saxophones, and suggestions for using the book.

- I. 104 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Ear Training
    - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. Discography and Bibliography included
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## JAZZ IMPROVISATION FOR BASS CLEF INSTRUMENTS

by

Abe Most

This book consists of twenty-one etudes which are to be learned by the student. Each phrase is to be transposed to every key. As in the treble clef book, the student is encouraged to invent his own phrases.

- I. 44 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach  
    Melodic Patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual and Class method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## JAZZ IMPROVISATION FOR TREBLE CLEF INSTRUMENTS

by

Abe Most

This book consists of twenty-one etudes which contain phrases to be learned by the student. Each phrase is to be transposed to every key. The student is further urged to invent his own phrases. Most feels that the creative process in improvisation is enhanced with the development and memorization of a sufficient number of jazz phrases.

- I. 42 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## PATTERN FOR IMPROVISATION

by

Oliver Nelson

Patterns for Improvisation is a book containing eighty-one exercises. The purpose of the book as stated by Nelson is to "give the player flexibility in all keys and the confidence to cope with almost any musical situation." Each example is without an accompanying explanation, the only explanation being stated in the first two and one half pages of the text. However, based on Nelson's stated purpose, the brief introductory explanation is sufficient. There are no expressive markings in the music; however, the author states that all examples are to be played with a melodic legato jazz concept. The author assumes the mastery of major and minor scales, the construction of simple chords, and the understanding of musical forms. Each exercise consists of a pattern written in sequence. There are no written chord symbols; therefore, any placement of individual patterns on chords is based on the player's ear.

Exercises 1-76 do not contain tempo indications which allow for freedom of expression. These exercises can be played as fast or as slow as desired.

Exercises 77-81 are compositions by Nelson that contain tempo indications. Each composition uses some type of sequential development.



- I. 58 pages
  - II. Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Ear Training Exercises
    - Scales/Chords
    - Rhythm Patterns
    - No Theory
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Supplemental Method

## PENTATONIC SCALES FOR JAZZ IMPROVISATIONS

by

Ramon Ricker

The purpose of this book is to acquaint the advanced high school or college improviser with the vast resource of melodic material available through the use of pentatonic scales. The method is intended to be used as a supplement to more comprehensive books on improvisation. The author does not advocate the exclusive use of pentatonic scales in improvisation.

Chapter One discusses the construction of the pentatonic scale. Chapter Two outlines the application of pentatonic scales to various chord types. Chapter Three outlines the application of pentatonic scales to chord progressions. The blues is included in this chapter.

Chapter Four discusses altered pentatonics. Chapter Five presents excerpts of improvised solos that utilize pentatonic scales.

Chapter Six consists of diatonic, chromatic, II-V-I, turnaround, circle of fifths, and altered pentatonic exercises.

- I. 80 pages
- II. Advanced
- III. Teaching Approach
  - Theory
  - Melodic Patterns
  - Scales and Chords

IV. No play-along record

V. No Discography or Bibliography

Classification: Supplemental Method

THE LYDIAN CHROMATIC CONCEPT OF TONAL  
ORGANIZATION FOR IMPROVISATION

by

George Russell

The Lydian chromatic concept as defined by Russell is a philosophy of tonality which can provide the musician with an awareness of the full spectrum of tonal colors available in the equal temperament tuning. This awareness would give the jazz musician tonal resources from which to draw his improvised lines and find his own identity. This concept is established in the belief that this knowledge will liberate the student's melodic inhibitions and help him to intelligently penetrate and understand the entire chromatic universe.

The book contains eight lessons: (1) Determining the Parent Scale of a Chord, (2) The Lydian Chromatic Scale, (3) Chords and Chord Categories, (4) Types of Melodies, (5) Horizontal Polymodality (tonal gravity conveyed by the scale), (6) Fingerings Applied to Scales, (7) The use of the Lydian Chromatic Slide Rule, and (8) Construction of Chord Patterns and the Substitution of Chords.

- I. 50 pages, plus appendix
- II. Advanced
- III. Teaching Approach  
Theory  
Scales/Chords
- IV. No play-along record

V. Individual and Classroom method

VI. Discography included

Classification: Complete Method

LEARNING UNLIMITED JAZZ IMPROVISATION SERIES  
BLUES AND THE BASICS

by

Dominic Spera

This method is designed to introduce the beginning student to the basic theoretical and interpretive skills of improvisation. Each exercise is explained on a play-along tape. The exercises are also sung to aid the student with interpretation. The entire method is concerned entirely with the blues.

- I. 40 pages
  - II. Beginning
  - III. Teaching Approach  
    Imitation  
    Theory
  - IV. Play-along tape
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method

## TECHNIQUES AND MATERIALS FOR STAGE BAND

by

Hal M. Sherman

This book is designed to be used by the band director or music director who is seeking information concerning the teaching of jazz phrasing, improvisation, arranging, and all special skills related to the study of jazz. The subjects discussed in the book are (1) ensemble playing, (2) the rhythm section, (3) phrasing, articulation, and special effects, (4) suggested rehearsal techniques, (5) improvisation, (6) programming, and (7) jazz chart sources.

The discussion on jazz improvisations covers the following subjects: (1) stylization, (2) ear training (3) the blues, (4) three blues patterns, (5) the twelve blues scales, and (6) blues lyrics and constructing a good solo.

- I. 55 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory
    - Ear Training Exercises
    - Patterns
    - (Suggestions are made to the music teacher concerning exercises that can be utilized as part of band rehearsals)
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual and Class method
  - VI. Discography and Bibliography included
- Classification: Complete Method

## THE SOUND OF JAZZ

by

Carl Strommen and Sandy Feldstein

This method is designed to teach jazz concepts in the jazz ensemble and concert band situations. The book is divided into eleven units which contain eight complete arrangements. Each unit combines the study of characteristic rhythms and their proper articulation with the aural and theoretical understanding of basic jazz harmonic progressions. Each unit utilizes a basic melodic pattern, background pattern, and harmonic progression as the source from which the studies and pieces are derived.

The book is scored for four part, plus rhythm section, each part consisting of a prescribed combination of instruments. This type of scoring allows for a complete sound with any ensemble utilizing one instrument from each part, plus rhythm section. This book also contains an articulation and rhythmic interpretation guide.

- I. 32 pages
  - II. Beginning and Intermediate Level
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory/Composition
    - Rhythm Patterns
    - Chord Study
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Classroom Method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method



## THE CHORD APPROACH TO IMPROVISING

by

Walter Stuart

This book consists of a series of jazz exercises with accompanying chord symbols. The exercises are written in the keys of C, F, B<sup>b</sup>, E<sup>b</sup>, A<sup>b</sup>, G, D, A, and E-major.

The following set of instructions is given with each set of exercises: (1) exercises should first be practiced as written, (2) the student should then "re-compose" each measure by omitting some notes or adding other notes of his own choice, (3) original improvisations should be composed either in writing or just "ad-lib," (4) exercises should be used as a guideline and inspiration rather than for direct copying.

- I. 19 pages
- II. Beginning - Advanced
- III. Teaching Approach
  - Composition
  - Ear Training
  - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
- IV. No play-along record
- V. Individual or Classroom method
- VI. No Discography or Bibliography

Classification: Supplemental Method

## ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MODERN IMPROVISATION

by

Walter Stuart

The Encyclopedia of Modern Improvisation consists of six books: (1) Lessons in Rhythm and Syncopation, (2) Jazz Ad-Lib Choruses on 21 Famous Songs, (3) Modern Jazz Passages, (4) How to Create Your Own Jazz Phrases, (5) The Chord Approach to Improvising, (6) Jazz Scales (for all treble clef instruments).

Lessons in Rhythm and Syncopation. This book is designed to acquaint the student with rhythms and syncopated patterns found in modern jazz and popular music. They are arranged in progressive order with vertical lines below the music to indicate the metric division. The exercises are limited to 4/4, 3/4, and 2/4.

Jazz Ad-Lib Choruses on 21 Famous Songs. This book consists of written solos on 21 songs. Chord symbols accompany each written improvisation.

Modern Jazz Passages. This book contains 190 jazz passages that illustrate various styles of jazz improvisation. Passages are written in all major keys with the exception of F#. The student is encouraged to transpose each passage to all keys.

How to Create Your Own Jazz Phrases. This book presents a system of putting together jazz solos based on the

use of short phrases. 1,080 jazz phrases are presented along with a system for assembling complete choruses and rules for modifying jazz phrases to construct new phrases.

The Chord Approach to Improvising. This book consists of a series of jazz exercises with accompanying chord symbols.

Jazz Scales. Jazz scales is a study of major scales and harmonic minor scales using rhythmical jazz patterns.

- I. 139 pages
  - II. Beginning - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory/Composition
    - Ear Training
    - Scales/Chords
    - Rhythmic and Melodic patterns
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method

## THE A B C's OF IMPROVISATION

by

Richard Torres

This is a beginning level improvisation book containing basic theoretical components considered by the author to be necessary in order to improvise. The book contains four chapters.

Chapter One consists of major, minor, major seventh, diminished seventh, minor seventh, diminished seventh, and augmented chords and their scales. Detailed explanation is provided, as well as illustrations and musical examples.

Chapter Two contains major, major seventh, minor, diminished, and augmented chord studies. Examples are provided that combine major chord arpeggios with dominant seventh arpeggios and minor chord arpeggios with minor seventh arpeggios.

Chapter Three contains examples using the II-V-I progression and examples using the blues. Some musical examples are written out. An analysis system is given in this chapter.

Chapter Four consists of an explanation of the key center and how to find the tonality of a given chord.

Suggestions for study are provided in the final chapter.

- I. 49 pages
  - II. Beginning Level
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Ear Training
    - Scales and Chords
    - Rhythm patterns
    - Theory
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. No Discography or Bibliography
- Classification: Complete Method

## GUIDE TO CREATIVE JAZZ IMPROVISATION

by

Rick Wald

The purpose of this book is to aid the student who has an existing knowledge of scales and intervals and wishes to study jazz improvisation. The book contains ten chapters.

Chapter One, "Interval Determination," explains intervallic construction and provides exercises that utilize various combinations of intervals. Chapters Two through Nine discuss major scales and modes with the inclusion of exercises. Chapter Ten explains the blues and chord progressions.

- I. 48 pages
  - II. Intermediate - Advanced
  - III. Teaching Approach
    - Theory/Composition
    - Rhythmic and Melodic Patterns
    - Scales/Chords
    - Ear Training
  - IV. No play-along record
  - V. Individual or Classroom method
  - VI. Discography and Bibliography included.
- Classification: Complete Method

PART TWO - REVIEW OF RELATED STUDIES

A SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL, AUDIO-IMITATION METHOD DESIGNED  
TO TEACH TRUMPET STUDENTS JAZZ IMPROVISATION  
IN THE MAJOR MODE

by

Allan Eugene Aitken

The general purposes of this study were to design a method to be used by teachers of little jazz experience and to fill a void in the published and unpublished jazz improvisation trumpet literature.

Part Two of the study consisted of a text which was designed with the following purposes in mind: (1) the design of a jazz improvisation method for the B-flat trumpet, (2) the design of a method incorporating the elements of jazz, (3) the design of a method which is self-instructional, and (4) the design of a method incorporating an imitative approach to improvisation using a rhythm section and trumpet artist.

The text consisted of 112 lessons that cover scales, nuances, patterns, and cliches commonly used in jazz. A play-along tape accompanies the text.



## THE JAZZ STUDIES CURRICULUM

by

Walter Laning Burr

The purpose of this study was to structure a college curriculum for a major in jazz and studio music. On the basis of a questionnaire administered to fifteen American colleges and universities, a jazz studies curriculum was developed that would meet the needs of the Bachelor of Music in performance, jazz, and studio music. Accompanying recommendations for the potential jazz educator are also included. The jazz studies curriculum was based on the following categories: (1) jazz ensemble, (2) jazz improvisation, (3) rehearsal techniques for the jazz ensemble, (4) jazz keyboard, (5) arranging for the jazz ensemble, and (6) jazz history and literature.

THE DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF A SELF-INSTRUCTIONAL  
SEQUENCE IN JAZZ IMPROVISATION

by

Bert Lee Damron, Jr.

The purpose of this study was the development and evaluation of a programmed sequence designed to teach jazz improvisation to junior and senior high school wind instrumentalists. Comparisons were made between participating and non-participating students. A comparison was also made of the relationship of stage band and concert band experience on the learning of jazz improvisation.

The construction of the self-instructional sequence involved the usage of vocal and visual materials utilizing a modal approach. Each instrumentalist was provided with a packet that contained a performance book, worksheets, and a cassette tape recording. The activities included were: structured creative responses, applied ear training, applied theory, transcription analysis, and improvisation. Forty students were selected from secondary schools located in Maryland.

At the conclusion of five weeks of study a performance test was administered. Conclusions of the study were that performance of jazz improvisation, as designed with this study and evaluated by selected judges, can be taught by a programmed method.

A GUIDE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF IMPROVISATIONAL  
EXPERIENCE THROUGH THE STUDY OF SELECTED  
MUSIC FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUMENTALIST

by

Orlando DiGirolamo

The study presents an organized body of instruction that employs improvisation as a creative and learning experience. It is designed to meet the needs of individual high school instrumentalists. The main thrust of the dissertation is the encouragement of instrumentalists to explore, discover, and express themselves. Improvisation is used as an instructional tool and as an approach to developing comprehensive musicianship.

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF IMPROVISATION  
AND COMPOSITION ON THE ABILITY TO DISCRIMINATE  
SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN MELODIC PATTERNS

by

Carl Joseph Eberhand

The purpose of this study was to conceptually analyze and classify major sources of information concerning the terms improvisation, creativity, and music creativity. The study consisted of an experiment in which two groups of subjects were presented aurally and visually with melodic patterns. Each subject was asked to use his visual and aural capacity to place the patterns into families.

The result of the test showed no significant difference in the scores of the experimental and control group. However, the author felt that a longer experiment was needed to distinguish the variables in question.

FROM JAZZ TO SWING: BLACK MUSICIANS  
AND THEIR MUSIC, 1917-1935

by

Thomas Joseph Hennessey

The purpose of this study was to examine the role of the black musician in influencing and reacting to the changes that occurred in jazz between 1917-1935 with the author using the following time spans in discussing the era.

- (1) Before 1917 - Jazz discussed from the standpoint of a patchwork formation of local styles which combined elements of Afro-American and European-American musical traditions to produce an entertainment music for urban America.
- (2) 1917-1923 - Interaction of black and white musicians caused by influences of mass media, records, and radio.
- (3) 1923-1929 - Continuation of racial interactions along with regional development of jazz styles.
- (4) 1929-1935 - Band business and operation organized on a national level.

JAZZ IMPROVISATION AT THE PIANO -  
A TEXTBOOK FOR TEACHERS

by

Bertram Lawrence Konowitz

The major purpose of this study was to create an original, sequentially structural process for teaching jazz improvisation at the piano. As a second purpose, an approach to the improvisational experience is developed. The final purpose of this study was to compose original piano compositions which were specifically designed to initiate and motivate jazz improvisation.

JAZZ IMPROVISATION FOR THE B-FLAT SOPRANO TRUMPET:  
AN INTRODUCTORY TEXT FOR TEACHING BASIC  
THEORETICAL AND PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLES

by

John Willys McCauley

The purposes of the McCauley study are outlined as follows:

- (1) To provide an introductory text for teaching basic theoretical and performance principles of jazz improvisation for the B-flat soprano trumpet.
- (2) To present a review of selected rudiments of music considered to be requisite to the study of jazz improvisation with particular emphasis on intervals, chords, scales, and blues fundamentals.
- (3) To provide basic concepts of jazz improvisation which would enable the serious student to discover and develop his own creative potential through improvisatory experience and then proceed to become more familiar with current improvisatory practices.
- (4) To compose original jazz improvisatory models which were designed to initiate and motivate the students toward proficiency in jazz improvisation.

The study is divided into two parts which utilize

historical research, theoretical studies, pedagogical principles, and original examples for jazz improvisation. Part One contains research supporting the need for a jazz improvisation text. Part Two consists of an improvisation text which contains a sequentially structured review of selected rudiments of music. Special emphasis is placed on techniques of improvising jazz from pentatonic and modal structures and from the twelve-tone matrix.



DIFFERENCES IN MUSIC ACHIEVEMENT, MUSICAL EXPERIENCE,  
AND BACKGROUND BETWEEN JAZZ-IMPROVISING MUSICIANS  
AND NON-IMPROVISING MUSICIANS AT THE FRESHMAN  
AND SOPHOMORE COLLEGE LEVELS

by

William Theodore McDaniel, Jr.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain whether there are significant differences between a population of jazz improvisers and a population of non-improvisers with regard to music achievement, musical experience, and background. McDaniel's hypothesis stated that a significant difference did exist. The data-gathering instruments used were the Aliferis Music Achievement Test (AMAT) and an eleven scale inventory devised by McDaniel called the McDaniel Background Test (MBT). This latter instrument was used to secure information concerning background and musical experience of each subject.

A total of 297 students were selected from members of the freshman and sophomore classes at eleven midwestern junior colleges and universities and three southern universities. Jazz improvisers were selected on the basis of taped audition and non-improvisers were selected randomly.

Three null hypotheses were articulated in the following manner:

- (1) There are no differences in music achievement as measured by AMAT between the jazz improvising and non-improvising musicians.

- (2) There are no differences in background between jazz-improvising and non-improvising musicians.
- (3) There are no differences in musical experience between jazz improvising and non-improvising musicians.

Hypotheses one and three were rejected and while hypothesis number two was accepted.

THE OCCUPATIONAL SUBCULTURE OF THE JAZZ MUSICIAN:  
MYTH AND REALITY

by

Charles Anthony Nanry

This study consisted of an outline of the occupational history of jazz, a discussion of the social science literature on jazz, and an empirical investigation of jazz musicians in the New York area.

In defining the areas of investigation to be undertaken, jazz musicians were asked to read some of the sociological literature concerning jazz to help in the rejection or retention of myths concerning the jazz subculture.

Two critical developmental stages were selected for investigation. The stages were defined as: (1) the position of those attempting to achieve full professional status, the candidates; (2) The position of those who had already achieved full professional status, the pros. Further information was obtained by means of an interview process.

The central hypothesis of the study was that candidate successes are more like pros than candidate failures.

CHARLIE PARKER: TECHNIQUES OF IMPROVISATION  
(Volumes I and II)

by

Thomas Owens

This study consists of 190 transcriptions of the improvised solos of Charlie Parker. The transcriptions are divided into two groups: (1) early period solos, and (2) mature period solos. The mature period is further divided according to key and harmonic plan. Much of the study is devoted to the manner in which Parker uses motives to construct solos. The writer presents a set of conclusions based on his analysis.

JAZZ EDUCATION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF LOUISIANA:  
IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

by

Jerry Ronald Payne, Sr.

The purpose of the study was to examine the implications for teacher education resulting from an investigation of jazz education in the secondary schools of Louisiana.

The author utilized a descriptive survey technique which employed a structured personal interview. General catalogs of nineteen Louisiana colleges were analyzed to determine the availability of courses related to jazz education. Fifty secondary school band directors were interviewed. Findings and conclusions are presented.

AN EXAMINATION OF THE EVOLUTION OF JAZZ AS IT RELATES  
TO THE PRE-LITERATE, LITERATE, AND POST-LITERATE  
PERCEPTS OF MARSHALL McLUHAN

by

James Joseph Quinn

This study examined the various styles of jazz that have occurred throughout the evolution of the art from the standpoint of performance practices, overall musical textures, and structural organization. The information brought forth by this examination is then used as evidence bearing directly on the basic percepts put forth by Marshall McLuhan concerning the effects of pre-literate, literate, and post-literate modes of communication on man's sensory balance.

The study is written in language which allows the non-musician to easily understand analytical comments concerning jazz music itself.

A SURVEY OF PUBLISHED JAZZ ORIENTED CLARINET  
STUDY MATERIALS: 1920-1970

by

R.L. Ricker

The purpose of this study was to present representative publications relating to jazz clarinet technique.

Chapter I summarizes the use of the clarinet in jazz from the beginning to 1973. Chapter II discussed the pedagogical use of jazz-oriented materials. Chapter III consists of an annotated catalog of jazz-oriented clarinet materials.

The following division is used:

- (1) Published transcriptions of recorded jazz improvisation.
- (2) Publications discussing improvisational techniques.
- (3) Clarinet solos and studies simulating jazz improvisation.
- (4) Publication for various instruments, including clarinet or adaptable for clarinet, that contains solos or studies simulating jazz improvisation.
- (5) Jazz-oriented materials found as part of larger methods.
- (6) Jazz-oriented duets.
- (7) Chord studies.

Appendices included:

- (1) Conversation with DeFranco.
- (2) Life span of famous jazz clarinetists.
- (3) Discography of jazz artists whose solos are included in the cited materials.



## JAZZ HARMONY: STRUCTURE, VOICING, AND PROGRESSION

by

Joseph William Rohm

The overall purpose of this study was to define theoretical bases for the three areas of jazz harmony. This study addresses itself to chord structures, chord voicings, and chord progressions. Piano and instrumental scores that are representative of the period 1950-1970 are used to further clarify certain harmonic aspects.

Chapter One presents information concerned with building chords. The basic jazz chord structures are discussed along with polychords.

Chapter Two examines block style, open position, and spread voicing. Findings are presented concerning each category.

Chapter Three presents a theory of progression based on a relationship of chord roots.

JAZZ IMPROVISATION: PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES  
RELATING TO HARMONIC AND SCALIC RESOURCES

by

Joseph A. Salvatore

The focus of this study was on the theoretical and practical materials needed for executing an improvised solo in terms of (a) the specific chords and scales used in jazz music, (b) a process for converting chord structures into scale structures, and (c) the types of study materials best suited to mastering these chords and scales.

The objectives of this dissertation were twofold:

- (1) To analyze and identify basic principles and practices of jazz instrumentalists in their performances of improvisations of jazz melodies.
- (2) To identify and analyze techniques which these instrumentalists evolved and present them in such a manner that they could be understood by the emerging young jazz performer in his quest for quasi-professional skills in this medium.

To achieve these objectives the following steps were taken:

- (1) An investigation was made of publications dealing with jazz harmony and scales.
- (2) Analyses were made of transcribed solos taken from recordings.

(3) Analyses were made of the various teaching methods espoused by current professional jazz theorists.

(4) Analyses were made of jazz compositions and arrangements.

The outcome of this study resulted in the evolution of a method book.

IMPROVISATION IN THE PERFORMING ARTS:  
MUSIC, DANCE, AND THEATRE

by

Martin Sperber

The purpose of this study was to present a comparative and comprehensive view of improvisation in the performing arts. The study employed the following system of organization:

- (1) Definition of improvisation and presentation of relevant psychological and educational theories dealing with spontaneous expression, intuitive thinking, and expression of feelings.
- (2) Explanation of the relationship of the historical use of improvisation and description of reading improvisation in the performing arts.
- (3) Presentation of information gained through interviewing practitioners of improvisation in the arts.
- (4) Discussion of answered and unanswered questions concerning improvisation.

STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE JAZZ IMPROVISATIONAL  
TECHNIQUES OF CLIFFORD BROWN

by

Milton Lee Stewart

The purpose of this study was to investigate the elements of structural development used by Clifford Brown in his jazz improvisations. This study utilizes and extends methodology developed in an earlier study by the author, A Comparative Analysis of Improvisational Technique of Clifford Brown.

The basic hypothesis of the study is that Brown's solos are based on a thorough awareness of the levels of the original composition, as well as the levels of his own mental constructs and pre-determined compositional ideas.

## CHAPTER IV

### INTERVIEWS

The purpose of this chapter is to present typescripts of interviews obtained as primary data. Much of the inspiration and insight into improvisation that is acquired by the aspiring jazz musician is gained through actual contact and personal exchange with accomplished jazz improvisers. The process of personal exchange is commonly termed "hangin' out" by the jazz community. "Hangin' out" is considered by the jazz community as one of the vital aspects in the development of a complete jazz improviser.

With this in mind, complete typescripts of interviews are included so that the reader can gain a more profound insight into the personal make up of each musician and "hang out" by proxy with them.

Each interview session was arranged at a time that was mutually convenient to the researcher and the participant. They were characterized by an open discussion covering the five areas included in the interview guide.

In order to insure a natural atmosphere conducive to uninhibited conversations, the interviews took place within the everyday environment of the subject being interviewed.

Locations of interviews included dressing rooms of night clubs, backstage at Carnegie Hall, sidewalks, recording studios, offices, taxicabs, subway trains, airports, restaurants and private homes. Each interview fluctuated in length and degree of privacy. The elements of time and privacy in relationship to each interview were largely dependent upon the location in which the interview took place and on the volubility of the interviewee. In every case, subjects were extremely cooperative. Most subjects appeared eager to be interviewed, and all were friendly, helpful, and most cordial to the interviewer.

Following is a list of participants in alphabetical order.

Jamey Aebersold	Saxophone	New Albany, Indiana
David Baker	Cello	Bloomington, Indiana
Oscar Brashear	Trumpet	Los Angeles, California
Randy Brecker	Trumpet	New York, New York
Bobby Bryant	Trumpet	Los Angeles, California
Al Cohn	Saxophone	New York, New York
Jerry Coker	Saxophone	Knoxville, Tennessee
Bill Evans	Piano	
Gil Evans	Piano/Com- poser	New York, New York
Jon Faddis	Trumpet	New York, New York
William Fielder	Trumpet	Itta Bena, Mississippi
Carl Fontana	Trombone	Las Vegas, Nevada

Dan Haerle	Piano	Denton, Texas
Eddie Harris	Saxophone	Los Angeles, California
Joe Henderson	Saxophone	San Francisco, California
Milt Hinton	Bass	New York, New York
Dave Holland	Bass	New York, New York
Hank Jones	Piano	Cresthill, New Jersey
Thad Jones	Trumpet	Teaneck, New Jersey
Dave Liebman	Saxophone	San Francisco, California
Marian McPartland	Piano	New York, New York
Blue Mitchell	Trumpet	Los Angeles, California
Rufus Reid	Bass	New York, New York
Sam Rivers	Saxophone	New York, New York
Zoot Sims	Saxophone	New York, New York
Marvin Stamm	Trumpet	New York, New York
Clark Terry	Trumpet	New York, New York
Ernie Watts	Saxophone	Los Angeles, California
Snooky Young	Trumpet	Los Angeles, California



## JAMEY AEBERSOLD INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

AEBERSOLD: I was born July 21, 1939, in New Albany, Indiana.

QUESTION: What were your early home and musical lives like?

AEBERSOLD: My parents both played music. My dad played the banjo and the piano. He used to play in bands around Louisville, Kentucky, which is just across the river from New Albany, Indiana. My mom also played the piano, and I think that she used to teach a little when she was younger. I have two brothers; one is four years older, and one is four years younger. They are both musically inclined and they both play the piano and organ. The younger played clarinet and drums, and if he wanted to be a musician he could be because he has talent and an excellent ear, but he is a florist.

I started playing music when I was five. I started on the piano. I got fired when I was ten. The teacher gave me my money back and told me to go on home because I didn't want to practice and told me that I would never be a musician. After that, I didn't want to practice. After five years of practicing for an hour a day on the piano, I was pretty tired of it. When I was eight or nine I started playing the tenor

banjo like my dad. The first two bucks I ever made was at a talent show, playing and singing a tune called "Slow Poke." I think they gave me the two bucks because I forgot the words and they felt sorry for me. I remember that my old piano teacher was in the audience, so I must have been about ten years old. I probably had just quit piano lessons. I can remember seeing her out there and thinking, "Oh wow! Now I'm playing the banjo and singing. I bet she really thinks I'm terrible."

I started playing the saxophone in the fourth or fifth grade. I went up to the band director at my grade school and asked him if I could play in the band and he said, "Sure, what instrument do you play?" I said, "I play tenor banjo." He said, "We don't have no banjos in the band," and I said, "No banjos! What kind of band is this? Wow! Maybe I don't want to play in this band." Anyway, I had to wait until the next year when I got in the sixth grade and could borrow my brother's alto saxophone. I guess if it had been a trumpet laying around, I would have started playing trumpet. I took clarinet a little later in high school, and flute, oboe, and bassoon in college. I took these instruments because I got

a bachelor's degree in woodwinds, and I was trying to avoid going to war so I stayed for my master's degree.

QUESTION: Where was this?

AEBERSOLD: At Indiana University. I got a bachelor's and a master's in saxophone. That is about it. Then I came home and started teaching. I also got married.

QUESTION: What kind of music did you listen to while growing up?

AEBERSOLD: My dad always played records. He had some seventy-eights. I finally got around to buying some myself when I got a little older. At breakfast and especially noon, my dad would come in from the florist's which was right next door to our house and put on three or four seventy-eights.

QUESTION: Do you remember any of the artists on the records?

AEBERSOLD: He would put on Clyde McCoy and records like that. It was never Duke Ellington or Count Basie. I would always buy a couple of those records, but I would play them on my record player down in the basement. He did have some Benny Goodman, which I liked, and I guess the dance bands of the day.

QUESTION: How did you first get into improvising?

AEBERSOLD: Well, I don't know. I have thought about that and often wanted to go back and think about it. I think I have always been improvising in some form or other. The idea of looking at the notes and reading them takes discipline, and in the early part of my life--I mean up until this year-- I have not been a very disciplined person. I feel that I have always been undisciplined. The idea of having to read music and things like that went against my grain. I would rather spend my time messing around trying to figure out things. Improvisation sort of came natural to me I think. I can still remember going down in the basement and putting some of the old seventy-eights on that I liked, like "Sugar Blues" by Clyde McCoy, and playing along with them. Then I remember that Debbie Reynolds came out with a movie that had a tune with the lyrics, "So this is the kingdom of heaven, etc.," which was a pretty tune with a nice chord progression. Now, I can visualize Coltrane (John) doing that on an album of ballads. When I heard that tune, I said, "Wow, there are some chords in this song that are different." I got my horn and just played with the record over and over. When I was in high school, at about fifteen years

old, we started a little band called The Night Hawks. I started writing some blues and things like that. We played some Stan Kenton, and I started to hear major seventh chords, and I remember that they were really neat. I would also listen to the radio every night. I would listen to Station WLN out of New Orleans. I can't think of the guy's name who had the program, but I remember that he would play records of bands and have live bands on the show. He used to play a lot of Dixieland on the show. It would be eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and I would be listening to Dixieland on the radio every night. I thought that it was fantastic. It was at the same time I was reading books on Dixieland by Mezz Mezzrow that I would get from the library. I would read about the lives of the musicians and the drugs and drinking and all of those things. I couldn't believe anybody was really like that, and it seemed kind of funny to me at the time, but I was really interested in the music and how the musicians played. I thought that it would be neat to be like that, but actually it wasn't for me at all. The music was but not the life. I listened to radio a lot, and then I found a record store and started

buying records. I think that some of the first records that I bought were seventy-eights by Count Basie and Duke Ellington. One that I remember in particular was "Tootin' Through the Roof," by Duke. Then I remember that I got this one Metronome All Stars record with Dizzy Gillespie where they played some pretty modern music. It was much more modern than anything that I had been listening to. All of a sudden, after listening to that, I don't remember going back and listening to WCN anymore. It was like eating vanilla ice cream and then discovering pickle ice cream. If you really like pickle, you aren't going to eat vanilla anymore.

The bass player in the band we had asked me if I wanted to go over to Louisville and take ten jazz lessons that would cost ten bucks. We had already been improvising but we didn't call it jazz; we just called it playing. I don't know if we even used the word jazz. I said, "I don't want to do it," but he said, "I am going to whether you go or not." With his insistence, I said, "Okay, I'll go." I didn't have a car so I went with him. I imagine that I was around fifteen at the time. It was really an embarrassing audition.

QUESTION: Who was the audition with?

AEBERSOLD: It was with three local musicians over in Louisville who are now good friends of mine. They are maybe ten years older than I.

QUESTION: What went on at the audition?

AEBERSOLD: One of the guys asked me what I would like to play and I said, "Oh, anything." He said, "Well, just name a tune," and I said, "Well, just anything." We had been playing in our dance band, and I felt like I knew hundreds of tunes when I really didn't know anything. Finally, the guy got exasperated with me and shouted, "Jamey, pick a tune." With that, I said, "Oh wow, this guy means business." I started racking my brain for the jazziest tune that I could think of to impress him with and I picked "Tenderly." That is the tune that Don (Haerle) played last night. He says that it is the first tune he learned to improvise on. Well, anyway, that is the tune that I picked. This guy asked me what key and I didn't know, so I told him that it started on the note of G on my alto. He said that was the key of E-flat and gave me a big arpeggiated introduction, and I was lost. I didn't know where I was. I tried to play the melody, and we didn't even make it all the way through. He

stopped and said that it was okay that I couldn't remember the melody and that he wanted to improvise. All of a sudden it really dawned on me that I didn't know anything. After that they started lending me records and teaching me arranging. They didn't teach the way we teach now using scales and chords and a methodical approach which utilizes the historical with the theoretical, but they started me to listening. We are more concerned now with getting the student to point X in a certain length of time. But anyway, I started listening to records and writing for our band which consisted of three saxophones and a couple of trumpets. We would rehearse a couple of times a week.

QUESTION: During this period were you also playing in the school band?

AEBERSOLD: Yes, I played in school band every year from the sixth grade, except my sophomore year in high school. I dropped out because my freshman year in high school band was like a babysitting class. We hardly ever played any music, and all I did was try and cut out early because it was the last period of the day and go home and get my work at the greenhouse done so that I could play basketball or something. I guess I sort



of missed that year that I dropped out, and I started feeling like I wanted to be a musician so I got back in the band my junior and senior years in high school. It wasn't really that much fun and I didn't enjoy the marching at all. In college I also had to march and I didn't like that either.

QUESTION: Did you ever participate in school choirs?

AEBERSOLD: No, however, I did sing in church choir. I sang in church choir for years.

QUESTION: In this part of your development, if you had to point out things that helped you develop the ability to improvise, what would they be?

AEBERSOLD: I really can't say back then because nothing really profound happened until I got almost out of college and started studying with David Baker. He started telling me things that made so much sense, as well as explicit things to practice. Prior to studying with David, it was all done by ear and asking questions with other people. That is sort of like running around a fence trying to find a gate and you can't see the gate because it's covered over with vines. You just run around and around, and everybody else is running too, but then somebody finally shows you where the gate is so that you can pass

through it and advance.

I remember practicing with a little play-along record while I was in high school. It had about four or five tunes on it like "Ja Da," maybe "Sweet Sue" or something like that. I improvised with this record over and over. As a matter of fact, I think I've still got the record. I wore them out. I was dying to play with somebody. I just played. I didn't know what key it was in. I just played by ear. I can even remember my high school band director letting me play with a play-along record at one of the half-times of a basketball game. We set up a record player and I played through a P.A. system. It was to some sort of dixieland tune. I had practiced my solo and I had several different ways that I could go at various points in the tune. That was a big thing for me. It was like playing in Carnegie Hall for me at that time.

QUESTION: What other kinds of things did you practice?

AEBERSOLD: I don't know what I practiced. During those years I think that that was all that I practiced. I just improvised and played around. I don't know exactly what I did.

QUESTION: Did you ever read music or play scales?

AEBERSOLD: I don't really ever remember doing that on

saxophone, but I did do it with the banjo. With the banjo I could sit down and work on certain tunes, but I finally gave the banjo up.

QUESTION: Do you ever play the banjo now?

AEBERSOLD: I can chord a little bit if I practice, but that is it. Tenor banjo requires a big reach like the cello. It is also tuned like the cello. I gave it up because I was a small-handed boy.

QUESTION: What would you tell a student if he came to you and said, "Mr. Aebersold, I am at point zero and I want to learn to play jazz. What should I do?"

AEBERSOLD: If I had time I would have him get his horn out and listen to him play. Then I could tell him better. Before I left him I would tell him that he had to get some records and start listening.

QUESTION: What would you ask him to play?

AEBERSOLD: I would just give him a scale or two or maybe a blues. I would probably play the piano. I would walk a bass line, play chords, and have him play a blues in maybe the key of G major. If he said, "I don't know what that is," I would probably say, "G is the home key, one sharp. Let's go." I would put him in a comfortable key and just see if he has anything going at all intuitively. That will tell me if he has listened to the music at all. From this

point I would go in other directions. I would try various scales and we would play using them as a reference. We would keep adding to it. If we were on a progressive lesson basis, I would insist all the while that he listen to records. The trouble with the majority of people who come to our jazz camps is that they don't play very well. I was just down the hall listening to a tenor player who was playing like he was playing a march. It is very obvious that he has never listened to this music. I can't stress listening too much. Listening is where it's at. Today with our mass movement we are confronted with the fact that everything in the United States is so big. You find something that works and then you try to manufacture it and make it big for everybody. We want to involve everybody in this great thing that we have going. The problem is that we are trying to involve a lot of people in improvising who really don't know if they want to improvise or not. It is like a social thing. They do it because their friends are doing it. You can't really improvise that way. You can approximate and play right notes, but the feeling, emotion, and getting the creative thing going inside and getting it to

come out of the horn is something else. You have to have desire.

QUESTION: How does your play-along record series fit into your teaching?

AEBERSOLD: The whole idea of the play-along record series stems from the fact that when I was young I wanted a rhythm section to play with and didn't have one.

When I came out with Volume One of my series ten years ago, I was not thinking about teaching in public schools or having improvisation classes where every kid has got a book and a record and you make assignments and have a lesson plan and stuff like that. By the way, I don't have a lesson plan or assignments. All I was thinking about was Joe Blow, like myself, who would like to play. I stopped and asked myself, "What should he play?" I thought that he should definitely play blues in F and B-flat. I know that there would be a lot of trouble if I gave a lot of scales at first, so I thought that I would limit it to two or three scales. It would have gotten very complicated if I had changed scales every measure, so I started out with eight-measure phrases. I was also thinking about Miles Davis's tune, "So What" in making that decision.

I felt that the modal idea was a good jumping-off place. A student could hear the modal tune and have eight measures in which to get ready to change scales. I also thought that I would not make the tempo too fast. After eight-measure phrases, I worked in four-measure phrases and then gradually into two-measure phrases. Everything was done stepwise. The student is led into the blues on the second side of the record and then into a simple John Coltrane type tune. I also included an exercise that would have the student play in all twelve keys. That closes up that volume.

QUESTION: I notice that the series progresses to include volumes on individual players. Is that going to continue?

AEBERSOLD: Yes, that is definitely going to continue. I have already recorded one with the tunes that Cannonball (Adderley) made famous. I have also been talking to Chick Corea now for three years concerning an album. I tried to tell him that three years ago was the time to release a play-along album of his tunes, especially if he wants to make some money. That is what they are thinking of and rightly so. I was thinking in terms of putting the tunes out while they were

popular. I have been talking to Joe (Henderson), Benny Golson, Wayne Shorter, Horace Silver, and Dexter Gordon. It just takes time to do it, and I feel that there is a definite need for it. Records on these players and records from my series like the Sonny Rollins, Miles (Davis), and Bird (Charlie Parker) play-along records are advanced. As a matter of fact, the Bird one is real hard.

I will share an experience with you that seems to make all of the work worthwhile. I got a letter from a doctor out in Utah. I believe his name was Dr. Burham. He wrote a letter that essentially said, "Your play-along record series is going to someday be responsible for jazz greats from little towns all over the United States." He jokingly named some small obscure towns, but what he was saying was that people could actually learn to play jazz by playing with my records. He ordered the four new ones and closed his letter by saying, "P.S. There is nothing like coming home from a hard day on the job and jamming with Ron Carter. That is what I call bringing the music to the people." He was talking about the Bird record. I xeroxed that letter, and I have a copy on my desk

because that letter is a written testament of why I did the whole thing. I did the series to give guys like this doctor some enjoyment in playing. I felt so good about it that I called Ron and read him the letter.

QUESTION: Is there anything else that you would like for me to include concerning your conceptual approach to teaching jazz improvisation?

AEBERSOLD: It is really not my approach. It is just that I am trying to codify some of the material. I am trying to put it on a level so that the layman can see where I am going in my series. He can even look ahead to see what he is going to be working on next week. It takes a lot of the mystery out of teaching jazz. Basically, you are dealing with scales. You learn the chromatic scales and then you learn the major scales, dominant seventh scales, minor scales, and your blues scales. These are the scales that are used more than any others. You get these scales down and then you play tunes that involve these scales. The materials found in my Volumes One, Two, and Three handle this area. Volume Three starts moving into half-diminished scales and diminished-whole tone scales. This puts things on a little higher level, but once a student



hears these and can play them on his instrument in a couple of keys, he will hear melodies based on these scales used in many different settings during the course of the day. He will hear them used on Musak by Andre Previn and Peter Nero, and he will hear Henry Mancini use them in his french horn countermelodies. It has always been around him, but up until this point he has not known what it is, but when you define the sounds in terms of a scale and give it a name it becomes a part of his understanding. He may say, "Hey, I heard this on the radio on my way to school today." Who knows? You might even hear Hank Williams playing, but when you start listening to Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie you really hear scales that are what we call high-tension scales. From this point you move on out because there is no end to scales.

QUESTION: How do you view the scales in relation to constructing improvised melodies in various contexts?

AEBERSOLD: I view the scales as the tools of improvisation. All such material must be filtered through one personality in order to be musically meaningful at a very high level. These tools filtered through wherever your head happens to be will help produce the music. You should also be

aware of the fact that your head changes. You can play a scale a certain way today and play it completely different tomorrow. The next day you may even change it again. Some kids who are sort of undisciplined feel that by learning the scales they will sound mechanical, sterile, and stiff. I like Don Haerle's answer to this. He says to them, "If your playing comes out that way, then that tells me that you are mechanical, sterile, and stiff. It has nothing to do with the notes."

QUESTION: What area of the country do you think most influenced your personality?

AEBERSOLD: It would have to be where I am from in southern Indiana. But personally, I feel that your personality is built over many incarnations. In order to take this position you would have to believe in reincarnation.

QUESTION: How do you compare your method of teaching improvisation to other methods that are on the market?

AEBERSOLD: I feel that there are different strokes for different folks. However, I may see someone else do a clinic and feel that they are short-changing the student. In other words, he may be offering the student a salad and that is all

he has to offer. I may be thinking that if it was me I would do some things a little differently and give him a salad, meat, potatoes, bread, and dessert, as well as a ticket for one after we eat. Now someone else might be able to give him the ticket to the movies, take him to the races, and put him up in a motel for a week. I said that to say that, even though I may be able to take students farther than some teachers someone else might take him farther than I can. You can only teach what you know. When you get into this, the students know when you are shuckin' and jivin' as a teacher. They can hear it if nothing is coming out of the horn. I feel that my whole teaching is based on everything that I have listened to, so everything that I say when I am talking to a student is based on something else. When I say to a student, "I want you to play this way;" I am really saying, "I want you to play this way because Miles Davis is listening. Play like you're playing for Sonny Rollins. Don't play for this kid sitting next to you who doesn't play nearly as well as you do to begin with," In other words, set your sights at the top. I sometimes have a problem getting through to

band directors because they haven't listened. When I mention Coltrane or Sonny Rollins, they don't know who I'm talking about, but yet here they are trying to teach this music with no background. They can't understand why they can't develop soloists and why the other bands sound better than they do. They just can't figure it out. It all comes down to listening. I feel sorry for them because I would hate to be trying to teach something and make a living doing something that I don't know anything about. Right now if I was into plumbing and didn't know anything about it, I would be petrified, especially if I had to go out and work with people who wanted to be young plumbers. I would be doing everything wrong, and they would know it, and I would know it.

QUESTION: What do you see for yourself in terms of future endeavors as far as the teaching of improvisation is concerned?

AEBERSOLD: Well, it has developed into quite a business. I don't really know. Whenever I get into a position where I get to play for a couple of days with somebody, I start to think of myself as a performer, and the educator becomes second. One particular instance that comes to mind is a clinic

that I did with Art Farmer, Louis Hayes, Rufus Reid, and James Williams. The day before the clinic I really got excited and sat down and wrote a couple of tunes. The two days that we were there I found myself dealing with my feelings of being a performer. However, when I get back home I start thinking more down the lines of education, but I have it in the back of my head that maybe someday I'll be able to play.

QUESTION: Do you practice?

AEBERSOLD: Yes, but I don't practice as much as I need to.

QUESTION: What do you practice?

AEBERSOLD: When I practice I'll practice patterns. I'll practice fourth patterns, false fingering patterns, and other things that Steve Grossman and John Coltrane got into that I can't do. I will also practice for speed. Sometimes I'll pick a tune and play on it for ten or fifteen minutes by myself. Sometimes I will play along with the records. I will pull out Volume Three and play along with the track that I still can't play real good on, especially the half-diminished and diminished-whole tone things. I sometimes practice with the Bird record. I think that I have enough to practice to keep me busy for two lifetimes.

As far as my teaching method goes, the things that I do are not really my teaching method. They are things that I have culled from other people. They seem to be logical and they seem to get results.

QUESTION: I notice that you and David Baker do a lot of similar things in your teaching. Is that by accident?

AEBERSOLD: No, it is not by accident, and as we have been doing these camps together for the last four or five years, we have even come closer together. He has borrowed things from me and I have borrowed things from him. We often talk things over before we publish something.

QUESTION: Do you have a preference for a particular type of music?

AEBERSOLD: The only music that I don't listen to a lot is Dixieland. Everything else past Dixieland I do listen to. Sometimes I can't get into the music of Anthony Braxton or Cecil Taylor, but then sometimes I can. But my head isn't really there. I also like Bartok. I used to go around putting down country and western music because I thought that it was impinging upon the jazz movement, but now I can listen to country and western and it doesn't bother me at all. I don't feel the

resentment toward it that I felt ten years ago. I think that I have become much more open-minded in that respect.

QUESTION: If you were asked to set up a curriculum for the music education of students all over the United States and you had unlimited funds, what would be the nature of the program that you would set up?

AEBERSOLD: The first thing I would do is to call in some people whose opinions I respected. We would have a meeting. I wouldn't dare do something like that on my own. I don't think that one person could do that, but it would be nice if I could.

I would have kids singing and improvising from an early age. You should hear my little boy sometime. He will be a product of what we are talking about. He is eleven years old now and has lived with this music for a number of years. Whenever he was younger and we would be in the car going along, he would never sing the nursery rhymes; he would sing with sort of a swing feel. Now he is listening to Charlie Parker on records and trying to play some of Parker's solos on his alto. He is starting to phrase like Bird. Any kid could do that if they are subjected to the music at an

early age. If they listen to that bubble gum trash they might as well be listening to something else. Actually, all that they are doing is listening to that because the disc jockey says that it's good. If their mom, dad, or teacher at school said, "Hey, Bird is out of sight, really out of sight and we are going to play this while we eat supper," they would think that it was great.

QUESTION: Is that what you do?

AEBERSOLD: Yes, that's what he hears all the time, and I have made it a point around him to try and not put down other types of music. I used to do that very badly. I have tried not to do that because I don't want to influence him. Who knows? He might end up being a church organist?

QUESTION: I get the impression that you make some strong connections between the mystical or the spiritual and the music. What is that?

AEBERSOLD: I am still trying to figure that out. To be perfectly honest, I am trying to figure out how I can worship God by picking up my tenor or alto and playing. I haven't gotten that clear yet because playing jazz has always seemed to me to be a very egotistical thing. With a lot of people that I have been around, it appears to be



a very egotistical thing. Very few people stand out as being extremely loving, giving, and kind. Very few people say, "Yes, you can take my music," or "Yes, I will stop and show you what I am doing." "I will put a handkerchief over the valves so that you can't see how I am fingering to get some of these sounds." That always seemed wrong to me, but yet I was caught up in that. I see that that is not it at all, and now what I am really trying to do is figure out how to worship God with my music.

I can see in the future that playing music is not really the important thing. The important thing is to reach a point of self-realization. In other words, if I had to give all of this up in order to get closer to God, I would not hesitate.

QUESTION: . In your teaching of improvisation do you teach on the level of self-realization and spirituality?

AEBERSOLD: I am trying to guide the students and at the same time I am hoping in my presentation and in the way that I am that they will see me as a person to mold themselves after temporarily. Maybe they will say, "If he says practice this, I'd better do it. He can do it, and I like what he is playing so I'd better do what he says."

If I were to say to them, "Well, if you want to play jazz, just listen and you'll get it together if you've got it," I'm sure that their attitudes would maybe change because that is jive. That is my inadequacy to think about how to improvise. I have come to that conclusion. Too many people say, "Man, if you want to improvise you just go play." What is that? That is like being told, "If you want to be saved, you've got to find Jesus." Then the guy walks away from you. You are sitting there saying, "Yeah, I believe him but where do I find Jesus? He died two thousand years ago." What good does that do? The guy telling you that has to be specific. He has to lay down some rules. "Be patient." "Stop killing." "Love those who hate you." I could go on and on, but my point is that you have to learn some rules and you have to follow them.

What I am trying to do is lay down some rules. If you want to play beautiful music, take what is in your head so that you and everybody else can hear it. You have to have some tools. It boils down to be the development of the tools which serve as the means by which you allow the music to pass through you. The tools are the means and not the end.

## DAVID BAKER INTERVIEW

QUESTION: What is your concept of improvisational playing?

BAKER: I write books so I see myself as an explainer of musical phenomena. I don't think anybody who writes theory books, whether it's jazz theory, the theory of how to prepare a machine, or the theory of how genes and chromosomes work, invents them. I think that the people who write theories are people who observe phenomena and then say, "Because of this, therefore, that."

As an improviser and writer of books, I go through all of the greats I come in contact with in an imitative fashion, Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Dickie Wells, and players like that. While examining these players and knowing that music is broken down into rhythm, melody, harmony, etc., I see that, give a particular situation harmonically, they will react in certain ways with a supporting melody constructed in a certain way. I then draw my conclusions and put them in a book. For instance, if out of a hundred people who I study, ninety of them play a major scale in a certain way under certain circumstances, then I make a rule. I say a major scale is supposed to be used in this circumstance for this reason.

As a player I learned by playing along with records. There were no jazz books or teachers. I learned all of J.J.'s (Johnson) solos. I certainly didn't have it as systematic as I've got it now, but as a player what I did over a number of years was get to the point where I could play any piece I heard in the style of J.J. convincingly because I knew J.J.'s style that well. What I do is start from this basic repository of knowledge, scales, patterns, and chords that everybody uses. That is why I teach the bebop language as our common practice period to my improvisation classes. I tell them that if they internalize bebop, then they are ready to start dealing with what they want to do. I take this fund of knowledge that has come down to me from Charlie Parker, Louis Armstrong, and all of these cats and then try to personalize it. I try to take it where I want it to go. In my own thinking right now I've become very much disenchanted with trying to keep repeating what Bird (Charlie Parker) and other greats have already done better than anybody is going to do. While I was with the George Russell Sextet, I started experimenting with ways to enliven certain aspects of the music as time and harmony using the lydian

chromatic concept. More and more I've gone to using set systems as their own reason for being. Given any tune, I immediately look to see what the possibilities are for evolving a set system out of the tune itself.

Take a tune like "Straight, No Chaser" where the melody consists of a perfect fourth, a whole step and a half-step. What I do is structure a solo using those raw ingredients without any regard for where they fit in the changes. The material supersedes the circumstance in which it is used, When I get ready to play on a tune like "Straight, No Chaser" I use the perfect fourth, whole step and half-step to construct my solo and let it go wherever it goes, because I think that Ornette (Coleman) and those cats have already freed us from having to go back and run changes.

Almost every improviser who is worth his salt has already come to this conclusion. Woody Shaw decided that he would use fourths and pentatonic scales on a particular chord. He simply plays the pentatonic scale and does whatever he wants to, and it becomes its own reason for being. That is a freer way of playing. Now as a teacher, I try to teach what I do. I try to teach what everybody else has done, but I also try to teach where it is

going. E.Z. Blackwood, who is one of the top composers in the country and is teaching at The University of Chicago, said something that really stuck with me. He said that no composer under thirty had any business writing tonal music. I don't think that it is that stringent but I do think that the whole spectrum is out there and that a cat has no business trying to do just what other people have done. Nobody is going to improve on what Miles (Davis), Dizzy (Gillespie), or Bird have done. They might extend it, but it seems to me that people have an obligation to be about the business of examining what contemporary music is about. The whole concept that exists now of the expanded spectrum of sound possibilities of harmonic, melodic, and tonal resources is available. For instance, a cat improvising today would be more likely to play in a contemporary style and use the things that have happened since Webern and Krenek than he would be to simply play the way he would have before he heard their music. And I think that is the way it has to happen. A player coming up today shouldn't play like me, Bird, or Dizzy. He should use us as a point of departure and go on from there. That is the name of the game.

QUESTION: Can I assume then that building the storehouse of knowledge is a way of learning what great players like Bird, Diz, and others have played and if the storehouse of knowledge is not there, there is no raw material to draw from?

BAKER: Yes. There is no way you can go and create something out of nothing. You have to have a basis from which to start. That is why I say the common practice period for me and my students is the bebop period. If you internalize the music from this period then you can use it as a stepping stone to go anywhere you want to go. I can't imagine a person who is going to write a novel not knowing how to write in the language of the people that he is trying to communicate with and not knowing how to codify thoughts even though there have been people to try it. I know a lot of cats who play that way. Cat says, "I'm going on out," when in effect he doesn't know if he is out or not because he doesn't know what preceded him. How are you going to get out if you don't know where in is? I don't mean to imply that you shouldn't have the storehouse of knowledge. As a matter of fact, I think it starts with the storehouse of knowledge.

QUESTION: With this in mind, what is the difference between a person who can improvise and a person who cannot?

BAKER: First of all it is a question of a philosophical position. There are people who believe that there is nothing to be gained from being an improviser or who do not choose to make improvisation a way of life. There are also improvisers who feel that there is nothing to be gained from playing pre-created music that does not involve their own creation. I happen to think that they are both viable positions. I agree with Jimmy Depriest, Marion Anderson's nephew and the conductor of the National Symphony, when he says that if he were to assess the creative quotient of two musicians, one being an improvising musician and the other not being able to improvise that probably the improvising musician would be the better of the two just because it involves total creativity. There are people who are improvisers who don't create, but that is their weakness and not a weakness of the system.

QUESTION: What do you mean when you say improvisers who don't create?

BAKER: I mean that there are people who simply 'poll parrot' what they have heard. That is a way to



learn, but that is not the end product. You can program a computer to play a Charlie Parker solo in a very convincing fashion, but it is not creating unless you think of creating as simply meaning the ability to join pre-existent materials together. That is a kind of creativity, but I'm talking about the ability to make decisions based on context and your emotional posture at a particular time. That is what I mean by creativity. I can program players to be very good jazz players without having them to be terribly creative. That is creative but there are different levels of creativity.

QUESTION: What method do you use to program them?

BAKER: I teach them to use the language. When you are teaching someone to write English, you aren't necessarily looking for creativity in the initial written work. What the teacher is doing is looking at your ability to put together thoughts in a cogent fashion and to use the language correctly. That is what you do when you teach jazz. You teach him what patterns go in what places, where scales go in relationship to chords, what Bird did, and what Dizzy did. To teach creativity simply give the students an atmosphere in which creativity is encouraged. I have to give them an

atmosphere in which they know that my priorities are creativity rather than restatement of extant material. My feeling is that anything that can be analyzed and codified can be taught. That is really how we learn to play.

For years the jazz musician was much like the griot in Africa who was the carrier of knowledge. This knowledge was handed down orally from generation to generation. The difference in the teaching techniques of the past and the present is that in the past we learned on a one-to-one basis. We sat up under Wes Montgomery and saw what he did. But why do that when I can put the information in a book and reach ten thousand people instead of one?

Jazz musicians have withheld information for one reason or another, and sometimes they are selfish reasons. When cats get into their act about not being able to teach jazz improvisation, the first thing I tell them is that the problem is on the emphasis of the words. You can't teach jazz improvisation. I feel that with the invention of the printing press in roughly 1500, we got rid of the need to pass on everything orally. It's like the commercial on television where the man comes out after hand printing a

sign. What is that? Why go back to the dark ages? If I can reach a thousand people with a book, why should I have to be limited to teaching one person at a time? There was a time before the invention of records, roughly 1917, when that was the only way you had to learn to play jazz. That was the way you had to learn to play a lot of things, but with the invention of the record, whether somebody taught it or not, the record did the teaching, and once you get to the swing period where there was a proliferation of recordings along with the availability of the jukebox and radio, the music became more accessible. From that point on, it was just a question of hearing the music anyway that you could. That is why you can walk into clubs in Japan and hear a cat who sounds just like Freddie Hubbard. You can walk into a club in Yugoslavia and there is a cat playing just like Ornette. It is not a closed thing anymore. Marshall McLuhan said it right when he said that it is a global village. Every bit of information is immediately accessible to every human being on the globe within minutes. I think it is very important to examine jazz materials that are passed down by books because there is no way for one man to hold all of the truths and all of the

answers. If that is the case then the answer lies in being able to tap as many sources of knowledge as possible. It takes it all to do it now. There was a time, roughly before 1926, when jazz was a folk art, but the advent of the Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings of Louis Armstrong around this time, the direction of jazz changed and expanded. Before then it was possible for a cat to be the keeper of the flame and have all of the knowledge in one bag, but nowadays you even have to redefine the term jazz.

If you say jazz to people, they ask what you mean. You can even say avant-garde and the reply is the same. They ask are you talking about Archie Shepp, Lester Bowie, Ornette, or whatever because all of these players are so different from each other than the term doesn't even mean anything anymore. Multiply that by a million when you start to talk about the term jazz, and it becomes evident that no one cat can have all the truths, so what you do is go to a million books. My book doesn't claim to be the only book, that's why I write so many books--because my truths change. I finish a book and I don't even look at it anymore. That book is put on the shelf and people who need it, buy it. I say,

"Read this chapter if you want to know this or that," and then I'm all about the business of writing another book because my ideas have changed.

QUESTION: If a person comes to you with some concept of feel but really couldn't improvise that well, what sequence of activities would you take him through in order to get him to improvise?

BAKER: It is impossible for me to answer that because my whole premise of teaching is predicated on the individual, and without having a set of specifics concerning what he needs, where he is, or what he does, I couldn't tell you that. There are certain general things that are given. He will have to learn to play cycles, changes, patterns, etc. The order in which the activities are presented may change. That is why even though my books are fine, you have to study with somebody who is sensitive to your needs. I don't know what order I would teach the material until I get the student. I can tell you how I do it in class. In a one-to-one situation, I see where the cat is at and what he needs, and then I go from there. One of my biggest gripes about people who teach privately is that when I walk down the hall I can tell every student who studies with a single teacher by

what he is playing because they all play the same exercises. I can't go with the premise that everyone has the same needs, strengths, and weaknesses. If the needs and weaknesses are not the same, then they don't have any business playing the same things. In a class things are different and can be structured in such a way that the class becomes the special problem and I see where the mean of the class is. If I've got 150 people in an improvisation class, I try to see where most of them are at, and I design what I am going to do so that everybody can do as much as he can with what is being done. Anybody can play a major scale from wherever he is. Trane (John Coltrane) could play a major scale and have a different perception than the cat who has just started to play a major scale. It is like Fela Sowanda says--"Truth exists on a lot of levels. There are no absolute truths." There is no way that a cat who is seven years old can have the same truth about anything that a cat who is seventy years old has. They both look at a cup and have a perception of what a cup is and what the truth of the cup is about, but that cat who is seventy years has got seventy years

worth of truth about the cup.

I get people in my class and we are all going to play the major scale, but the cat who has got twenty-five years of experience is expected to play twenty-five years worth of experience on the major scale. I don't want him messing around with the diminished scale, I want the major scale, but I don't want his playing to be structured and limited by anything other than his growth.

My book is aimed at the most people who need the most things. However, in a situation where there are a lot of people involved, you can't give the same kind of detail and attention, so what I try to do is provide situations that will benefit all concerned. I'll say, "Alright, we are going to play the diminished scale and I don't want anybody playing below his level." In performance and improvisation classes I am leary. I don't want anybody to sound good because if you sound good you are not learning anything. The minute you can play something, you should leave it alone except in a performance situation. There is no reason to practice anything that you can play except for a refresher now and then.

When I sit down to practice I don't ever sound good. I always sound awful because I am always trying things that I can't play. I don't see any reason to practice things that I can play. I don't play scales or patterns that I know how to play except for recreation. When I get done with all of my work and my head is aching, then I may play "If I Were A Bell" to relax. Even then I may play it in F-sharp instead of F because I want to always be learning. I know cats who sound good all the time. If you catch my band at a rehearsal, you will never catch them sounding good, because I am not going to let them do anything that they sound good on. If they can already play a chart, there is no point in playing it. I can take hard music and put it in front of them and they can read it, so we don't mess with that. We get our concerts together three days before so that it will be mellow for the people to hear. I don't have time to waste. When I teach in a one-to-one situation I try to structure the



lessons toward the individual. I have a number of private students now who impress me as being conscientious people who need help. Rarely, even in a one-to-one situation, do I listen to people play what I assign except to know that they did it. I give them all kinds of backbreaking exercises and have them play a minute of that. The minute I know that they have been working on it there is no point in me listening to it. We can go on to something else. The learning took place while they were working and not with them playing it for me. Why waste my time and their money by having them play all the things that they worked on that week? All I listen for is to see how accurate it is or is there a problem with the exercise. When I spot the problem I analyze it, diagnose it, and fix it. Then we march on.

I have a lot of students who can't handle the way I teach privately because they work all week on this one thing so that they can impress me and once I find out they can play it, I say, "Cancel; let's go on to something else." To sum this up as to the way I feel about teaching, I would have to say when asked what my sequence

for teaching improvisation is, that it depends on many things. I know that there is a certain body of knowledge that everybody has got to have and I can tell you that we are going to deal with all of these things, but the sequence in which they come varies. I teach them the basic skills You have to know scales, chords, and nomenclature, which is the language. The next that I think about is the adhesive techniques, which is why I wrote the four books that follow my jazz improvisation book. They consist of scales, II-V patterns, turnarounds, and cycles. These are the things that you need to be able to play to the extent that you don't have to do anything about them.

You internalize this material and it becomes your links. Like in the language, nobody has to think about whether the verb comes next, conjunction, and all of that. Those are the givens. We learn those so that we can have them at our disposal, then we can concentrate on content. All of the linking devices just pull it together. A turnaround is to get me from one chorus to the next. I can't think about what I am going to play if I have to think

about that. My fingers know turnarounds, as well as all of the other linking devices, and can play them all day long.

Once I have established the order that a person needs this material in, then I don't talk about these things anymore. I talk about how to make music. Getting to the place where this material is internalized is just practice. I have a feeling that anything that is not internalized is of little value to you. You have to internalize all of the basic scale-related material. It's like Muhammad Ali. He doesn't have time to think about how to react when a left is coming at him. That is internalized. It's like what happens when you read music. Nobody has to tell you what fingering to play a B-flat with. If you see a B-flat, the first finger goes down or whatever alternate fingering you intend to use at a given time and you don't think about it. You don't have time to think about that, because if you did you couldn't play any music. We get all of this first and then we talk about making music. How do you move to the highest architectural level and get rid of all of the building blocks? How do you make a house that looks like Frank Lloyd Wright's houses? That's what I want

to talk about. I don't want to talk about the first brick that's laid, and I assume that there is a blueprint and then we talk about how to conceive it.

QUESTION: What do you think is happening at the highest level of total creativity?

BAKER: I don't know. That is something that is different with every individual. It is different with every individual even at different stages of his life, sometimes even from day to day. If it were something tangible then you could create at that highest level all of the time, but I don't know anybody who can do that. That is why you have to have all of the motor things. I believe that a cat like Miles Davis, John Coltrane, or Sonny Rollins is different from the second string player, third string player, fourth string player, and the beginner only in terms of the degree of concentration--not in the kind of concentration--only in the degree of concentration. What is one cat's first-class improvisation may be another cat's fifth-class improvisation. In other words, John Coltrane could play his fifth-class improvisation and be higher than most cats first-class improvisation. It is a question of how much you've got it together. If it is internalized you don't have to

worry. I want to have so much that is automatic, that even when I feel bad, can't think, and everything is going wrong in the rhythm section, I sound good. I want that much in reserve. That means motor skills. That means that my mind can be on something else or can wander and I can still make music because my finger knows a lot of what's happening. That is what I mean when I talk about the reserve factor. The highest level is Valhalla. I don't know what that it is and I can't even explain that. I can tell you how to get there, but I can't tell you what it is because it's something different. You get there through the internalization of all the materials that happen at every level. Everytime you add another level, you create another high spot that you can't go below.

QUESTION: Was there ever a time when you had to devote all of your time to building the foundation that you have been talking about?

BAKER: I've been there, I've worked on it. I learned to play cello very late. I started cello when I was thirty-one or thirty-two years old after having to quit playing the trombone. I had a car accident and had to start cello after I had already won the Down Beat Poll as a trombone

player. I had to start from scratch. I learned a lot of bad things with different teachers. When I switched to Jano Starker in September I didn't play anything but open strings for one month. That is all. No music. Open strings. I learned how to hold the bow and feel the instrument again. I didn't mind. I am not adverse when it comes to things that will help me. If a cat told me tomorrow, "I can make you a player twice as good as you are on that instrument, but you are going to have to give up all public playing and playing of music for the next two years," I would not hesitate. I wouldn't take one minute to make the decision to do that. When I went to Starker I said, "Man, I don't care what it takes because I have already reached a limit with what I've got physically and what I can do on the instrument. Now fix it. If it takes five years, I don't care." I haven't played one public gig since September because there were things that had to be done. The ground work had to be laid and I had to re-examine my major premises concerning what I was doing physically on the instrument. In light of new evidence, if I had to do the same thing musically I would not hesitate. I am in the best of all possible worlds because

I don't depend on any one of the things I do to make a living. I can teach, write, play, and lecture. If I had to learn to do something new tomorrow, I would learn to do that. If a cat came to me and said, "I want you to learn to play a raccoon cone," and he could tell me how to go about figuring it out, I would take the time to learn to play the raccoon cone.

I do not recognize limitations. If I have one failing it is the fact that I am absolutely intolerant of anyone who does not maximize their potential. I can't even deal with illness because I function in spite of it. I play hurt much of the time. If I am sick or need sleep, I still do what I have to do, and I am very intolerant of people who don't. I know that they will outlive me because that is the way it is, but I am totally intolerant of people who function below their potential. Nobody functions at their maximum potential because that is impossible, but I want a cat functioning on all pistons all of the time. I expect everybody to do what I do. Consequently, I get in a lot of trouble. I have had a lot of friendships that have been wrecked because people say, "I simply can't function and I don't want to be my best all the time." My

level of intolerance is doubled when it comes to the instrument. Whenever I put an instrument in my hand, I am 100 percent business. I don't play around. I love humor and I laugh and joke sometimes. I am as loose as anybody, but the minute you put the horn in your hand there should be no more jive. It should be all business when the horn is in your hand because nobody cares about your problems or inadequacies. All they want is results and you owe that to people 100 percent of the time. You should be the best that you know how to be.

If I get a student who comes to me two weeks and does not have his lesson together, I tell him not to come back because he doesn't need me. If he says he was sick or that his dog died, that doesn't matter to me either. I don't care why you don't have it. The world is very cold and does not care what your problems are.

QUESTION: Do you have a preference for a particular type of music or improvising situation?

BAKER: The type of situation and improvisation that I prefer is dependent upon the context. I have certain music that I prefer at certain times, but I don't have any preference where I say that one music is more important or less important



or better or worse than another. I ask myself, "For what or compared to what?" I prefer bebop if I am talking about how to teach somebody to play jazz. If I am talking about my playing preference, then I am talking about something that is very far left of the avant-garde because my mind is gone on that. If I am talking about nostalgia, then I am talking about the swing period because I like to dance to that music and remember what it was like when I was in high school. Therefore, it is compared to what or for what. That is the only time that music has a preferential position in my life. For me it is total music--all music.

QUESTION: How did you get into improvising?

BAKER: I don't know. I can't begin to tell you that. I just know that I started playing in high school. I had a horn and other people were improvising so I wanted to improvise too.

QUESTION: Do you mean that you just picked the horn up and started playing?

BAKER: Yes. I started imitating. We had a marching band where the cats would get together at intermission of the football games, and everybody would try to play "Intermission Riff" so I tried to play it too. I'm sure that I played it badly

most of the time but I was in an environment where there were jazz musicians. I grew up in Indianapolis which has one of the richest traditions in jazz. Maybe only a place like Detroit has produced more jazz musicians. I grew up in a neighborhood with Wes Montgomery, Leroy Vinnegar, Buddy Montgomery, Monk Montgomery, J.J. Johnson, Floyd Smith, and it goes on and on. If you didn't have the urge to play, there was something wrong with you because these were some of the people who transformed the aesthetics of the music. What city but Indianapolis can boast of two cats who single-handedly turned around their instruments--J.J. Johnson on trombone--and there hasn't been but one Wes Montgomery on guitar. The first electric bass player, Monk Montgomery, was also from Indianapolis. Now what is that? How are you going to help but play? There was a good environment and a reason to want to play. Oftentimes you will get a particular teacher or a school that is more likely than others to produce musicians because of the atmosphere. I think immediately of Chicago's DuSable High School and Walter Henry Dyett that has produced Sonny Stitt, Nat King Cole, Eddie Harris and almost everybody who came

out of Chicago. That was the school. The same thing happened in Detroit. You look and see that Donald Byrd, Elvin Jones, Thad Jones, Hank Jones, Curtis Fuller, and Barry Harris all came from around the same place. It must have been something in the water. Things like that provide the inspiration and the reason.

QUESTION: Were the players that you grew up with the primary people who motivated and inspired you towards playing jazz?

BAKER: Sure. Just listening to them was motivation enough. It also turns out that we had a bebop society in Indianapolis that gave me my first scholarship to college.

QUESTION: Can you point out players who were particularly influential?

BAKER: All of the Indianapolis musicians. I neglected to mention Slide Hampton or Macio, his brother, who are both from Indianapolis, and then my own students, Larry Ridley, Freddie Hubbard, Virgil Jones, Jimmy Spalding, and many more who are ~~from Indianapolis. We have got an unbroken line~~ from the beginning until now. Certainly, I can put my hand on people like Russell Brown who was my band teacher at Crispus Attucks. He was the most encouraging and inspirational person that I

know. Slide Hampton gave me my first trombone. J.J. Johnson was the first cat I got to sit up under in the YMCA Band, so it was all of this confluence of events that made it possible.

QUESTION: What was your early home life like and what part did your parent play in your learning music?

BAKER: My parents were very influential. They made it possible by paying the rental fee on the instrument. They also encouraged me to play. I had a lovely home where I didn't have to do anything but work and practice. I knew that I could hang out with the cats and come in late without any questions from them.

QUESTION: Were there any unusual circumstances in your home?

BAKER: No, because we lived the same way that most of the black families in Indianapolis did. Black families were very close knit families. I think that things have changed a great deal now in that there is a lot of turmoil and ugliness on the street. Those kinds of things did not exist in the same proportion as they do now.

QUESTION: Were your parents musicians?

BAKER: No, my dad had played the alto saxophone when he went to Hampton Institute. He grew up in Kansas City and went to the same high school as Ben

Webster, Bird and those cats. He also could pick out a tune on the piano, but there have been no professional musicians in my family prior to me that I know of.

QUESTION: What would you recommend to a young musician who wanted to learn to play jazz?

BAKER: It would be very difficult. I think the first thing I would say is the search for knowledge. I would say, "Go to school and learn to play your instrument." If you want to play jazz, it presupposes that you have an instrument that you can handle. I do think that it is possible to learn it in the street but it is a long trip. Why spend fifteen years in the street trying to learn something a cat can teach you in six months? That's stupid. That is like the people who re-invented the wheel. There is no point in re-inventing the wheel. I would say, "Go study with Barry Harris." That is school too. Learn to play the instrument and get it under control so that there is no shuckin' and jivin' on it. You have to play an instrument if you are going to speak. Given two cats who have the same amount of creativity and ideas, the one who has got the craft best together is going to be the one who is going to do the most. That is a simple fact of

life. It has already been proven that the operational parameters are circumscribed by technique and all things involved. Given drive, talent, energy, and no way to communicate that to somebody, you are just as lost as the cat who does not have anything to say and has got all the technique in the world. It has to be a happy marriage between technique, craft, and content.

In the front of my string books I quote Fela Sowanda. He is an African Chief who is a composer. He says, "Music is in the final analysis content expressed through form . . . . ideas structured for purposes of communication by will. The faculty that is at work is imagination; it is this that gives Form to Content or uses Will to structure Ideas; but having done so, Imagination must then have access to Technical Proficiency for the actual expression of that Content as embodied in Form, in communicable terms; and with Technical Proficiency one must have Industry, for the actual time-consuming and laborious chore of writing a musical score or whatever may be required to give that Content Material existence. Now form can be taught; Technical Proficiency can be acquired; Industry

can be made into a habit, but imagination as a term really means the ability to give birth to Images and to think creatively and effectively in Images."

That is the whole secret for me. I don't care how much talent a person has got. If he doesn't have some way to communicate that to somebody, he can forget it. A cat can have all of the proficiency with technique, and if he doesn't have something to say he can't give that to anybody, so it is the wedding of form and content that makes any product a viable one. The simplicity of it is deceiving. Slide Hampton put it so beautifully and I quoted him in one of my articles. He said, "You show me a cat who plays with his heart, and I'll show you a dude who is virtually incoherent," because what you have to say comes from the heart, but it better be filtered through intellect. A cat can think all he wants to about his ability to play under the impact of emotion, but it better be disembodied emotion because when a cat is overcome totally with grief at the loss of a loved one, he does not sit down and play the violin because he can't function. However, the memory of that emotion can be communicated after he reflects

on things. His mind translates the memory into something that is fine.

I also know cats who think that they can really play when they are intoxicated, but they don't really know how they sound until they listen to a tape of their playing and then they ask, "What was that?" However, if you can remember the emotion and disembodify it, then it is another bag. I think that heart and head work together, but the head better be running things. Every player I know, whether he subscribes to that position vocally or verbally or not at all, really does this in order to play. I don't want to hear anybody play gibberish. I've seen cats just pick up a horn and say, "Well, I haven't ever played a horn before, but I am full of emotion and I know what I want to say," and then play in a nonsensical fashion. That is like someone who decides that he is going to write a novel in Russian because he is inspired, and has no prior experience with the Russian language. It is the same thing when a musician says that he is going to play some music and can't play an instrument. What is that? I can't use that.

QUESTION: What type of preparation would a person have to undergo in order to function in a similar



capacity as yours?

BAKER: You would have to define which area of what I do that you are talking about.

QUESTION: What about teaching?

BAKER: You have to be a renaissance man. No teacher at any university teaches in more disciplines than I do. I teach the practical aspect of music in applied music because that is what teaching people to play their instruments is all about. I teach theory because that is what improvisation is all about. I teach composition because that is what arranging and composing is all about. I am a conductor because I have an orchestra. I also teach history and styles and analysis. I am teaching in six or seven disciplines. They don't ask that of any teacher anywhere. You teach in one discipline or another. People who are the theoreticians teach theory, the historians teach history, and the applied teachers teach applied. Maybe they might combine applied music with a conducting job. How many times do you find a person who can teach in all areas? In jazz you have to do that. The university is set up in such a way that there is a person assigned to a task. However, in jazz we are young, and they are not about to switch the entire system around

to accommodate us, so that means that one or two people have to do the whole thing. I can't ask a cat in music history to teach jazz history because first of all, he doesn't know anything about it, and next of all he usually doesn't care anything about it. I can't ask that cat to teach the styles and analysis because he doesn't know who Lester Young or Charlie Parker is. I also can't ask him to direct the jazz band because he thinks that he has got a concert band that is superior to the jazz band anyway, so why should I deal with that? Therefore, the first requirement for a person teaching jazz is that he has got to be a renaissance man. When I get ready to conduct a clinic in the summer or during my regular teaching, I know that when I get in front of that group I better be able to play every instrument that they can play. I'd better be able to sit down and play bass, drums, and piano because when I get ready to tell my drummer why he's not swinging or why the beat is turned around, I have to be able to demonstrate what it is that I am talking about. I can't think of another place that has to happen. You have to be able to do everything, and you had better be able to do most things well.

The second thing is you have to be indefatigable. You better be prepared to go from morning until night because it takes that. You have a lot of remedial teaching to do. You have to establish an aesthetic, which in any culture is very important for someone who is going to play music, paint, or whatever. If somebody is going to play the music of Mozart, Haydn, Lukas Foss, John Cage, or any of the music that starts with Palestrina and continues through that aesthetic to the farthest reaches of what's going on now, then they have no problem relating because everything that they have done in school since day one has prepared them to play that kind of music. The music appreciation courses deal with Bach, Brahms, Beethoven, and Bartok. The music that we hear in school by way of concert band, symphony orchestras, chorus, and choirs all deal with that music. The music that is piped in and the music of the visiting organizations that come to the school is dealing with that line of thought. An aesthetic is already established. You have a tradition laid when you get ready to come to college and play. However, for the jazz musician nothing is taught in music appreciation. You can't get jazz anywhere but in the street and

on the radio and very little of that because radios are not set up to deal with music other than mass popular music, so you've got a dozen radio stations in the whole country that specialize in jazz. You can even name them. You can narrow it down to that station out of Buffalo and maybe one in Los Angeles and one in New York. That is it. Therefore, you have got to build the whole aesthetic for the student who is going to play jazz. In addition to that, you have to build a cultural aesthetic, so that means from dawn to dusk. It is a full-time occupation. The third thing that a cat has got to have is a very thick skin because he is going to get kicked in the ass at every turn. He is going to find that there are people who will conspire to destroy what the jazz aesthetic is about. I think immediately of something Archie Shepp and I were talking about. Archie's feelings are that the minute he is told that black music is not as important as other musics all of the cultural imperatives are raised and the spear is in the ground. From that moment on we are adversaries. That is really what it is. I don't care how well-intentioned the people at a university like this are, they simply cannot begin to understand

the magnitude of the problem. If they did, it would not be necessary for me to say to them that students should take a jazz history course or black history course, as well as have the experience of playing in a jazz band if they are going to go out and be educators. There is a kind of built-in cultural superiority syndrome that comes with being a part of the majority population. That is normal. I suspect that it would be the same if it were blacks who were in the majority. We look to see those things that make our culture superior to other cultures. The whole university system and the educational system in general is set up to perpetuate the kind of conditions from which it arose. It was an autocratic kind of societal situation where blacks were indentured servants, if that. In order to survive you have to be very thick skinned. In accordance with an old cliché, you have to be fifty times better than the other people who are competing for the same kinds of jobs. You've got to be Supernigger. I don't mind at all that I have to be better than other people. Another thing that is very important is the notion of the being bicultural and bilingual. The black man has come up through western culture

which gives him a decided advantage because when we take our native culture and develop it, we've already got that other culture covered. I have to know the music of Stockhausen and Bartok because I love that music and I grew up in the culture that spun the music, but by the same token I have worked very hard to put my own culture together. I also have a deep love and understanding of the music of Trane, Bird, Miles, and Dizzy. Therefore, these are the kinds of things I look for when I look for a teacher. If I can get a performer I am very glad. If I can get a cat who has published and is creative, I am glad to have all of those things too, but the other qualities are basic. Consequently, I feel that I would never be totally happy with anybody. However, I must say that there are some white jazz teachers who come a lot closer to my ideal of what I need as a second jazz teacher here than some black cats. For instance, there are cats who have been the pioneers, like Jerry Coker and a student of mine named Jamey Aebersold who publishes all of the play-along records. These are cats who have approached this the same way. They have come up with a method, technique, or a way of doing it.

Another thing is that a cat needs to have thought about what teaching is. It is not enough to want to teach. I said in an article once before that a love of jazz is a sufficient position out of which to learn, but that is not a sufficient position out of which to teach. You have to bring something with you. I want a teacher to have thought about it and not come to me saying, "I want to learn to teach." He should have something prepared. I don't care what it is, and it doesn't have to be what I am talking about because my way is only one way. Most of my students who I really respect have gone their own ways. They have taken what I've had and built on it and gone in some other direction. As a matter of fact, I use all of their books.

We get a lot of teachers at the university who come out of the Metropolitan Opera or a performing career without every having taught or ever having evolved a technique and a method for communicating knowledge. That is not enough. Students will pin you in a minute. I've been teaching since 1966 and I didn't learn to teach until four years ago. It took me that long to learn how to teach, but now I have to close all my classes. The difference is that my mind was open and I

was working at it all the time. Now when you see me walk in front of a class you will never see me with a book because I know what I am going to talk about. I don't need a book because I know how to teach.

QUESTION: After going to bed at one or two, you then get up at five-thirty and practice?

BAKER: I don't have any choice. That is survival.. You can't survive if you can't play. At least I can't, even though a lot of people can. It is a grind, but I think it is important to have the ability to practice consistently and with purpose. I don't mean just sitting down playing. I am talking about having a plan. I write what I am going to do every day and I follow that plan.

QUESTION: You mean that you write your entire schedule out?

BAKER: No, I write my practice schedule out. I know what I am going to do during the course of a day even though I may get waylaid and do a lot of other things, but I do know my practice schedule. If I say I am going to do fifteen minutes of that, it gets done because I don't know any other way. I know a guy who got more done than most people because he would have five minutes between classes and he would have practice scheduled so he would take out his horn and practice for five minutes



and put it away. During the course of a day enough of those five minutes would make an hour. Maybe you could learn to play a scale that you didn't know how to play or a pattern that you couldn't play. Maybe you could even work on a sound that you had to work on in those five minutes. I don't have that kind of discipline, but I do have another kind which includes knowing how to react to people. I think what has to happen is that you have to develop a way to communicate your knowledge to people. It is not enough to do like Buddy Rich did at a Jerry Coker clinic. He came in late, sat down on a stool, looked out at a sea of kids and said, "Ask me what you want to know." That is not enough, because people don't know what they want to know or what they need to know. That is what a teacher is for--to tell them, "Hey, this is what you need to know. This is what you should do." They can go on from there and ask me anything else that they want. A person has to have a philosophy of teaching, no matter how bad it may be. I am vehement when it comes down to a cat having to be a good thing when he gets ready to teach. As a teacher you can destroy lives as well as build and shape them. I know what my

first teacher did for me. I know that Mr. Brown shaped my life. I know that Tom Beuersdorft did that when I came here. I know that George Russell did that with me. Teachers are the people makers. They can destroy or make you.

QUESTION: Do you think that the seriousness and way that you go about teaching attracts students?

BAKER: Not only that, I think it is the ability to disseminate the knowledge. I also communicate my love for the music to them. It is a question of different life styles. My life style is such that I get excited about the music. If I didn't I would get out and do something else.

QUESTION: In line with your work as a clinician, what would a person have to do to prepare himself to do that?

BAKER: I think you need some of the same basic things because clinics involve teaching. As an improviser, I think it means staying on top of ideas and trends by knowing what people are doing and being aware of everything that is happening musically, irrespective of your personal preference. It is not enough for me to say that my preference is to play out of a George Russell way of thinking about music. I have to know about Sonny Rollins, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, and anybody else because as a teacher that is my responsibility.

Staying together on the instrument is very important. How you find a way to do that I don't know. As it is, I have an eighteen- or twenty-hour day, and it is all that I can do to find an hour and a half to two hours to spend on my cello. However, I do think that you have to do it no matter what. I also think that you should continue to study. There is nobody who can get it so together that they don't have to go to some teacher for check-ups. You should find teachers, whether it's on your own instrument or simply about music so that you can constantly renew whatever it is that you do. I read everything I can get my hands on about anything. I just want to know, so I bug people. I study all the time. Every semester that I have been here I have been studying something with somebody.

QUESTION: What about your composing?

BAKER: I am an early morning writer. I try to write in the morning because that is when my mind is the most fresh, but often it is catch as catch can. I write whenever I can--fifteen minutes here and ten minutes there. I have a unique capacity for being able to cut off everything else at a given time. I can write for ten minutes because I shut out the world for ten minutes. I am virtually

in a catatonic state. It starts with a plan of attack. You wouldn't go from here to Chicago without a map. You can't get waylaid because all the world is full of temptation. You just have to say that this is my minute to do this or this is my hour do this and do it. Life itself is a religion of denial. That is how growth always takes place. I don't know any other way you grow other than through denying things. For instance, I love to eat. I would be a thousand pounds if I let myself. I also love to just play and never practice, but I know I have to practice. It is in reverse proportion. The amount of denial usually determines how much growth takes place.

QUESTION: Do you have any final comments concerning what it takes to pull it all together and what the key is that opens the door towards learning improvisation or anything else that is important to you?

BAKER: It is total dynamism. I don't think that you can waste a minute of your life. Someone has said that the unexamined life is not worth living, but I say the unused life is not worth living. I see a lot of cats who waste time and I can't afford to do that because time is the most precious

commodity that you own. My concept of relaxing is simply to change the activity. I know that statistics say that I am going to probably leave here earlier than most people. I don't intend to. I intend to leave nobody here when I leave. A sedentary life is just not where it is at. I can dig throwing money away but I can't dig throwing time away. I need every second. Every minute is spent doing something useful--writing, playing, listening to someone who needs some help, or trying to figure out a way to do something else. If I had to say anything, it would be that life is for living if you can dig that.

## OSCAR BRASHEAR INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

BRASHEAR: I was born August 18, 1944, in Chicago, Illinois.

QUESTION: How did you get interested in music?

BRASHEAR: It was a family thing. My mother was a piano teacher and I got into it through her. I played piano for nine years. I went through a very classically oriented training. I changed to trumpet when I was twelve. I started playing trumpet in the Sunday School band. I started taking private lessons from Charlie Allen, but the private lessons were not associated with the Sunday School band.

QUESTION: Were you interested in jazz playing at the time?

BRASHEAR: I didn't know what jazz was.

QUESTION: When did you find out about jazz?

BRASHEAR: When I got to high school I found out through friends who were into jazz. It was the total environment. You were exposed to music by way of record shops, radio, and other things in the environment. You could be walking down the street and people would tell you about different players whom they had heard or had records of.

QUESTION: While this was going on, was jazz playing your primary motivation?

BRASHEAR: No. My primary motivation was to play the trumpet to the best of my ability. Everything else is environmental as far as what you are exposed to, and that is what you try to do. You can't try to play a certain way if you have never heard that certain way. You have to have heard a model so you can try and imitate it. In my case the music of the environment was jazz. I knew it was there but I didn't necessarily get into it.

QUESTION: What is your concept of jazz improvisation?

BRASHEAR: My concept of improvisation in any sense is how I feel at the moment. That is all that you can do. You deal with the moment. It depends on how you feel and what your lifestyle is about. Like I said before, it also depends on what you have been exposed to and whom you have heard. It depends greatly on who has inspired you. You will tend to deal with style based on these things. You will tend to take your style in that direction.

QUESTION: Who were some of your primary influences?

BRASHEAR: Everybody in my neighborhood, everybody I heard on record, and everybody I heard in my life, but if I had to narrow it down to a few people, I would have to say that my main musical inspiration was John Coltrane. It also depends on whether I

am talking about jazz or other musical inspirations, because I also have to say that I was inspired by my high school teacher, Captain Dyett (Walter H. Dyett) at DuSable High School. That is a very hard question to answer because you can't just single out certain people. If I am talking about my development as a trumpet player, then I definitely have to say my trumpet teacher and Captain Dyett. I also concentrated a lot on John Coltrane, Freddie Hubbard, and everybody else who was playing then and now. When it comes down to it, I would have to say everybody, including my next-door neighbor and the drunk in the alley, because the drunk in the alley would give you the opportunity to learn a tune that you didn't know by requesting it. I learned "Everything Happens to Me" from a drunk. He brought the music to me and said, "Hey man, if you don't know this, here is a good tune to play." That was an inspiration. Again we get back to it's being your life and what you are exposed to. A lot of it depends on who influences you in your development, both past and present.

QUESTION: How do you define improvisation?

BRASHEAR: I define improvisation as self-expression. It is everything that an individual accumulates in his



knowledge, what he practices, and what he wants to express at a given moment.

QUESTION: What in your mind is the difference between an improvising and a non-improvising musician?

BRASHEAR: The difference lies in their areas of concentration. One person might choose to concentrate on the area of improvisation. Another person might want to concentrate on the area of range. He might want to concentrate on low notes. It all depends on what the individual is about and the areas that he chooses to concentrate on. Some people choose to concentrate on all of those areas. The difference lies in the amount of time spent on any given area. I don't think that there is a difference in one musician or another.

QUESTION: What did you concentrate on?

BRASHEAR: I concentrated on all of the music that I knew about. That included jazz, big band, classical, solo classical, and solo jazz. I wanted to experience all the music.

QUESTION: Did you practice a lot?

BRASHEAR: Yes, in my earlier years I practiced everyday. I practiced on my own self-initiative.

QUESTION: Do you have a preference for a particular kind of music?

BRASHEAR: Yes, I do. My preference is jazz because I am in

favor of self-expression. I feel closer to that.

QUESTION: What type of situations do you play in?

BRASHEAR: I play in a variety of situations because I work as a studio musician as well as other things. I play on movie sound tracks, jingles, TV shows, a variety of recording work, and combo gigs whenever the opportunity presents itself.

QUESTION: Have you always wanted to be a professional musician?

BRASHEAR: I have always seen myself as a professional musician and trying to survive. The survival aspect is not necessarily related to music. I knew music as an art and as a livelihood. I knew what I had to do to survive musically. I knew that it would entail free-lancing and playing certain styles in certain ways. I had a choice of doing it or not doing it, but playing in different styles in different situations motivated me. Otherwise, I would not be able to do it. I have to say that I had other interests besides the financial rewards. There was a maturation process in my music that enabled me to participate in different fields of music.

QUESTION: What did you do before you settled in Los Angeles?

BRASHEAR: I was free-lancing. I did a lot of different gigs. I was playing with Count Basie and Woody Herman.

QUESTION: How long were you with those bands?

BRASHEAR: I was with Count Basie for two years and Woody for four months. I played with Woody first and then Count.

QUESTION: How did you view those experiences?

BRASHEAR: They were both very rewarding musical experiences. I left those bands because I felt that there is an ever present need for change. You have to move on. That does not necessarily mean that you are graduating or moving to a higher level but that you have to change into another environment in order to continue to grow. It does not necessarily mean higher or lower. It just means change.

QUESTION: What advice would you give a young player who wanted to be a professional musician and particularly wanted to play jazz?

BRASHEAR: I would tell him to continue to exhale and inhale. I would also tell him good luck. I would tell him to learn his instrument. He should try to get some lessons and work steadily in the direction that he wants to go. He should form some good practice habits and open his head to different musics and be aware of all the music around him. He should be very aware of the music of today and the music of the past. One of the main things is to try to find himself and the

direction that he wants to go with the music, but he should learn his instrument first.

QUESTION: Do you still practice?

BRASHEAR: I don't spend as much time with actual physical practice now. I practice more mentally than physically.

QUESTION: Were there ever periods in your development when you ran into things that required a lot of physical effort and seemed unsurmountable?

BRASHEAR: Yes.

QUESTION: What did you do?

BRASHEAR: I got drunk. I slept it off and went back and hit it again. Seriously, you just continue to go on. You learn the phenomena of defeat and what defeat means to you. It may be something that you are trying for that does not come off. Whether or not you succeed depends on what you are shooting for and how much it means to you. It depends on your conception of defeat and why you call it defeat, because the trumpet is secondary. You have to live first. What happens with you musically or with the trumpet does not command your life. In other words, you don't go off the deep end because you can't play your trumpet or because you can't hit a high note today. You don't go out and run your car into a tree because

of those kinds of things. You have to live first. It all depends on a person's values and what they are shooting for.

QUESTION: Do you do any type of warm-up exercises?

BRASHEAR: Yes. I play long tones.

QUESTION: Do you do them everyday?

BRASHEAR: No. Not now.

QUESTION: Do you have anything that you do everyday?

BRASHEAR: I don't have a set practice thing that I do everyday. I will probably get back into a set practice thing, but it has not been happening for awhile. When it gets right down to it, everything is mental anyway. It is all how you think. If I was practicing everyday, I probably would have a set thing that I followed. However, I usually have to work everyday.

QUESTION: How does working everyday fit into your development?

BRASHEAR: Working everyday involves a lot of discipline. It is not necessarily all musical because you have to cope with many different personalities in many different situations. That is practice within itself. In other words, life is practice because it involves challenges of the mental powers and mental discipline because what you are like will reflect in what you play on your

instrument. The way that you handle a particular situation in life will be the same way that you handle the situation musically. As you walk around in your daily life you are practicing the trumpet or any instrument for that matter. It is just an extension of that life practice. There is no way that your whole mind is going to change just because you are practicing the trumpet. It is the same mind in the same person. What you do on any particular day mentally will reflect on how you play.

QUESTION: What kind of equipment do you use?

BRASHEAR: A Bach medium-large bore trumpet and a Bach 6D mouthpiece.

QUESTION: Why do you use this particular combination?

BRASHEAR: It feels comfortable.

QUESTION: Have you tried a lot of different combinations?

BRASHEAR: Yes.

QUESTION: When was a firm commitment made to mastering the trumpet?

BRASHEAR: Never. There was a point when I made up my mind to take it seriously but I knew that I would never master it. I couldn't make a commitment to master something that I knew I would never master.

QUESTION: What did you find out about the trumpet during this process?

BRASHEAR: The trumpet is infinite. There will always be something that you can't do, but you can play the trumpet to the best of your ability on a given day because what you did yesterday don't mean shit. You've got to do it again today. If you bust a double high C three hundred times in a row today, when you wake up tomorrow, what you did yesterday don't mean shit. I mean you have to do it now because everyday is the first day of your life. You will never master the trumpet. You just play it to the best of your ability. That's all anyone can do. I don't care who they are. There is always something that they can't do. Can Maurice Andre triple-tongue double octaves at the tempo that I want him to do it? You could think up anything. Now, if you let one of those thoughts pop into your head it will destroy you. You could say, "Damn, how would I ever be able to do that?" You could then say, "Trying to do that would take another five years and twelve hours of practice a day," but what will be your reward when you are able to do that? Who is going to hear it, or is it going down the drain in your practice room? If anybody does hear, how would you feel with your accomplishment, because after you do that, it is only the beginning

of a whole new area of some more intense study. After you do that you say, "Now, if I can do that, can I triple-tongue three octaves?" In other words, you will never master the trumpet. You only play it to the best of your ability physically because the trumpet is limitless in the physical respect.

QUESTION: Is that attitude what allows you to survive in the musical situation where you have to go into the studios and not know what you are going to have to play?

BRASHEAR: It doesn't help me to survive. I am going to survive anyway. If I never play trumpet again I am going to live and be happy. There was a time when, if someone had knocked my teeth out and the doctor told me that I couldn't play trumpet anymore, I would have gone off the deep end, but now that is not the case. If I never play trumpet again I am going to still be happy.

QUESTION: How did you get to that frame of mind?

BRASHEAR: I had to work for that point. I had to realize my relationship with the trumpet. I had to realize what the thing in my hand was doing to me. It had to be my slave and not me be a slave to the trumpet. There is a whole world out there. You can't be frustrated about something that



doesn't come off today. In other words, I can't suffer from hypertension because I am frustrated that my triple-tonguing was not as even as I wanted it today, when somewhere in this world or maybe even down the street from me five people are starving to death. Now what is the measure of importance? How important is my triple-tonguing not coming off evenly today when a cat down the street can't even sneak up on a can of beans? I will be able to triple-tongue tomorrow. He won't if he doesn't get his beans, because he is going to die from starvation, and I am going to be happy tomorrow because my triple-tonguing comes off. What I am saying is that I just can't be locked in a woodshed when there is a whole world around me to experience. Music is just one phase of life and I am happy to know that it exists and that I am a part of it, but there are so many other things.

It also depends on what a particular person seeks on his instrument and what they are willing to sacrifice and what they want to put into it. I know that you have to practice in order to elevate yourself. What you put into it is what you get out of it, but I feel that you have to be a person first because music is only an extension

of your being. In other words, if your head is in order and your life is in order, then your music will be in order. You can't practice that on the trumpet. You can't practice how to be polite to people and how to love people on the trumpet. You have to do it. You have to experience that with people.

You could go on the bandstand and play and then come off, and a cat says, "Oscar, you just played so lovely. I really enjoyed your playing," and you say, "Oh, kiss my ass. You don't know what I was shooting for. That is the worst I've ever sounded." As far as you are concerned, you sounded lousy. You really had something else in mind that you were shooting for and it didn't come off at all, but the person who complimented you is a person who you made feel happy. You should not be wrapped up in your own misery. You should open up to him and be considerate as far as his feelings concerning what he heard and liked. It is giving and being patient. That can't be practiced on trumpet, but the trumpet can put you in positions where you can learn.

QUESTION: Do you think that anyone can learn to play the trumpet?

BRASHEAR: Sure. I have been giving my dog lessons. A

gorilla could play the trumpet. As a matter of fact, as big as some gorillas are, they could probably really handle it because you need to be a gorilla to play the trumpet.

QUESTION: Do you believe in getting into physical shape to play the trumpet?

BRASHEAR: I never really concentrated on that. I've been playing tennis for about a year now. You have to be in shape to play tennis and it seems to work hand in hand with trumpet playing.

QUESTION: Did you take any trumpet lessons past high school?

BRASHEAR: No, I didn't. I started playing professionally while in high school.

QUESTION: Would you change anything in your background that would make you a better musician?

BRASHEAR: I would have studied harder. I would have tried to have been aware of more people in different situations. I would have tried to be more sensitive to people and been aware of improving my being at an earlier time.

QUESTION: Do you think that the Los Angeles studios require a special kind of preparation from a musician?

BRASHEAR: All you have to do is be yourself.

QUESTION: A lot of people talk about the high pressures of a city like Los Angeles. What do you think about that?

BRASHEAR: There is only the pressure that you feel. Some people feel pressured to come outside. Other people feel pressured when the phone rings. It depends on how you look at it. Some people feel pressure and some don't. The pressure that people feel is what they feel in their lives. It carries over. It just doesn't start at work. It started before they got there. Just because a cat has a pianissimo high C to play by himself at the end of the recording cue and misses and the entire thing has to be done over is not pressure within itself. If he feels the pressure, it was present before he got there. The pressure was building up five years ago because of the pressure in his life. It was not just the moment of the high C. The moment just exposed the pressure that he is already under. It made him aware of how much pressure he is dealing with. The pressure is not the high C.

## RANDY BRECKER INTERVIEW

QUESTION: Where were you born?

BRECKER: Philadelphia.

QUESTION: Did you grow up there?

BRECKER: Yes. I was born in Philadelphia, but I have been in New York for about ten years.

QUESTION: How did you start playing the trumpet?

BRECKER: It started with my father who was a bebop fanatic. He played piano all through college. He plays real well, but kind of square like Dave Brubeck's style. He dug trumpet players so I grew up with Miles Davis's and Clifford Brown's records. That was during a time when Clifford was still playing around Philadelphia at a place called The Blue Note, so my dad really got into him. He would also listen to Dizzy (Gillespie). For me it started at home because my dad would put on concerts with friends of his and they would have jam sessions at my house. I grew up listening to my dad play and listening to records.

QUESTION: Did you study privately?

BRECKER: Yes. I started when I was about eight years old. I was in grade school. I studied with a guy named Tony Marcione who taught a whole lot of

cats, including Lee Morgan. This was going on at a technical high school in Philadelphia called Mass Bound. All kinds of cats went there like Lee (Morgan), Bobby Timmons, Benny Golson, and a lot of others. There were a lot of guys around so I got a lot experience playing around Philadelphia when I was in high school. I have some rhythm and blues roots. I played with blues bands and a lot of Jimmy Smith type organ trios.

QUESTION: Did you start playing jazz from the beginning?

BRECKER: Yes. That was where it was at. That was all I knew. My dad was not into classical or Perry Como or any of that. He was pretty hip. The first thing I can remember ever since I was like four or five years old is Miles, Lee Morgan, and especially Clifford because that was his man. I can remember when I was in the sixth grade, we had this music class and everybody was supposed to bring in a record that they liked. People would bring in Elvis (Presley) records and all of that. I brought in a Miles and Bird (Charlie Parker) record and all the kids said, "What is that?" That is the way it has been since I can remember. It was the same way with my brother except that he got started a little

later because he was into basketball and all of that.

QUESTION: Is he younger?

BRECKER: Yes, three years younger. He started on clarinet and then gave it up for awhile and didn't get into music until maybe high school. He stopped and played basketball.

QUESTION: How did you get your chops together?

BRECKER: I don't know, man! I practice and I also try to play as much as I can.

QUESTION: What was your early practice like?

BRECKER: I studied classical material. My teacher, Tony (Marcione), was a classically trained legit trumpet player who had a lot of jazz feeling. He couldn't really play jazz solos but he had a real feel for it so he helped me with both kinds of things. I studied classical trumpet and when I was young I learned to play jazz by listening to records and by copying solos off of records. I would write down the solos or just try to play along with the records. The chops just came from that fact that I practiced a lot when I was younger. I don't do that much any more. I keep my chops up by playing as much as I can.

QUESTION: Did you play in college?

BRECKER: Yes. I went to Indiana University. That was a

big influence on me. When you are young you hear a lot of stories about going into music as a profession and starving and all of that and Indiana probably had something to do with me making up my mind. They had a real good music school. We had a real good big band that was led by a guy named Jerry Coker who is a good educator and writer. While I was there, we did a State Department tour to the Near East and Asia. That was around the time I left school. It was around my third year. After staying in Europe and working around some clubs for awhile, I came to New York. I went to school for a semester and then I decided that I would try to do it. I wanted to be a full-time professional musician. That was about ten years ago, around 1966.

QUESTION: Dave (Liebman) told me a series of stories about a place where you lived with a lot of musicians like Chick Corea, Richie Beirach, Dave Holland, and some others. What was that like?

BRECKER: Oh, yeah! It was on Seventy-Third Street between Columbus and Central Park West. There were a whole lot of people who lived on the block. Larry Coryell and Steve Marcus lived down the street. When Dave Holland, the bass player,



came to New York, I was in California with Horace Silver so I told him that he could stay at my apartment. When I got back, there was this other cat staying there who I had never heard of. It was John McLaughlin. I'll never forget my first night back in New York. First of all, Dave was ridiculous when I heard him for the first time. I couldn't believe anybody could play bass like that. By being a very serious cat, he also taught me a lot of concepts and played a whole lot of music for me that I hadn't heard. Some of it was classical stuff that he thought I should listen to. He is heavily influenced by Bartok and other classical composers. He listens to a lot of that music. The first night I got back from California and got to my apartment, John picked up the guitar and I could not believe what I was hearing. He was playing acoustic guitar and I couldn't believe it. I'll never forget that. They stayed there for awhile and we played a lot together. It was not so much the playing as it was just talking to them and checking out where they were coming from because it was from a completely different European base. John was getting into Indian music at that time, as well as having the classical background.

I used to play with Liebman a lot at his place with McLaughlin, Bobby Moses, and a lot of other people. Chick was living downstairs. This was before we were working a lot so we had a lot of time off to jam. We've got hundreds of tapes of all kinds.

QUESTION: With this varied background, you evidently must have a very broad concept of improvisation and playing in general.

BRECKER: I am coming from a lot of different places, which is why I always try to keep an open mind about music. A lot of cats put down various styles of music. The free cats always put down bebop and the bebop cats put down the free cats and I could never get into that. I try to keep an open mind about the whole thing and try to learn, because I have always thought that there was some validity to everything. There is some meaning to every sound.

I always have tried to flow with whatever was happening at the time and communicate with whoever I was playing with and try not to have an attitude about it. I have gotten a lot of chances to play a lot of different styles and I have listened to a lot of different styles of music.

QUESTION: What advice would you give a young player who

came to you and said that he really wanted to learn how to play?

BRECKER: I would tell him a lot of things. First of all, I would tell him that the trumpet is a hard instrument and unless you are amazingly lucky or talented you have to study it for awhile. It is not like rock-and-roll guitar players or blues players, who just pick up the instrument, and in a short time, somehow or another, they have the facility to play what they need to play. The trumpet is a hard instrument that requires a lot of study and attention. I also think that all players should study what is normally called legit and play the etudes, which is real boring stuff to do, but you have to do it because that is how you build up your endurance and chops. Learning how to read music is important, and if you want to be a professional, it is a requirement. I would also tell young players to keep an open mind about everything.

QUESTION: What would a trumpet player have to have together in order to function in a similar capacity as you do?

BRECKER: All of the things I said before in addition to listening to a lot of styles. He would have to keep up with what is happening--commercially and

aesthetically. If you want to make a living by working in the recording studios you have to learn how to play with other trumpet players. You have to know how to bend and play with other guys in a section. You should be open to suggestions. For instance, if someone says you're sharp or you're flat you don't say, "Kiss my ass." You say, "Okay, thanks, man," and work together with the guys and try to play with the other players which a lot of guys have trouble doing. It's called being flexible.

In order to do studio work you also have to keep up with the styles. One day you might be doing a funk session and the next day you might have a real straight ahead, schmaltzy, Muzaky kind of date. You have to adjust to whatever concept of playing that is required of you. You don't have to be an expert in each style, but it becomes a question of knowing enough about a lot of styles. You have to keep up. Everything that you hear you should try to learn from. Keep an open mind. I know I keep saying that, but that is it. That is the best thing to do whatever music that you happen to hear--at anytime--on the radio or whatever. Listen to it and try to grab what is good out of it. Even if there are a lot of bad things

there might be one thing that is good. Check it out and try to remember it. Be as well-rounded as you can. That is the name of the game, as far as trying to make it in New York, Los Angeles, or anywhere. I'm just speaking for myself, because I know that there are some people who are really committed to one style of music and refuse to play anything else. I can dig that too, but I get bored easily and I like doing this one week and that the next. I like doing a Bob James date one week and doing a funk gig the next.

QUESTION: Where is the concept of your band coming from in making an album like Back to Back?

BRECKER: That came from the fact that we were a group of friends who had been playing together for a long time in that context. The band kind of grew out of the band Dreams that we had with Billy Cobham. The bass player and keyboard player were in that band. They had a rhythm section that used to play on Carmine Street in the Village and we would get together and play, not so much to have a band as to play the tunes that we were writing. Steve Kahn, a guitar player who just did a record on Columbia, was also in the band and was writing some tunes. Dave Sanborn also would come around.

He wasn't writing that much at the time but I had written a lot of music for three horns so we just got together and rehearsed. I got a record deal and it went from there. I didn't really actually go looking for it. It just kind of luckily came to me.

It's the same thing I was talking about earlier. I would go out and play bebop every day and the other guys in the band lived in the same building and were real good funk players so we used to get together and play funk. When I started writing for the band I tried to write music that was in between--music that had a bebop influence but had funk too. That is where my writing is coming from--everything kind of boiled together.

QUESTION: What did you study at Indiana?

BRECKER: I was in music education and I always studied, but a lot of the courses were dumb to study, so I didn't do it. I was in liberal arts for a while. The main thing at Indiana for me was the fact that we had this big band that would rehearse everyday. That was mostly all I did. We also had a sextet.

QUESTION: Who are some of the trumpet players you have studied?

BRECKER: Lee, Freddie (Hubbard), Clifford, Miles, and Woody (Shaw) are some of the main players that I

have copied some licks from. It helps. I steal. I admit it. You have to start out with something. I used to copy down their solos.

QUESTION: Were they your basic influence?

BRECKER: Yes. Those are five good ones. Kenny Dorham and Fats Navarro could also be added. Thad Jones has also been an influence, not so much with his licks but in his musical and compositional approach--the way that he composes while he plays. As much as possible I try to stay away from just playing licks and think of the tune that I am playing. If it is a blues, I will try to keep the melody in mind and not just play anything. Sonny Rollins was a big influence on me for that aspect. I try to compose a solo as opposed to just running all over the horn. Art Farmer is another influence that I forgot.

QUESTION: What is your concept of jazz playing?

BRECKER: That's pretty much it. You should have a vocabulary of what they call licks as well as knowing scales, but everybody's ideal is to get above that and just play music. You should be as spontaneous as you can and use all of your influences to play music. You shouldn't just play the stuff that is worked out in your head but you should have it there for when you need it.

You should get above that. That is what Sonny Rollins is so great at. Out of everybody, he is probably my favorite cat because he can be so spontaneous. Sometimes he would even play off the wall stuff that would work.

I also have to stress keeping the melody of the tune in mind.

QUESTION: If you could go back in your career and restructure anything that would make you better prepared for what you do, what would it be?

BRECKER: I would have studied more than I did because I was real insecure about going into music. In the back of my mind there were always thoughts like, "Maybe I better take some other courses just in case." I would definitely have studied more composition and arranging. Most of the things that I know about composition and arranging I did myself.

I didn't really study it. I have been going back lately and studying with Don Sebesky. I think if I had it to do again I would have just gone to college and studied. I would go to a good school, know what I wanted to study, and do it, instead of half doing it, which is what I did. I always studied trumpet, but as far as really learning how to write for orchestras and varying



instrumentations, I didn't get that. I am now trying to learn. I can write for my band or three or four horns but I can't orchestrate. I really wish I could have done that.

QUESTION: As far as the trumpet goes, do you have a warm-up routine?

BRECKER: No, but I should.

QUESTION: What do you do when you get up in the morning in terms of dealing with the trumpet? How do you handle that?

BRECKER: I may play some long tunes and slurring exercises or lip flexibility exercises from the Schlossberg book or some of that stuff. To be honest, I am not real disciplined. I have it down so that I can warm-up pretty fast, especially when I am playing a lot.

QUESTION: You kind of have to do that in studio situations don't you?

BRECKER: Yes, you have to warm-up in a hurry. If I have to be there at ten o'clock in the morning, I am lucky if I get there. I try to tell myself

the night before that I have to get up and warm-up but you just get used to playing right all the time so you try not to get your chops in such bad shape that you can't play what you need to at anytime. You just concentrate on trying to play right without overdoing it. It takes me maybe five or ten minutes and I will feel okay--unless I had a real bad day. When this happens I sometimes lay off for a day. However, when I do warm-up I play soft long tones and flexibility exercises. Sometimes I play scales very softly so that if my lips are swollen they will come down some. I also do Carmine Caruso exercises. I study with him.

QUESTION: A lot of trumpet players around New York who do similar type work as you feel that Caruso is one of the best teachers to go to. What are your feelings on this?

BRECKER: Yes, he is a very good teacher, especially for chop related problems. He has a couple of books out. A lot of the stuff that he makes you do sounds ridiculous. It's not music but it works. The exercises consist of long tones that are slurred. You play them and get gradually higher until you can't go any higher; then you rest. After resting you continue up from where you left

off. You keep trying to go higher. It really works.

QUESTION: Does it help your range?

BRECKER: Yes, it improves your range and flexibility. It also can be done in a relatively short amount of time but sitting around playing the long tone exercises can get to be pretty intense.

QUESTION: Are you supposed to keep a certain embouchure setting?

BRECKER: Actually, Carmine never talks to you about that. Somehow his stuff works. You don't have to think about the setting. Somehow, the exercises makes the setting happen. I don't understand why it works, and, if I didn't know that it worked, I wouldn't believe it worked from hearing someone play the exercises. However, it really helps.

Carmine doesn't try to change your embouchure because the exercises straighten out the embouchure problems. There are certain rules, like tapping your foot and playing each note a sixteenth note ahead, but as far as rules that concern placing the trumpet on a certain spot on your chops, there aren't any.

QUESTION: What are some of the most important things that contribute to your being a successful musician?

BRECKER: I would have to say everything. First of all, being able to play good. A lot of it has to do with being a human being about things.

QUESTION: Oftentimes, musicians make comments concerning their personal family relationships and the effect that they have on their profession. Do you have a comment to this effect?

BRECKER: Luckily, my personal life has been very cool. I haven't had too many problems with that. As far as making it in New York, you have to be able to play and be sincere about your music and be able to groove with the other musicians. Musicians are pretty aware people and if you are not sincere they can see through it right away. One amazing thing about being a musician in New York is to become aware of the very competitive nature of the city. You would think that all the trumpet players in the city would be at each other's throats trying to get gigs--like it is all over the city in other fields. Everybody is trying to ace someone out of a gig. On the contrary, all of my best friends are trumpet players, and it's not a jive thing where we try to be friends, so we can get each other work or anything like that. It is a for real kind of thing. It is one of the nice things about

being a musician. It has a competitive aspect, but it is competitive on a musical level and not a personal level. You have to be able to play and get along with people. There is some politics involved because you have to use your brain to make it in the big city. I can't say what move it is, but you have to make the right move at the right time. When it all boils down, it is a lot of everything and a lot of luck.

One piece of advice I would give to a guy coming to New York is to take any gig you can find.

When I first got here I did just that and got some of the most work out of some of the dumbest gigs simply because maybe someone was in the audience listening. Sometimes I would say, "I don't want to do this gig. It is a real dumb gig," but that was the very gig that someone came to and heard me and gave me a whole bunch of work. That is a very important thing to consider.

## BOBBY BRYANT INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

BRYANT: . I was born May 19, 1934, in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

QUESTION: How did you get started? How did you start improvising? Is there a point where you can say, "This is when I started improvising," or did you just always want to play?

BRYANT: I have always wanted to play. There has always been music running in my head. I have not always known what the guidelines were. I have not always known how to play correctly. I have not always known the proper ways to apply whatever rules exist. I feel that a person must first of all be moved toward improvising. He must be moved by some creative urge from within. There has to be some kind of instinct. For example, when somebody played a B-flat seventh chord on the piano, I reacted, and that was improvising. I felt something and I played what I felt. My ear, my instincts wouldn't let me play certain notes because they didn't fit. I improvised for a long time, based on ear and instinct. I came from Mississippi and much of what we played was based on records. We were a jukebox band

We would play things off records and take solos, some written and others not. Out of that came guidelines and different ways to apply what I knew. Not only did I play what I was moved to play, but I also played what someone else was moved to play because I was copying their solo. All of that had to do with improvisational development. Then I finally got into defining harmonies, chord structures, scales, patterns, and how to apply those things. That was further improvisational development, even more advanced. I still have not lost the creative urge, which is where this thing began. I listened to a lot of records and people who had created things before me and was inspired by them. Take for example, someone who has been playing trumpet for a year and has never heard any jazz records. Now they want to get into improvising. Why can't they improvise? They haven't lived. They haven't really heard anybody improvise. They haven't listened to anybody. Therefore, they have no concept of how they want to play. Much of it has to do with basic instinct, the urge to create something of one's own. The rest of it is learning the guidelines, finding out what the harmonies being sounded are. You're not limited to playing

a B-flat seventh chord when a B-flat seventh is sounded. I had to be taught that. I certainly didn't start out playing superimposed chords. That came in my further development.

QUESTION: Did your family have a lot of music at home? Did they encourage your playing?

BRYANT: They encouraged music. Music was always in the house. When I was very young, I lived where bootleg liquor was sold. When people would come to drink, they would want to hear music while they were drinking. I was charged with the responsibility of keeping the music going. I was literally standing on the chair playing the Victrola, playing old blues records and pop hits. I didn't understand why they wanted it and I didn't understand liquor. I knew that it was something that made your attitude change. They gave me some with water and sugar and it made me dizzy. It wasn't fun. I knew that music was a necessary part of that whole design of things. I was tremendously affected by those old blues records. That's really engraved in me. I had to learn how not to play the blues. I can play "Stardust" blues, "Come to Jesus" blues, and any kind of blues you want to hear. I'm diseased with the blues.



QUESTION: Do you think that was one of the most influential things happening?

BRYANT: It was certainly one of the first things to happen. I don't think it was the most influential, but it was one of the first. That was the beginning. The people I saw were not necessarily musical, but they were influenced by music. They liked it. They responded to it. If you put on a record and somebody goes, "Ahhh," that means something must be good about that record. Just through osmosis, you're going to dig what's happening on that record. I would play that record because every time I put it on they would go, "Ahhh." Just to see them do that--those were the beginnings. My influences grew and I started listening to things other than those old blues records. I listened to Gene Ammons who was a very big influence on me particularly those records he made when he had a seven- or eight-piece band.

QUESTION: You said this early experience was not the most important; it was only the beginning. Is there something that was most important?

BRYANT: I don't think the most important thing has happened yet. I think I'm still developing. I think I'm still learning. New things are still happening inside my head which I haven't played

or taken the time to really give vent to because much of my time is spent in the studios. I spend most of my time playing someone else's music. That's my job. If I spent as much time giving exercise to my own creative instincts, some great things might happen. It is most enjoyable when I do go out and play a night club. When I go out I'm not so much for jamming as I am for a more controlled situation. You go jamming and you might find some good players and you might not. You're only going to sound as good as the worst player on the stand. He's going to continually drag you and you're going to be sounding just as bad as he does.

QUESTION: I have heard people say that you were playing jazz very fluently in high school.

BRYANT: My jazz playing at that age was fluent by comparison. It was fluent as compared to people in that area of my same age. It was fluent because of my listening and experiencing everybody who came to town. I stayed up as much as I could on the records and emulated those records. It was fluent but it wasn't very original.

QUESTION: Did you play in band in school?

BRYANT: I was in the high school marching band all through high school. I started playing and trying to get

into the beginner's band in the fourth grade. I probably made it by the fifth or sixth grade. Then I was considered one of the brats who could almost play. I found some of those old pictures of me when I was a little tot standing with those big guys who were really able to play whatever had to get played during those years. Eventually we formed a dance band. In some cases it was a big band, in others it was just a combo. When I was in the tenth grade in high school the guy who was our favorite tenor player left to go to the army, so we were left without a feature tenor player. I took over. That was fun. I had been fooling around with the saxophone. By that time we had a six-piece band and we were working around town. In the marching band I would play trumpet. In the dance band I played saxophone. I mixed the two instruments like that all the way through high school. Just before my senior year I went to a place in Louisiana with a band called The Rhythm Aces. They had heard about the young boy who was playing trumpet and they sent for me to come play in their band. I had to get my mother's and father's permission to leave home. One of the guys promised to take care of me so they let me go to Louisiana that summer. I spent that

summer playing with The Rhythm Aces. I played mostly trumpet and some saxophone. Then I had to leave and go back and finish high school. I went back to playing trumpet and saxophone. That was the way I finished school. As a matter of fact, when I was home recently, I ran into someone who remembered the saxophone solo I played at graduation. I had forgotten it.

QUESTION: Did you always want to be a trumpet player?

BRYANT: No, I wanted to play high C like Louie Armstrong. When I was standing on the chair playing the Victrola and learning to dance, they were saying "You're gonna play that high C like Louie Armstrong." I didn't know what high C was. When I grew up and started playing trumpet, I found out high C was nothing. Now they are talking about double high C! I played some saxophone, but I never did get away from the trumpet. I played baseball--not very sincerely though.

QUESTION: How old were you when you got serious?

BRYANT: I was about twenty-two or twenty-three. When I started at the conservatory, the only reason I didn't register as a saxophone player was because I didn't have one. I had a trumpet. We went looking for a saxophone in pawn shops and on Forty-Seventh Street in Chicago, but I didn't

find one that I liked. I got tired of looking, so I said I would just register as a trumpet player. I've wished many a day that I had taken the time to find a saxophone. I really have. The trumpet has been mean.

QUESTION: What were some of your first professional playing experiences?

BRYANT: When I was about twenty-three or twenty-four, I went into a music store to try out a trumpet, and one of the guys who worked in that store had a band. He heard me trying it out and invited me to play in his band or come down and sit in. They had parts written out and all that. There was a trumpet, a trombone, and three saxophones. The trumpet player got down and let me play. I thought I was just fumbling and stumbling, doing an atrocious job of reading the man's music. At the end of the set he said, "I hear you walking through them parts," and I said, "No, you hear me stumbling through those parts," and he said, "No, I heard you walking through those parts." I didn't know myself what I was doing. To me it sounded like stumble, fumble time. He saw farther than I could see in terms of my potential.

QUESTION: There was a period when you lived in Chicago and were going to school and playing in the Chicago area. What was happening then?

BRYANT: That's it. I was going to school and working at the post office throwing the mail. I worked at a strip joint. It was downtown, a place called Moulon Rouge, and I was playing behind strippers. That's where I had the true test of the power studies and my endurance. We started work at eight o'clock and we went straight through until four a.m. It was continuous music. It was a four-piece band--alto saxophone, trumpet, piano, and drums. We didn't even have a bass player. Not only that, but someone was always on break. If there were twelve girls in the show, each guy would take three different girls off to get a break. I was a swing-man. When the piano player would take off his three girls, I'd play the piano. When the saxophone man took off his three girls, I'd play the trumpet. When the drummer took off his three girls, I'd play drums. That job really strengthened me for the things I'm doing today. It was a bad job--continuous music, eight until five on Saturdays.

QUESTION: How long were you there?

BRYANT: I was there a couple of years. I did that until I was able to leave and get some kind of job on the south side. After I left there I worked in a Latin band for a year. I was working my way through school. I was working at the post office four hours a day, and when I had an occasion to work more hours I would. I was trying to support a young family. After 1956 or '57, I went to a place called Idlewhile, Michigan, for a summer with The Idlewhile Review. The bandleader was named Larry Rice. We worked that summer and went on tour after the summer. I guess that was about the extent of my hard times. I wasn't making that much money writing for the band. The bandleader was the drummer, and he set his drums up in front of the band and stole the show, but he didn't know anything about keeping the band together. Behind the scenes there had to be somebody who knew how to write and who could rehearse the band and get the show played. I was that somebody. During that time I met The Four Tops and wrote the first music they ever had on paper. After that we settled in Chicago for awhile and then I got the Billy Williams job. I was the leader of that band. We played Milwaukee for awhile and then went down to New Orleans for five weeks on

Bourbon Street. Then we went to New York City on Broadway to The Latin Quarter. We played there for awhile. It was a small band. We had trumpet, tenor, and trombone. After The Latin Quarter engagement, Billy Williams all of a sudden said, "Okay, we're going to be off." He hadn't let anybody know that we were going to be off. He didn't give anybody transportation home. All of the guys in the band were mad, especially me, because I was responsible. I went back to Chicago after that. We had intentions of coming back to Billy Williams to record an album that was going to make us really big. After that album we were going to be big in Las Vegas. During that period of being off, I got a call to work with Vic Damone. I turned the job down at first. Then finally I took it and played with him in Milwaukee and then in Newport, Kentucky, which is across the bridge from Cincinnati. After I told Vic that I had to go back to Billy Williams to record this album, I went back to New York. We made the album and, of course, it did absolutely nothing. After that I was rather disenchanted with Billy Williams and that whole bunch. I really felt good about working with Vic. I didn't have that much



responsibility. I wasn't the leader. I was a first trumpet player and more featured than I was as leader. I was a little black kid up there playing high notes.

QUESTION: What did you do in the band?

BRYANT: I played first trumpet for Vic's show. His show would last thirty-five or forty-five minutes and he did two shows a night. I was working forty-five minutes twice a night. That was all. That was really good for me after having worked so hard all my career. He paid us well. He didn't carry a band. He just carried key players--a first trumpet player, a drummer, a piano player, a conductor, and sometimes a bass player. I stayed with him for about six years. We went many places. We were on salary, even when we weren't working. It was good financially, musically, and I enjoyed traveling. Aside from all of that, everywhere we went Vic introduced me to anybody who could do me some good. When we were in Miami, he'd make a point to introduce me to people who could help me. It was the same thing in Las Vegas and Los Angeles, so when I finally decided to move out of Chicago, I really had my choice of cities. I could have moved to any of those places. I had a good offer in Vegas.

During those years there were no black players in the orchestras there. They were not looking to take any chances. They weren't going to hire any black player who was not more than qualified. Everybody wanted to find one though. They wanted to be the first to hire a black player on the strip. It was under those circumstances I was offered a job in Vegas. One guy told me, that if I came to work in his orchestra, he would guarantee me a feature spot in the show. He told me he would put me on salary while I was sweating out my card. You had to wait for your card during those years. He said he would give me a down payment on a house and a super salary when I was finally able to work. All of that was offered. I turned it down in order to come to Los Angeles. Several people including Al Lapin at NBC and Jerry Fielding, who was a free-lance arranger-composer, had made me offers, not similar offers, but good offers if were to come to Los Angeles. They promised to keep me busy and they did. I felt I had more a future in Los Angeles than in Vegas or Miami because that was playing shows again. In Los Angeles there was a variety of work, a free-lance scene that I liked better, so I started in Los Angeles.

From that point on, you probably know it.

QUESTION: Were there ever periods when you took some time and just practiced? I've talked to a lot of people who say they had to do that at some point in their careers.

BRYANT: I'm experiencing something like that now. Normally, I would get to work maybe half an hour early, to practice and work on things. As far as just divorcing myself from work altogether and just practice, no.

QUESTION: Rather than divorcing yourself from work, how about taking a lot of time to practice. Do you ever do that?

BRYANT: Practice is different. You don't have to have a horn in your hand to practice. You can practice on the freeway, anywhere. Usually when I have the horn in my hand, I'm working. Now I will go to work half an hour early and practice with the horn in my hand. In a sense you always practice. It's hard for me to stop music from going on in my head. I'm coordinating my mind and my finger patterns. That's a habit I guess. It could be a bad habit--thinking about music and always practicing. It's not enough just to build my confidence and see how many times I can play high G. I know how many times I can play

high G.

QUESTION: Do you have a preference for a particular music?

BRYANT: I prefer not to listen to insincere people play. I mean people just making noise on the instrument displaying one kind of emotion. That got to be quite a fad for awhile in the recent past. The only thing displayed on a record was frenzy. You weren't really doing anything on the record or in your solo, for that matter, unless you displayed a great degree of frenzy. It was just frenzied playing, not musical, and much of it had to do with anger. Anger was the emotion they were displaying, frenzied anger, so I chose not to participate in that.

QUESTION: What is your concept of improvisational playing?

BRYANT: I can't ever remember not having the creative urge, and this urge certainly is important when it comes to improvisation. You have to have the urge to create. When you say, "Teach me how to improvise," you are referring to the guidelines. What are the guidelines? How do you know what to play when? When do you apply what?

QUESTION: What would you recommend to a player who said that he wanted to get his improvisational playing together?

BRYANT: I would first test his basic creative urges. If a person comes to me and says, "Teach me about improvisation," chances are he has heard me do something he liked. If he's interested in doing what I do and he's at point zero, I would make him realize that he is at point zero and I'm at point ninety-seven. What I did was thus and so. I didn't just go to someone and say, "Teach me." I went out and gathered some sort of inspiration I had a genuine interest. I would tell him to listen to records. He would have to answer some questions for me. He just can't come to me as a blank and say, "Make something out of me." He's got to want to be something. He has to represent some sort of potential. He would have to like something or the other. He's got to be curious about something. You can't just say, "I want to know everything." That's no answer. If I sat down and played a chorus of blues on the piano, and he didn't know where to start, or if he can't pick up his instrument and relate somehow or other to what I'm playing, we have a big problem. He has to have lived the improvisational life a little in order to deal with people on that level. Now I would suggest some records, some people. If he were a trumpet player, I

would suggest some trumpet players--some good ones, some bad ones, some current, some old ones. He has got to have some notion of what he is talking about. He can't walk in there cold. I would say to go listen to somebody and come back and tell me what you like. He can't say to me, "Well, I like everybody." That means he hasn't been listening to anybody. Nobody likes everybody. That's not really a good and intelligent answer to that question. Otherwise, it figures that there is nothing he really wants to do. He would have to know what he wanted to do. He would have to be curious about something, so we start out with records and creating some kind of a concept, some kind of way to get from point zero to point one. He's got to want something. Who do you want to play like? What is there about this person that you like? These are the things you must consider in order to get from point zero to point two. You start out with simple improvisations, simple responses. If you hear a B-flat seventh sound, you are going to play within C-E-G-B-flat. I would try to stir up some interest, some curiosity, more so than I would be trying to teach somebody to improvise. It would take much time spent like that before

we'd finally get into advanced harmonies, chord substitutions, and all of the good things that a person really needs to know in order to improvise. Many people do have all those things right at their fingertips, but they don't have the basic thing which is the instinct to create. All they're doing is standing up, running chord patterns that they've been taught. They don't even know how to apply them. They wonder why another person sounds so good because he does know how. All they know is that this is something. They might even play their patterns over a ballad which means it had nothing to do with the music that was being played. They are trying to make it run into something that is totally unrelated. That a form of improvisation I guess, but that's one I don't want to condone or to experience. It has very little to do with music.

Now I think my son Bobby is a good example. He didn't come to me. He was with me at point zero. He sounded as corny as anyone else would sound at point zero. I suggested records. There were records made available to him. After he became curious enough, he started going out and seeking his own records. Then there was somebody he became interested in. He really dug Joe Henderson.

After awhile he sort of grew through Joe. A tenor player can't light in this town without Bobby going to hear him. There are a lot of guidelines I've laid on him. I've told him how to do this, where you run this kind of thing. This is the way it fits; this is the way it should sound; and he's coming together. Not all of his experiences were with me, and that's the way it should be.

QUESTION: I remember a ballad you played at the National Trumpet Symposium clinic. It was funky, but also very beautiful.

BRYANT: Okay, you're speaking of emotions again. I referred to music that displayed only one emotion, which was anger and frenzy. There's one or the other or both. We can hardly separate the two. Then you talk about the ballad I played. There was some tenderness and a bluesy feeling, some musical moments in there. There's more than one emotion that you are dealing with. When you have possession of the listener's ear, you really have control of their emotions. That is unless you annoy them so much they turn you off completely. Then you become music for conversation. I like the idea of displaying different emotions in music, being able to make



the listeners feel and experience. All these things must be told to a person when he's first made aware of what improvisation is and what the effects of improvisation are. You don't just walk in and say, "What did you do?" I don't know what the first thing I did was. It's going to vary from any one situation to the next.

QUESTION: What would someone have to do to fill in for you on a night-club job? What would he have to have together?

BRYANT: He'd have to have his own thing developed. I would not allow someone to go in and do what I would do. I'd ask them to go in and do their thing, do what they do. If it was a gig I'd send somebody like Blue Mitchell, Oscar Brashear, or Albert Aarons, somebody who could play and understand that I was not sending them over there to imitate Bobby Bryant. I would tell them to just go and play the way they play.

Freddie Hubbard got into trouble with his chops because he had a fever sore or something like that. He had a week to finish at the Parisian Room and he got Blue to go in and play. Now that was Blue Mitchell playing. It wasn't Blue Mitchell trying to be Freddie Hubbard. He could have gotten Oscar or Albert, but I guess he's

friendlier with Blue.

QUESTION: What do you say to young players who ask what they can do to enhance their developing careers as professional musicians?

BRYANT: I'd never encourage a person to be a trumpet player. I mean it. I'd never encourage my own son. It's really a terrible thing. It's very demanding to be a professional musician. Let's go back to the point zero to point one hundred concept. Where are these people when they come to me? I am very choosy about students and people I associate with. I don't want to associate with people who are at point zero. It's not that I'm a snob, but by the time a person gets to me, I want him to know the answer to that question himself. I want him to be sincerely motivated. I don't want to have to furnish the motivation. I want him to know that he wants to become a professional musician and that there are barriers in his way and to feel that I might have the answers to those things. I don't necessarily want to be an inspiration or a guiding light. I would rather be a stepping stone. There are some answers that I have that I care to give. There are some answers that I'm not going to give to anybody. I just want the

person to know the right questions. That's very important to me. If you know the right questions, chances are you'll get some information from me. If you don't know the right questions, I might answer the time distance between Los Angeles and Honolulu. Louis Armstrong had experiences like that. People would come to him and ask, "What is jazz?" There's no answer to a question like that. He'd answer in his unimitable style. If you're so dumb to need to ask a question like that, you're probably too dumb to appreciate the answer. That's better than saying, "Well, I don't know what it is." Students will ask me "What's the first thing you've got to know if you are going to be a studio musician?" I answer, "The first thing you've got to know is where to park." That sounds sort of facetious, but that's one of the first things you need to know. You really need to know where to put your car and where the men's rooms are.

QUESTION: How do you know what to practice when you get called?

BRYANT: They call and say, "I want you to be at Warner Brothers II next Tuesday, nine to one and two to five," and that's all they say. What are you going to practice in order to prepare yourself?

You don't know what to practice, so you practice everything. Right? If you don't have it together enough by the time you get that call, they wouldn't call you. You've got to have that kind of confidence. Otherwise, you don't really have it together. Playing exercises and the basic fundamentals are never going to give you that kind of confidence. I know some great exercise players. They will dazzle you with performance pieces, characteristic studies, little showpieces for the trumpet. That's all they know. If they have to sit down in the band and play a part, they're in trouble, dire trouble.

QUESTION: How do you achieve that confidence?

BRYANT: It's at the end of many experiences, but not many experiences sitting out practicing fundamentals and exercises. It's at the end of many experiences where I've been asked to do many things. You don't learn those things in school. It's going to happen on the job under battle conditions. There's really no such thing as simulated battle conditions. Your adrenalin won't flow at such a frantic pace practicing at home where you know the conditions are only simulated. You have to have your career on the line, your next month's rent on the line, your house note on the line.

You know what I mean? With a family depending upon whether you're going to play this part, your adrenalin really flows. That's battle conditions. You can't practice that. The only thing you can do is prepare. When the red light goes on, your heart is going to step up. You're going to sit up and be seen.

QUESTION: I noticed that confidence among the studio players. As a lead trumpet player, would you comment on that?

BRYANT: There is an art to playing parts. Inside parts are not easier, just different from first parts. I requires more attention when you're playing inside parts. I've played second and third parts. There's much less responsibility. I don't mean to say that you can all of a sudden become irresponsible because you're playing second or third because you certainly have to follow the lead player. There's an art to lead playing. The lead player's responsibility is to lead. He's the guy on top of the entire orchestra. He's the one you're going to hear first. If he makes a mistake, he's the one who is going to stand out the most. All those things go along with playing lead. What you witnessed today was my recognizing what my responsibilities were.

I was a bit more relaxed and was concerning myself with following whoever was playing the lead part. Whatever he wanted to play, however he wanted to phrase was okay with me. He's got the lead part. I'm just going to do what he does. It was not my decision. It was not my responsibility. My only responsibility was to play it the way he wanted it played. That's what you do in a trumpet section. Now when I was handed the lead part, all of a sudden my role shifted because my responsibilities were different. Now the decisions were mine. You don't sit with your legs crossed and expect to play with intensity. Some of the things Snooky (Young) had to overdub today were because people were lackadaisical about getting the lead parts on, making them heard. The responsible person playing lead will make sure that his part is heard. The lead part is what the arranger wants to hear. He wants to get that recorded. My change of attitude came from that knowledge. When I'm handed the lead part I have to make decisions about where we're going to breathe, how we are going to phrase, and what notes we are going to play long and short. If they are unmarked, then that's my decision. If the composer or the arranger marks on the paper,

then we adhere to that. It is my prerogative to change or disagree with anything he wrote. All of those things go through the mind of the person who is playing lead. Everybody knows it and respects him. For "New York, New York," there were three guys hired to play lead. We all couldn't play at once, so we tried to cast guys according to their abilities. Warren Lunning played lead on the Les Brown charts because that was more his style. I would have to put myself out of character to play a chart that was supposed to sound like the Les Brown Band. That was right in character for him. Snooky Young played some of the things that were older since he's older than Warren and I and is familiar with that style. Then when it came to the Dizzy Gillespie Band and we had to duplicate that sound, they felt like that would be good casting for me. I know that style, so I dictated phrasing, breath marks, and style. The whole band was following me at that point. That's when you notice a change of attitude. In the performance of any given music, even if it's just a part, there's always a certain degree of chance as far as the trumpet player is concerned. You become of professional

caliber when you recognize where you have to take a chance. It is according to your equipment-- that marriage between you and your mouthpiece, your leadpipe and your trumpet. I don't know if you noticed any of the false fingering I was using today. I use a lot of that in the upper register because I know that I have to alter pitches on that horn. For example, sometimes I'll play D above high C open. Sometimes, depending on where the tuning slide is, I'll play it with the first valve; sometimes I'll play it with the first and third valves with the third valve-slide out. I know how that horn acts. I know the characteristics of that horn. It changes wherever the tuning slide is, and the tuning slide is going to be where it's most comfortable for you to play, according to where the band is playing. If I play the way I'm most comfortable, I can use the ordinary fingerings, but if I have to pull my pitch down some, I'll have to alter my fingerings. That has to do with being professional. I know my equipment. With that knowledge alone, I'm taking fewer chances. When I say chances, I mean there's not much chance that I'm going to miss because I know every compensation I must make. If I miss something, it's not because I couldn't



play it. It's because I didn't play it. I just took my mind off the music at that moment. I know what to do. Usually, when I'm playing lead we make one or two takes and we're done with it. I do not fool around with them because I want to be through with them. I have made every compensation that was necessary and they say, "Super--next tune." The proper compensation and what that entails can be a list a yard long. Nevertheless if you are going to render professional performances, you need to know that list. Your audience doesn't care how long the list is or whether you even have it. All they know is what comes out of the horn. That's the difference between professionalism and pseudo-professionalism.

QUESTION: What are you thinking about when you sit down to play in a professional situation?

BRYANT: I had better be thinking about that part, every compensation that I have to make, and everything that's related to that part. Some of the most obvious clams, really outstanding mistakes that I have made in my professional career, happened when I took my mind off the music. I eventually learned when they were going to happen. I can remember playing shows and I'd be sitting there thinking, "Boy, I'm playing this awfully good."

I'd be playing all the while I'm thinking it. "Maybe I ought to ask for a raise. I ought to be getting more money than this." Then when I would come back to my senses, I had messed up the preceding eight bars. The pitches were all shot to hell. I'd missed the notes. I had really just wrecked. Then I had to start all over again. That happened to me more than once, when I'd start thinking about something else, particularly about getting a raise. You can't think about anything other than your part. You can't take your eye or ear off the trumpet. It demands one hundred percent. I told you about staying even with it. You can't stay even with it if you're not going to think about it. You have to think about it. The trumpet doesn't have to think about anything. The trumpet will be there waiting for you to miss and you will. If you don't watch that fellow, he'll make a monkey out of you. I'm thinking about that part and I mean one hundred percent concentration.

QUESTION: How did you get to the place where your mind was such that you could turn off everything and think about that part?

BRYANT: A person does not have to say much to get you to understand that, if you keep missing parts, you

are not going to be in his band. You only mess up when you aren't thinking about what you're doing. You're thinking about something else. If your rent is due and your car payment is due, believe me, you will keep your mind on that part. It's not asking very much. How long can a part last? It might be two and a half minutes. You might have to rehearse it four or five times. When you think about it, that's about ten minutes that they ask you to pay attention. That's not very much. Even if you play the lead part like I did with Vic, that was only forty-five minutes. That's not much time to pay attention out of twenty-four hours. If you won't be attentive, you will not be on the gig. Please believe me. It doesn't take much of a transitional period. There's not a time when you miss a whole lot; then you miss a little bit; then less, and now you don't miss anything. You either miss or you don't miss. You get from one point to the other. Zap! All it takes is paying attention. I don't mean to oversimplify it. That's not all it takes. In the situation though, all those other things are given. You aren't considering whether you can play a note from the start. You know the notes are there.

If you're taking the people's money, you had better not be talking about considering whether you can. They are paying you. You have to go in there with all the confidence in the world. "I've got to have . . . ." or, "There's no way I can live without . . . ." This is the attitude you must go in with. "If you can't pay any more than that, I don't see how I could possibly . . . ." and they say, "Okay, you got it!"

QUESTION: You seem to take the same basic attitude, not only towards the trumpet, but towards everything you're involved in. It's very simple.

BRYANT: I think my approach is more direct than it is simple. I go right to identifying the problem. Please find the answer. Execute!

QUESTION: Do you think there is any geographical area that has influenced your development?

BRYANT: I am very much aware of the geographical situation. There is a difference in intensity. That is a key word. Musicians in New York and the eastern part of the country were more intense than musicians of the west coast were five or seven years ago. It just happened to be geographical. I think the differences had to do with the pace of the city, the pace of living, the pace of life styles. It is a definite fact that New York

musicians played with much more intensity than west coast musicians did. It's changing now because New York musicians are moving to the west coast, and they have not lost that intensity which was displayed in their music before they came here. New York musicians played as though they were hungry. Their life depended on it. The rent, the car note, everything depended on it. Their job depended on it. West coast musicians played very securely. It was not important that they played with intensity. That's how the differences in west coast and east coast jazz were divided. It was a matter of intensity. I had to become aware of that because you could say that I gained a lot of my training on the midwest coast in Chicago. That's a different style of playing too. I learned a lot in Chicago. Then I went to New York and experienced that, and it was altogether different. Then I came to Los Angeles, which was altogether different again. Now I'm witnessing the east coast players moving to Los Angeles, and that same kind of intensity is being brought along. It has to do with a different life style, a different people. There was a time when you could define it on a geographical basis, but those barriers are being

broken now. You notice that some of the New York shows are moving to Los Angeles now.

QUESTION: Imagine that you were in charge of setting up the program for music education in the United States. What would you do?

BRYANT: I would recommend picking instruments in terms of personality. I wouldn't give a kid a tuba or trombone just because he had thick lips. He might have the personality of a leader. I would recommend an extensive listening program for faculty as well as students. I would end the condescension that is exhibited in certain faculty throughout the country. They look down their noses at jazz and people who play jazz. The way it is now is that, if you happen to be able to play jazz, you are categorized as a jazz musician. I would do away with that category as much as I could because a jazz musician is altogether different from a person who just happens to be able to play jazz. I resent to the ninth degree being called a jazz musician because they tend to pigeon-hole you. If you want some jazz played, call this person, but if you don't want any jazz played, don't call that person. I would put an end to that concept throughout the industry. I think instructors should be more qualified in

terms of categories and broadness. I wouldn't want an instructor to say to a person boastfully, "Of course, I'm classically trained." It really doesn't mean anything. You can easily say, "Well who isn't classically trained?" Usually an instructor will say that in defense of his inabilities to play jazz, swing, or contemporary music. It's a false pedestal he's placing himself on. They get away with it because they're in the majority. I would change that.

QUESTION: So you think it is important to be able to play in different idioms or styles?

BRYANT: Yes. You talk about musicians who have served in several idiom, look at Snooky Young. I have been trying to convince Snooky to do clinics. He's rather shy about speaking in front of people. His statement to me was, "I wouldn't know what to say or how to go about it. Suppose they ask me something I don't know?" But I said to him, "All any clinician really needs to do is show up. Usually the people carry or take the offensive. They keep things going with their questions. All the clinician has to do is respond. Usually people ask questions within his area because information has been sent in advance." I told Snooky that he had more information than

any of us. He didn't realize why. What other trumpet player has played first trumpet with Jimmy Lunceford, Count Basie, Thad Jones and Mel Lewis, and now Doc Severinson and The Tonight Show Orchestra? What other trumpet player alive has covered that many eras and is still active? There's nobody. He has a wealth of information that he can lay on us. He is a great source of information. For example, there's a definite way to play a shake. When they write 'Basie Shake' on a part, there's a definite thing they mean. It's not a lip trill; it's not anything except what they say--a 'Basie Shake.' Snooky is one of the few people who can do that. He didn't even realize what he was doing. He was shaking an A on the second space the other day. I asked him, "What notes are you shaking?" You don't find guys nowadays who can play a shake like that in the middle register. He said, "I'm just shaking A." I said, "No, there are two notes involved. What are they?" Then he said, "I never thought about that. I never realized that I'm playing A and C-sharp." Snooky has a style which is a dying art. He can swing you into bad health using a derby. You don't find



young players playing that kind of solo. He can do that better than anybody else I know. That comes from way, way, way back when guys used to use derbies and plungers to alter the sound of the trumpet.

QUESTION: In summation, is there a statement you could make that would encapsule your attitude toward professional playing?

BRYANT: You've got to be up, up, up. You've got to imagine the worst possible thing that could come out of your horn. The worst possible thing that could ever come out must be so far above the consciousness level of everybody listening to it that they think it's just marvelous. Clifford was that way. I don't know if he was that way consciously or unconsciously, but he'd play a solo, then walk away from the microphone just shaking his head, and people would be standing up applauding and cheering. There are peaks and valleys. You want your performance to be on a peak day, not a valley day. When you do it long enough, your peaks and your valleys start to flatten out. Every time you put the instrument on your face, play it.

## AL COHN INTERVIEW

QUESTION: What is improvisational playing to you?

COHN: There's a lot to it. It's a lot more than scales and knowing the chords. It's a very personal thing. I know guys who don't know the first thing about chords and scales, and they're great improvisers. Lester Young used to say, "It's like telling a story." A guy who sings the blues like Jimmy Rushing or Joe Turner is improvising and telling his story.

QUESTION: Is there any difference in your mind between a jazz improviser and a non-jazz improviser or a person who cannot improvise?

COHN: They probably are different facets of the same thing. I mean non-jazz improvisers and jazz improvisers. Music is categorized more than it should be. If a guy is improvising, no matter what the content, he is doing something related to improvisation of any form. He would sit down and do the same sort of thing if he were writing, only with improvisation it would be gone forever.

QUESTION: How did you get into playing? How did you start?

COHN: Well, I just heard it and I was seduced. First, I heard Benny Goodman and Count Basie and Lester Young, and then I began digging Billie Holiday records. I also had some older guys who

were good influences on me who started showing me things that were on records. Then I got obsessed with it. That's all I did until it drove my parents crazy.

QUESTION: Where are you from?

COHN: Brooklyn, New York.

QUESTION: How was your early family life in terms of music?

COHN: My father and mother were music lovers, but they didn't know anything about jazz. They were never exposed to it. They grew up on stage shows from the twenties. They loved it. My mother played the piano and they had all the sheet music to all the shows. They would sit around and play them and sing them.

QUESTION: Did they encourage the jazz music?

COHN: No, but they didn't discourage it. They had me playing piano when I was very little, six years old, and of course I wasn't interested in it at that time. I did it because I had to. They were just doing it, not that they ever thought I'd be a great musician, but because they thought every person should be exposed to the arts in some way or another. I resented it because I wanted to be out playing ball with the other kids, but now I'm grateful.

QUESTION: What kinds of things did you practice in your

early development?

COHN: I had legitimate training, the scales, etc. When I got interested I got a clarinet. I was twelve years old and I was taking clarinet lessons. I went through all the standard exercise books. I had a very fine teacher. Then I got a saxophone when I was fourteen years old and I practiced scales and exercises. I would sit in the room and wail, I thought. I did the same thing all kids do. I tried to play as fast as I could.

QUESTION: If a young guy came up to you and said, "I really want to play jazz. What should I do?" What would you tell him?

COHN: I'd tell him two things. Listen to records, listen to other players, and listen to live performances if you can, and play a lot. Play by yourself and with other guys as much as you can. I have a son who goes to Berklee. We were living out in the country, and he wanted to play jazz. He practices and he's good and he works real hard, but there was no one for him to play with out there in the sticks. All they like is country music and rock and they were just fooling around. That's why I sent him to Berklee, to be around people his own age with the same interests. I knew it was a dead end street for him out there

in the sticks as far as music was concerned.

QUESTION: So you think that you have to be in the right environment?

COHN: Yes, and there is a certain amount of competition that exists in that environment, and I think that's good. Competition makes progress. It's the American way.

QUESTION: What would a player have to have together to make it in an improvisational situation like you often play in?

COHN: Well, he has to have his raw materials. I mean the ability on his instrument. It takes a lot of experience to get up in front of a band. Usually I'm working with guys who have played with each other many times, and we don't have anything set; we just say we'll play a tune. Whatever would happen, we would be able to take care of it. Whatever situation would arise, we expect that we could pull it together. It's an experience, and that's not just a few years. That's a lifetime.

QUESTION: How long have you been playing?

COHN: Well, professionally since 1943. February, 1943, I got my first job. Experience teaches you how to make a job, how to get something happening when you are in a strange situation. Say you're

in a town where you don't know anybody and they give you a local rhythm section and it's not what you'd like, but you still have to pull it together. You have to work harder and draw out everything you know from your experiences.

QUESTION: If you had to point out some things, whether they were musical or not, that were the most important for getting your jazz playing together, what would they be?

COHN: I think you have to have the basic knowledge of your horn. That you can't get away from. You have to have the training. You have to know how to breathe. You aren't born with that. You have to work on that no matter how talented you are. That's the technical part of it.

QUESTION: You've got to just work that out?

COHN: Yes, you do. Now I've laid off a bit. I do some arranging and writing of music and occasionally I get very involved with that. I'll get on an assignment or project that takes weeks and sometimes I don't touch the horn for weeks. Then I go on a job and I find myself really pooping out. I'll remember that I'm probably not breathing right. All of a sudden the bulb goes on up there, and "Oh, that's what it is." It makes all the difference. It's something you

have to concentrate on. You have to keep it up, like an athlete has to train. So if you've been off for awhile and your breathing is right, it makes things a million times easier.

QUESTION: You started playing professionally in New York in 1943. What was happening musically in New York then?

COHN: It was great. We had Fifty-Second Street and even though it was on its last legs, there were still a whole bunch of clubs. People like Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Art Tatum, Coleman Hawkins, Nat Cole, Billie Holiday, and Roy Eldridge played at all these clubs. It was heaven. You could go into the clubs and hear these musical giants. There were a lot of bands and a lot of jobs, but not a lot of money. I mean you couldn't make very much money; scale was low. I worked for forty-five dollars a week on six-day jobs, but I thought it was great. I thought it was the big time. I thought, "You mean they pay for this?" I played all kinds of jobs--in theatres, in ballrooms, and then some jazz jobs in small clubs. I was lucky in that I didn't play with too many rotten bands.

QUESTION: Who were some of the people who were your primary influences?

COHN: Well, the giants of course--Lester Young, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Roy Eldridge, Coleman Hawkins, and Charlie Parker was the big one. Strangely enough, I didn't pick up on Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington until later. I had a one-track mind. Everything to me was swing and Count Basie, and nothing else registered. Duke Ellington was a little too hip for me I guess. But in retrospect, Duke Ellington is the one influence that has stood up more than anything else.

QUESTION: If you had to teach improvisation in a school situation, how would you do it?

COHN: I always thought it couldn't be taught, but kids could be helped a lot by studying their scales and chords and also by being helped with their repertoire. That's very important. But as far as pure improvisation, I don't know if it can be taught.

QUESTION: What do you think the ability to improvise is?

COHN: It's like anything. There are many fine painters who could look at a scene or landscape and paint it well, but it would take a certain painter to move someone with their personal expression.



## JERRY COKER INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

COKER: I was born on November 28, 1932, in South Bend, Indiana.

QUESTION: How did you get interested in playing?

COKER: My mother and father were both jazz musicians. My mother was a jazz pianist and my dad was a jazz tenor saxophone player. They met while playing in the same band. My older brother was also a jazz pianist. Music was always in the family. I was hearing the records that belonged to their generation all through my childhood. For awhile I didn't really know what I wanted. I didn't even know if I liked music that much. I did know one thing, and that was whenever I heard my father play in a ballroom situation or whatever, it always felt good and natural. Music has always been a natural part of my life. For example, when I walk down a music school hallway and I hear people practicing, that is par for the course for me. That is my environment and surrounding. I wouldn't want it any other way. I have grown to like the sound of industry, but it does not distract me or keep me from taking a nap in the middle of it all, because that is the way I was brought up. My

family was always practicing. The sound of my family practicing may be similar to other people hearing the radio or something like that. It was a natural part of my environment, so I hadn't thought about whether I wanted to do it myself or not. It was already there. When I was six or seven, I asked my father if I could play his tenor saxophone and he said my fingers were too short. Being as young as I was, I figured, "Well, if they are too short, then they are too short." I didn't think that later they might be long enough. Even if somebody did say to me that my fingers would be long enough in three or four years, three or four years at that time seemed like an eternity.

When I was eight they started me on private piano lessons. I was studying with a parlor piano kind of teacher and that wasn't what I wanted. I didn't want to play "Running Up Grandfather Clock," or what have you. I got very disinterested in it and I didn't practice piano at all. As a matter of fact, I almost became a little anti-music during that time. When I was ten, they had me start to study clarinet and they said that I could play in the school band. Well, I have very little affinity for

clarinets even now. I have loved good clarinet players when they have come along like Jimmy Hamilton, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman or somebody from the traditional times, but I have never really had much affinity for clarinet. I've felt like it made good firewood, but little else. I don't really enjoy the sound, although that was my major instrument throughout all of my college career until I started working on my doctorate and finally ended up playing saxophone as a major. Clarinet just wasn't the instrument to start me on to inspire me because I still had my father's tenor playing in the back of my mind. I wasn't consciously thinking about it, but it was back there without me even knowing it. For the next couple of years it was a downhill trend. For one thing, I was told that what the concert band was playing was classical music and that was a gross error, but I didn't know any difference. All I knew was that the music sucked. It seemed to have very little validity for much of anything. It seemed corny, cumbersome, and too much at the park concert level. It is hard for me to put my finger on it, but it certainly wasn't concert music. It wasn't Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Brahms, Mahler, Shostakovich,

Hindemith, Stravinsky, or Bartok. It especially wasn't the modern ones. Well, anyway, with this false impression presented to me of what classical music was, I then thought that I didn't like classical music, the piano lessons that I was getting, or the clarinet.

My parents shifted me to another teacher who I later found out was one of the most important people in my early life. His name was Joseph A. Artist. He was a black man who happened to be one of the most together teachers that I have ever studied with. I studied with him continuously from about age ten to about age seventeen. I stopped studying with him just before I went to school. I didn't work for him. I was always embarrassed about that and I felt sheepish because I knew that he had a lot to tell me. I studied harmony with him, as well as piano. I didn't practice piano so I finally gave it up at age fourteen, but I continued going in to him just for the theory and harmony. He used to fill my head with axioms that to this day are some of the truisms that I often say. One that I remember that he said with respect to writing was, "What does not sound well should not be written." He would put it to you that exact way

every time that it applied. It was like having a guru tell you how to react to each situation and how to evaluate it. Another one of his axioms was, "Remember when you are writing music that you are always responsible for the other fellow's mistake." He had so many of those things and they come back to me all the time. Maybe I didn't work for him, but I never forgot what he said.

I was still overall not that interested in music. I was more or less doing it because my family felt like I should.

When I was eleven years old, I was lying on the living room floor one night listening to my brother play the piano. My father was sitting in his usual easy chair almost dozing, but not quite. He was listening, too. He saw that I was depressed and figured out what was the matter. He came over and asked, "How would you like to play my horn?" It was like a brand new thought because I hadn't thought about it since I was six or seven years old. He said, "Not only am I going to let you play my horn, but I am going to set you up to take lessons with the best tenor player in town, Junny Farrell. Junny can play both choruses of Coleman Hawkins's

'Body and Soul' note for note." I already knew Coleman Hawkins's solo because I had heard it over and over in the nightly jam sessions at our house or somebody else's house. My thought was, "Oh, my God, do you mean that somebody else can play that solo note for note, the whole thing, both choruses?" I knew that one chorus had come out in down beat, but I didn't know what to do with it because I didn't have a tenor. I tried to play a little of it on clarinet but I couldn't get anywhere with it, so when he told me that, I got very excited.

The next day he got out the horn and tried to get me into it. I said, "I want to play like you play when you are sitting in the bedroom practicing and not playing out of a book or exercises. You just warm up the horn and the next thing you know you are starting to make up your own stuff. That's what I want to do." I had this stock chart of Count Basie's, "One O'Clock Jump" and I asked him how I could work with it to do that kind of playing. The chart had the chords written in close harmony the way they used to appear in all of the old stocks. My question was, "How do I know what to do?" My father said, "Grab one of those notes and start

working around with it and keep staring at those notes so that you know you are in the right measure at the right time, work off of those notes."

That was my first and last improvisation lesson from my dad because I realized that he was not going to be able to help me. He could help me more by example. By listening to him play I could figure it out, but he and ninety-nine percent of the people of his generation couldn't be methodical, because there was no method.

There was not only a lack of books, but there were no teachers and not even musicians who could verbalize what they were doing or a verbalized enough musician who could understand it.

That was my initial introduction to improvisation, and as soon as I got the horn I went in and grabbed the down beat that had the Coleman Hawkins's solo in it and went to work on it. I spent much of the next couple of years running through that solo and trying to play it a little better. I also played it with the record. I started playing gigs about six months after I picked up the tenor, when I was twelve years old.

QUESTION: Was this in South Bend?

COKER: Yes. They were mostly club dates with local

bands. Then I played in the college band. After the college band there was an interim period where I was working mostly at a black club called Chez Paris for a tenor player named Curtis Johnson. If Junny Farrell wasn't the best tenor player in town, then Curtis was. Curtis and I started working together a lot. I was playing piano for him. We were doing shows but we also had some places where we could stretch out. Curtis was a tenor player of the Gene Ammons, Wordell Grey, and even a little of the Illinois Jacquet school of thought. He also liked Dexter (Gordon). He liked the two tenor duel kinds of things. After we had been playing for awhile we started working breakfast dances together. Those were a three-ring circus because I got to play tenor instead of piano. Playing tenor with Curtis was a dream come true. I had heard him a lot before I had the opportunity to play with him, and I already had respect for his playing. On top of all of this he was truly good-hearted. He is one of the few people who I go back to see in South Bend when I go through there. He was a beautiful man as well as a good player. He knew that the excitement, competition, and rivalry of having two tenors



exchange in a duel kind of thing was good for the audience, and made the whole thing a lot more fun. That was how I spent the last years that I lived in South Bend. Then I went out with Woody Herman's band and other things started to happen.

QUESTION: Did you go out with Woody's band before going to college?

COKER: No. It was in between. I went to school for two years, laid out a semester, went back to school for a semester, and then went on the road with Woody. I stayed out of school that time for five years and didn't go back until 1958.

QUESTION: Was all of this time spent with Woody?

COKER: No. Part of the strangeness of the situation was the fact that I was precocious as a player, but I was socially and personally very naive. I was really a child. When I was seventeen or eighteen I found out that I had a friend on the Woody Herman band. I got very excited. Arno Marsh was on the band and I knew him through Clare Fischer. Even though Arno had never heard me play and was going by what Clare had told him about my playing, I told Arno that if he ever decided to leave the band I wanted to know because I wanted to try for it. When he finally

put in his notice, and the word got to me, I went to see him to ask why he didn't let me know, and he acted like he forgot. He just hadn't heard me play and was not convinced that I could cut it.

I went to see the band and went to talk to Arno again. I wouldn't dream of being that pushy now. I was so young and naive and I wanted so badly to play with the band. My mother had been telling me since I was fifteen years old that I shouldn't count on playing in a big band because big bands were becoming less and less popular. She would say, "Calm down, Junior Jazz. You don't want to put all of your eggs in one basket. Big bands aren't around that much anymore. Who are you going to play with? What bands are left?" I would say, "Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, Basie or Ellington." Her reply would be, "Well, Basie or Ellington aren't going to invite you to play with them." The only thing I could think to say to her was, "Well, that leaves the other two bands."

I would get very distressed, because to have my mother, who had a remarkable ear and could pick off some fantastic things, not encourage me didn't help. She knew everything that was going on.

When I would play a cliché from somebody's record in my solo, she knew it. If we were playing a tune that had a bebop head over a set of standard changes, she would yell out the standard tune from the kitchen while washing dishes. To have her not put solid support behind me at that time was discouraging. Now I know that she really did support me. She just didn't want me at fifteen years old to put my hopes up so high that I would get hurt and disappointed. I remember going to hear Gene Krupa's band about this same time and there was an excellent tenor player on the band named Buddy Wise. I was an autograph hound and I would go around to all of the bands and meet everybody. I always stood right in front of the band, glued to the stage all night long. I wouldn't move. I never danced. I just listened. I spent many evenings within feet of the bell of Dizzy's (Gillespie) horn, listening and letting it blow my hair back. I loved it. This particular evening I leaned over the edge of the stage during the break between tunes and I asked, "Buddy, how old are you?" He said, "Twenty." I was crestfallen. I was fifteen and that was only five years away. On the way home my brother said, "You're depressed,

aren't you? Would you like to be doing that when you're twenty?" I said, "I would give anything for it." He told me to get busy, sit down and start learning my changes. He told me to take a key a week or a key a month and learn all types of chordal structures in the key. I did these things at about four times the rate he expected me to and I got them all done in one month. That was an important period for me, because I broke the ice. My brother had threatened to stop playing with me unless I learned my changes. I thought, "Oh, my God, I'm losing my accompanist." When I wanted to make the audition with Woody I was nineteen or twenty. I went to listen to the band and talked to Arno again. This time I asked to sit in. He said, "Yeah, let me talk to the old man." He delayed it, so I came back on another night and asked him again. I said that I would at least like to play for Woody. They told me that I could come up on the last set, after twelve-thirty and play. The gig was going until one o'clock. Woody said, "Yeah, tell the kid to come back at twelve-thirty He'll never ask to sit in this band again." The band was going to have a big laugh. Then I went to the bandstand to set about my destruction. Woody called up all of the heaviest tenor features.

But, what they didn't know was that in listening to them play I already knew what the book looked like, what the soloist played like, and I knew changes well enough that I could glance at the changes and know what they were. I could then go out to the mike and solo like a regular member of the band. I was making an enormous impression but didn't know it. Even though I knew that I played well enough to be in that band, which was my reason for insisting upon an audition, I didn't really know that I was impressing them. When I was finished I put away my horn and hurriedly and grateously thanked a couple of the players for letting me play a little bit and started out of the hall. My heart was leaping around happily because I had had a few minutes of joy. As I was about to leave, I heard Woody and his manager coming after me. I had only met Woody on the way to the stand so I couldn't believe that he was standing there. He said, "I don't know what your plans are, but just don't go back to school. We already have a guy, Freddie Greenwald, from the Buddy Morrow band, and I can't get out of that. But, give us a number and we will get in touch with you as soon as we get clear of Freddie." I didn't really think that they were

serious. I went on home and they called me one week later and asked me to come out and join the band immediately because they had sent Freddie Greenwald home with two week's pay.

Within a month's time I had the book memorized and I was sick of traveling, the road, the life, and the kind of people that I was meeting by being with the band. You also have to understand that I was naive. If I were going through it again now, I would find other points of interest. I would get into interpersonal relationships with the people, but I was selfish. I offended Woody.

QUESTION: How did you offend Woody?

COKER: By being a musical snob. When I left, he told Nat Pierce that I was leaving because I didn't dig eighty-seven percent of what they were playing.

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He was right. I was a musical snob and I saw beyond what they were doing. I heard a more modern music than what they were playing. I had just come from college and being around people like David Baker, my brother, and lots of other good musicians. I had been hearing sessions that involved the Montgomery brothers. I had been around a hotbed of musicians and I couldn't even tell the guys on Woody's band about it. As

soon as I started to tell them about somebody like Wes Montgomery they would say, "Don't come on with that Indiana stuff, man. There aren't any players around there. Come off that jive; you are one out of a million." I would try to tell them different, but we just didn't get along.

Woody asked me to write a chart and I wouldn't. He kept after me and finally I wrote one. We spent about four hours rehearsing it and we performed it a couple of nights but I couldn't stand the way they were playing it. They didn't understand the concept and I couldn't get them to play it right. I had never rehearsed a band before in my life so I couldn't tell them what to do.

When we went to Paris on that first European tour I wrote back to the collegiate band leader and said, "Count me in for the summer. I want to be there." I even tried to get one of the tenor players on the collegiate band to take my place with Woody, so that I could have his space in the band.

When I went to Indiana University and played with my first collegiate band, the book had been written especially for the personnel in the band.

The arranger had gone around and visited each member of the band in the summertime in order to get a more personal viewpoint concerning the playing styles and musical preferences. When we got to school, he had a forty-tune book ready to go, and after that, he added about thirty or forty more tunes. It was like entering another world of music because I had only played big band society things. People like Clare Fisher were writing for the band also.

QUESTION: I have a question concerning the period in your development between sixteen and twenty. Could you tell me more about that period?

COKER: That was intense work. I became very determined when I was in the sixth or seventh grade. I knew that I wanted to be a musician for the rest of my life. That period was my first deciding point. The years between ages fifteen and twenty were the testing period. When I made the decision I was going to be like Buddy Wise and get on a name band by the time I was twenty, that meant that I was going to have to go all-out for it. I had been on the basketball team, football team, running track, and generally participating in sports activities, but it came to a point where I had to decide between playing basketball on



Saturday night or playing gigs. I had to take the gigs even though I loved sports. When I was a child, all I ever wanted to do was be a football player at Notre Dame. My sports goals went by the wayside and I started studying with Sammy Runion in Chicago. He designed saxophone mouthpieces and helped with the design of the Conn horn, neither of which I care a great deal for, but as a teacher he did a lot to clean up and inspire my playing. He helped me in saxophone ways but not in improvisation ways. I continued studying with Junny Farrell until I was about seventeen or eighteen. I also went back and took a few lessons from him after I went to college. He taught us arranging as well. We got together and wrote for six or eight saxophones or any instrumentation, and played what we wrote. This was a period of intense practicing, but my most intense practice period actually happened from age eighteen to twenty. That is when I began staying at school instead of going home during Christmas vacation. I would go home Christmas Day to be with my family and then I would go back to school to practice. I began to realize that the University was going to suck up all of my time and I was not going to have any time to

practice. As it was, I was only sleeping six hours a night and I could only practice tenor in the evening. I made sure that I got everything done before so that I could practice with a clear head. But three or four hours a day wasn't enough at that time. So I began staying at school on vacations and practicing more like six or eight hours a day. I couldn't do it for extended periods, but I could do it for a week or two.

I was also doing a tremendous amount of solo transcribing at that time. I would not write them down on paper. I would simply learn them either by remembering how they went and picking them off or by playing along with the record. I would do whichever was more expedient at the moment. I also spent a lot of time self-critiquing my playing. About this same time my parents bought me a wire recorder. When tape recorders first came out there was a wire recorder and a tape recorder. The wire recorder used spools of wire in place of a tape. This machine enabled me to play along with records and record myself while playing with the record. Unfortunately, Jamey's (Aebersold) records were not out then but I had some old

seventy-eights by Billy May called Joining the Band, which had about six or seven standards on them, and some early rhythm section records. I had about a dozen records which gave me twenty-four selections. I would put the records on the record changer and place the microphone of the wire recorder so that it could pick up the record coming out of the speaker and I would play with it and record myself.

Nowadays anybody could think of doing this, with the level at which we work with tape recorders, but at the time it was a revelation to me. I could record myself improvising and still hear the accompaniment well enough to know whether or not what I played worked. I got on a daily schedule of playing and listening. I would take half an hour to play with the record and half an hour to listen to critique. At first I would get rid of those phrases in successive goings-through. I would listen to it over and over. I was trying to figure out what worked and what didn't work. What do I want to keep? What do I want to get out of this? What am I not hearing while I am playing? These are some of the questions I was trying to answer. Within a reasonable length of time I acquired

the ability to listen without the wire. I could simply listen to myself spontaneously.

I would be objective and subjective at the same time. This was about the time that my pitch came in. It actually came in earlier than this, but it got solidized during this period. From then on anytime I heard somebody play something, I knew what they played and could play it back to them. This process got transferred to other instruments. That is why my book, The Jazz Idiom, has all of the business on the ear. I found that to be one of the most fascinating subjects. The way our ear works and what we hear that we don't think we hear or that we don't know we hear is a very interesting topic.

QUESTION: Could you elaborate on that?

COKER: I explained the whole thing in the book. But in short, any musical device that is reinforced by enough successive experiences or listenings can be instantly transcribed after a certain point. If I played a C major triad to my theory class and only told them that the bottom note was C and turned to them and asked "What is it?" They would all say, a C major triad. I would then say, "How did you figure that out? You weren't writing it down and you weren't figuring

it out. I didn't hear anybody singing." Another example is me telling my class that we are going to do some melodic dictation and the the first note is C. Even if I don't count a tempo and just run my finger up the C major scale very quickly, they would still all get the C major scale correctly because of their familiarity with the sound of the C major scale. Again, that is instant recognition. Even the layman on the street knows the difference between major and minor. He may not be able to label it, but he does know the difference because he hears it.

QUESTION: In other words, if we hear something enough times we learn the sound?

COKER: We eventually can hear it instantly; we become at one with it. Any musical device can be done this way. It can be harmony, scales or melodies. It can get into areas that are frightening. There are some things that I have learned to hear in feeling pitch that I didn't even put in my book. For example, I can go to hear a woodwind quintet concert, and because I was a multiple woodwind major with saxophone concentration when I was working on my doctorate in Indiana, I can sense a very close pitch relationship with each

instrument in the ensemble.

I can't play any instrument more than a few months without very quickly acquiring that sense of pitch on the instrument. I can even do this on instruments that don't have so much quality distinction like the piano. It is always there to a more or less extent and if I am playing a lot of piano, it gets glued in and stays there for a while. It's like working up your chops. It depends on how much I have to think in piano key. If it happens to be more convenient to think in tenor saxophone key because I have the tenor in my hands, then that's what I am going to hear. It becomes possible to have this sense of pitch within a short length of time once you set it underway. Once you get this sense on one instrument it seems to be easy to grab it on another. This sense is a result of an unusual amount of sympathy. I am not a social sort of person, but I do have tremendous sympathy. If I am with a blind person, I also become blind. I begin to wonder how I am going to find my way to the bathroom or to the door. I begin to become completely at one with that person. I am also a natural mimic. If I am with a person who speaks a certain way, within moments I start to

talk that way.

The sympatico holds over with improvisation. When I listen to my improvisation students, I am with them. I am inside their brains and inside their bodies, as well as their hearts. It is an unusual feeling. It's like when I go to a woodwind quintet and hear all of the instruments simultaneously with respect to their individual pitch relationships. I suppose it shouldn't alarm me anymore than that our ears can remember entire orchestrations that we don't understand. When we recall the orchestration in our minds, on a grand scale, we hear the entire thing. We don't just hear the parts of it that we don't understand, or have learned, or have read; we hear everything. If that is the case, then what is to keep us from using that memory the same way that we use the rewind and fast forward on a tape recorder. If we gain control of it then our minds become a tape recorder. When I hear an entire small group or my improvisation class play, if they have ten or twelve people in them, I can usually go down this person's solo and discuss it in detail when we have finished. I can do this easily, because between the pitch thing and the sympatico thing I am at one with my

students when we work.

QUESTION: Do you think that this ability improves the more you do it?

COKER: Yes. That explains why a person like Mozart could go in and transcribe difficult works with many voices with one hearing. Part of it is memory, but by the time of his life that he was doing this, he had dealt with most, if not all of the sounds necessary for him to perform such a feat. There also were not that many different sounds for him to have to deal with. The same basic thing holds true for everyone. If you learn the sounds that are not unusual, the more commonplace sounds that seem to be tried and true that everybody seems to use a lot, then you can hear the sounds that are irregular, because you have an anchor. You can't go out if you don't know where in is, because you don't know when you're out.

The free-form pianist who is using his elbows, feet, hitting the piano, slamming the lid, sitting on the piano and all sorts of unconventional things to get wild sounds from it is always in terrible danger. If he is shuckin', he could be getting ready to lay down the hairiest chord of all and come down on a C major triad. If he



doesn't know where the C major triad is, he doesn't know how to avoid it. Now that we are getting into playing the kinds of things that introduce graduated forms of dissonance, we have to learn to produce tension, building sounds to varying degrees. Lee Konitz once said, "You've got to know where far-in is before you can be far-out." The physical way that doors are set up helps explain that you can get from inside to outside without a key, but you need a key to work the lock from outside. Most windows also open from inside, but if you've never been inside, you don't even know if there is a window on the other side of the room.

QUESTION: What is your concept of jazz improvisation?

COKER: Improvisation is spontaneous composition which includes with it the aspect of performance. In other words, you are composing and playing simultaneously. It is instantaneous, spontaneous composition. Jazz is simply the tag for the style because improvisation could and does exist in virtually every style of music.

I didn't realize that when I was a young musician, but as I have begun to acquire neighbors who are bluegrass guitar players, hillbilly fiddlers, folk players and the like, I have become convinced

that improvisation is present in all styles of music. The question becomes one of degree. It is just not as heavily concentrated as in jazz. In jazz it is just about the whole ballgame in terms of the longevity of the concept or the style. Without improvisation, jazz would become a glass case in a matter of a few years. It would go the way of dixieland, ragtime, folk music, bluegrass and classical music to some degree. These are styles which have improvisation that has reached some sort of an apex. These styles are made up of certain characteristics and components that identify the style. To adopt new trends or to look around to other styles for new thoughts and new ideas would be an anachronism. Exponents of these styles don't want to ruin the style. They simply want to work within the same terminology and revise it along the way. They shake up the order here and there by playing a different fiddle lick between the first gospel chorus and the second or whatever it might be.

When we talk about the jazz style we are talking about one of the only styles that is constantly reaching out for more inspiration, ideas, and ways to express itself. It has achieved the

impossible, which is to still have a style that can be called jazz that remains, after all the fantastic absorbing it does of other styles. It draws from Latin music, African music, European classical music, Indian music, John Cage and on into the night. The remarkable thing is that we can still point to a music that is called jazz. I think that jazz is sustained by a very few factors even though the language does change. The language of Louie Armstrong is definitely not the language of Freddie Hubbard. Now, in aesthetic terms they might be very close together, but the technical means by which they achieve their stature is so different and has such different objectives that the language has truly changed.

QUESTION: What should a person do who wants to learn to play jazz?

COKER: Do you mean programs that they should attend or do you mean that they want information from me?

QUESTION: The person wants information from you.

COKER: I have a sequence of areas that I feel should be covered. I talk about this in my next book. It cuts the improvisation thing to the bone by a slightly different process. It involves certain basics that need to be gotten underway.

The first one is of a mechanical nature. These involve digital patterns in four- and eight-note groupings.

QUESTION: Are these the patterns in your Patterns For Jazz Improvisation?

COKER: Yes. But only applied to a more real situation. A student who comes in and wants to play, doesn't want to sit around and practice a bunch of patterns that he hasn't figured out how they are going to work for him. You have to make him feel successful at what he is doing. It is very important that his first experience be as firm as possible. By giving him four-note digital patterns to play like some of the ones that David (Baker) likes to use, which are 1-2-1-2, 1-2-3-1, 1-2-3-5, the student can start to play usable material. These patterns can be applied to tunes like "Giant Steps" by Trane (John Coltrane) or tunes of the same order that move very quickly. We also use eight-note patterns against tunes like "All The Things You Are" and "Moments Notice" which present two different kinds of problems. If you play something like 1-2-3-4-5-3-2-1 against the tonic chord you can play the first four notes against the one chord and play the last four notes against the

dominant chord, and it will sound okay, because the last four notes give you the tonic and extensions of the dominant chord. Well, anyway, I go through four- and eight-note digital patterns, dorian patterns of the non-terminal type, and commonplace licks. All we do with the four- and eight-note patterns is play them against tunes like "Giant Steps," "Count Down," "All The Things You Are," and "Moments Notice." That makes the students understand how the patterns can be used so that they can put them where they want to.

QUESTION: Are these patterns practiced with a recording?

COKER: Yes. I also do a lot of playing with them. I always have my horn out at the lesson and we do a lot of switching back and forth. I am trying to do for them what Curtis Johnson did for me a long time ago. When you are dealing with something that has as many nonverbal areas as music, and especially jazz which is so intensely creative and personal, an awful lot depends on getting everybody in the right psychologically relaxed state. You have to encourage students to play by demonstration and example. If a student is playing the solo and is playing nothing but eighth notes at a medium tempo

very linearly, he may get very boring and musically unexciting. The solo gets monotonous and doesn't go anywhere. When he finishes playing, I come in with my solo and play very sparsely in an in and out fashion. Then I play as busy as I can until I swing into a climax and then give it back to him. The student thinks, "Oh, he wants me to get more rhythmically diverse," or he gets the idea. Much of the time the student is not even aware that he is getting the idea. It happens by osmosis. That is why I like to play the same instrument as the student. Whatever can be absorbed by osmosis has a better chance if I am playing alto with an alto player or tenor with a tenor player. If it is a trumpet player I use the tenor, but I do play piano with the piano players.

The activities are segmented and each segment can be applied to the five or six basic kinds of tunes. You've got standard, bebop, contemporary, blues, modal, and free-form tunes. There are a few other quasi-bags like folk-type things that you might want to give a separate category to, but generally speaking there are only six basic kinds of tunes. Each

one requires a different technical and psychological preparation. You try to teach the student to play one or two of each of the kinds of tunes. If the player really wants to play, he will continue studying. Then we begin to work on the aesthetics--intensity building, melodiousness, sound vibrato, phrasing, psychological feelings, energy, time, and all of the stuff that sometimes gets hazed over by the lydian augmented scales, ruptured thirty-fourth, and all of the absurd technically complicated things some of the areas that I am talking about are. I have found a way to simplify that language also. It's not ten easy lessons, but it can be reduced.

I won't go into detail, but we know that there are a lot of different kinds of dominant sevenths with a lot of different kinds of tones. What hasn't been brought out so far is that there are a couple of them that are prominent. The others are very rare. There are really only four possibilities and two of them are uncommon. The two that are uncommon take the diminished scale and the whole tone scale. The two that are most common both take the lydian augmented scale. One starts from the third, and the other

starts from the seventh. Therefore, if you were going to teach a student scales, you would start with the two scales that are most often used. You would also learn to recognize them in the various ways that they might appear symbolically. What I am trying to do with my students in the first stage is to give them all of the scale information, application, and exercise procedures that will get their machines well oiled and running. Afterwards, I encourage them to go into the aesthetic area. The mechanical things often have a way of making it very hard to realize that the aesthetic area even exists. Yet, the aesthetic area is precisely why we listen to the music and enjoy it in the first place. I get reminded of this all the time. More than half of my students have a built-in resistance to having to learn all of the material. It is an odious task. I am still doing it myself, but it is a necessary task. If you want to play you've really got to be serious.

QUESTION: When did you formalize your ideas concerning improvisation?

COKER: Even though I was from a musical family, played under one of the best concert band directors in the region, got an early start in music, and



studied under Sammy Runion, I really did not have a strong source of theoretical knowledge concerning improvisation. For instance when I went to school with David (Baker) and all of the people at Indiana, we all knew that we were studying jazz and what players we liked, but there were no teachers or books that we could consult. The closest thing to a book to learn by would be something like a book of songs. Just about all of the books of this nature were illegit in the early days, but to get a book of songs meant that at least you could be a little more sure of what you were doing. I copied a lot of tunes, transcribed a lot of solos, and did a lot of self-study kinds of things in place of having formal training. The lack of available information is one of the things that got me to try to formalize the things that go into teaching improvisation.

When I was twenty-two or twenty-three years old I got a request to teach improvisation and even though I still felt green myself, I accepted. I had never taught anybody and jazz was sort of sacred to me. That is why I have always disliked anything to come up that did not paint an accurate picture of what jazz really

is. There are a lot of bad pictures being painted, like the one where John Coltrane's "Soul Eyes" was used for the background music of a television documentary on prostitution in New York. I can't tell you how offended and angered I was. I got similar feelings when NAJE (National Association of Jazz Educators) repeatedly dropped the ball in their early years and made a lot of wrong decisions. It didn't get started off on the right foot and may take some time to correct it all. That bothers me. I can't stand to hear anybody speak of jazz unkindly. It is almost as if it were a member of the family. My feelings are so strong because I know that jazz is a good, honest, true, valid, sincere, creative, expressive, exciting, kind of music.

When somebody asked me to teach it for the first time, my stomach turned flip-flops. I got very nervous, but I sat down and started writing what was to my knowledge one of the first lists that anybody ever really tried to make of what went into learning to improvise. This is more or less the question that you are asking. I had to answer this question in one week, because I was going to have to teach that lesson at the end of

the week. I was not going to start unless I had it together to the point where I not only knew what I wanted to get into with the student, but I also knew the order in which we would do things.

I wrote down the strangest items. Some of them were funny little things that I learned from looking over somebody's shoulder, hearing them on some interview, or transcribing a solo. My list was long and disconnected, so I eliminated a lot of things that, in retrospect, probably did not help me learn to improvise. My final result was an outline that included a set of patternized things that were of a starter type. The outline became a pamphlet of about five or six pages which was done so that I would not have to keep re-writing the outline for each student. This pamphlet was followed by another of about twenty pages which later turned into a slightly larger pamphlet. This final pamphlet was followed by my master's thesis which used the same material. The book, Improvising Jazz, did not come until after the master's thesis. It took a period of almost ten years. It took almost ten years for that material to come together from the time of that first student.

QUESTION: What are some of the most exciting and rewarding experiences that you have had as a jazz educator?

COKER: One of the most exciting jazz educational points of my life was teaching improvisation at the Tanglewood Symposium with David Baker. Our audience was mostly departmental chairmen and music educators from various walks of life. The age group ranged from about twenty to seventy.

What made the experience go is the fact that David and I have always been of one mind. Everything that happens to him also happens to me. Maybe I should turn that around and say that everything happens to me also happens to him because so much happens to him. Our marriages, children, certain realizations about teaching, playing, and many other things have always run very much in accord, even at times when we are not in touch with each other. I am also that way to a degree with Jamey (Aeber-sold). If I call up Jamey and ask him what he is reading, it just might be the very book that I have in my hand. The thing with David is probably more consistent because our lives have run so parallel to each other. When we taught it was like having two of one of us. Our

agreement on the subject matter and sequence was unbelievable. One of us could be talking and the other one could pick up the conversation without losing the essence of delivery. It was beautiful.

QUESTION: In addition to teaching privately, you have taught at Monterey Peninsula College, Sam Houston State Teachers College, Indiana University, The University of Miami, Duke University, and The University of Tennessee. When you were at The University of Miami your program was considered by many to be one of the best in the nation. What contributed to that?

COKER: First of all, I went to Miami because I wanted to, just as I have gone to every other position that I have taken. I stayed at Miami for seven years and built the jazz program of my dreams. For one of the first times in my teaching career I ran into someone who would give me enough flexibility to be effective. Bill Lee, head of the music school told me that I could offer as many courses as we had room for and they were already set up to give a degree when I got there. So many schools just offer the four basic courses--improvisation, arranging, jazz band and jazz history, and consider that enough. He told me

if I needed more staffing, it was possible. He was just as eager as I was to build a jazz program. Bill was very cooperative in providing my salary, a space for me to use, and putting courses in the curriculum that I asked for. I built the program from the ground up. In this respect, it was a very exciting time. It took about four or five years to get it about ninety-five percent what I wanted.

QUESTION: What is the first thing you did to get the program going?

COKER: When I got there, there were three jazz majors. When I left there were over 130. Only having to take care of three people, and the program not being well defined, the first thing that I did was to find out how much of the program was real and how much was set up as filler to get the degree approved. I took out all of the excess and boiled the program down to the minimum. I then put in the courses that I thought were necessary. Most of my attention was put on providing the proper sequences for the courses. I went through a heavy evaluation process that allowed me to eliminate the things that were truly unnecessary. For the entire seven years that I was there, I

would completely reconsider everything that I had done the year before. My last two years Dan Haerle joined me, but the first five years were done with graduate assistants help. It was a twenty-four hour operation.

Through all of the trial and error, I finally sculpted a program of courses that was in line with what I consider the best possible set of things for a person in jazz to encounter within the school community. Somewhere during the sixth year it all came together. I'll outline the program for you quickly. We had jazz ensemble each year as a requirement. It didn't have to be big band. It could be a combo which included anything from a trio to a group of eight or nine pieces. There were also three or four big bands. We didn't get into having fifteen or twenty big bands, because we all had a tendency to think in terms of black artists, who were small-group oriented. Although we were all white, my graduate assistant and I were in complete accord in that we liked Mingus (Charles), Monk (Thelonious), Bird (Charlie Parker), and Miles (Davis). We liked small-group players and black composers and writers. We didn't do this because we were trying to favor anybody

but we simply wanted the best of jazz wherever we could find it. We didn't care if it turned out that all of the people were blue. We didn't deliberately exclude anything else but our concentration was on the jazz genius. In other words, the ensembles were varied.

In the first semester, the jazz majors took a separate jazz history course. That was taught in a very concentrated way. We would even play the music of the particular person who we were studying. The activities ranged from solo transcription to performance. It was a very concentrated kind of hanging out. In the second semester, they got the analysis of jazz styles. This was an even more penetrating review of the music. In the second year the student took two semesters of jazz piano, a course for non-pianists which included learning to play changes. The third year no improvisation was taught because we felt that during the second year their heads had been filled with all kinds of things that should be practical. But, we knew that the student had had very little time to practice up to this point. You can talk about it and you can read it much faster than you can get it to come out the bell of your horn.



They took arranging this year and tried to put their bag together. From the first year on, we would give concerts. This was a non-credit class which met once a week and was called jazz forum. Somebody would come in and play. It might be a guest artist or a student group. What we were trying to do the first year is fill their heads with sounds, because I found that most students haven't listened to the right people. They couldn't improvise something that they hadn't heard. The second year was concerned with providing them with the theoretical knowledge and the tools. We had solved the problem of "What do I play?" in the first year. The question in the second year was "Now, how do I find these things?" The second year was an information giving year. The third year was for the student to practice his instrument and take jazz arranging. The fourth was the best year of all. They got another year of improvisation and concurrently a course in jazz directing, rehearsal techniques, and jazz teaching. They got four semesters of jazz courses in one year plus ensemble and senior recital in jazz. The improvisation course in this year was a private lesson. This first semester was spent playing

samplings of different kinds of things to see how much took during the sophomore year. During the semester we would put all of the seniors together and play. Playing is the culmination of the jazz learning process. Jazz is supposed to be played.

## BILL EVANS INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

~~EVANS: August 16, 1929, in Plainfield, New Jersey.~~

QUESTION: What area of the country do you feel was most influential in shaping your personality?

EVANS: I guess it would be the East, New York.

QUESTION: Did you join any musical organizations in school?

EVANS: I did all that. I played in the school orchestra and then in college and in the army for three years. I played flute and piccolo. In fact, I got my scholarship to college on the flute. They didn't have any piano scholarships. I think it was all very beneficial too, especially the concert part.

QUESTION: How long did you do that?

EVANS: I started playing in the orchestra in elementary school and then in the band in the eighth grade-- flute and piccolo. Then eleven more years-- four years in high school, three years in the army, four years in college.

QUESTION: Where did you go to college?

EVANS: Southeastern Louisiana, a small college. It was pretty good but I missed some things. Maybe I wasn't really ready for anything else. We had some good teachers. I played a lot around New Orleans and Baton Rouge, around the backwoods of

Louisiana. I worked a club in Louisiana in Kentwood near McComb, Mississippi, right near the border, a gambling club. Everybody that worked in the club had a forty-five stuck in their pants. We went to little places nobody even knew existed. It was an education.

QUESTION: How did you start playing?

EVANS: I started playing classical music when I was very young, but then when I was twelve or thirteen, I started playing jazz. The idea of learning to manipulate music on my own terms, even though they were more elementary forms, appealed a great deal to me. As I learned more about music and learned how to handle it in the jazz idiom, I became more and more committed to jazz. Then there was a long-term experience process over the years-- a lot of dedication and a lot of time spent at it and developing it to the point where I obtained some degree of mastery.

QUESTION: How did you get into jazz?

EVANS: I was aware of it through my older brother, who was playing in the high school band. The piano player got sick one week and he asked me to come along and play. I started rehearsing with that band, and up to that time I had only read written music. From that, I started to realize the thrill

of playing something that isn't written and then I started to play jobs, learn chords and changes, and went on from there.

QUESTION: What about your early home life? Were your parents musicians and did they encourage jazz?

EVANS: No, they didn't encourage jazz, but they had a great love of music. They weren't professional musicians but they sang and there was a great love of music in the home. Also, of course, my brother and I started music when we were young, six and seven, playing the piano and then other secondary instruments. They just stood by and encouraged us, they didn't over-encourage us and it motivated us; we were active in bands and then started to play in dance bands in high school.

QUESTION: Did you have an early motivation to play the type of music you're playing now?

EVANS: When I became committed to jazz, I did have ambitions to have a trio or a small group and to be in a position where I could record and shape music of my own.

QUESTION: If a young player comes to you asking for advice, what do you say? What are the things that they need to do if they want to play jazz?

EVANS: The first thing that comes into my mind is to play jobs. It's a good thing to keep your feet on the ground. Aside from that, you've definitely got to learn your instrument and you have to learn music in a broad sense. It has a lot to do with individual commitment. That's something that you really can't manufacture. Some people grow into a total life commitment in a field, and some people have a lot of aptitude and a lot of early ability, and it runs out young. They just don't stay with it. So that kind of a thing is a little less predictable. I would recommend music school, conservatory training, and get as much practical professional experience as possible. Listen and learn. I am a believer in good conservatory training. I think this can benefit any kind of musician, and the talented ones know what to do with it.

QUESTION: If you had to point out the most important things in terms of your development, what would they be, musical or otherwise?

EVANS: A lot of it is environmental. Family has a lot to do with it--starting young, being fortunate enough to work with good people, having some good teachers at the right times. And the rest of it, as I say, is an individual thing. What

makes one person push everything else out of his life for many years and make one thing foremost? I think it's environmental--certain teachers, certain inspirational people along the way.

QUESTION: Can you think of any particular people who were most inspirational?

EVANS: It's hard to say because there were so many over the years. My first teacher would probably be the most logical. She could have easily turned me against music by approaching it the wrong way. She somehow got me to play the piano and read music and enjoy music without going through a lot of the practice which at that time would have turned me against it. I would mention her above all.

QUESTION: What is the quality you bring to the situation that you play in with Eddie Gomez and Elliot Zigmond? What would a person have to do to replace you or substitute for you?

EVANS: I have to be a shaper, and in a sense, a leader without being a tyrant. I have to give freedom without getting chaotic, try to hold it together without too much restraint. Of course, the kind of musicians that Eddie and Elliot are, you don't have to do very much, because they're responsible to their music. It's more of a

problem which different people approach different ways.

QUESTION: Was there ever a point where you stopped doing everything? Many musicians who I have talked with have said that they had to stop and really get down to the physical mastery of their instrument. Was there ever a time when you did that, and how did you do it?

EVANS: I spent a lot of time at various times. Mostly when I came to New York, when I was about twenty-five, I spent a great deal of time really digging in although I had quite a bit behind me already. On the other hand, sometimes you just have to take off entirely, maybe take a break and get away from it.

QUESTION: Have you ever done that?

EVANS: Yes, it's been very refreshing, you get a different perspective.

QUESTION: Who were some of the people you played with before you decided to form your own group?

EVANS: Well, I recorded with a lot of people from Charles Mingus to Cannonball Adderley, Lee Konitz, Art Farmer, George Russell, people like that.

QUESTION: What about the Kind of Blue album you did with Miles Davis?



EVANS: It's funny because when you do those things you have no idea of what's going to happen. That album did turn out to be very successful and influential. But playing with those guys was just incredible. I felt that band was one of the greatest that's ever been in jazz, and I consider it one of the most wonderful things in my life--to just have been a part of it for awhile. But really what I had on my mind from the beginning was starting a trio, but I just couldn't get my foot in the door. I had to build up more prestige. It's still a business. You don't get bookings unless you can pull in some people. I thought perhaps after being with Miles--and Miles came out very strongly for me in print--that I might be able to get it off the ground. Even so, for a couple of years we didn't get much work, but I had a recording contract and so we made records and we took the bookings that came along. We did manage eventually to get it off the ground, but I think that being with Miles was what made it possible. A lot of people, at that time especially, felt that hard bop and hard jazz was in, and the type of trio that I was trying to get going was a little more subtle. I think we'd have had a more difficult time except

for the fact that Miles had come out for me, and I'd been with Miles, and people who might not have bothered to turn toward it gave me a chance.

QUESTION: There is a lot of controversy about Miles Davis, and every musician who has ever played with Miles says, "Miles is where it's at. Miles is a teacher." What do you think about that?

EVANS: Somehow, being alongside Miles in any kind of experience is a learning thing. He never says that much. You can't pinpoint him, but he gets a really great result. I haven't followed him that close lately, but what I've heard hasn't impressed me that much. Knowing Miles, there's probably a reason for it and it's probably a great contribution. Miles in the original quintet period, and for awhile after that, was so lyrical and melodic which to me was the essential Miles. To me, he didn't ever change that much. When the group got out, he was pretty much the same, but in a different context, which didn't set him off as well. He's a very enigmatic and interesting character. I often wonder why he took the turn he took musically.

QUESTION: What about young players on the scene today? Do you see a direction toward creative playing? There is a lot of criticism that young players

aren't really saying anything musically. What do you think?

EVANS: I think there aren't that many people at any one time who are saying that much, and I think there are at least as many players now who are saying a lot for their age. In fact, I see more young talent now than ever. I don't agree with that at all. I think there's a tremendous amount of talent now that music's going through a period of change and experimentation which it always does--just a consolidating point. Ultimately there aren't a great number of people who are going to lay it down and consolidate music for a period. People used to ask me, "Aren't you worried about the future of jazz, because rock is so strong?" I don't worry in the least because the most talented people are going to be attracted to the greatest art, and they are going to contribute to it and make it progress, and the outstanding talents of those people are going to make good music. That's all that matters. Style doesn't matter. What really matters is the person involved. Ultimately, the thing that's most important is the kind of musical values that are in your art. Therefore, I think the exceptional human beings who have

developed their art are the ones who end up saying the most, regardless of the style.

QUESTION: Do you approach music religiously?

EVANS: You might say that. I don't consciously, but certainly the feeling is very much like a religious feeling. It's a very high personal feeling.

QUESTION: You played a Newport Jazz Festival in Oklahoma City a few years ago. When I first saw you, you were sitting in the dressing room and I walked in and I was almost frightened. You show such complete calmness and control.

EVANS: Part of that is a protective device. When I'm in clubs I don't want to be bugged with too much socializing, so I developed this attitude and people just let me walk by.

QUESTION: It seems to become more intense when you play.

EVANS: That's why I like music. I enjoy being within myself and music is a meditative thing.

QUESTION: Do you ever still practice the piano?

EVANS: Well, I never did practice scales or that kind of calisthenics, but I spend a lot of time at the piano reading music, playing music, and I intend to do it even more, but during the last ten years I hardly did it at all. It was all

spent touring and performing. Now I have a music studio set up. I wouldn't mind taking a year off and woodshedding. It's tough when you get older. It seems like your drives are different. I don't have the same kinds of drive I had when I was young--no more make or break. I don't have the drive to break barriers. I have more of a desire to make the kind of music that moves me. I want to do more of that, something personal.

QUESTION: Do you think you'll ever do another solo piano album?

EVANS: I just did another one; only all I did was play a melody for a whole side. I don't consider myself much of a solo pianist.

QUESTION: What's your definition of improvisation?

EVANS: I think it's a specific process that differs from composition in the sense that it has to take place in the amount of time that it takes to perform it. It's a special process that's developed within a closed theoretical area. I think it's good that you said improvisation, because if you just say jazz, people get hung up on style, and I think the same process is used in improvising any style of music, in that one must have a mastery in a certain area of music

and then apply it spontaneously to that area. For example, if I compose, I might compose in an idiom of music which I would not be able to improvise. That's the difference. It's a whole physical, mental, unified process between the artist and his instrument, his mind, and a closed area of style in which he functions.

QUESTION: What is the difference then between an improvising and non-improvising musician?

EVANS: The difference is not contained in the result in that any good composer tries to make his composition sound as if it's spontaneous. That would be the ideal. The difference is that the improvising musician must do it on the spur of the moment. So there's a little different mental process involved. Composition is a contemplative process where you can dig and take your time and find how the pieces fit together. Finally, you put the puzzle together and perhaps it's performed by an orchestra or concert artist. The improvising musician is limited in that he may not be able to develop quite as complex textures or perfection of counterpoint that a composer might be able to. On the other hand, if he's masterful enough, he might be able to do that as well, and more than that, if he's in touch with the flow of

time and the flow of music, he can do very special things to enjoy himself musically and many times be taken on a path musically that he would not otherwise have gone.

QUESTION: Are there any special thought processes that you go through while playing?

EVANS: Not really. The main thing that I'm pointing toward now is a level of expression and a level of concentration in playing. Hopefully the material that I'm playing is such that I don't have to concentrate too much on the specific theoretical considerations, whereas when one is learning, one must concentrate on specific musical problems as well as the expressive problems. Now I tend to put most of my energy into trying to reach for a level of expression and creativity.

QUESTION: I've heard the statement, "Music is my life" and "My life is music." Is there a difference in those two statements to you?

EVANS: I suppose that the evidence would point to that. Music has been a central thing in my life. You could say that my life has been music. Music is my life is another question. I think that's something that has to be regenerated everyday. In order for your soul to be fed by music, you

have to deal with it daily. Music has certainly given me the best moments.

QUESTION: Was there ever a point in your life when you said to yourself that you had everything together?

EVANS: In a sense. There was a point where I was always playing well, but I knew there were things lacking --certain feelings, certain conceptions that I heard in others--and I always felt a frustration that I wanted something but didn't know how to get it. Then there seemed to be a point during the time I was with Miles or a little before when I seemed to arrive at a certain expressive capability, but I think that goes by plateaus. It's an emotional problem to find a good level to play at and it's an energy problem, it's a health problem, it's a lot of things. If you're not healthy, you can't put everything into it. I would say there's almost a formula--the amount of energy and effort expanded in that direction for the reward you get. You may feel like you are getting nowhere, trying harder and harder, but all the time you are learning. I think the problems I deal with now are subtler.

QUESTION: The moment you realize that you have to improve is the moment you start to get better?

EVANS: It's a balance of things--knowing where you're



at and doing something about it. You've got to be critical of yourself but in a nice way. You know, you asked me when I really sat down and practiced. Well, when I got out of the army, which I really didn't handle so well, I was pretty messed up. I had to go through a rebuilding process musically and mentally. I did it through music. Although I was looking into philosophy and religion, basically it was the keyboard and music. That was my universe. For about five years, until I was thirty, I spent a great deal of time working it out, looking for things in music and trying to achieve them. In a way, if the army hadn't backed me into a corner I wouldn't have had to fight my way out and I wouldn't have learned nearly half the things I have. In a way, problems are an advantage. Very talented people have a lot of aptitude; they seem to be able to do things without any problem, but the guy who has to go through a lot of turmoil usually ends up later with more of a message. What else is better in life than discovering yourself? And if you can do it through an art like music, so much the better.

## GIL EVANS INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

EVANS: I was born May 13, 1912. I am really from no one place, but I was born in Toronto, Canada. I never really lived there because we moved from there when I was very small. We lived all across Canada in almost every Province. Then we came down to the state of Washington. After Washington I lived in Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and finally ended up in California.

QUESTION: What were you doing?

EVANS: My father was a miner. I lived in mining towns until we moved to Stockton, California, which was near the mining town where my father worked. I went to high school in Stockton. That was when I organized a band, and I was in music from then on. That is a long answer to a short question, but we moved so much when I was small. I never stayed in one school longer than one semester at a time.

QUESTION: How old were you when you got into music?

EVANS: I actually started pretty late. I was about thirteen years old.

QUESTION: How did you get started?

EVANS: I started with popular music. I started buying

popular sheet music and picking it out on the piano. I got into it on my own. I just started doing it.

QUESTION: When did the lessons start?

EVANS: They never did. I started copying records. I had an old crank-up phonograph that I would use. I would put the record on and sit by the piano and figure out what the hell was going on on that record. However, I did take keyboard harmony in high school.

QUESTION: Where were you living while all of this was going on?

EVANS: I was living in Stockton. This was around the same time that I organized my own band. We worked in clubs, at school dances and affairs of that nature.

QUESTION: Were you playing piano?

EVANS: Well, yes. I really was never a piano player. I learned to play the piano from arranging. I just sat at the piano for twenty-five years trying to figure out how to voice a C minor seventh chord a different way. I am still trying to figure that out. I have gotten piano chops just from sitting there playing like that, but I am really not a piano player.

QUESTION: Did you ever study classical literature?

EVANS: No. I never did have any classical background because we lived in mining towns and the people there never heard that kind of music.

QUESTION: Were your parents musicians?

EVANS: My father was not musical at all, but my mother liked music. She always carried a guitar or mandolin with her everywhere that we went. She could strum a little on the mandolin. I didn't really pick up on classical music until after I was into jazz. I had a band in Balboa, California, in 1935. I bought some Ravel records and started to get into them then, but I never did have any classical training. I never did get into studying classical formal structure which locked me out a lot. I realize at this stage in my writing that I have to use some kind of form.

QUESTION: When did you get interested in jazz?

EVANS: Actually jazz was the beginning for me. I started out with Louis Armstrong and a lot of other musicians who I heard in the thirties. I got the feeling and the spirit of jazz from Louis Armstrong. I got one of his records and that was it. Every time a new pop tune would come out, Louis Armstrong would make a record of it. That was different from the way it is now. It

just happened that Louis and pop music were traveling the same road. When tunes came out like "Body and Soul," "Stardust," and "I've Got Rhythm," he recorded them. I learned all of those tunes through him. If you learn those tunes through somebody like that, that is how you get into jazz. I couldn't stand to hear the tunes played any other way. I would also listen to bands on the radio in the Stockton everyday. I listened to Don Redman, Duke Ellington, Claude Hopkins, and a lot of bands out of New York that you don't hear about anymore. There was a southern white band called The Casa Loma Band. They played black music, but they did it in their own stiff kind of way. They had a very good and talented arranger who was not stiff but the band was. The arrangements were very exciting. The arranger's name was Gene Gifford. I got a lot out of his concept of arranging. He had a way of breaking up a band into some other groups besides saxophones and brass. Fletcher Henderson started that. All of the bands started doing it because Benny Goodman was doing it with Fletcher's arrangements. Gene had another way he had developed out of necessity because The Casa Loma Band didn't sound good trying to play like

Fletcher was writing. Gene would write a baritone melody with three trombones playing the harmony on top of it. It was things like that that made the sound different.

QUESTION: What were you doing musically while this was going on?

EVANS: I still had a band and I was copying these arrangements off records and writing them down for the band. I was doing it by ear. I had three saxophones, three brass, and three rhythm. Later I added members and had four pieces in each section.

QUESTION: What happened after that period?

EVANS: Things got weird. I couldn't get any work. Then I got a call from a man named Skinnay Ennis who had been playing drums with a very popular band called The Hal Kemp Orchestra. He sang and played drums. He had decided to get his own band. He made me an offer to take over my band, and I worked as the arranger. We got a job with the Bob Hope radio program. I worked for Bob Hope a few years until finally I couldn't take it anymore.

QUESTION: What was that experience like?

EVANS: The show was on once a week. I had two numbers to write each week. I had to do one for a guest

singer and one for Skinnay Ennis to sing with the band. I was running into problems with the producer of the show. He was calling me a poor man's Stravinsky. They couldn't figure out how Skinnay could find out where he was in the arrangement. Skinnay had a very good ear and kept very good time. He was a funny, tall, skinny guy with a very shakey, fast vibrato in his voice. His voice caught on and people liked it. I would write an introduction that ordinarily wouldn't lead you into a tune, but he would get it every time. The producers and people in charge panicked. They couldn't find it, so I had trouble with them. I decided that I really didn't know enough about music to stay in Hollywood and get into the commercial work. You have to really have all of your shit together. Your technique and everything has to be really together in order to go to work in Hollywood for the television industry. At that time everything was on radio. I really didn't know enough about what I needed to know. It was around this time that I met a man named Claude Thornhill. I came to New York after his arranger got drafted. I started working with him in 1941. I got drafted in 1942. As a matter of fact, the whole band got drafted, including

Thornhill. After the war, three or four years later, Thornhill reorganized so I came back to New York again. I couldn't stay in Hollywood because I still didn't have my thing together. I came back to New York for the purposes of learning more about my trade and to work out some emotional problems. I had no idea that I would stay in New York so long. I have been here for thirty years. I got here in 1947. Miles Davis got here the same year. We have both been here for thirty years. It seems impossible. I never planned on staying in New York, but I don't know where else to go.

QUESTION: What musical periods of development were there that particularly stick out in your head?

EVANS: There was a period of nine or ten years when my family and I were first together. We were a tight quartet. We never moved anywhere except together. During that period I mostly listened. I would play at home with a tape recorder. I've got stacks of tapes here where I would walk over to the piano and turn on the tape recorder. I would play for awhile and then turn it off and put it away. I've got some tapes around here that I have never heard. Once in a while I'll put one on and I will hear my little kid coming



up and saying, "Daddy, I lost my pacifier," or some little shit like that when he was only two years old. I have never played the tapes since. I am just starting to play them now. I am discovering some ideas that I can work on, but during this period I never produced anything except for an occasional album. I did a few arrangements for Kenny Burrell and a couple of other people. I didn't do a lot. As a matter of fact, I have never been a very productive or prolific writer. For instance, I was in the army for four years and I didn't do any writing at all. I just spent my time trying not to get killed.

QUESTION: What did you do in the army?

EVANS: I was in the infantry, but I got into a band training unit at Camp Lee in Virginia. I was sent out with a band, but I was busy trying to work the angles so that I wouldn't have to go over and get shot. I really didn't do any writing at all.

QUESTION: What are some of the significant experiences you have had that have contributed to your musical concept?

EVANS: I don't think like that, so that is a hard question for me to answer. I really don't think in terms

of those kinds of things. I don't have my life divided up into definite phases. Most people can do that if they want to. I have a friend who can do that. Out of the clear blue sky one time he said, "I am in phase twenty-two of my life right now." I just laughed. He had it all figured out. I guess I could go back and do that. Sometimes I think you have to have a nervous breakdown in order to get profound. I found myself sitting in Central Park one day with the sun beating down on my head. I didn't even know where I was. All of a sudden one day the top of my head started burning inside. There was a definite chemical or physical breakthrough in my head. I didn't know what was happening. Everything I saw was symbolic. I would see something and it would mean something. I could pick up an empty container with a label on it and there would be something on it that would signify something to me. I started to get into the truth about life. I went through a thing that brought me down. By down, I mean that this experience pulled me close to earth. This is no unusual experience. It happens to many people who have blinders on and are just looking out for what they want to learn and do. They don't see either way. They are just going right straight

down one way. It is all music. That is all that is happening. Somebody else might be all painting or whatever it is they do. Anything they think about that is outside their world is a great big generality. They don't really look at the specifics of how it really is in the U.S.A. today. They are busy right now. Eventually when you have had a consumation of some kind or you have done something, you have time to let the blinders down and look around. You can then look out. When you do, you begin to see that things are not like you were taught or told. Suddenly it dawned on me that I along with everybody else, had been the victim of misrepresentation since the day I was born.

QUESTION: What do you mean?

EVANS: I mean that things had been misrepresented to me from the day I was born. They had been misrepresented by my parents, the school, the neighbors, the state, the media, and everything. No one had ever told me the truth. The truth is something else. It has to do do with living. The truth is an interplay between the living who perceive and the life that is perceived. If you are alive and you are looking at life, there is a natural interplay between you and the life that

you are perceiving. That is the truth.

QUESTION: What effect did all of this have on you and the music?

EVANS: I was fortunate at the time to have some friends who got jobs working with Peggy Lee. It was the rhythm section from Claude Thornhill's orchestra. She hired the drums, bass, and guitar. They liked me because I had written lots of nice things for them with Claude Thornhill so they took me with them on the road. I hung out with them. I went with them everywhere. I was kind of flipped out but they took care of me. After about three months I was okay again. They helped me out. I was going through all kinds of changes. I really didn't have it down like I do now. Now I can say it in a few sentences. At that time I was still looking for it. When you are looking for it, people don't have too much patience with you. As soon as you discover some kind of truth, you try to preach it. I finally found out that when you get there you stop preaching. The preacher preaches to people, but actually he is not convinced himself. He has to keep preaching in order to keep himself going, which is okay because he is put in a position where he has to articulate the problems people have. A good

preacher articulates the problems very well. People listen to him and believe him and get help from him, but there is no therapy or cure because often the person who is doing the preaching is in as much trouble, if not more, as the people whom he is preaching to. They are very often better off than he is. He is not out of trouble just because he is a good articulator and can say all of that shit. You have to stop preaching because when you finally get there you realize that ain't going to change it. It helps to articulate it, but it has nothing to do with the therapy or cure. The only time I preach is when people ask. Otherwise, I don't volunteer. When I was a little kid, there was an old saying that went "The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

QUESTION: What do you tell a young player who asks you what is necessary for him to get his shit together?

EVANS: If I wanted to get into it, which I wouldn't want to, I would have to first find out what he meant by his shit. Then I would have to find out what he meant by together. He would have to tell me that. If he could tell me those two things, then maybe I could help him. I never taught anybody

because I don't have any projects to assign to people. That is why I have never given any lessons.

QUESTION: You have never given lessons?

EVANS: No. I have never given lessons, but I have been asked dozens of times. Whenever I am asked, I always have the same answer. I say, "I don't have a project for you, but if you ever have a problem that you think I might be able to answer call me on the telephone." Man, you know nobody ever calls. The reason is that most of the people who ask you for lessons are really looking for you to hand them a project. They want you to spell out what you want them to do. Then they want to run home and do it so you can check it. This idea is left over from high school. They are looking for a way to organize. They figure that any project that someone gives them will be an organization. Even though it is not their own organization, they figure that if they get all of those organizations together they will eventually get one of their own. It is a natural desire, but I just can't accommodate it. I can only accommodate specific problems. If it was a problem in balance, emotional value, sound, or something like that, then I could deal with it.

QUESTION: You have worked with Miles Davis quite a bit. What kind of relationship do the two of you have?

EVANS: Miles and I are very close. We have an unspoken agreement never to put up with anybody discrediting us. The press has always been inclined to discredit Miles. They have always like to do that. They have to find somebody to whip. They know they can't do anything about his music so they like to discredit him. I've always put them off about that. I have never answered any questions that might reflect on what he does other than his music, so he hasn't given me hell in print yet either. So far we have been doing okay. I have a genuine affection for him because we have had a family relationship. When I came to New York, I picked up all kinds of things. I picked up brothers, sisters, and a father. My miner father was really a stepfather. For a long time I didn't really have a father until my mother married him. With Miles I have had a brother-father relationship in a way. We have both been father and brother to each other. It just worked out like that. It is a friendship that would not be easy to break. As a matter of fact, Miles and I may work together again. We have had a couple of rehearsals at his apartment. He brought his trumpet down and played. He sounded

the same. Man, he could play. He hadn't played for two years. He has been very sick. As a matter of fact, he hadn't been out of the house but a few times in two years. It didn't bother him not to play for two years because Miles has worked hard for thirty years and developed tremendous chops. He has been going out and blowing it to the four winds for thirty years. The problems that he has had physically are not connected with his playing. Miles's playing is just like swimming. You never forget it. It is in his head at all times. He is always thinking about the sound. He is always thinking about what he is going to play. That aspect keeps developing all the time. That is why Miles can't play like he played on Kind of Blue. He can't play that way because he can't think that way anymore. Thought keeps on going at all times. It is a part of development that never stops.

The total organism has to be considered in what you do with your life. Miles worked so hard in those thirty years that right now he is taking a forced vacation. It is like getting the flu in order to take a vacation. The organism is really crying for a balanced life. It is crying for a balance between your profession and the fun kind



of play that you want to do. The physical, intellectual, and all other types of pleasures come into the picture. These are the things that go into making a balanced life for an individual. If you don't have that, the organism cries out for it. Sometimes it will kill you or throw you in bed sick just because it needs that.

QUESTION: Do you think that balance is the key?

EVANS: Yes. There are all kinds of ways of balancing. You don't have to live a balanced life everyday, but you do have to get that balance over certain periods of time. You can't just stay with one thing. Some people do, but they don't last too long. I have it in mind to be around for awhile. I am a survivor. There are a lot of things that I want to do that I haven't done yet. Other people have done them and died. They are all through. They did it already. It just depends on the way your character structure is. You can't actually say whether it is hereditary, environmental, circumstantial, or innate. You really don't know what it is. Some people live as much as I have lived in forty years and they are gone. They may have accomplished as much as I have or more and had all of the intensities of living.

When I say that, I think of Bud Powell. Bud Powell had a tragic end to his life, and yet it was wonderful that he lived. The intensity that he had was out of sight. Bud was one of the few pianists who floored me. The first time I was floored by a piano player was when I heard Earl Hines. Listening to the way that Earl Hines plays now you would never know what I mean. You would have had to have been there then and heard him with his intensity at the time. There was nothing else around like that. He had intensity and swing. Even though I heard lots of piano players between Earl Hines and Bud Powell, I was never set up straight by a piano player after Earl Hines until I heard Bud Powell.

QUESTION: Was Bud Powell one of your primary influences?

EVANS: Oh, yes. I used to try and play just like Bud. I wrote out a lot of his solos. One time I wrote out a whole book of his solos and bebop tunes and gave it to Claude Thornhill. Claude was a pianist and I thought that maybe it would help him out. I wish I had that book now. I don't know where the book is since Claude died. I spent a lot of hours writing it out. I had Bud's solos, Bird's (Charlie Parker) solos, and all of Bird's tunes. It included some of everything that was happening

at the time. Writing out all of those things really helped me because it made an impression on my head.

QUESTION: What do you think about the dilemma a lot of musicians have with making music and making money?

EVANS: I never really considered money like I should have considered money. When you go into your life's work, you have got to figure out some way that you can make your own living and not depend on someone else to support you. My attitude toward money has always been very infantile. It was so bad that I could spend the day at the piano just figuring things out and expect a check to be down in the mailbox the next day for the work I did. You have to go out somewhere and peddle it. The arranger's life is really a loser's life as far as finances are concerned because you don't get any royalties. Everything that I have ever written so far has not paid me any royalties. Other people get checks in the mail to help pay the rent, but I spent my life writing arrangements of other people's music. Somebody would give me the lead line and I would arrange it. A lot of western symphonic composers did that too, but they didn't have the copyright problem that we have today. I read somewhere where one composer was put down for using someone else's melody, and his reply

was, "I could make better use of it anyway." Nowadays you can't get by with that. I could say that too, but I can't collect any money on it. That has been a problem for me. Now when I record, I put some of my own material in there just so that there will be some royalties for my family. When people say that I am whatever I am and that I am a great musician, I feel pretty dumb because here I am right now with no money. I don't think that is a very smart thing. I have done all of that music, but I have no money from it.

QUESTION: Did you ever think about including some of your own tunes?

EVANS: No. I never thought about that. I would hear a tune and say, "Hey, that would be a great tune to do this way or that way." I wasn't really raised with the idea of money because we never had any. I couldn't starve because my mom was a cook. We would travel to different farms across Canada. She would answer an ad, and we would go somewhere and live on a farm for awhile or in a mining town. I never got used to thinking about money.

QUESTION: What was your original goal in life?

EVANS: I never had a goal per se. I have always done

what I wanted to do at a particular time. There are a lot of little things that I have wanted to do like travel around the world on an ocean liner with my family and stop any place I wanted to for as long as I liked, but as far as an artistic goal is concerned that involves fame, glory, fortune, or whatever, I have not really had one of those. I am a good example of the fact that fame and fortune are not synonymous. I get more good press than I get money. It's funny, but when I go to see a record company about doing an album I always say a big, "Hello." They will say, "Gee, I was just playing your record this weekend," or "Do you mind giving me an autograph for my kid?" By the time I leave, I realize that they either wish that I were rich or dead. They can't do anything for me. They have to make money within a certain budget, and they know that I can't do it for them.

QUESTION: In terms of styles of music, what do you like?

EVANS: It is funny because some great musicians buy the funniest records. My taste is constantly evolving. I think that you can get a lot from different kinds of music, particularly popular music. A lot of good players came into their feeling that way. There are a lot of people in jazz who play

a solo for five minutes and don't cry once. If  
~~there is no feeling, it is a drag.~~

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QUESTION: What do you listen to?

EVANS: I was raised with popular music, and I guess I still like it very much. I like Stevie Wonder. He can sing, as well as write all the songs and all of that shit. I am touched by some of his things. I just heard a song of his yesterday that has been going through my head all day. I think it is called "Summer Song." It is beautiful. I like "All in Love is Fair." He is like an opera producer to me. I was listening to "Living for the City" and it knocked me out. It is an opera. The whole thing is there. He is better than the people who are famous for that shit. There are certain popular artists that I have always liked. Anytime somebody creates their own tone, I am moved. There was a cat named David Ruffin who used to sing with The Temptations who knocked me out. He had a falsetto that gave me goose bumps. The one thing about creating your own tone is that you have carte blanche and you have to be careful. The reason is that anything you play is going to sound great because you have a great tone. You then have to be careful about the music. Attention has to be given to the actual notes.

Miles is very conscious of that. Everybody can figure Miles playing certain songs and say that they would be beautiful, but if he doesn't want to play a particular song, he won't. He knows enough not to just play anything because he knows what is happening. Another funny cat was Pres (Lester Young). He used to drive the critics crazy. When they would come around to interview him or to see his record collection, he would have Guy Lombardo and Russ Morgan records. He had them because there were certain tunes on the records that he wanted to learn. It would be so funny.

QUESTION: What kind of records do you buy?

EVANS: I haven't bought a record in about a year. I have to buy some new records. Sometimes I get records from companies.

QUESTION: What about all of the musical instruments you own?

EVANS: I have them because of my kids. They both played drums and took lessons from Billy Harper. One of my sons wanted to start playing bass so I am going to get him one. My other son, whose name is Miles, started listening to Miles Davis records on his own. I never encouraged them to go into music, but they just got into it on their own. I never thought that Miles would play at all, but all of

a sudden one day I heard him playing scales and getting a sound. You know, music can come from anywhere at anytime.

QUESTION: What is your concept of formal design as it relates to music?

EVANS: Form and spirit are synonymous.

QUESTION: What do you mean?

EVANS: I mean that form came from spirit. You may not be able to believe it but actually it came from somebody's spirit. By spirit, I mean the way that you feel. You can't put a name on it. Everything has a different wave-form. When you talk about spirit and form you are also talking about spirit and wave-form, as well as the overall form of a composition. Wave-form is definitely made up of spirit. Eventually, a person decides that even though they love all of the previous players on their instrument, they don't want to sound like them. That means that they have a certain spirit that refuses to use that sound, so they have to get another sound. That is what happened to Miles Davis. He changed the tone of the trumpet because he didn't want to sound like a trumpet. He hated the trumpet sound, but he loved the trumpet. In order to do that, he had to get inside and create his own tone. That had not been done on the



trumpet since Louis Armstrong. He was the last one to create an original trumpet sound before Miles that was original and had some beauty to it. Harry James had a certain sound that he used on ballads, but it was very schmaltzy. It didn't touch you in the same way. He was the only other trumpet player that you could recognize, even though when he played jazz, he played straight Louis Armstrong. That wave-form didn't have the beautiful spirit to it that was necessary for the world to accept a new sound past Louis Armstrong on trumpet. The same kind of thing happened on the tenor with Coleman Hawkins. Pres came along and people told him that he should play the alto because his tenor sounded like an alto. What they meant was that the only tenor sound they knew was that of Coleman Hawkins. Pres had a very hard time with his sound. He was put down for his sound for a long time, but it was his sound. Now it is recognized as the Pres sound. He changed the sound of the tenor because he didn't like the way that Hawkins sounded. He wanted to play another way. Coltrane had to do the same thing. He developed a sound that sounds like all of the sounds poured into a funnel. It all comes out. I can hear Billie Holiday in Coltrane's sound.

The bittersweet edge that she had in her voice is in Coltrane's sound. It finally becomes a thing of its own. In other words, it becomes its own personal wave-form which is spirit. It is a thing that has to be worked up to. When Miles Davis played his first solo on "Now is the Time," you can hear that he hasn't got his tone completed yet, but he is not playing like anyone else. He is playing a bare, skeleton sound that used to drive people insane. They couldn't stand the sound of it. After awhile, Miles realized that he had to put flesh and blood into it so he developed his tone.

Another consideration is style. Style can be so strong that you don't even think about the tone. For example, Dizzy's (Gillespie) style is so strong you don't even think about the fact that he comes from Roy Eldridge who comes from Louis Armstrong. He has got such a harmonic and rhythmic style that you know him. It is an individual thing that is primarily based on a wave-form.

## JON FADDIS INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

FADDIS: I was born July 24, 1953, in Oakland, California.

QUESTION: How did you get interested in music?

FADDIS: My early home life had a lot to do with why and how I got interested in music. There was always music around the house. I have an older sister who plays the piano. In addition, my mother and my sister both sang in the church choir. Because of their musical interest and the fact that there was always music in the house, I was getting into it early. I was probably going to sing in the church choir, too.

QUESTION: When did you start playing the trumpet?

FADDIS: I started playing the trumpet when I was seven or eight years old. I got interested in it because I heard Louis Armstrong on "The Ed Sullivan Show." My parents asked me if I had my choice of instrument what would I play and I told them the trumpet. My choice was probably based on seeing Louis Armstrong on television.

QUESTION: How did you get started playing the trumpet?

FADDIS: Well, my parents went out the next day and bought me a trumpet. After getting the instrument, I had to start taking lessons. I started playing

in the elementary school band and practicing.

QUESTION: Did you have a teacher from the beginning? If so, how were your lessons set up?

FADDIS: Yes, I did have a teacher. I would go to take a lesson every Saturday morning. As a matter of fact, I took lessons up until I was sixteen. I stayed with my first teacher until I was about ten or eleven years old; then I changed. The new teacher whom I got started me into jazz and things that would help my playing in the jazz style.

QUESTION: When was a firm commitment made to mastering the trumpet?

FADDIS: I think that I really wanted to become a professional trumpet player when I was sixteen. I was in high school at the time. I went out for the basketball team and the coach told me that I made the team. Up until this time I was a sports fan and wanted to go into sports but for some reason I decided I wanted to go home and practice, listen to music and get more into music. I would say that this was when I really got into the trumpet.

QUESTION: At the time of your commitment what other personal needs did you encounter and how did you meet these other needs?

FADDIS: At that time I was still in high school, so I had

a lot of school work to do which I did mostly at home. I would do most of my trumpet playing at school. I played in marching band, symphonic band, jazz band, and orchestra. We would have jam sessions at lunch time. After school I played in a few rock bands. I guess I could say that I did a lot of playing outside of school as well. At home I would listen to records while I did my homework, so I was always around music.

QUESTION: When did you start improvising?

FADDIS: I don't know. I guess I was about twelve years old. I was in the seventh grade. My new trumpet teacher got me into improvising and I started going to a few improvisation classes. One class I went to was directed by Mr. Bill Bell in Oakland. Playing with the rock groups around town also helped. My teacher would also take me to San Francisco to sit in with rehearsal bands. I would sit in and listen to all of the professionals around town solo and play the written parts. I guess I got farther into it that way.

QUESTION: Why did you start improvising?

FADDIS: I wish I could improvise an answer to this question. That is a hard one. I don't know. I got into listening to Dizzy (Gillespie) and I started playing his solos and bit by bit I

started getting into my own solos. I guess I still play a lot of Dizzy's things. Why did I start improvising? I guess I started so that I could play solos.

QUESTION: Who were some of the influential people in your life who contributed to your development as an improviser and as a musician/trumpet player in general?

FADDIS: Starting at the beginning I would have to say my mother and father were influential because they bought me my first trumpet. My older sister was important because she was always playing tunes and teasing me about how bad I sounded. Everybody used to laugh at me. Bill Catalano, the trumpet teacher who got me into listening to Dizzy and really being into his music as well as other jazz, also got me into Snooky Young. Bill Atwood helped me with the theory of improvisation. Snooky Young was one of the people who helped me a lot when I got to New York. I also think that my playing as a lead trumpeter is certainly influenced by Snooky. Clark Terry and some other people helped me when I got to town. In general, I can say that I enjoy listening to everybody. I listen to Louie Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Clifford

Brown and all kinds of music.

QUESTION: What were your early aspirations and ambitions?

FADDIS: As far back as I can remember, my first aspirations were to become a professional baseball, football, or basketball player. After I got into the trumpet, those went straight out the window, but occasionally a group of musicians in New York will get together and play a little game of pick-up basketball, so I guess these aspirations have been attained.

QUESTION: What is your concept of jazz improvisation?

FADDIS: My concept of jazz improvisation is ninety-nine and ninety-nine hundredths percent based on Dizzy's style of playing which people call bebop.

QUESTION: Do you have a preference for a particular style of music?

FADDIS: Yes and no. I enjoy playing bebop but I enjoy listening to all kinds of music. As well as jazz, I enjoy Beethoven, Chopin, Penderecki, Stravinsky, and other European composers. I listen to almost all of the music that I can, except for opera, which is kind of a turn-off to me, and country and western music.

QUESTION: What recommendations would you make to a young player who wanted to learn to improvise?

FADDIS: I would certainly say that he should do as much listening as he possibly can, and if he can afford to, he should take private lessons from a professional who could help him learn the ropes. If he is not able to take lessons, I would suggest getting together with people his own age or with any other musicians and playing as much as possible.

QUESTION: Discuss the situations in which you are called upon to perform as a professional musician.

FADDIS: I find myself having to play all kinds of little dillies and dallies. I do lots of studio work which is not that hard. Very little of it is challenging. However, I have a rehearsal with Charles Mingus in the near future which should be a challenge. I enjoy various challenges like that.

One fun thing that I remember was playing with a jazz repertory company in New York and doing the music of Jimmy Lunceford and Count Basie. I also did a thing with the repertory company in which I played the trumpet solos of Ray Eldridge. That was very interesting and I really enjoyed it a lot.

A lot of different styles are required when you play professionally in the studios. Rock,



classical, and country styles are among the requirements that go into being a professional musician in the studios.

QUESTION: What are some of the things that you practiced when you were starting out?

FADDIS: When I was about eleven or twelve my teacher started me on a set of exercises that involved ascending major triads. The exercises were done in order to develop my chops. For instance, you start on the first space F and play a major triad. You play the root, third, and fifth of the chord and you put a fermata on the fifth. After holding this note, you then go up a half-step and continue up with the idea of developing more range each day. You have to be aware of your chops and the air while doing these exercises.

QUESTION: Do you still practice?

FADDIS: Yes, whenever I have the time.

QUESTION: How much do you practice a day?

FADDIS: As much as I can.

QUESTION: What do you practice?

FADDIS: As much as I can. Seriously, I do still practice and I still take lessons. I started a few months ago because I wanted to get my tonguing together. My main area of practice right now is double- and triple-tonguing and things like that.

QUESTION: Do you have a warm-up routine? If so, what?

FADDIS: I don't warm-up per se and I don't have a warm-up routine. If I have a need to warm-up, I play long tones or scales very softly or in a mute to get my lips vibrating depending on what type of work I have to do. However, most studio work you can do without even warming-up it's so simple.

QUESTION: What kind of equipment do you use and why?

FADDIS: I use a Schilke medium bore B6 horn with a new five and one-half inch bell that Schilke made for me. I use a Schilke custom-made mouthpiece which is fairly shallow to make it easy to play in the upper register. I use this equipment to try to get the work that I have to do done as easily as possible. If you are playing on a Bach 1C mouthpiece, it would be considerably more difficult to play a high G than if you were playing a shallower one. I used to play Flugelhorn until mine was stolen not long ago. I also own a Yamaha piccolo trumpet. I don't play any of the C, D, E-flat, F or G trumpets. I'd like to and I probably will some day.

QUESTION: Do you think that anyone who desires to can learn to play the trumpet, or is the ability to play well a gift given only to a select group of people?

FADDIS: I think that anyone who has patience and desire can learn to play the trumpet. You just have to know how to go about it and not make the same mistakes over and over. You have to know how to practice and you have to want to play the trumpet well. I think that wanting to play well is very important. I think that people can do anything that they desire if they just put their minds to it.

## WILLIAM FIELDER INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

FIELDER: I was born in Meridian, Mississippi, on July 1, 1939.

QUESTION: What is your concept of improvisation?

FIELDER: Improvisation is the expression of the intangible essence of the musician. Man basically is a dual creature. He has two sides. The tangible aspect is the inner part, the creative part of man. That is the part of man that will actually expound his purpose in life. The tangible aspect is the physical aspect. So all music and improvisation is actually a vehicle from the inner man.

QUESTION: What is the difference between a person who can improvise and a person who can't improvise?

FIELDER: It is a person's level of awareness of his inner self. A person can't only be objective in his thinking. For instance, all the tests in the educational field are designed for evaluation through conversion thinking. This is a logical approach, but creativity is something that is diverse and illogical. You can't pinpoint creativity or measure it by scientific means. Say you are inspired from listening to the birds. It is a creative inspiration to expound

the beautiful.

QUESTION: What then could you say about improvisation as musical expression or as personal expression?

FIELDER: I would say that improvisation is the expression of one's individual creativity. It is one's identity. It is one's release of the way he feels about life. It is the way he interprets music.

QUESTION: There are some people who think that improvisation can't be taught or can't be learned. How do you feel about that?

FIELDER: I feel that jazz improvisation can be taught. Specifically, I would say the basic tools for improvisation, the basic concepts can be taught. But you see, you can always bake a cake, but you have to put the icing on the cake. That is the inner man. I always think of it as man's sixth sense. So, the tools for improvisation can be taught, but the expression of it cannot be taught.

QUESTION: I gather from what you're saying that one's ability to express is very personal. The tools give you a vehicle for your expression.

FIELDER: I concur with that wholeheartedly. In order to express himself on the instrument, a person would have to have a basic concept of that instrument.

He would have to have manual dexterity on the instrument. He would have to be cognizant of the nature of improvisation. But that is a different thing because there are people who will sit down and play chords but they won't say anything. So then we get to the concepts of purpose and meaning. Purpose and meaning come from the inner man.

QUESTION: In your own musical life, is there a particular style of music that you are partial to? What is your musical preference?

FIELDER: I enjoy and appreciate the whole of music-- classical, jazz, Dixieland, country and western, because I believe that there is a message for the world in all music. For instance, people who sing folk songs are expressing their view of life. Of course Brahms was also expressing his view of life. Of course Brahms was a romanticist, and basically his music expresses that. I think a note is a note, that the note will be beautiful and have purpose to it. Without that, a note is ugly. If I am playing in a symphony orchestra and I make a bad entrance and there is no beauty, it is going to sound ugly. I have to seek the beauty. Beauty comes from knowing one's self, and in order to know one's self there

must be some element of suffering. In New York City there is a saying, "You must pay the dues in order to express your dues." One aspect of the intangible essence in music is developed through suffering. Dr. Martin Luther King found his element of serving, of giving, of empathy. Dr. King released himself to the world instead of holding back from the world. So this element must be present in music. Love is empathy, love is giving, love is suffering.

QUESTION: Is that the basis for your approach to creative improvisation? You believe that the basis is the intangible and that the external or physical only serves as a manifestation of that intangible essence.

FIELDER: That is correct. Because what's inside will come outside. If nothing is inside, there is no intangible, no purpose, no meaning, no expression.

QUESTION: How did you start playing the trumpet?

FIELDER: My father was a cornetist. He performed with the Sugar Foot Minstrels, Silas Green, and other minstrel shows. I remember from an early age seeing his cornet lying around. I was curious about it. It fascinated me. He showed me how to play taps. I was playing everything

without using the valves.

QUESTION: Who and what were some of your early influences?

FIELDER: I learned some of the fundamentals of the instrument like fingering. But I was not cognizant of the concept of breathing. It was an instinctive beginning.

My brother was attending school at Xavier University in New Orleans. He is a drummer and percussionist. He would bring records back like "Farmer's Market" by Art Farmer, "Stop and Go" by Fats Navarro, "Move" and "Whispering" by Miles Davis. The first record he played for me was "Manteca" by Dizzy Gillespie, a fantastic band with J.J. Johnson and James Moody. I was fascinated by the fast runs that Dizzy Gillespie was playing. I couldn't imagine playing that fast.

QUESTION: How old were you then?

FIELDER: I was nine years old. I would have to say my first influence was Dizzy Gillespie. I was also impressed with Maurice Andre. This was during the time when he was a student at the Paris Conservatory of Music. There was a demonstration record recorded by Andre and his teacher. I also listened to Stan Kenton's band. I was always fascinated by clear tone and precision. I also



listened to Dizzy and his big band, but I could tell the difference in the concept of Dizzy's band and Stan Kenton's. It was the clarity of tone and the total sound. My mother was a violinist and concert pianist and she played a lot of classical records all the time, so I was aware of that sound. At the age of ten I attended a recital by Marian Anderson. I was fascinated, but I didn't know what they were doing.

QUESTION: What was your first improvisational playing attempt?

FIELDER: I was in a band. Each town in Mississippi during the time of segregation had their own bands. The whites had their band and the coloreds had their own band. I was in the band in Meridian called The Red Adams Band. My first attempt at jazz improvisation was just an impulse reaction. It was on a composition by Cab Calloway called "Hot Toddy."

QUESTION: Did you play the tune and then try to improvise on the chords?

FIELDER: No. I was trying to improvise from the melody. I didn't even know chords.

QUESTION: Who were some of the influential personalities in terms of your early improvisational develop-

ment?

FIELDER: There was a pianist in Mississippi at that time by the name of Walter Fountain. He was a fantastic pianist. He couldn't read music, but anything he would hear he could play even chords. Bobby Bryant was also a great influence. I first met him at an all-state band where two hundred trumpet players would assemble from all over the state. After the first session there would always be a jam session. Bobby Bryant was the star. He could improvise at the age of thirteen. It seemed very natural. He was the first trumpet player in the all-state band.

QUESTION: What were your aspirations at this time?

FIELDER: I was still listening to Maurice Andre. I was greatly influenced by classical music. I was listening to Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Schubert's "Unfinished Symphony," and Bruckner's symphonies. My mother would constantly influence me to think in terms of a classical career. Later on I had the ambition to play in a major jazz group at Birdland. I was twelve years old. Every day I would practice Charlie Parker tunes. One of the first tunes I learned was called "Anthropology." I heard that by Claude

Thornhill's band with Lee Konitz playing alto saxophone. I was greatly influenced by Charlie Parker and my ambition was to actually perform in Birdland, which I did. Then I decided I had reached my objective in jazz so I would let it go and concentrate on classical.

QUESTION: What kind of formal training did you have?

FIELDER: I had teachers who taught me how to finger the instrument. I played in the junior high school band and the high school band too. But it was Red Adams who taught me how to count. One night we were sitting there and I saw these sixteenth and thirty-second notes and I just started wiggling the valves as fast as I could. He said, "No, you have a downbeat and an upbeat. If you are going to play four sixteenths you have to place two notes on the downbeat and two on the up. If you are going to play thirty-seconds, four on the down and four on the up." And that is when I actually started thinking of the rhythm in music. I was very happy because I learned how to count. Then I discovered the Arban Book. All of those fast runs were what I wanted to play. That motivated me to study with the first trumpet player in the New Orleans Symphony but due to the adversity of the time

I couldn't. Therefore, this greatly limited my symphonic background until much later when I studied with Adolph Herseth and Vincent Cichowicz in Chicago.

QUESTION: Do you have any recommendations regarding your initial forms of training?

FIELDER: First of all I think that public education is ill equipped. For instance, my band director was a saxophonist. He didn't know anything about the trumpet. We would get the old instruments from the white schools. I think it is wrong to have one person teach all of the kids in the band. One man cannot teach the proper concepts about all the instruments. I learned concepts after I was a junior in college.

QUESTION: Where did you go to college?

FIELDER: I attended Tennessee State University on scholarship. I played first trumpet in the band. But I felt that I had a lot of shortcomings and they didn't have a trumpet teacher so I transferred to the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. There I found that what I had been taught was all wrong--all those years wasted. So I'm very critical of public education, I feel that they are not doing an adequate job.

QUESTION: When did you start to formulate your jazz ideas?

FIELDER: My first experience was when I was a freshman at Tennessee State and I met Lee Morgan. We were the same age and he was performing with Dizzy Gillespie's band. I was influenced by him very much. He exemplified absolute pitch. If you dropped a dime on the floor he could tell you what note it was.

QUESTION: Was that when you started to really study jazz?

FIELDER: No, I was still baffled about chord changes. I didn't really understand.

QUESTION: What happened then in Chicago?

FIELDER: In Chicago I encountered Booker Little, a fantastic trumpet player with a very good concept and understanding. He knew exactly what he was doing. I was ridiculed because I couldn't play on the chords. One night Big Joe Alexander was playing in Cleveland and we were all sitting at the table. I said, "I'm going to go up and play." They said, "No, you stay off the bandstand." I walked up there and he said, "What do you want to play?" I said, "I want to play, just play." He said, "Alright, 'Cherokee' in B-natural," and counted it off as fast as he could. I pulled back into the background and he said, "No, you get out in front. You say you want to play and

I'm going to see whether you can play." So we started playing and I just couldn't keep up. I couldn't keep up at all. I was playing opposite chords. So Joe stopped the entire group and said, "Now you apologize to the audience for that shit you were playing." All the people in the audience laughed.

QUESTION: Did you still continue to play jazz after that?

FIELDER: Yes, I was going from house to house and club to club every night. I met a pianist by the name of Richard Abrams. Richard told me about chords. He showed me my first chord on paper. Then I started doing pretty good doing a lot of big band jobs. I was playing with Red Saunders and Morris Ellis's band. We were playing Count Basie's charts. I played high notes and I was working but I still couldn't solo. My jazz improvisation was just nil at the time. Then I decided I would go on the road with B.B. King. He was playing the blues all night and I became very disenchanted with that. Then I took the audition for Slide Hampton's octet and got the lead trumpet player job with his band. Also important to my development at this time was my encounter with Donald Byrd who gave me the first pattern I learned. It was a II-V

pattern. I took that pattern and worked out a multitude of variants. My greatest ambition at that time was to be a soloist, not a big band trumpet player and I was going from club to club trying to find out about jazz solo improvisation. I had a rough time. I paid a lot of dues. I wrecked my life a couple of times. I just experienced all phases of life, habits and everything else trying to find out. Players coming up today have a much greater advantage because there are books on jazz. There is formal teaching of jazz. There is all of that, but people still can't play. That is the strange thing.

From the pattern that Donald Byrd gave me, I could see what I was doing wrong. I didn't have a system. So I had to go back and re-evaluate my playing. I decided to go back to school and study with Vincent Cichowicz. Classical music was still in my head so I decided I was going to be a classical player and that is what I am today.

QUESTION: What recommendations would you have for a person who wants to learn to play jazz?

FIELDER: I would say there are three aspects to jazz. First, you must be cognizant of the concept of

jazz, understand the idea, the basic mechanics of jazz. Second, you must master the manual dexterity of jazz improvisation, know exactly what scales you need, and be able to play all the chords on your instrument. The third aspect would be the aesthetic projection, performing every note as beautifully as possible.

QUESTION: What kind of formal training would you recommend?

FIELDER: A solid background in music theory is necessary. You need a competent teacher on your instrument and an understanding of your purpose in life.

QUESTION: What about informal training?

FIELDER: The informal training that a person would need is to have the experience of hearing fine jazz players, performers like Herbie Hancock, Stan Kenton's band, Count Basie's band, and Freddie Hubbard, people of that sort. One other point I would like to make is that just to know the theory of jazz is not any good. You have to apply the theory to jazz tunes, popular tunes. A person can understand the theory behind what is happening but still not be playing anything. You have to be able to take a musical statement and put it in its proper context, proper perspective. You may have a player who has manual dexterity on the instrument. He may be fast,



but he doesn't know exactly where to put all of those fast runs on a chord; it sounds out of context. A person can have all the technique in the world and still not be able to be a good jazz improviser.

QUESTION: How does one acquire manual dexterity?

FIELDER: Practice chord structures for the vertical perception, scales for the horizontal perception. And then, when you combine the two, you have a complete musical idea.

QUESTION: Where does the concept come from?

FIELDER: The concept comes from an idea. You must have some understanding of what you are trying to do, have some direction, some projection of how you want something to sound. That is actually dealing with the sixth sense of man, which is feeling.

QUESTION: Are you currently involved in any kind of situation in which you have to improvise?

FIELDER: Yes. I have my own group.

QUESTION: What would a person have to do if they were called on to sit in for you in your group? What kind of skills would they have to have?

FIELDER: You would have to know all the standard tunes. You would have to be able to sight-read, have good intonation and tone production.

QUESTION: Would you relate any other experiences and percepts or concepts that contribute to your ability to improvise?

FIELDER: My approach is that music is closely related to life. I think that a person would have to have their life together before their music is together. You have to have compassion to be creative. I think you need to study with a confident teacher. Some of the better teachers are people who are actually performing with orchestras. They have to have their instruments together. You will find that most great players in the orchestras have a concept of the instrument. I think a person should study with a symphony player first to understand the instrument. Of course they should also study theory and ear training. You must be able to hear; you must develop your hearing to a high degree. And most of all, listen to great players, jazz or classical.

I think my having direct contact with major artists has been a major contributing factor to my development. Being around players like Slide Hampton, Donald Byrd, Lee Morgan, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and also Vincent Cichowicz and Adolph Herseth has helped me

tremendously. Talking with them and understanding their approach to music and to life has been beautiful. Because life is music. One factor that I found in all of these great players, whether classical, jazz, country and western, Dixieland, soul music, or whatever, is the intangible essence of love and giving, compassion. I think some of your coldhearted, objective thinkers, people without any subjectivity, are mainly your non-improvising players because they are not really dealing from their inner self but from the outer self.

## CARL FONTANA-ZOOT SIMS INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

FONTANA: I was born in Monroe, Louisiana, on July 18, 1928.

SIMS: I was born October 29, 1925, in Englewood,  
California.

QUESTION: How many years have you been playing?

FONTANA: I started around the seventh or eighth grade,  
so I'd say twenty-five or thirty years.

SIMS: I started about 1935.

QUESTION: What area of the country did you grow up in?

FONTANA: It was mostly around the South in Louisiana.

SIMS: I grew up in Los Angeles, but I've been around  
New York a long time.

QUESTION: What area of the country do you consider the most  
important in getting your jazz chops together?

FONTANA: I think when I went to school in Baton Rouge,  
Louisiana. Those were the formative years. That  
was in 1947. I listened to records a lot. I  
started listening to bebop. Then when I graduated  
from school I went on the road with Woody Herman.  
I was on the road eight years.

SIMS: I think our backgrounds are very similar. I had  
some brothers who had a lot of good taste, and I  
grew up listening to a lot of good music. I  
went on the road very early. I was about fifteen.

I've been on the road ever since.

QUESTION: What about your formal education and background?

FONTANA: I think I learned a little by playing in my father's dance band. I played in the college bands.

SIMS: I learned to read some in grade school. I got all my education in bands. Then I started hearing people who were better than me. I still do. I've played with some great musicians. They didn't go out of their way to teach me. I learned a lot just by being there.

QUESTION: Did you play in school bands?

FONTANA: I did the marching band, concert band, symphony, and all kinds of bands.

SIMS: I played in the school band.

QUESTION: How did you get started playing?

FONTANA: I went through the regular school things. I was in grammar school and high school bands. My father had a dance band. I went to college and took courses in music. I played and worked my way through school. All of this time I was learning. When I got through school I went with Woody Herman's band for a couple of years. From then on, it was a succession of bands, but all of that continued my education. My ear was still learning a lot of things. Over a period of years

you listen to a lot of music and digest it. Then you start coming out with your own things. You become proficient enough to play your own things--your own jazz.

QUESTION: Did anyone in your family play an instrument?

FONTANA: My father played tenor saxophone and violin, so that helped. I had an early musical concept of jazz and someone to listen to who really loved music. There was a lot of music going around my house. I had a record player and records. In my high school days I worked in my father's dance band on Fridays and Saturdays. That helped too.

QUESTION: What do you tell young players seeking advice?

FONTANA: I tell them to listen to as many records as they can in order to get a musical concept. I also tell them to study a music theory course and to get with a piano player who could show them the right changes and what the notes are in the changes. I tell them to do as much playing as they possibly can.

QUESTION: Who were your primary influences in music?

FONTANA: I started listening to records when big bands were popular. I listened to Woody Herman and Stan Kenton and all the bands. When the bebop era started, I began listening to Charlie Parker,

Dizzy Gillespie, and Miles. I began to start digesting bebop. Through the years I've just listened to everything I could in order to get a concept of what I thought I wanted to play like.

QUESTION: Did you play in the big bands also?

SIMS: Yes, I played in all kinds of bands; I was a key man in every band. I played with Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, Bobby Sherwood, and some bands you never heard of.

QUESTION: If you had to point out something that helped you get your jazz playing together, what would it be?

FONTANA: I'd say years of listening to records, playing in bands, listening to guys, accumulating knowledge, and being proficient enough to get it all out.

SIMS: In my case it's just natural talent.

QUESTION: Do you practice a lot?

SIMS: I practice every time I play.

FONTANA: It's the same with me; I practice everytime I play. I hate to practice by myself. I like to practice with a rhythm section.

QUESTION: Do you spend a lot of time practicing at home?

SIMS: Not really, no. To get serious, you can't say enough about practicing. It's a great thing to do. After you start playing with bands and

working every night, you have little time to practice. The most time I ever practiced was in dressing rooms. If you play every night it's hard to practice. If you play jazz, you are practicing all the time because you are using your wits. That's real practice.

QUESTION: What would you say helped you get your playing together more than anything?

SIMS: I think the bands and learning how to read. I had a natural liking for jazz. It is my whole life.

QUESTION: How do you think it affected your family life?

FONTANA: In my early days I didn't have a family to worry about. It was like an apprenticeship. I was just on the road learning. I was lucky to be sitting in front of two good trumpet players.

SIMS: I could say the same thing. I got married late. My wife understands what I am and she tries to help me. She knows that I am going to be on the road a certain number of months out of the year.

FONTANA: As far as the family thing, I don't think it affected me much at all.

QUESTION: What is your concept of jazz improvisational playing?



FONTANA: Jazz improvisation, as far as I am concerned, is creating a countermelody to the melody.

SIMS: In other words, it is making up your own melody.

FONTANA: Since you must base it on something, you base it on the melody of the original tune.

SIMS: I think that is a good explanation. You don't have to go any further than that. To improvise means you make up your own melody.

FONTANA: In other words, a quick definition would be that you create a countermelody--create your own melody, your own line.

QUESTION: Do you think jazz improvisation can be taught?

FONTANA: Yes, I think it is possible to teach it. First of all, you should give the kid an idea of what jazz is by playing records of Charlie Parker and Miles Davis--any kind of jazz so that he can digest it. You have to listen to a lot of jazz to get a concept of what it's supposed to sound like. You do that by training the kids to listen so that they can digest it. After they have assimilated it, you teach them to be proficient enough on their horns to play it back--to create melodies after learning them. In other words, the process works like a tape recorder.

QUESTION: What would you tell a kid if he came to you and asked how to get it together?

SIMS: That's the most difficult question in the world. There is no 1-2-3 easy lessons about it. First of all, you have to have the determination and the willingness, and then you go out and play all you can with cats who are better than you. Just go out and jam. The reason we did it was pure joy. I get more kicks out of playing now than I did when I was sixteen. That's what's good about jazz.

QUESTION: What are you doing presently?

FONTANA: I'm in Las Vegas. I play a lot of shows and some jazz. I go out of town on the road some too.

SIMS: I'm based in New York. All I do is play jazz. I travel a lot and play mostly clubs.

## DAN HAERLE INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

HAERLE: I was born in Quincy, Illinois; July, 1937.

QUESTION: How did you get interested in music?

HAERLE: I was interested in music because my parents were involved with music. My father played trombone in a dance band and my mother sang with the band. They both came up through school music, played in the high school band and orchestra. My mother played violin and my father played trombone and baritone horn. We always had music around the house. They had records and were big fans of Benny Goodman, Art Tatum, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and a lot of really great musicians of an older style--Bob Crosby and the Bobcats and Bix Beiderbecke and Louie Armstrong and Jack Teagarden. I heard that kind of music from the first day I can remember.

QUESTION: When did you start playing piano?

HAERLE: I started when I was in the sixth or seventh grade. I wasn't a child prodigy. I didn't start when I was five or six years old. I was more like eleven or twelve. I took lessons all through junior high school and high school. There was a year or so in high school when I was working and not going to school that I didn't take lessons.

QUESTION: What was your early home life like?

HAERLE: My early home life was really good because my parents were very, very loving and kind to me. They didn't try to encourage or discourage music. They just had an environment of music that they loved. I asked them to start taking piano lessons.

QUESTION: How did your early home life contribute to your getting into music and playing?

HAERLE: There was a piano at home because my father was an arranger and he used the piano to write music. I went to them to ask if I could take piano lessons. It was kind of funny because they really didn't want me to be a musician because they had experienced some of the hardships of being musicians--the road life, late hours, working in bad clubs, and all of those kinds of things. They really were not anxious that I be a musician at all, but when I went to them and asked if I could take piano lessons, they said, "Fine, that would be okay." I guess they realized they couldn't avoid the inevitable.

QUESTION: Did you have a teacher from the beginning? How were your lessons set up?

HAERLE: I did have a piano teacher from about the sixth or seventh grade although I never really practiced the first couple of years I took lessons. I am

ashamed to admit it. I was a pretty good sight reader. I learned to read music easily, but I was at the age when I would rather go out and play baseball and croquet in the summertime. I never practiced. I would just go in and sight-read my lesson, and the teacher would say, "Very good; next week do the next lesson." and that kind of thing, so the first couple of years were really kind of a waste. When I got in high school I had a better teacher and she got me into the standard piano literature. I started playing Bach and Beethoven and Brahms and those kinds of things. I took lessons once a week.

QUESTION: When was a firm commitment made to becoming a musician and mastering the piano?

HAERLE: I don't think I made a firm commitment about becoming a musician or really trying to master the piano until I was in my junior year in college. I had been torn by other possibilities. I was playing the string bass, which I also played since junior high school. At one point I got a good bass and I was considering trying to pursue orchestral bass playing. I was very interested in that, and I had a scholarship to play bass in the orchestra at school. About the time I was a junior I decided to make the choice for piano, I

gave junior and senior piano recitals and really got to work for the first time. I started practicing and learned how to solve problems and I improved much more rapidly.

QUESTION: At the time of your commitment, what other personal needs did you encounter and how did you meet those needs?

HAERLE: My personal needs were confused because I was trying to study the classical literature and learn pieces for recitals, but I was also playing jazz gigs. I was playing on bad pianos and having to play very hard and force because the instruments weren't good or there wasn't a good PA system and that kind of thing. I was very often playing incorrectly and straining, so I was going through a personal conflict as far as whether I should play jazz or classical. There were periods when I stopped playing jazz or stopped playing gigs and jobs so I could really get my technique sorted out and learn how to get a good tone and how to really play correctly and use proper tone production and that sort of thing. After I got that sorted out, I went back to jazz playing because I loved it and couldn't stay away very long.

QUESTION: When did you start improvising?

HAERLE: I guess I really started improvising when I was

still in junior high school. I think one of the things that made me want to play the piano was that I heard Art Tatum, Bud Powell, and Oscar Peterson. Their music really excited me about the piano. I knew I wanted to try to make up my own music the way they were doing, but I had no idea what I was doing.

QUESTION: Why did you start improvising?

HAERLE: I really liked the fact that they were making up all that new music to go with the original melody. I remember very distinctly an Oscar Peterson record that had a big impact on me. It was a ten-inch record in the old days when they still made them, and one whole side of it was the blues and the other side of it was a tune, "I Only Have Eyes for You." I knew that tune because my folks played and sang it. My mother was always singing tunes around home. I had books of pop tunes and standards. I played through those--just read them note for note out of the books. I didn't really do anything with voicing chords or try to improvise anything. I played through those songs because I liked them. I knew "I Only Have Eyes For You," and the whole side of this record was Oscar Peterson improvising on that tune. I knew the melody well enough that I could sing it while he

was playing all his thousands of notes. It really impressed me that I could sing the melody with it and it still fit and sounded good. That just really knocked me out. I thought, "He is doing all that stuff and it fits, so he must really know what he is doing." I guess that was the thing that really made me want to start improvising--just hearing that that kind of thing was possible. I had no idea what I was doing, but I just started from there. Then I started taking sheet music and messing around with some of the chords that were printed. I would play around the melody a little bit and throw in some grace notes and some extra notes here and there, but that is all I did at first. I remember the first tune I really started trying to stretch out and improvise was a tune called "Tenderly." My inspiration for that was Jo Stafford. She was an impeccable singer with flawless intonation and great phrasing and breathing. She was fantastic. We had a recording of Jo Stafford singing "Tenderly." That and the Oscar Peterson record really knocked me out. I wanted to learn how to play "Tenderly." I messed around with it and threw in a few extra notes here and there, but I was strictly reading the printed page. I wasn't



reading the chord symbols.

One of the things that really helped me was the fact that my Dad was an arranger as well as a trombone player. He showed me how to play different chords on the piano although he didn't actually tell me what I was playing. He showed me what notes to push down for this chord or that chord. I would play boom-ching, boom-ching, boom-ching and chord through progressions, and my Dad would play along on trombone. He would play the melody and then he would improvise and I would be boom-chinging away. I never really knew what I was doing. Finally, one day I asked him, "Why do I play these notes, Dad?" This was when I was about in the eighth grade. He said, "Okay, now these notes make an F sixth chord. F-A-C-D is an F sixth chord containing root, third, fifth, and sixth," and he started to explain to me how chords were built. That was the beginning of my theoretical understanding. It wasn't until I got into college that I started learning theory, learning ear training, learning to hear intervals, learning to hear chords, and really understanding how chords were constructed. Then I started understanding more about what I was doing, learning scales and all my major and minor keys. I still

didn't know anything about the modes or any of the altered jazz scales, but I heard them. Several years later I discovered that I had been playing a particular kind of scale and it was called such and such, but I had to learn purely by ear, by listening to records, and by trial and error. That was my beginning stage of playing. When I understood more about what I was doing, that helped speed up my learning. Things got a lot easier to understand.

QUESTION: Who were some of the influential people in your life who contributed to your development as an improviser and as a musician/pianist in general?

HAERLE: First my father--no question about it. He had a tremendous impact on my early understanding of music and the environment in which I heard music. I grew up loving and hearing Louie Armstrong, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Sarah Vaughn, Ella Fitzgerald, and all those people. That was a tremendous impact. He counseled me and explained things to me in my early stages. I think the next big influence on my life was a saxophone player named Ronny Deal who lives in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. When I was in college there, I was fortunate enough to have the

opportunities to work with Ronny. I was a sophomore in college and he was older than me and a much more experienced player. I worked with him night after night and he taught me tunes. Every night when we would come to the job he would say, "Hey Dan, do you know such and such a tune?", or, "Listen to this tune." I would go home and learn those three or four tunes and go back to the job the next night and we would struggle through them. I would struggle through them; he wasn't struggling. I started learning them. Then he would ask me another three or four tunes and I would go home and learn those. During the years of playing with him I learned many tunes. He opened up my mind to the music, the great writers, and the great tunes, and I have been eternally grateful for that. What was even more important was that at a critical point in my life he told me that I couldn't play. What he meant was simply that I needed to study and to practice my scales and arpeggios and technical studies. I needed to get in control so I could move around on the instrument because I was really stumbling. It shook me up at first. He was very nice about it, very positive about it, but no one had told me that. I thought I was really getting so I could

play, and I really couldn't in a lot of ways, so that was a real big influence. Once I got over the initial shock, I realized I had better get to work, get to practicing, and learn something about playing the instrument and using the right fingerings on the scales and all that kind of thing. Everyone I have played with has influenced me to some extent because I have learned something from everyone. The people on recordings, the giants who have been influential in different times, have been important. I would have to say Art Tatum, Oscar Peterson, and Bud Powell had a tremendous impact on me. Bud threw caution to the wind and went straight ahead and just got that energy happening. I loved the rhythmic feeling and the angularity of his melodies and the dissonant notes he would come up with harmonically. The first time I heard him at Birdland, in 1954 or 1955 I was totally astounded at his playing. I don't think I have ever recovered from that. I went through a very strong Oscar Peterson influence and a very strong Bill Evans influence. I have tried to assimilate all the important players and their best qualities in whatever way I could use them honestly and naturally for myself.

QUESTION: What were your early aspirations and ambitions?

HAERLE: When I was in college I wanted to become a famous jazz player. I thought classical music really had no depth or value. It was resolved, contrived, and worked out, and all we did was keep dragging out these same old tunes again, whereas jazz was fresh, creative, and spontaneous. Later I started seeing the value of the traditions and of those forms and styles of music. I learned to love classical music and in graduate school I became involved in composition and writing music for the chamber orchestra, choir, and everything. I think that had a big influence on my life too. It affected my overall aspirations and ambitions in that I realized that I was interested in a lot of aspects of music. I was interested in playing the piano and writing. I was becoming involved in teaching and finding that very gratifying and satisfying. I decided that I didn't want to exclude anything. I wanted to try and pursue all those aspects of music--writing, playing, and teaching. I think Dave Liebman put that a really good way when he said, "When we reach a certain point in our musicianship, we realize that we are grateful for the help we've had along the way in so many ways, and we feel like we want to give it

back. We feel like we owe it. It is the least we can do to try to share and give back to the people coming up behind us whatever we can, whatever benefit we've had, to pass that along."

None of us own the knowledge. We need to pass it on and give it to the next generation moving on up. I have found that teaching is an important activity for me. I left teaching for awhile just to be certain whether or not I would be happier being a free-lance musician and doing all of those things that a musician does or whether I would be happier staying in full-time teaching. I found that ultimately I am much more fulfilled in a teaching capacity but with the qualification that I have the chance to play music as well and continue writing.

QUESTION: What is your concept of improvisational playing or what is your concept of jazz playing?

HAERLE: I started out playing inside the harmony which I feel is the way you have to learn to outline chords. I moved through chords and scales in a way that stayed completely tonal to the harmony in the sense of fitting and not being wrong or ~~dissonant to the harmony.~~ Gradually I started using more altered tones and interesting colorations and dissonant notes for their value or

effect. That led to trying to learn how to play outside the harmony as opposed to inside the harmony, really exploring the dissonant possibilities, playing everything foreign and dissonant that I possibly could, and going through a phase of outside or experimental playing. Now I have come around to what is sort of a compromise, but it feels natural for me. I play around the harmony, not necessarily inside or outside, sometimes more tonal, sometimes more dissonant, but basically around the harmony. As the musical needs dictate it'll either be more inside or more outside or more coloration of the harmony or more consonant and simplification of the harmony. I don't really have a pre-conception in my mind now that I am going to play any one way. If a more tense expression is needed, it will tend to be more dissonant or foreign to the harmony, and if a more relaxed, consonant kind of expression is called for, it'll tend to be more inside or more consonant to the harmony. That seems to be the way it is working out.

QUESTION: Do you have a particular preference for a style of music?

HAERLE: I have a preference for jazz in the sense that it is my personal challenge to pursue a kind of

music which we call jazz that involves improvisation and a lot of spontaneous creation, but it bridges a lot of styles because at times I find myself improvising in not only Latin, rock and folk music styles, but even classical or something that you might call twentieth-century avant-garde chamber music. I don't really like to be limited or pigeon-holed into any one style because I really enjoy most styles of music. My father used to say that there are only two kinds of music --good and bad. I believe that anything well done deserves our attention and our respect, whether we prefer to listen to it or not. I had a lot of background in classical music through classical study on the piano, through orchestral bass playing, and then later through doing master's work in composition. I know that is a huge part of me, and I would have a tremendous void if I didn't continue to listen to classical music and play it, but I really enjoy a lot of pop styles, a lot of folk music, even country and western music. I am very interested in ethnic musics of different countries. Again, the main criteria is if it is well done and if it is a genuine honest expression. I really find myself captured or engaged by it if that is the case. If it is obviously not



sincere or it is not well done, then I lose interest.

QUESTION: What recommendations would you make to a young player who wanted to learn to improvise?

HAERLE: The recommendations that I would make are really pretty simple. I think I can divide them into four areas. First, I think formal training is definitely necessary--studying with a teacher, studying classical literature and technique, and just learning to play the instrument correctly. There are some unconventional or special kinds of techniques that I think a jazz player needs to study and practice that aren't taught through classical literature, but that would be supplementary. I think there is no substitute to learning how to play the instrument as correctly as possible, using correct fingerings, correct tone production, and correct articulation. I think that is essential. Playing with a good sound and good time is universal to any kind of music.

I think you can study a lot on your own out of improvisation books, but that is a very individual kind of thing. You have to browse through different improvisation books and see what looks like it makes sense to you. What is one man's meat is

another's potatoes or whatever. You can't really say that one is the best approach. There are a lot of good books on the market, and these days the opportunities to attend jazz clinics or jazz camps at different universities and high schools around the country are there all the time. To study privately with a jazz teacher, in addition to your classical teacher, would be ideal. You could take classical lessons to work on your chops and just learn how to play and, of course, learn something about music. Then taken another lesson separate from that from a jazz teacher and learn the materials of improvisation, harmonic concepts, patterns, etc. I do think though that we learn a lot more than we think about music and musical feeling by studying the classics. In Bill Evans's playing you find impressionism, suggestions of Debussy and suggestions of Chopin and Brahms and different kinds of romantic things. I think there is a lot of influence there. His classical training shows through in many ways. I can see in my own playing, by having played Bach, the effect it has had on my thinking about eighth-note time. Music expresses human emotions, and most emotions can be expressed in many ways and in many styles of music. I think the more insights

we have into those, the more complete musician we are. The more we have experienced as a musician, the larger our totality is as a musician. I think you should listen to all kinds of music. As a piano player, I really zeroed in on jazz piano players. I listened to a lot of different players. I copied ideas I liked, listened for the feeling and what they were doing, and tried to bring that into my music. I have also listened to all kinds of orchestral music, string quartets, classical piano music, and music of all styles and periods. It is really important to me to have that exposure to all the music in the world because there is just too much great music to miss.

Then I think an important part of your development as an improviser is to play as much as you can. Play with any kind of group you have a chance to play with. Playing commercial gigs and things aren't really jazz jobs still contributes to your development as an improviser because you have to learn to be flexible and hear. Very often you have to play tunes without having changes written down, so you have to hear the progression or learn how to fake it. You have to be able to improvise and please the people listening.

You can't get far-out and be experimental, so that requires control and taste. You are developing a lot of qualities as a player when you play all those kinds of gigs. You can also work on improvising when you are playing with people who feel like you do. Get together with other musicians and play tunes and pick solos on them and try things. The playing is a really important part of it. A lot of the great players we look up to now as being giants or people who have been important influences learned how to play entirely by experience. Many of them are not schooled players. Through the history of jazz more and more players have been schooled and have had more background in theory and classical training, but in the early days they learned how to play strictly by ear. They learned how to play without knowing anything about theory or without taking private lessons on the instrument or without studying any of the books. Now we have a lot of advantages that help speed up the whole process. We can learn how to play much more quickly, but still there is no substitute for playing. You have to play and play and play and play. It has to be a primary activity in life. Play as much as possible, and that sometimes means a lot of sacrifice in

terms of rest or whatever, maybe playing six nights a week, going to school all day, and holding down a part-time job besides. That can get pretty exhausting, but if the desire is there it can happen.

QUESTION: Is there a specific manner in which you go about teaching improvisation?

HAERLE: I think it is easier to start out playing on fewer chords which last a longer duration of time, gradually working up to tunes that have more chords and go by more quickly at faster tempos. Basically we are talking about a modal approach to improvisation. You start out learning just the dorian scale. Many students have never played a dorian scale before. They have learned pure minor, harmonic minor, or melodic minor forms, so the dorian scale is a new sound, a new feeling, and a new fingering. Playing one dorian scale on one minor chord which lasts maybe sixteen measures or eight bars is enough to think about to start out. Playing on various kinds of sounds of a dominant seventh chord, using a mixolydian mode or a major seventh chord using a lydian mode, and just getting to the sound of one single tonality, one single chord, or one single scale for an extended period of time is a good place to begin. Then

the process moves toward using two chords, say two different minor chords or two different dominant sevenths that last maybe eight bars apiece. Then eventually I lead into a simple blues progression with three chords or a simple chord progression such as "Cantaloupe Island" or tunes like "Maiden Voyage" or "Blue Boss," that have a few more chords but are still not changing too quickly. Then we work towards using more chords, changing every bar or every two beats, moving through different keys, and that kind of thing. That way it is a gradual progression as the basic concepts are understood. As the player has the sound of dorian, lydian, or mixolydian in his head, he is more prepared to play that on other keys and change course more quickly. I think it has proved to be a pretty good way of teaching improvisation. Usually in the second semester of improvisation I introduce the concept of the II-V-I progression in major and minor keys and show some simple ways to deal with that. This paves the way for moving into bebop tunes or tunes which involve a lot of II-V-I or II-V or V-I changes in many keys. By the end of the second semester we are playing or at least exposing

them to tunes like "Lazy Bird," "Count Down," "Giant Steps," and "Moment's Notice." In the second year I try to introduce them to the concept of how to deal with tunes of a very complex nature involving unconventional chord forms and functions, unusual progressions, and all kinds of unusual alterations. I try to introduce the concept of dealing with any tune by learning how to resolve a basic choice of coloration or scale sound that fits any chord in the chord-scale relationship. As you go through a tune, there are three or four basic factors you have to understand. Obviously the chord symbol is some indication of scale choice, but the next consideration would be: once the basic family or chord type is resolved, it narrows down to certain scales. Then the next consideration becomes the alterations or extensions that are indicated, but then there may not be enough information to still decide the scale possibilities, so the melody becomes an important consideration. Sometimes the melody includes alterations and extensions which have an important implication on the tune even though they don't show up in the chords. Sometimes the melody simply suggests a strong feeling of lydian as opposed to major, or maybe the melody suggests a

strong feeling of pure minor as opposed to dorian. Sometimes the melody doesn't give you any additional information and you still are undecided. There are two or three excellent possibilities of dealing with a particular chord. We start by examining the context of the flow of the tune. What tones are in common between one chord and the following chord? If a tone can continue, it may logically want to. On the other hand, if that tone could be changed in the following chord, that might produce a pleasing effect in the sense of a surprise or an unexpected sound. In examining the context it may not be a matter of what happened in the previous chord but what the function is and where you are going. A V-I in minor anticipates the resolution to the next minor key and sort of prepares it. I would treat that V chord in a way that almost makes one think you are hearing the sound of the minor key before it even resolves so there is a natural flow into that next change. I introduce them to that concept in the third semester--how to deal with tunes considering the obvious superficial aspects of the chord symbols but also the strong implications of the melody. The melody has to always be kept very strongly in mind or you might as well



play another tune that has a similar set of chord changes. Then I feel like it is time to get into either advanced application of the conventional principles or into some unconventional situations. I get into a lot of applications of pentatonic scales, not just the melodic concept that the pentatonic scale generates, but also different ways of superimposing it in different situations to create effects, either inside or outside the harmony. I think it is important for them to play some of the tunes they played before, but to get the tempo on up there, to learn to play really fast, to learn to play in hard keys, the keys that they are less secure in, and to break down the mental blocks about those. We play unconventional kinds of tunes, in the sense of odd meter or meter changes in the tunes with odd phrase lengths, tunes that are based on synthetic modes or unusual chordal structures that you can't satisfy using any of the conventional modes or altered scales. We play twelve-tone music, a sort of organized classical twelve-tone serial technique, where you have a tone row and work off of it and develop sub-sets. We experiment with free playing--no pre-set structure at all. We get into multi-phonics, marginal techniques of the instrument,

collective improvisation, outside playing, and advanced applications of superimposing different kinds of structures, patterns, and scale forms over the technically wrong chord, but showing ways that melodic integrity can still make those kinds of things convincing. Probably one of the most important things in the fourth semester would be individual trouble-shooting, trying to deal with each individual member of the class in terms of his weaknesses.

QUESTION: Could you tell me something about the situations in which you have to improvise?

HAERLE: I am narrowing those down more and more all the time. In the course of years of playing I found myself having to improvise in a lot of situations, playing different styles of jazz or not even jazz at all, but I still had to improvise something that seemed to fit the idiom of what I was playing. I have improvised sparkling Lawrence Welk rhythms with a society band and country and western. At different times I found those kind of things interesting and challenging, but now they really don't hold any interest for me at all, and I find that they are more of a nuisance and time spent that I would rather spend doing something else, so I just don't put myself in those kinds of situations.

I have played with a lot of different musicians and tried to make my playing blend into the flow of their style or the music they were playing. When I played with Clark Terry, I strongly felt that I wanted to play a certain way for him. I didn't feel like I had to compromise my playing. That wasn't the point at all. But I felt I wanted to play a certain way to fit the sound of the tune and the style of the band. The band was very open and sometimes we would be very daring and experimental, but I found myself improvising in quite different ways at different times. It was rewarding and I really enjoyed it. I guess I have a lot of roots in older styles of playing, so occasionally I find things creeping into my playing like a stride-style or an older style in one way or another. In other situations I find myself improvising in the context of the band I had in Miami when Pat Metheny and Danny Gottlieb were down there. We had a band which played entirely experimental free music, totally unstructured. We were using a lot of electronics and a lot of effects and textures, and it was very rewarding in its own kind of way. It was very demanding in terms of sensitivity and the ability to hear because there were very few pre-set

conditions. Very often there was not even a key center expressed and we would play completely free, but the ears were big in that band and we did a lot of listening. The sensitivity and desire was there to create a total sound so it was very satisfying. I have found myself improvising in very, very conservative kinds of situations and very adventuresome situations in the jazz idiom. I feel like it has all been valuable. I've learned something in everything I've done musically and I don't regret a bit of it. But now I turn down many jobs that might even be construed as being in the jazz idiom because I'm impatient with playing other kinds of music. I feel like I've got a challenge in my own playing to learn how to deal with the music that interests and challenges me. I've got my work cut out for me with just that, without spreading myself thin. I find myself playing less electronic music, which doesn't mean that I have reversed my view on it. I feel that electronic music is extremely important and meets a very important need. It is a whole parameter of sound expression that has great value, but I don't find myself doing it. It doesn't seem to meet my musical needs. I find myself playing bebop tunes, very free experimental music, a lot

of original material, and a lot of the music of important composers like Wayne Shorter and Keith Jarrett. I feel that, at this point of my life, I really need to have the say about what music I pursue and what music I use as the vehicle to make my expression, to make my statement. There is no question that I could continue to learn from playing with the great leaders as an apprentice learning from working with them, but I guess that was one of the reasons, along with the desire to return to teaching, that I finally left New York this last time. I felt that ultimately no matter what opportunities I got to play, I was still playing somebody else's music. I really need to be playing things that challenge me in the way that I need to be challenged, so now there is a variety of things I play, a lot of composers represented, a lot of idioms. I play Latin, rock, and ballads in all kinds of styles, and a lot of original music and styles that I couldn't define what exactly they are, but I'm exercising the say over that. I still like to play with other players because I need that stimulation. I'll have sessions over at the house and invite players over. We'll jam and play tunes and a lot of music that I maybe ordinarily wouldn't play or prefer to play, but I

still enjoy it. I feel like that is important to keep me fresh and open so I don't get locked in some little narrow closet somewhere where I'm just doing my thing and nothing else. I guess that is what I'm doing right now. I'm trying to balance it by pursuing the things that I'm really excited about but at the same time still playing some other things. I do concerts with some of the faculty members here where I cater to them and what tunes they want to play and the music they feel good about, because I feel like I can enjoy playing any kind of music, so I'm not really super critical in that way.

QUESTION: What are some of the specific things you practiced to get your chops together?

HAERLE: There is no question but what the traditional disciplines are important. It is like someone said to me one time, "All music moves in steps and skips, so if you learn to play your steps and learn to play your skips you've got it covered." That may be an over-simplification, but I think there is a lot of truth to that. I practiced scales and arpeggios and the traditional kinds of things and learned to play all my major and minor scales and all three forms of the harmonic minor. I played different kinds of studies for independence of the

fingers like Hanon and Czerny and those things. I played a lot of classical literature which helped me in so many different ways. I played works by Bach and Scarlatti, for the development of touch and running passages. I played works by Mozart and Haydn where you have to really cover a lot of territory in terms of fast running scales and running sixteenth notes. I also played big powerful romantic pieces by Brahms and Beethoven that demand a lot of power in getting the sound out of the piano. There is an aspect of chops in learning how to play strong on the piano without forcing or banging and learning how to control weight and power. I guess the thing that ultimately helped me get my chops together was just playing as much as I could in demanding situations where we were playing hard tunes at fast tempos in hard keys or moving through a lot of keys where I had to really be alert and be on top of the situation. At first I would try to run and I would stumble and fall all over the place when I had to play a fast tempo. Then gradually I got more confidence from just doing it and getting past the mental blocks of those things. I think that is a big part of your chops too-getting past the mental thing where you get

psyched up about not being able to play fast then you realize "Sure, I can play fast. It's no big deal." You have to get yourself psychologically together. That's a big part of getting your chops together. I think the more that I have gotten my head straightened around about myself and my playing the more it has helped me to relax and play better. I could go into that at great length but I don't think it is really necessary. All I would say is that the psychological, philosophical, or spiritual aspects of a musician are extremely important. They require as much if not more attention, because if you are spiritually uptight or psychologically really upset, into some kind of inferiority complex, or if you are really tense or nervous about being in front of people or feeling paranoid about being put down, I don't know how you could play, no matter how good your chops are in the technical sense. I found that once I started solving some of those mental problems, my chops got better without practicing another day. That had a tremendous impact on me. It really showed me a lot about what playing music really is. It ultimately is much more of a spiritual experience. When we reach the level of involvement where we are really



spiritually involved, we don't have time for the psychological tensions that defeat us and cause us fear, apprehension, anxiety, and tension. I just have to repeat that I don't know how anybody can play when they are all wrapped up in knots like that. All the classical background and all the discipline of study and practice that go with the conservatory techniques are pretty hard to beat. Obviously there are some specific kinds of jazz things that you have to practice. You have to practice a lot of voicings in all keys and all those patterns and melodic ideas in all keys, but that takes care of itself. That is less of a problem. You can add those things gradually as you go along.

QUESTION: Do you still practice?

HAERLE: Yes, but in terms of actual practice in the sense of trying to work out something or practicing a pattern or scale, hardly any. I haven't really practiced scales or technique or anything like that for probably five years now because I found that I have needed to get more deeply into the music I am playing. At this point I am pretty secure with chords, scales, keys and the mechanical aspects of music. I know the fingerings. I know

what notes are in the scales. I know how the chords are constructed. I know how to voice them. After enough years of doing that, you would almost have to know that just by accident. At this point I don't have to think about those things. What I am really trying to get at is the core of my expression as a musician. I am really trying to get closer to me, what I am trying to say with my music and what I really want it to be. With any vehicle that I am using, whether it is an original piece, a standard tune, or a piece by some composer, what I really want is to get as close to it as possible. I want to get as deeply into it as possible so that I am really intimately acquainted with it and I don't have to think about it. I don't have to know what chord is coming up next, what the melody is, what the sound of the harmony is, or what the scale choices are. My practice really consists of just playing music. I play music and I try to get closer and closer to it. I continue to play music that I have been playing for fifteen years, trying to get closer to it too. I try to really get to where everything about the music, including the tune, chord progression, scales and everything is completely automatic so that it is truly a vehicle, a medium through which I can function and

express myself so that all I really have to do is think music. I don't have to think about any aspects of the thing except what I want it to feel like.

Insofar as how much I practice that way, that varies with my teaching schedule, concerts, playing, or whatever. It almost by necessity has to be spasmodic and irregular. I may not practice at all for several evenings, or I may sit and play for several hours one evening, or I may practice ten minutes in between class in the middle of the day, or maybe I have a free hour and no one comes into the office to see me about anything and I don't have any other pressing work to get done or whatever. I practice in little bits and pieces. I sit down and play a tune for five minutes. That may not seem like much time, but I think of all the time in my life that I have wasted, those little bits and pieces of five minutes here and fifteen minutes there and even half hours and hours. I find that time means a lot to me, and now that I have learned to focus my concentration, I can sit down and in the first few seconds be deeply into the music as though I had been playing for several minutes. I don't waste any time. Five minutes can be an extremely valuable experience

for me--ten minutes here and fifteen minutes there. When I do have the chance and am not too tired from the hard day's teaching schedule, I'll sit down and play for an hour or two or three or four, but I don't practice lots of hours like I did at one point. Several years ago when I quit teaching I would spend the whole day at the piano sometimes, or at least three or four hours a day, every day, at the piano practicing and then maybe another couple of hours at a jam session or at rehearsal playing. I was playing five, six, seven, or eight hours a day and maybe more if I was playing a gig that night. I don't begin to do that kind of playing anymore. I try to play as regularly as I can, enough to keep feeling good about my chops so that I don't lose my endurance and so that I can play comfortably without any kind of physical frustration.

QUESTION: Do you think that anyone who desires to can learn to play the piano, or is the ability to play well a gift given only to a select group of people?

HAERLE: I think anyone with an average amount of intelligence could learn how to play an instrument if he applied himself. It is in direct relation to the desire to play, willingness to work and practice and really do a lot of ditchdigging. It requires

patience; it requires a lot of hours spent at some stage. I think I am at the stage now where I am enough in control that I don't have to work those hours to learn the right fingerings, to learn the scale and chord structure like I did at one time, but at some point in every player's life, he has to spend a lot of hours at the instrument. The piano is a very easy instrument to play in many ways and it's very hard in other ways, but I think that is true of every instrument. I don't think any instrument is peculiarly easy or hard.

If a player has the desire to play and is willing to study and practice hard and apply himself, he will learn how to play. It will be indirect relation to how much time he spends at the instrument. If he spends eight hours a day at the piano, he will probably learn how to play twice as fast as if he spends four hours a day at the piano. That is an over-simplification, but that is what it boils down to. I don't think it is a gift given to a select few. I think the select few are the ones we can't really explain: John Coltrane, Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Clifford Brown, and all those kind of people. Art Tatum also had that magical something over the basic skill of just playing the instrument. There is some kind of

magic there, some kind of exceptional gift, something that is really completely unusual that I don't know we could even define. Some spark in their mind or in their spirit makes them totally incredible and totally unbelievable in their ability to play. Short of the exceptional player, I think anyone can be a very good player, an excellent player for that matter, given enough time. It might take one person five year and it might take another person thirty years to get to that point. It doesn't matter. If he wants to get to that point, he will get there, if he has the patience to stick it out for thirty years. I have about decided that it is going to take me thirty years to get to the point I would like to, but I've got the patience to stick it out. I can keep trying anyway.

QUESTION: Is there anything else you would like to add?

HAERLE: I feel that teaching and playing are almost inseparable. I'm not sure I can separate in my mind being a teacher and a player. Again, that goes back to the early influence from my Dad who said, "Those who can, do, and those who can't teach." Of course, we know that there are many marvelous exceptions to that. We know that there are people who just don't have the temperament to

perform who are really excellent teachers, but I have never felt like I wanted to be that way. I've always felt like I'm not going to teach because I can't do. I want to be able to do, and whether I achieve any kind of national recognition or whether I ever get any kind of financial remunerations from making a lot of records or whatever it might be, I really don't care. I just have the personal goal that I want to play the best I feel I can possibly play. At the same time I realize that I have learned so much by teaching through the process of having to explain to others. It has required me solidify my thinking and really have a clear understanding of relationships and concepts so that I can explain them to someone else. It is like saying, "What is electricity?" Well I know what electricity is, but I couldn't explain it to somebody else, but I have arrived at a point in jazz studies and improvisation where I do have a solid enough understanding that I can explain it to someone else, and that has actually helped me to become a better player. I feel grateful for being shown the way by others, and I feel like I need to give that back to someone. It is like an unending circle. I teach to give back

what I have gotten out of music, at the same time I'm learning more about music and becoming a better player which makes me feel more like I want to give it back. It is an unending cycle. I can't separate them in my mind. I don't consider myself a teacher. I don't consider myself a player, I just hope to be a musician, a musician in the complete sense as one who can write music, play music, and explain it to others. I have never been able to rationalize in my own mind that someone could be just a music teacher or someone could be just a performer, or just a writer. It seems like a specialization that just isn't appropriate and doesn't make any sense. It would be like a guy in a butcher shop saying, "No, I can't cut up the lamb chops. All I can do is make hamburger." It is ridiculous. You are a musician or you are not. To me it goes even further than that because I feel extremely grateful for all my background and I don't want to be just a jazz musician. I want to be a musician in the complete sense. I've tried to understand as much as I can about all kinds of music, both in the theoretical and in the aesthetic sense. I'll continue to listen, study, play, and be involved in all kinds of music that I possibly can. Again



it comes back to the earlier statement that I made about my Dad, there being only two kinds of music--good and bad. I figure I'll just try to be a good musician and whatever I do will be good.

## EDDIE HARRIS INTERVIEW

QUESTION: How did you start playing?

HARRIS: I have been playing all of my life. As a child I was involved in church music and my cousin taught me piano. Every summer I would travel from Chicago to the South. When I was five years old my family would stand me up on a table and listen to me sing all of the church tunes like "Didn't It Rain," "Precious Lord," and "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Therefore, I have a lot more experience at singing than people realize. I also used to sing around Chicago with a group that turned out to be The Flamingos. I got out of the group because I wanted to play jazz. Primarily, what I am about is being truthful to myself which causes me to get rid of the categories. Categories are nice for journalism because they are pinned and are very descriptive when written about. But, as far as a musician is concerned, he shouldn't be hung up on a category. I can't say like a lot of musicians that I am a jazz musician. I have to say I am a musician. Now I can play jazz, but that opens another bag. I play whatever. I don't have the hang-ups that many guys have who can't stand rock, rhythm

and blues, country and western or what have you. Those are just names, and that is all that they are. I don't think that it makes a guy a jazz player because he is playing a jazz tune. Just like it doesn't make you a country and western player because you are playing a country and western tune.

I listen at what a musician is doing. If he is hip as far as I am concerned, then he is hip. If you come to my house and look at my record collection, you can go across the board.

QUESTION: Do you have a preference for a particular type of music?

HARRIS: No. I listen to music and I find what is good in the music. There are a lot of so-called jazz players, as far as I am concerned, who can't play. Just because they are playing jazz doesn't make them great. Through no fault of their own, they just can't play. They are attempting something that they can't do. That is no big drag because there are many people who do things that they can't do. A lot of people say that I am very opinionated, but I don't go on record as naming guys who can't play, but they know that they can't play.

QUESTION: Did anyone in your family play a musical instrument?

HARRIS: No. My father is of Cuban descent. My mother got married again to a man in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Neither one of them played instruments. I was being groomed to be a preacher. That is why I was in the church taking regular bible studies. My mother really wanted me to be a preacher, but I didn't want to be a preacher. This probably is one of the things that gave me a good gift for gab. One thing that helped me a great deal was my aunt who raised my mother. She also primarily raised me. She was in her eighties and nineties. She taught me a lot of mother wit or common sense.

QUESTION: What is your concept of improvisation?

HARRIS: First, I would like to define reading music as I see it. Notated music, as far as I am concerned, is something that a guy had in his mind that he didn't want to just keep in his mind. He wanted someone else to know what was in his mind. In order for someone else to play what he had in his mind, he put it down on paper. By putting it down on paper, he could only get a rough sketch of what he had in his mind. This rough sketch is written out so that he can recollect what he was thinking when he wants

to play it again. It is like putting an idea on a record or tape recorder. You want a story, so you put it down.

When guys who read music go to play a written score they very seldom play something exactly like it was written. Even if the change is a slight one, the written music should just be a guide. Now this is not always the case with guys who try to be absolute, but they don't count anyway because they aren't playing music. The written score is a guide to interpretation. A lot of people put too much emphasis on reading as an absolute. It can be very stagnating. A lot of guys who play in the studios just sit and play very divorced from the music. They are just reading patterns and it sounds that way.

I have five books on the market that have to do with my concept of improvisation. When I speak of improvisation I confuse a lot of guys because improvisation is like lecturing; the topic is whatever you are speaking on. If the subject is ice hockey, then the first speaker elaborates on ice hockey. If you are the second speaker and you are going to take a solo, what are you going to do? Are you going to stand up and say,

"I agree with him?" Are you going to play the same solo he played? If not, you have to find something else to elaborate on as far as ice hockey is concerned. I have found that most people are very limited or they don't really care. The topic can be ice hockey, and because it deals with a sport or a game they might stand up and talk about figure skating or baseball. The topic is ice hockey. In this case, figure skating and baseball are totally irrelevant to what we are talking about. In the case of improvisation, the topic is the tune. A guy says, "Well, the melody is over with now, so I will go back to what I want to play." Why should he even play the melody? Why bring back the topic?

You run across this in everyday life. You talk with a guy about something and if he is not too well versed, he tends to not know what to say. If a guy is going to speak on a subject he has to be versed on that subject. That is why very few guys change their solos. They try to change different melodies because they are forced into changing them by people, but their solos are the same. They are not really changing. In other words, it would be like

you talking to a buddy of yours about the new game of the United States, soccer, and him trying to talk to you about a jump-shot in basketball. He is talking to you about what he knows no matter what the subject changes to. When a guy plays a lot of ditties like Bird (Charlie Parker), that means that he was cracking jokes in the different things that he said. When a guy runs a lot of technical passages like Trane (John Coltrane), that means that he was using a lot of uncommonly used words from the dictionary. Guys who play things that contain real simple patterns, like holding notes and slap-tonguing as Illinois Jacquet did, would be making slang-type statements. They would be saying things like, "You know, everything is everything,"-- whatever that is. Those are statements that could be applied to anything.

As I play different tunes I play differently. Very few guys understand what I am talking about when I put this out in a book but I think more of them understand than care to admit it. The fact is that it is very difficult. If you go to a party and a guy is talking about geometry and you are in the midst of that conversation and you don't even know elementary math, you feel

kind of bad. You shouldn't feel bad. You should ask questions, learn, and grow. Most people tend to go to another group where they are comfortable instead of trying to learn in the group that they are in. That is the same thing that musicians do when it comes to improvising on certain tunes. They get a difficult tune and say, "Man, I can't deal with this tune." They tend to reject it, or they put down musicians for recording certain material.

Everyone who records a record is recording for sale, for profit. I don't care what record company it is; all record companies are in business to make money. There are young companies who tell artists that they can come to their label and do what they want to. They tell you that you can do your thing and not be ruled like you are in the large companies. That is a joke. They only do that to lure you in, because they can't pay the large advances like the big companies. But, the small companies have the same purpose in mind. The same thing held true for Dial Records and Charlie Parker. They wanted to sell records. No company is in business just to have fun listening to you play. You can go and buy a tape recorder and stay home



and knock yourself out. You can play and sit down and just blush over the solo that you just recorded. But, when you are making a record it is a business. As a matter of fact it is the most lucrative business in the United States. The government is still trying to find out ways to keep up with record sales and get their tax monies.

An artist might have a million seller in New York. With this in mind, who is to tell you that you are doing right. There are all kinds of funny books on the market concerning the record industry, but nobody knows whether or not your record will sell or where it will sell. You could sell a hundred thousand records in Japan and not know it. Your records go everywhere. They go where you will never go in life. People hear you everyday and enjoy you and never see you. The point of it is if one guy says that another guy is commercial and is selling out, it is a joke.

If you go back into the history of anything you will find commercially successful people. Do you think that Wagner and Bach were the only bad cats in their time? No. They were the most commercial. They latched onto what was happening,

set it out for the public, and got paid for it. They talk about Schoenberg and all of his crazy music, but nobody talks about Mahler. What is happening is people talk about what is popular. Miles Davis made Porgy and Bess, and it was a hit. Miles is still around. What about the other trumpet players? Unless they made hits, you don't hear about them.

QUESTION: When you first started playing did you have ambitions to be a successful recording musician?

HARRIS: I never thought of making records and all of that. I don't lie to myself. There are so many guys who try and tell you what they think the public wants to hear. But, if you look at their actions you can tell that they are lying. Success to me is peace of mind, and I have had peace of mind for years. I would always do whatever I thought was right. Everyone used to tell me that I never would make it, because I got involved in what was considered by many people to be a lot of strange musical things. I would play the saxophone without a neck on it. I would also play the saxophone with a trombone mouthpiece. Now it is uncanny for me to be considered as one of the top saxophone players in the world. I also sing, play piano,

and did a comedy album. It doesn't make me play any less because I do all of these things. I play the right changes. I can play fast, out to lunch (atonally), and any other way I want to. When you come to play with me, you have got to deal with it because I can play. I can play because I practice. I do exactly what I want to do and most people can't deal with that because they only want you to do what your label calls for.

You are not supposed to be a big mouth like Muhammed Ali and talk when you beat people up. If you play a football game and beat your opponent fifty-six to nothing, what are you supposed to say? It burns me up when they interview a coach and he says, "Well, they had a pretty good team with good blocking." Why don't you tell the truth? When you get in the locker room you will say, "That was the worst team that we ever played in life." That is my point. A person says to me, "Eddie, you can play the piano and trumpet as well as saxophone." I cannot only do that; I can play trombone, vibes, and flute. I am bad.

When a person tells me that I am ego-tripping, I just look at them. When you come to see me

play my men get plenty of space to solo. They can solo as long as they like. On every record that I have ever made, my sidemen are featured. All of the other guys who are so humble never let anybody in their band solo but them. They are the whole show. That should show you who is ego-tripping. I don't need to step on you to make myself look taller. You can play all you want, because when you finish then I will deal with it. I have always thought like that. Because of my attitude, I am often very frightening to people, but a great number of guys would like to have the freedom to do what I do. They used to say that I would never make it, but now that Richard Pryor has been shot up to great heights, people can accept the fact that I stand up and curse people out if I want to. I was talking like Muhammed Ali years ago and they used to bar me from television. I would be asked, "What do you think of that guy's playing?" My answer would be, "He is good, but compared to me he ain't nothing." I could also back it up. That would really make people mad. It is nice if you can talk loud, but if you can't talk loud and back it up, that's something else. I was ahead of my time, and plus, I was in Chicago.

I have always had that kind of attitude. People ask me why I sing and I tell them because I think I can. If I felt like tap dancing I would do that.

QUESTION: When you were growing up, what did you practice?

HAERLE: I practiced everything. I took lessons from the same teacher as Lee Konitz. We lived in Chicago. I also studied with Walter Henry Dyett. He was a bad cat. There were a lot of bad cats who came out of that school. The band I was in was ridiculous. There was Richard Davis, Richard Evans, and a whole lot of other cats. After me there was Julian Priester and Charles Davis. We had a terrific band at the high school. It was uncanny. Professionals like Duke (Ellington), (Count) Basie, and Dizzy (Gillespie) would come by to hear the band, because we really sounded good. He had an entire extra band sitting around the wall of the band room and as soon as you missed a note he would kick you out of the band. In fact, if you were obstinant he would kick your ass. He had to run the band like that, because it was a very rough school. The school made the headlines because a girl was gunned down in the hall. The guys were pretty bad. I was

right in the middle of the gangs. I was a gang counselor. I stayed in trouble. To play in the band you had to have discipline. If he told you to wear a black suit, black tie, black shoes and white socks, that is what you had better have.

All of that transferred to the music. No one had to say anything to you when you missed a note. You knew it and it was up to you to correct it. He instilled that in us. This is a trait that is often instilled in black musicians, because they would often take the attitude that they were born with it and could naturally play. He taught us that if we were born with it then that was out of sight, but if we would get the factual knowledge to go with the natural thing, we would be exceptional.

If a guy can pick up his horn and just play, that is cool. But he should take lessons. Now, no one can teach you the fundamentals of your instrument. Guys want to come to me and say, "Teach me to play." Man, I can't teach you to play. I can teach you the mechanics of the horn, embouchure position, and things like that, but to play you have to do that yourself.

QUESTION: What do you tell players when they come to you

and say that they really want to get themselves together and learn how to play?

HARRIS: I tell them to go home and get themselves together. I am serious about that. That is the truth. If he wants to get my thing together, then I can teach him what I have created. All of the things that I created I created at home. All of the experiments were conducted at home. All of my electronic inventions were also discovered at home. When I first came out with the electric saxophone, mine had a pick-up that went into the mouthpiece. It worked better because the tones are closer together. I am always designing things because I constantly experiment. My inventions included the root switch for saxophone, the reed mouthpiece for trumpet, and an electronic device that allows me to play five notes at one time. It allows you to play one note and produce four others that are a prescribed interval away. It has a wide range and can make one man sound like an entire section.

QUESTION: Do you play the electric saxophone all of the time?

HARRIS: No. It limits me to a degree. I like to play acoustic saxophone because I can play five C's

on it. The electric saxophone won't let me play that high because it cuts out on me. My control over the acoustic instrument comes because I studied classical saxophone in Paris. When I play the acoustic instrument, the people who listen to me hear another saxophone player. They hear me without electronics.

On a lot of records I play acoustic. As a matter of fact, I am playing acoustic on my current album.

QUESTION: If you could change anything in your background that would improve you as an improvising musician, what would it be?

HARRIS: My biggest problem is the fact that I have never recorded with the so-called jazz giants. I really don't want to emphasize the words so-called, because they were giants. I know that they were giants because I played with all of the cats.

QUESTION: Which players in particular?

HARRIS: You name them and I have played with them-- everybody except Gerry Mulligan, Miles Davis, Les Brown, and Duke Ellington. Other than that, I have played with them. I played with Trane (John Coltrane), Diz (Dizzy Gillespie), Cannon (Cannonball Adderley), Basie, Bud



Powell, Charlie Parker, Fats Navarro, and everybody else. I have played with all of the cats--Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins, too. There is not a cat out there who does not know that I can play. The biggest problem is younger people. They don't know a lot about me, because I didn't make the records with these gentlemen. It was my own doing that I didn't make the records. I didn't want to travel and get hung-up in the kind of life necessary for the road. I was always practicing and working on this and that. I was always working on my experiments. Consequently, I am of sound mind and cool health. I have been married, as of the month of May, for seventeen years. Staying married for seventeen years is something to be commended for in itself, especially in this business. Even though I didn't go out with all of the cats, play on the road, and make the records, I don't think that I would change anything because I like an enjoyable life. It has in a lot of ways hampered me. If it hadn't been for my open-mindedness and my versatility, I don't think that I would have been able to survive. With that in mind, I would not advocate any youngster to do as I

have done. He might not be as strong and able to survive. You should make records with the popular cats on the scene, if you get the chance. If the opportunity comes up to play and record with Joe Henderson, Freddie Hubbard, Weather Report, or Chick Corea, you should do it. I didn't do that. I didn't care about going to New York because all of those cats were crazy.

QUESTION: How did you get into electronics?

HARRIS: I am not into electronics. I just buy books and read. It is trial and error. That is the way I am. If somebody knows something that I need to know, I go and bug them until they tell me. That is the way you do. That is the same way that you really have to go about learning how to play. It is called on the job training. I go and hang out.

In other words, if I wanted to learn about selling records, I would go and hang out at a good record store. Sometimes people yell at you and tell you to get away, but you learn. You get books and go to the library and do some research. Everybody may laugh at you at first, but pretty soon you are laughing at them because you are ahead of the record business. That is the same way you learn to play. At some

point you have to be around monster players.

Some people can't do well at some things because they are dealing with things that they are not really interested in. The people who are interested in what they are doing are the ones who are going to go further. People who are not interested in what they do just have a job, like the guy who just plays his horn because he doesn't have anything better to do. It's like the guy who says, "Well, I just want to play." I haven't ever just wanted to play.

QUESTION: What have you wanted to do?

HARRIS: I have always thought of myself as an improviser. I never thought of myself as a soloist, because anybody can solo. I have always been looking for new and creative things in music. That is what an improviser does. Anybody can solo, but not everybody can create. I have gotten fired on bands for not playing in a conformist fashion. But if a person doesn't want me to create he shouldn't give me space to improvise. That is the difference between an imitative cat and a creative cat.

QUESTION: Who are the people who have influenced your playing the most?

HARRIS: Again, I have to say that I like creative cats. You know who they are. Thelonious Monk and Miles Davis are among them. These are the cats who everybody has copied. Good, bad, or indifferent, these are the creative cats. When I was growing up everybody would say that they didn't know what I was playing, because I sounded different. That is why when I am in a city and I hear people talking like that about a local musician, I bust my can to go and hear him. I know that he may be the new Ornette Coleman or Charlie Parker. That is the same thing that happened to me. I was playing intervallicly before a lot of other cats thought about that. Now, there is not a cat out there who is not trying to play intervals throughout his solos. I can play intervals on any kind of tune. Cats look at me today in amazement, but when I was playing like that and trying to get it together, cats would put me down. They couldn't put me down completely because I could play all of the tunes on piano. They knew I wasn't jivin', because I knew the tune.

QUESTION: What is the concept behind your book, Intervallic Concepts?

HARRIS: The book presents the basic information necessary for using intervals to construct solos. It starts off by showing how to play notes in succession without the use of the semitone. If you play the whole tone scale you would just be playing up and down. Rather than use this up and down approach, I use octave displacement and create a very interesting line. After you go through Intervalistic Concept, you should then go to my books which are entitled Skips for the Advanced Instrumentalist and Jazz Cliche Capers. In these books I include all of the interval licks that I have gathered over a period of forty years from all the cats. These books are primarily for sight-reading.

QUESTION: Do you think that there is any area of the country that shapes your personality more than another?

HARRIS: Yes, I guess I would have to say the Midwest-- Chicago, and Detroit. But I will tell you what I really think, even though a lot of people will argue this point. I think that you are born with it or you are born without it. But everybody is born with something. As far as playing is concerned, I used to practice technique like it was going out of style. The whole time I was

doing this and when I first went to New York, all the cats would think I was weird, but they all would say, "Man, that guy can swing." The rhythm section could stop and I wouldn't even lose the beat. That had to do with feeling music. Some cats say that you can teach that. Maybe you can, but in my case I naturally felt it, and it was an advantage. Every person has a vantage point that he has to find. That is one of the keys to learning how to improvise.

QUESTION: What would a musician have to have together in order to substitute for you on your gig?

HARRIS: I would have to call several cats because I do so much. If one person comes on the gig to sub for me he would have to be pretty versatile.

QUESTION: When you were in school did you play in band or sing in choir?

HARRIS: Yes. I played in band, but I couldn't sing in choir because I played sports.

QUESTION: Did you attend college?

HARRIS: Yes. I went to the University of Illinois for about a year, but I got tired of school and wanted to play music, so I quit. I later went to Roosevelt College in Chicago.

QUESTION: What advice would you give to a young musician who wanted to be a professional musician?

HARRIS: I would tell him to take a course in business. If a guy is a businessman he will fare much better than if he is a super musician and is lax on business. If you check out the big band era you will see that most of the big band leaders were not excellent musicians; they were businessmen.

Another very important thing is you can't complain about what you do and where you are. I hear people say, "I don't like working at the bank." I say, "Well, either quit or shut up." Do what you want to do in life and you will be happier. I would sacrifice twelve dollars an hour if the two dollars an hour meant peace of mind. You have to attain peace of mind. I am serious about that.

To close our conversation, I would like to say this so that you get it on record. Very few guys are as open as I am about what they are about. I am not hung-up on where music is supposed to go. I have a ball. This is happiness to me. If more guys would do that, entertainment would open up more. Right now entertainment is at its rock bottom. People would rather pay five dollars to hear a disc-jockey spin records. A lot of this is due to

the attitude of the musicians. A lot of guys come to play and act like they are at a wake. A lot of the serious attitude taken by musicians is nothing but bullshit. It is easier to bullshit than to play something right. This is why music is going down the drain. If a person wants to be an improviser and make a living at it, he has to know how to play and know how to communicate what he plays to people who pay their money to hear him.



## JOE HENDERSON INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

HENDERSON: I was born on the cusp of Aries and Taurus, April 24, 1937, in Lima, Ohio.

QUESTION: When was the first time you played the horn?

HENDERSON: I got started when I was about nine. I don't even remember starting.

QUESTION: Did any other members of your family play?

HENDERSON: Yes. I have a brother in Detroit named Leon who plays the tenor. He quit playing for awhile, but I think he is playing again now. He is about thirty-six or thirty-seven years old. He made a couple of records for Blue Note in 1972. The name of his group was The Contemporary Jazz Quintet.

QUESTION: Is there a particular music that stands out in your background?

HENDERSON: I grew up on country and western music. I was from Lima, Ohio, not far from Kentucky. Ask me about Hank Snow or some of those cats. I tell people that, and they don't believe me. That is all we could get on the radio. The Grand Ole Opry was what was happening.

QUESTION: You went to school at Wayne State in Detroit, didn't you?

ANSWER: I went to school in Kentucky for a year before I

went to Detroit. It was alright. It was a very small school with only about four hundred people. I think that if I had gone to Wayne right away I would probably have gotten lost in the shuffle. I liked Wayne a lot. I would definitely recommend the school to anybody who wanted to be in a hip environment. There was a lot of playing going on. That is where I got a lot of stuff together. I don't mean at Wayne itself. It was the by-product of all of the cats hanging out that was something else. I worked a lot of gigs with Sonny Stitt and other cats who came to town. That is where I met Miles (Davis), and Trane (John Coltrane). I've got some tapes of me playing with Trane when I was nineteen years old. What the hell was I doing playing with Trane?

QUESTION: Did you know what was happening musically at that time?

HENDERSON: It was all apart of everything else to me. I must have impressed the shit out of him because he told a friend of mine that he had come to Detroit playing with Miles Davis and had run into a kid with some horn-rimmed glasses and a big sound. I saw Trane come down the stairs where we were playing, but I didn't really pay that much attention to him. I didn't know who he was.

There must have been ten saxophone players in there that night, and Trane was just another saxophone player to me. I knew he had his shit together. Anyway I impressed him because he recommended me for a gig with Miles, but I got drafted into the army. Trane formed his own group and Miles called me to take Trane's place. Uncle Sam called at the same time. Uncle Sam with all of that fire-power won over Miles. I knew John very well. As a matter of fact, I knew the chick he married, Alice McLeod. She was from Detroit. I knew her for a long time before I met John. She would talk about John all the time. I would ask, "Who is this John cat? I play the tenor." She would talk about John like he was a god. I went out of town one time for about six weeks, and when I got back Junior Cook said, "Joe, guess what? John has got your old lady." She wanted to really get off into something heavy. I just didn't have eyes for that at that time. I was just getting to New York and trying to find my way around. A few gigs had started to come through and I was into it. The thing with Alice and John worked out so much like Alice had planned it until it was unreal. She talked about John every time I saw her.

Alice and I were very close. I think she is in California now and into a very heavy religious thing.

QUESTION: Who were some of the musicians who were still in Detroit at that time?

HENDERSON: A lot of cats were around. Yusef (Lateef) was still there and we were in some classes together at Wayne. Hugh Lawson, Curtis Fuller, Barry Harris, Roy Brooks, and some other cats were still there. Paul Chambers, Doug Watkins, Tommy Flanagan, and all those cats had just cut out about six months before I got there. Even though they had split, they hadn't completely moved into New York. They would come back to Detroit and visit their folks and pick up some of their things. That is how I got a chance to hang out with those cats.

QUESTION: Did you ever hear Bird (Charlie Parker) play?

HENDERSON: Yes, I saw him when I was about twelve or thirteen years old. It was in Detroit. My cousin played alto and he found out that Bird was going to be in Detroit. He said, "Come and go with me. I want you to hear Bird." I didn't know who he was. I remember that Bird was playing some shit that was unreal. This was in the fifties. Bird came on the bandstand and was playing tunes like

"Cherokee," "Indiana," and all of the bebop tunes. People were really in tune with it. All of the musicians were standing right up front by the bandstand. Some of the same guys I saw in front of the bandstand I later played with. Barry Harris was there. When I walked in the place, Bird noticed me because I was so small. He said, "Who is this young man over here?" I shook his hand, and I remember that he had some catsup or something on his hand. This cat was greasy. When I heard him I was knocked out. I can't tell you what it was that he was doing; I just liked the sound of it. About three weeks after that, Bird died. It seems like Clifford died around the same time.

QUESTION: Did you ever meet Clifford?

HENDERSON: Yes. Dig this. I played with Clifford one time. I was about fifteen years old. Lionel Hampton came to my home town. His alto player was acting funny on the bandstand. This cat was out to lunch. He was an early tripper. Lionel finally asked him to come off the bandstand because he was upsetting the program. There was a guy in my home town who would tell you that he knew Jesus Christ. He told me, "Oh, yeah, I know Lionel." Well, it turned out that he did. He introduced

me to Lionel. He said, "Lionel, we've got an alto sax player here. Joe, go get your horn." When you're that age, you don't know any better, so I went and got my horn. I came back and played that night. In that band was Clifford Brown, Johnny Griffin, and Quincy Jones. This was a band full of stars. I had no idea. I also played with Art Farmer one time. These cats were playing with rhythm-and-blues bands at that time. They later got off into the jazz thing. I met a lot of people like that in my early life because they used to have these dances in Lima. I met Duke Ellington, when I was about fourteen years old. He came to Lima to play a dance. Paul Gonsalves was still in the band. One of the most interesting guys I saw was Bull Moose Jackson who was a saxophone player with hands about twice as large as normal.

QUESTION: Who were your main influences?

HENDERSON: I listened to everybody. When I first started to copy solos off records when I was about twelve or thirteen, I copied Lester Young. Bird was a little too heavy for me at that time. He had so much going on and he played so simple that it just went by me. I couldn't get with it.

QUESTION: Who do you listen to now?

HENDERSON: My listening thing is totally on the other side of my playing thing. I have a reputation as a jazz musician, but if you saw my record collection you would think I was a rock musician. I am heavy into Stevie Wonder and Sly Stone. I recently heard a cut by Les McCann called "Street Scene" or street something or other that had a bass player on it who was a bitch. I called the radio station and asked who it was playing bass.

QUESTION: Do you still practice?

HENDERSON: Yes and no. I am 100 percent for practice. As a teacher, I know you've got to do that. At the same time, I also know that a lot of things won't come together for you until you get right on the bandstand and it's all happening. It really comes together for you as an improviser when you are interacting with the other musicians. You can learn things there that you have to go back to the basement to practice and get together. Until you go out there you really don't have a proper perspective of what it's like. You can't go to school for stuff like that. You have to go out there, check it out, get a level on it, and go back to school.

QUESTION: What kind of equipment do you use?

HENDERSON: I play a Selmer tenor with a Selmer D-star

mouthpiece. My horn is an old horn but it is out of sight. I played alto for a short while.

QUESTION: Have you played much flute?

HENDERSON: I own two flutes--an alto and a C-flute. That is one thing I really feel guilty about. I was into it for awhile because when I played with Herbie (Hancock) I had to play flute. By playing saxophone, I could just pick it up automatically, but if I am left to my own devices, I would just play the tenor. I do like the sound of the flute. I especially love the alto flute.

QUESTION: Do you think that there is a certain kind of intensity necessary to play music?

HENDERSON: Yes, it does take a certain kind of intensity.

A lot of the most intelligent people that I have run into on this planet are musicians. Sometimes they can get so intense and so locked into it that they are like a horse with blinders on. All they do is talk music, chord changes, and the like. This is okay, but after awhile it becomes old hat. It seems like other things can be happening too. This is especially true of jazz musicians. They are not intentionally anti-social but they have developed a life style that does not lend itself to dealing with people on a level. I have intentionally tried to develop other kinds



of interests. I got heavy into reading. I was reading a book a week about seven or eight years ago. I have read all of the Seth, Gurdjieff, and Ouspensky material. I also got hip to some cats called the Rosicrucians because Sonny Rollins is one. They have some hip stuff too. One very interesting thing that I got into digging on was how certain musical tones affect people in different ways. You can walk into a dentist's office or a supermarket and there is a certain kind of music going on. They don't just randomly put that stuff on. It is a calculated situation. They don't want to put music on there that runs people out of the store. They are after volume. There are certain sections of the store where you can hear the music better than others.

QUESTION: You have played in Europe a lot. Is it different there in terms of public acceptance of the music?

HENDERSON: It is, but they are a little behind the times. They hear the records that I made ten years ago and that's where they are at. They don't take into account that you are constantly evolving. Every time I go over there I am playing bebop. I love bebop because I grew up in bebop. I can't deny my heritage, but I have evolved. I am into a rock zone now and they don't want to

know anything about that. That would be an insult. I took a guitar player when I went to Italy. A guy saw the guitar player and he made me promise that we wouldn't play any rock. Nobody had ever asked me that kind of a question. At first I thought he was joking, but I found out that he was dead serious. They have the kind of audiences who throw shit on the stage. We had to play bebop or we played music that wasn't rock. When we went to Scandanavia, we did have to play bebop. They are really purists and tranditionalists. If you could go down under the floor of the concert hall, you would hear everybody in there patting their feet. They love that shit. We also played some stuff that wasn't out, but it wasn't bebop. They looked at us like, "What the hell are they doing up there?" Then Dexter (Gordon) came on the bandstand and dropped some heavy four/four on them. He brought the house down. It was a drag for me because I am just not hearing bebop now. Every time I go over there without my band, they always throw me with some cats who petrified at the bebop stage and then moved to Europe because that is where they are at. I have been over here in these trenches for ten years trying to survive and these cats are still playing

bebop. Now, there ain't nothing like bebop and I go right over there and jump in that shit, but I don't really dig it like I used to. It's like walking through your grave. I played that shit for so long. I played Bird for twenty years. They have found something that they like and they want to stay with it but I have to move on. They don't know about cats like Herbie and Freddie (Hubbard) over there anymore because these cats have moved into the rock area. The mainstream cats like Clark (Terry) and Howard McGhee do real well over there. The people over there stop at about the early sixties. They want to hear music that has that feeling. You can write different melodies but you have to keep the structure the same. The cats who do that do well over there. They go over there and make a million dollars. Now I don't ever want to take all of the bebop out because it would be like taking all of a certain food out of your diet.

QUESTION: What is the jazz recording scene in Europe like?

HENDERSON: They have a lot of bootleg records over there. They call them pirate records. These records come into existence because some cat slips a portable recorder into a concert. The next thing you hear about is a new release on some label like Trip

Records or whatever. It is a real rip-off. Cats have got it so together now that they can get almost as good a record quality as in a studio.

QUESTION: How many albums have you made?

HENDERSON: I've made about nineteen or twenty of my own and played on over a hundred others. I don't actually know how many I've played on all together.

QUESTION: Do you have any particular ideas concerning the state of jazz today?

HENDERSON: When people can't think of anything to call a particular music, they call it jazz. They have always done that. A lot of the things that people call jazz to me is not jazz. It might sound good but it is not jazz. The fact that it sounds good does not make it jazz. It may be nice, listenable, jazz-flavored music. I think that by the magazines putting certain things in print and calling it jazz, they confuse a lot of people as to what jazz really is. They get a lot of misinformation. I guess that it is about money. There is something that surrounds the jazz musician and jazz music that causes rock musicians to envy them. A lot of rock cats really wish that they were jazz musicians. They wish that they had the technique that jazz musicians have. Jazz musicians would like to be making the

bucks that the rock musicians make. I don't blame them for that because anytime you can get some dollars, get them.

QUESTION: How has the jazz music business changed for you over the years?

HENDERSON: At forty I can see the whole thing from a different perspective. When you get thirty-five or forty you get an attitude like whatever happens is solid. It is all cool. I don't mean to imply that age is the thing because if a person is into it they are into it. I don't care if they are nine or ninety.

QUESTION: You mentioned earlier that you considered yourself as one who has been out in the world of jazz and surviving. Would you comment on that some more?

HENDERSON: Yes, I have lived in the trenches. I have a nice beautiful house in San Francisco, but I was born in the trenches. I am a warrior. That helps me to be able to relate the real thing to the kids in a clinic situation. I can deal with them on another level because of my battle scars. I think that students today can really relate to somebody who is coming out of the trenches and has been out there taking the shots.

QUESTION: You said that you were writing books on improvisation. What are they like?

HENDERSON: I have a book of solos coming out within the next couple of weeks. There are two solos in the book from the Out 'n In album. "Recorda Me" is also in this project. Anyway, there are about eight solos in the book; that includes chord changes, phrasing, and other minute details. There are no stones left unturned. When you look at the solos in conjunction with the record, you can see exactly what is happening. That is one of about seven books that I am trying to get together in the future. Another one of my projects involves tapes and records. This is for the cats who live out in Podunk, Iowa, and are totally disconnected from it altogether. All a cat needs to get it together with my records is a portable tape recorder and a record player. You put these records on, and you immediately play with Elvin Jones and all the heavies. If you buy one of these records, you buy the record for your particular instrument. If you play tenor saxophone, you buy the one for tenor. On this record you would have all of the tenor parts dialed out. You have to supply the tenor part. The written music accompanies the record. The thing that is different about this play-along record is that after you take the tenor solo, McCoy (Tyner) comes in

and solos. You can take that shit and hook it up to your tape recorder and make your own tapes of yourself playing with the great cats. Nobody would ever know the difference. I am getting cats like Herbie, Chick (Corea), and Kenny Barron out in places like Podunk; all you need is a tape recorder. You've got your chord changes and everything. You can get that shit together anywhere in the world. You don't have to go to New York and do all of that other stuff. You've got Elvin right in your library. He is going to show up on time and kick his ass off everytime. Whenever you get ready to hit, he is there. He will come out smoking everytime.

QUESTION: Do you think that you are going to do extensive teaching now that you are into doing jazz clinics and writing jazz teaching material?

HENDERSON: Yes, because there is a very attractive new program that has been set up in California. It is a maestro-apprentice type program. The State of California pays the maestro and the student to study. It is sort of like the National Endowment for the Arts programs. The program is supposed to come into effect in September. I think that the money is coming from some rich cats who need a way to channel some money and help their taxes,

while relieving their conscience about being rich. I don't have that kind of money so I really don't know what I am talking about, but I do know about the tax situation.

QUESTION: You've played a lot with Freddie Hubbard. What was that about?

HENDERSON: We had a group together called the Jazz Communicators. The group consisted of me, Freddie, Kenny Barron, and Louis Hayes. The group was real cool.

QUESTION: You've also played with Miles for awhile, what was Miles like?

HENDERSON: Miles is a very sweet cat with a beautiful sense of humor. If Miles were here right now, we would be laying on the floor laughing. For some strange reason, everybody thinks that he is out. I was with him around 1969 or 1970. He was playing things like "Seven Steps to Heaven" and "Delores" from the Miles Smiles album. We went to a rehearsal once and Wayne (Shorter) showed up with Tony (Williams), who only had a snare drum. Miles was drinking beer and trying to explain to everybody what to do. He was saying shit like, "Do this, but don't do that."

QUESTION: What was he talking about?

HENDERSON: Man, you are dealing in abstracts. I asked myself the same shit. That was the extent of the



rehearsal. We sat around and drank beer. I got the rest of the thing together on the bandstand the best that I could.

QUESTION: Who was in that band?

HENDERSON: Ron (Carter), Tony, Herbie (Hancock), Wayne, Miles, and I were in the band. We used two tenors. Ron left and Eddie Gomez came in. Then Chick and Dave Holland got in the band. I don't think that I played any gigs with them, but I wish I had.

QUESTION: Did Miles call the tunes? Would you know ahead of time what you were going to play?

HENDERSON: Not at all. He would just start. Boom, and you would be into it. Everybody was super quick. He was dealing with heavy pros. He didn't have to draw anybody a map, because if he looked your way, you knew what he was going to do. If it requires a lot of explanation to a cat in a band, then that person shouldn't be on the band. A cat has to know what the shit is about. You shouldn't have to explain it to him.

QUESTION: What was the experience with Blood, Sweat & Tears like?

HENDERSON: That was a gig that was about some cats who had a lot of money. They would send a cat to pick me up for rehearsal in a Cadillac limousine. They

had fifteen people on staff. They had a light man, sound man, three secretaries, two managers, three lawyers and anybody else that they wanted. One of the things about that group was I just wasn't used to taking two months to put an album together and rehearsing everyday. I liked all the cats and I really wanted them to know that when I cut out. I just couldn't do it. That was about 250,000 dollars a year I just couldn't deal with. That's ridiculous. I was used to doing things on first takes, and these cats were sitting around trying to recreate "Spinning Wheel." When I first went with Sweat the jazz cats would call me on the phone and say, "Man, what you doing over there? You sold out." Then when I cut out, they said, "What about the money?" They don't know what they want. I got off into over-dubbing with that group. Then Miles went into the same area. As I said earlier, the jazz musicians were envious of the rock cats who got down after every gig and counted millions of dollars. That is why cats went into the jazz-rock thing like Blood, Sweat & Tears.

QUESTION: Did you ever take theory lessons?

HENDERSON: When I went to college at Wayne I was really into

that. I studied all of the traditional European harmony and Bach chorales. That helped me to enrich the stuff that I already knew and the stuff that I was to develop later. It is easier to relate to people who have that background but I can also relate to people who have no musical training at all because I spent a whole lot of time in the street. I think that it is very important to be able to relate to your students on any level. I don't think that you have to wallow in the mud with them, but I do think that you have to get down with them. This is especially true in teaching jazz because much of the music is transmitted with your vibe.

QUESTION: What do you think would help jazz education?

HENDERSON: I think an increase of jazz teachers who know the music would help greatly. There is a shortage of teachers. This is especially true in California. That is the reason clinicians have been brought into the schools. The clinicians are featured at the schools. The band directors at the schools are often in the same place as the students. They are trying to learn how to teach jazz. They really don't know. The first year that I came to a summer camp, there was a chick

here who was sixty-five years old. She was a piano player from somewhere in Kansas. All of her students kept asking her about teaching them how to play jazz so she had to come back to study. She was trying to learn to comp, and Dan Haerle was teaching her how to voice chords and stuff like that. She was into the basic elementary stuff, but it was good to see that kind of interest. I guess by the time she gets to be ninety she will be swinging. I say that because it takes awhile to get it down. I have been listening to the music a long time. I don't even remember when I didn't listen to it. It has always been around me. When I started to really study, I knew something about it because I had been hearing it.

**QUESTION:** Do you think there are any key factors for learning the music?

**HENDERSON:** There is a point where you listen and listen and you just keep listening. After you have been listening for five years, you find out that you know quite a bit about it. People can tell you to listen to this and listen to that, but there are so many parts that it is hard to put it all together. You just have to listen to everything. You buy records, and after awhile when you have started to spend your lunch money on records, you

have quite a collection of the music. A lot of the courses that they have in schools that last for a semester are out. They say, "Come and take a jazz appreciation course for a semester." You really don't get anything out of them. You might be able to do like I did in school. I didn't have a lot of time to do a lot of work, so I caught up with it later when I was in the army. I had all of my books with me. These were books I was supposed to have read in college. I caught up with a lot of things after I had been exposed to the class. What the jazz appreciation class can do for you is to expose you to some things that it may take you five years to really fully understand. You can learn how to teach yourself. It is just a matter of being exposed.

QUESTION: What suggestions would you make to help improve the situation?

HENDERSON: For one, I would like to see them use Bird on some of the "Sesame Street" programs. Right now Toots Thielemans has it locked up. The themes that he is playing on the show are nice and pleasant so he fits in. Bird might be a distraction, but at that young age, maybe he wouldn't. He never disturbed me when I was that age. He was always in the background. When I

started to get deeper into music and Bird moved up to the foreground, I knew that I had been hearing him all the time. When I started to copy some of his solos, I had been hearing them so much that it was no effort at all. To get one of Bird's solos down seemed effortless to me. I didn't know it, I just came into it accidentally. My brother was a Jazz At The Philharmonic fan and we had all of Lester's records. We had some Flip Phillips, Zoot (Sims), Illinois Jacquet, Bird, and a few people like that. I have always been around the music. I had a sister who was into Bo Diddly, B.B. King, and folks like that. I had another sister who wanted to be an opera singer. I don't know how she planned to make it without studying, but she would hear this stuff on the radio and just do it. She had a little record collection that included some of the classical things. After awhile Bird became classical to me. I also listened to Ben Webster and people like that, so I had a good exposure to a lot of different music at an early age when I didn't really know the difference. If they would use some of those things on cartoons or "Sesame Street," by the time some of the kids break off into instruments

which would be three or four years later, they would know something about it already. It is all music. It is just that nobody will give the kids all of the music. I am always giving my records away. A company might give me thirty promotional copies of an album that I do, and I give them to people who come through the pad. I don't even know if they listen to them. I even give them to the mailman. Who knows? This cat may really get into me.

It is a matter of being exposed to it even before you start thinking about it. Once you start thinking, the thinking mechanism can get in the way of the music's coming to you sometimes. You have to first experience it on a pure level.

QUESTION: Do you teach improvisation?

HENDERSON: I have a method of teaching improvisation in which I use the blues as the basis. I have a book coming out on it pretty soon, so I really can't get into it to any great extent. I teach all instruments, but I mostly have saxophone students.

QUESTION: What do you say to students who come to you seeking advice about learning to play jazz?

HENDERSON: First, I have to hear him play. Then I try to assist him by hearing him play what in my estimation is the extent of his activities. There

are certain things that will show up, depending on a person's ability. If he is into chords and knows what chord movements are about and if he is playing across his changes in a very intelligent and sophisticated way, and yet a certain ignorance is coming through, then I get an idea about where he is at. The blues is really supposed to bring that basic thing out. I can then put him on a certain path to help it eventually come together for him. I think I can. I have been able to do that for a few people, so I know that certain things work. A lot of cats studied with me when I lived in Detroit. Junior Cook and Pat La Barbera are some of the cats who have studied with me. Junior played with Freddie for awhile. Pat is with Elvin. That helps me to believe that it is working. When they come to study, it is a very extemporaneous impromptu-type of lesson. That is the way the music is. When you go out in front of the microphone, the only thing you've got going is your brain unless you want to carry a lot of music out there and be reading. The lessons are set up to get a person thinking and having all of that stuff inside his head. There is a lot of memorizing that goes on. Today in my improvisation class I



had the guys memorizing some things, whereas they are probably used to reading charts. If you read charts all of the time, the mechanical shit just totally eclipses all of the other shit that is coming into you. As long as you are following the eighth notes and stuff like that, you operate mostly on a mechanical level. If you use your ear, you open up. You start with your ear and you end with your ear. No matter how much intelligence you have, you still have to use your ear when you go to tune up. You can't tune up out of a book and get A 440. You have to hear it. It is a system that is geared to playing by ear. It is not geared to frustrate anyone's reading ability because the reading just adds to whatever you can do by ear. You can definitely get all kinds of gigs reading. When you are out there in front of the microphone, the people are out there and it all comes to life. That is some different shit. You have to be an independent thinker on your feet. I don't mean to push my method, but there is so much music that comes through at my students that is intentionally designed to be so much that they don't get a chance to think about it. There are still some cats who want to think their way through before they have

done enough listening or been exposed to the music enough to know what they are thinking. They have nothing to relate to. If you say E-flat major seventh with a flat five to them they can't relate to it because it is related to something that they know nothing about. If they don't have all the parts, they never really know what the centerpiece is about. I give them an overdose of the centerpiece. I teach them a chorus a week. About twenty choruses down the road they are playing things that, if I had told them what they were playing, it would only serve to confuse them. They would think, "Well, this is an E minor seventh with a flat five so I do this or that." Just do it. Don't even think about it. After he does it enough times he will know what it is. I don't have to tell him what it is. I can play a minor seventh flat five on the piano and he will know what it is. Chances are that he will have played anywhere from a hundred to five hundred ideas across a minor seventh flat five chord during those blue choruses. The idea is to improve the level of improvisation rather than to think through it.

QUESTION: If a cat came up and said, "Joe, bring it together for me," what would you say?

HENDERSON: Trying to teach somebody how to improvise is really a difficult thing to do. You can give them some written-out choruses, but they must realize that they have to think these ideas out themselves. You don't want to put handcuffs on anyone. Tell somebody something and that is all they know. You want to try to teach them how to create. That is not easy to do. A student may want you to teach him how to be able to create his own bebop lines without realizing that that level is way up there. It may be ten years away, but you can help a cat reach down inside of himself and find out what is there. There is a certain amount of copying that you have to do in order to get inside of the creative sphere. I got in there through Bird, Pres, and people like that. There wasn't anybody around town to play with, so I just played along with the records. I copied Bird and Pres solos. I learned how to play through them. I wanted to sound exactly like Pres. I didn't write the solos out. I just used my ear and took them off the records. I eventually started breaking off because I had an idea of how it went. Jazz is a how-to kind of art form. It is almost impossible to teach it. You just have to know about it. You should never try and recruit

anybody into a jazz program. They should come there themselves. If you recruit, you may get people who really don't know anything about jazz. A cat gets into it at whatever stage of development he is. I know some cats who didn't start playing until they were seventeen years old who are monsters.

QUESTION: How long have you been doing clinics for Jamey Aebersold?

HENDERSON: I have been doing these improvisation clinics for about three years. I have put some technique books and a book of solos together while I have been doing it. It has been a real good experience for me. We have a camp every year in Dekalb, Illinois, that is really hip. I really dig it. We have about 250 people there every year. There are between thirty and forty groups. On the last day of the camp, each group gets a chance to play for ten minutes. A cat gets a chance to play all of his shit at one time.

QUESTION: What kinds of things do you do in a clinic situation?

HENDERSON: I just play tunes because it is easier to relate on that level. I would prefer doing a clinic with my band so that I could present something that represents my level of involvement. I usually am

up there jamming, which is what I was doing up until ten years ago. This automatically yanks me out of my natural habitat and puts me into an area that I can handle, but there is no regard for where I am at the given time. I know it is easier to play standard tunes in that situation because you can't do a heart transplant with a turnip. I will play tunes that everybody can play, but that is not really me. I am in an entirely different place just by the nature of who I am at that moment. I think that the bebop things are what the student should study the most. If I went out and played some stuff, they might not have enough background to be able to really sink their teeth into the music. You have to evolve through bebop.

QUESTION: Do you think that there are other things that you have to do to learn jazz?

HENDERSON: Some of the greatest things that I have learned about music I learned when there was no horn or bandstand around. I would just be walking down the street talking. I would immediately turn that into something that I was trying to do on the horn. That is incredible. That is the kind of experience that is shyed away from at these camps. Everybody is trying to set all of

the technical shit down which is a must, but they completely neglect the other shit. You have to get the note, but then you have to get the stuff that goes behind the note or into that note. That is the stuff that makes the note meaningful. You can tell a cat what note to play, but the key is, what do you do with that note? There is a G on every saxophone. You have to get the technique, but you can't get lost in it and become a machine. There is nothing wrong with having some understanding of what you are trying to do because that makes it better. I don't mean better, I mean more better.

## MILT HINTON INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

HINTON: I was born in Vicksburg, Mississippi, June 23, 1910. We migrated from Mississippi to Chicago. My uncle had migrated to Chicago in 1910 because he had heard that there was work there for blacks. There was a great labor force used in the Chicago stockyards and they used a lot of people. You could make a fairly decent living and could take home as much meat as you wanted to eat, so my uncle decided to escape from Vicksburg and go there. Really he escaped because in 1910 a black couldn't save his change and get on the train and say, "I'm gone." Southern whites felt very strongly about the cheap labor and wouldn't let them go. My uncle worked in a barber shop and he saved some money but he couldn't just leave. He had to go to Mr. Charlie and show him a letter from Memphis, Tennessee, or someplace like that. He got someone to write him and say he had an aunt who was very sick and wanted to see him before she passed away. This way he could show the letter to Mr. Charlie and he would take him down to the railroad station and let him buy a round-trip ticket, and say, "Now boy, you go on up there and see your aunt and you come on

back down here, you hear?" He said, "Yes Sir," and got on the train at the A & D Railroad Station in Vicksburg and went to Memphis. When he got to Memphis he sold the other half of that ticket and kept on to Chicago. He got a job in a hotel as a porter. When a businessman checked into the hotel, the porter would take him up to his room, and the first thing the man wanted to know was where the girls were. Well the girls were already in the hotel and they had made their contact with the porter. They always told the porter that if he got them a good John then they would give him a good tip. When the businessman checked in, he wanted the porter to get him a good girl, so he also told him he would get a good tip. The porter put these two together and then the first thing they needed was some booze which my uncle had just made in the basement of the hotel. He was charging five dollars a pint for this liquor which was in the tub down there. He said he could make twenty-five or thirty dollars a day when business was good. It took seven or eight years to get my entire family up there. My uncle sent for his brother, Nat, and then he got a job. Then they sent for their younger brother and two sisters,



one of whom was my mother. The two girls got jobs in a department store. They my uncles went in the army and navy in World War I. By 1918 or 1919 they had made enough money to rent a nice apartment and had it all set up so they could send for my grandmother, me, and my mother's youngest sister. I can remember the morning we left Vicksburg. It rained and we missed the train because my grandmother was a little slow getting back and we had to wait for the evening train. It was in October and it was cold in Chicago. So that is how I made it to Chicago.

QUESTION: Could you discuss your family's musical background?

HINTON: My mother was the one person in the family who got an education. She seemed to be the one with the spark. My uncles never went to school for any length of time, but they always saw to it that my mother did. My mother took piano lessons from a lady in the neighborhood. To this day it is a miracle to me that in Vicksburg, Mississippi, we had a piano in our house. How my grandmother on a two dollar and fifty-cents salary ever got that piano is a mystery to me. My mother was the organist of one of the Baptist churches in Vicksburg. The piano was always going at our house.

People used to meet there on Sunday afternoons even in Chicago. My mother and aunts were also active in the Baptist church in Chicago. My Aunt Pearl was a great singer. She was such a great lover of music. It was her aim and desire that I be a musician. She dreamed of classical music and the violin on the concert stage. How the lady could even envision such a dream I don't know, but she did. When I got to be thirteen, they decided that I had to be a violinist. In those days everybody in the neighborhood's kid either studied piano or violin. Most of the girls were taking piano lessons and most of the boys were taking violin lessons. I took my first violin lesson from a guy named Joe Black, a white guy who had a music store in Chicago. He taught guitar, banjo, or whatever you came in for. He would give you a lesson for fifty cents. He was very kind and he encouraged me. There was a black guy in our neighborhood, Mr. Woodford, whom my mother knew, and she changed me over to study with him. He was very kind but I didn't cotton to him as much as I did to Joe Black. Finally, she got me a teacher named Professor James Johnson. He was a most magnificent man. He must have been sixty-five or

seventy then. This man was the one who really started my musical career. When he would assign me a lesson, he would play it for me. He would show me the lesson and I would go home and show it to my mother. My mother would play it on the piano and I would listen. My ear was pretty good, so instead of reading the music I would play it just like my mother had played it on the piano. I wasn't really counting the bars. When I went back to him for the next lesson, he would say, "That's marvelous. You got that so fast; let's turn over the next page and see how you can do." Of course, when he turned over the page, I couldn't even see it. I was blind as a bat because I wasn't reading, so he discovered that I was cheating. He called my mother and told her not to play anything for me, to make me count it myself. I am very grateful for that because I wouldn't know how to read or count if it hadn't been for him.

QUESTION: Did you play music in school?

HINTON: I played violin all through high school and was doing very well. I was concert master of the symphony orchestra at school. I have to mention this tremendous teacher we had in high school, a black man named Major N. Clark Smith. He was

a magnificent man. He had come from Kansas City to Chicago to teach, and I think he had also been in St. Louis at black high schools teaching. The man was unbelievable. He had won awards as a trumpet player. He had been in the United States Army and we called him Major. I think he had been a Captain in the army. His musical knowledge was just unbelievable. His rapport with black kids was beautiful. He knew how to knock us around and hit us in the head and throw sticks at us and make us really do what he wanted. His concern was that we had some dignity and that we knew how to play our instruments. I've got to also mention my high school music teacher who was a lady named Dr. Mildred Bryant Jones. She was a doctor of music. I didn't even know what that meant in those days, but this lady was in charge of music at our high school. She had dignity, and the biggest guy in the class would cringe if she just looked at him. I can also remember Major Smith asking us if we had ever been to a symphony. Of course we had never heard of a symphony orchestra. I remember him saying, "Well, I am going to call up Fred Stark and have him bring his symphony orchestra out here so you guys can hear what a symphony is like."

Of course we would laugh. Who the heck was this guy who was going to call up the conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and have him come out to the south side in the black community and play for us. About two days later the Chicago Symphony showed up and we were all in the assembly hall and they played for us, so he had a great deal of respect among the white community and they would do great things for him.

QUESTION: What happened after you got out of school?

HINTON: In 1927 Al Jolson made the first sound movie. Then they stopped using pianos and musicians in local theatres. We had a lot of black violin players in Chicago who were playing constantly in the theatre orchestras. Then they didn't need any more orchestras and in 1930 I graduated from high school and nobody was playing. There was no work for the black violin player. Al Capone had opened up the Cotton Club in Cicero and was using all the cats I went to school with. These young guys were in this band and they were making seventy-five dollars per week playing trombones and clarinets, and here I am with a violin. I didn't have a job. Nobody asked for me. I was delivering newspapers for nine dollars and seventy-five cents per week and these guys

were making seventy-five dollars a week. I was delivering papers in the morning, and here these guys were getting off their gigs at four-thirty in the morning. I was very much ashamed to have a newspaper pack on my back, and my peers were coming down the street making seventy-five dollars a week and had bought new cars with disk wheels. I said, "Well, man, I've got to get into something else." I had been toying around with the bass violin and the tuba in high school and I liked them very much. I decided then that I had to get another instrument so I could get a job. I decided to take up bass. That is really how I got started.

I taught myself. I use a visual system. I could read the treble clef from playing the violin, but the bass is in the bass clef and nobody had taught me about the bass clef. I used a system of seeing a note, and if the note was on the fourth line, I would put the fourth finger down to play it on the second string. I didn't know what the name of the note was, but I knew that if I saw it on the fourth line of the staff, I played the fourth finger on the second string. It worked out alright. Nobody ever stopped to ask me what the name of the note was. I was playing

the right note according to me. It was D on the treble clef, but actually it was F. I picked that up later.

QUESTION: How did you finally start working?

HINTON: I remember my first gig. Every bass player in Chicago must have died one day. They just ran out of bass players. A guy named Huey Swift, who had a society band in Chicago, had a bass player who didn't show up for the job so he hired me. I must have done fairly well. I remember the job paid nineteen dollars. I was still delivering newspapers and nineteen dollars was just the most unbelievable amount of money to make in one night. I came home with nineteen bucks and laid it on my mom, and she thought it was great. I can remember it to this day. I think the greatest decision of my life was when I decided to give up my newspaper route and try to shoot for music. I didn't know if they were going to call me again for another nineteen dollar gig, but my mother had laid the law down and said I couldn't come home at three o'clock in the morning and pick up those papers at four o'clock. I had to decide which one I wanted to do. I think that was my greatest decision-- that I was going to stick to music and the bass.

I am afraid that I am a little too old to go back to my newspaper route, so here I am still with the bass. Then my search was to try to improve myself. I tried to think about who I could study with and how I could get to them. I found a great musician, Erskine Tate in Chicago who had one of the greatest bands in the early thirties with Louie Armstrong, Eddie South, and Earl Hines. He finally used me in his band, and I found out what a knowledgeable man he was, so I began to study with him. He was a violinist and the stringed instruments were what he knew best. He encouraged me to go on and study, so I began to try to study with whomever I could possibly get. I was listening to the great bass players like Dale Johnson and Waymond Brewer, a great bass player with Duke Ellington's band. Duke would come in town and I would stand right under the band and admire this bass player. I would just hope that he would drop his rosin or something so I could just hand it to him. I found out that his sister lived next door to my mother. When he was going to be in town he would drop by to see his sister. When I heard that, I would be out on the back porch emptying the garbage just so I could ring his sister's doorbell and say, "Could I just say



hello to your brother?" He was most kind to me, and until his death we were dearest friends. He really inspired me. Then I met Walter Page who was playing with Count Basie's band. I met him later in the thirties when he came to New York. I was living in Chicago, and I didn't know many of the Kansas City guys prior to moving to New York. I worked in Chicago and my first really lucky gig was in Chicago. I got a job with Zutty Singleton, the great drummer. He was the epitome of a drummer and had played with Louis Armstrong's Hot Five. Zutty was one of the drummers of the New Orleans era. When Zutty decided to use me in his rhythm section, that established me as a main player. We played the Three Deuces Cafe, and Art Tatum was the relief piano player. Art Tatum played when we were off. It was my duty, when Art played his last tune and was getting ready to go off, to go up and join him. I never caught him because Art was so great and so fast that he just left me standing still looking at his left hand. I was never really able to catch on to what Art Tatum was doing. That's how far he was ahead of everybody even then. I was making thirty-five dollars a week and it was the best job in Chicago. In 1935 Cab Calloway came through town

looking for a bass player and he convinced Zutty that he should have me in his band. Zutty came to me and said, "Well kid, you're gone." I said, "Gone--gone where?" He said, "Cab Calloway just asked me for you." They treated me like a baseball player. Nobody said anything to me. They just discussed it among themselves. I said, "Well Zutty, don't I have to give you notice or something?" He said, "If you don't get your ass out of here tonight, I don't know what I'll do to you." I called my mother and told her to get my other suit ready because I was going on the road with Cab Calloway. It was four o'clock in the morning when Cab finally came up to me. He hired me and said, "The train leaves from the South Street station at nine o'clock in the morning. You be on it." I'd never seen a Pullman car in my life because I had never been on a train except coming from Mississippi, and I didn't come from Mississippi on a Pullman car. I got down to the station with my bass and a little canvas bag with my extra shirt, a fresh change of underwear, and a pair of sox, and my very best suit. I got on the train to go join Cab Calloway's band. There were these great musicians that I had

heard of but never met. They were all giants in the music business and I didn't know anybody. Cab missed the train at the South Street station and there was a little stop at Sixty-Third Street where Cab got on the train. He had been out all night. He got on the train with another fellow, Ben Webster, and they were both stoned. I was sitting in the men's room trying to get acquainted with the musicians in the band. Cab stumbled in there with Ben and he looked at me and said, "What is that?" Cab said, "This is the new bass player." He said, "The new what?" I made a note that this was one guy I would never like. It turned out that he was my dearest friend until his death. I guess I looked bad. I must have weighed about 119 pounds soaking wet. Cab said, "Well, look kid, I'm going to hire you until I can get to New York to get a good bass player." I took the job under those circumstances. I played with the man sixteen years. It was that sort of thing that got me started. Then after I got with Cab, I wanted to improve myself, so every town we played I would try to find a symphonic orchestra or someone teaching bass and I would spend that week studying. This was my beginning.

QUESTION: What kind of music was happening then? Were you playing jazz?

HINTON: In Chicago there was nothing but jazz. I had no idea about the symphony orchestra except from school and they were all white. We didn't know that there was any other kind of music except jazz. You must remember that at this time Chicago was a hotbed of jazz. All of the great musicians from New Orleans were there. When I was delivering newspapers I would look in the windows of the cabarets at four o'clock in the morning and see these great musicians like Louie Armstrong putting their horns in their cases. These guys were looking so sharp in their tuxedos. There was no other way but for me to get in there. That was really what I wanted to do. I saw Louie and a trumpet player named Joe Sutton nobody seems to know too much about today, but he was making more money than Louie Armstrong in Chicago in those days.

QUESTION: Who were some of the musicians you came up with in Chicago?

HINTON: I knew Benny Goodman in Chicago when we were kids. We were about a year apart in age and we both went to Jane Adams Hall House, a settlement house on the west side of Chicago, where poor kids could

go to get music lessons. There were nine in his family. Benny was in one high school and I went to Phillips High School. Once a year we would have all the bands meet at the stadium at Northwestern University. All the bands would compete and play and at the end of the whole thing John Phillip Sousa would come out and conduct all of us in "The Star Spangled Banner." I was looking at Benny Goodman playing in his high school band and Gene Krupa over in his band, never dreaming that we would years later know one another on a professional basis. There was Eddie Cole, Nat Cole's brother, who was a fantastic tuba player. Nat was too young to be there. Our great musical director, Major N. Clark Smith, who was so instrumental in helping so many of us and a man named Abbott who was in charge of a black newspaper in Chicago called the Chicago Defender, wanted to organize a band of young people to travel all over the world playing American music. Major N. Clark Smith was in charge of it. We used to rehearse once a week at a house on South Parkway. Lionel Hampton was in the band. He is a day or two older than I am and he didn't want to see me get into the band because I was still in short pants. I thought I could play as much as he

could and I still do but he didn't want me in the band. Hayes Alvis was drumming like Lionel Hampton then and was in the band also. They finally let me in the band and I in turn did the same thing to Nat Cole. Nat Cole wanted to join the band just so he could make this trip. Because I was a year or so older than he, I was one of the first ones who wanted to put him down to keep him out of the band. It shows how each group of people do the same thing to each other.

QUESTION: When did you start really learning how to solo?

HINTON: My first shot at soloing was after I finally got in these bands. There was a slap-bass thing where everybody was slapping bass in those days. Players like Bill Johnson, Wilbur Grove, Pops Foster, and John Lindsay, who had been a trombone player and converted later to bass, were going into this slap thing. Being a young kid I wanted to do it better than they did and I was going to try to do it. I remember one tune that was quite famous. Every band played this tune, "Mama Don't Allow No Music Playin' 'Round Here," and everybody would play and they would finally get down to "I don't care what mama don't allow" and each instrument had a solo--"I'm gonna play my bass anyhow." Then you had the chorus to play

your bass. I would just slap the hell out of that thing. Of course, like the young people of today, I would do it better and with more zest and more strength and power than the older guys did. It sort of made them angry with me, but it gave me some sort of establishment into the jazz business. Later on I learned how to bow from taking lessons, but that was really my first shot at soloing. That special number was the flag waver of the night.

QUESTION: Did you always want to be a jazz musician while you were growing up?

HINTON: There was no other alternative but for me to be a jazz musician. There were no black musicians in the symphony. That was an absolute no-no, no matter how well you played. There was no such aspiration that you would ever get into the symphony. We had black violin players in Chicago, but they were going out of business. The children didn't even study violin anymore. There was no hope of going into the theatres and being in what we called a pit orchestra. Everybody was involved in the only form of entertainment we knew, the jazz orchestra. We had a few people from the West Indies who showed up in Chicago. We'd see them playing cricket and laugh at them because

our thing was basketball, baseball, and football. We thought these people were extremely strange because the black people of Chicago were all descendants of slaves who had come from the South. There were several of these West Indian men who had good jobs and they would rehearse on Sunday afternoons. They had a string quartet and they needed a second-violin player. For a couple of years I played with these guys. They were playing music from Flonzaley string quartets and that sort of stuff. It was very good for my academic background because this was when I was sixteen and seventeen and the last years that I was playing violin. Everything else that I saw was about jazz playing.

QUESTION: What are some of your ideas about jazz?

HINTON: I think good playing is always appreciated. One who is involved in music will know what is played well. I have played in big bands, but I think at this stage of the game, I would prefer not to play in a big band because there is not enough personality, not enough exposure for the musician. He is one segment of a component. In a small band you are more or less in a stardom situation. Everybody is a specialist. In a big band there are going to be five saxophones and



you are going to have to compete with five saxophones. If you are in the rhythm section, you are going to support those five saxophones and six or eight brass or whatever it is. There is not enough room for popularity or exposure for you. It used to be that you had to work into the thing of playing with big bands and have this experience in order to be able to qualify for small bands. There are not too many big bands for people to get this kind of expertise now. I think all players would be a lot better off if they had some exposure in working in big bands before they got into small bands, which is what I did.

QUESTION: Do you think anybody can play jazz?

HINTON: No, I don't think anybody can play jazz any more than I think anybody can write a book or anybody can fly a plane. I think that if you so desire and you want to go through what it entails to play jazz and if your desires are strong enough and you have the proper will power and charisma and you involve yourself in the jazz environment, you can. I don't think that anybody can graduate from high school or anybody can graduate from college. I don't think anybody can play jazz because it takes a certain desire. It takes a

certain feeling of one's wanting to do a certain thing or having something to say. Anyone who graduates from high school or college can't write a book because you have to have some particular thing that you want to express, a way of life or something you feel. I don't think anybody can be an engineer. Anybody can't be a doctor. It is according to your particular feelings, but I don't think it is impossible that you can do it. It is just a matter of how you feel about it and how much you want to get involved or how much desire you have to become a part of this great society.

QUESTION: What do you think is necessary for a person to learn to play jazz?

HINTON: I would say first to play music. One has to have a working knowledge of music. If you acquire your academic training in music, then you can choose to go into any field that you want to. I would imagine that if one wanted to study medicine, one would study basic medicine first and learn all of the basics. Then you could decide later whether you wanted to go into surgery or into any particular facet of medicine. The same works with jazz. I know most jazz players didn't start that way, but, with the advancement of jazz

today, I think one has to do that. In the old days, guys just picked up instruments. When you consider that blacks were coming right out of the Civil War with no kind of knowledge of how to work except in the field, they did the next best thing they knew. Everybody could sing and dance. People expected blacks to sing, dance, and entertain, so this was the easy thing for them to do-- clown or, as we say, 'Uncle Tom' or pick up a horn and fool with it until you finally got some sound out of it. I think this is the way it started back in Savannah during the reconstruction era, but I don't think that is the case today. As progressive as jazz is, I think that one would have to have an inclination for music, to study music, and a feeling for it. Then you could decide which end of it you wanted to go into. You would let your feelings lead you.

QUESTION: Do you like any style of music better than others?

HINTON: Of course I do. I like jazz. I am very much involved in jazz. I like classical music very much and I am hung on string music. I am hung on violin. If you looked at my music library, you would see that I have more records by great violin players than any other form of music other than jazz. There would be more jazz records

because that is what I am involved in and that is what I like to listen to. As far as my personal feelings about the beautiful classical music, my love tends toward the violistic style-- to violin, to cello, and, of course, to any kind of classical bass. I worship Gary Karr and what he has done with the bass. I came from Mississippi and we were singing the blues and playing it. I am still very much involved with gospel music. I like that because it is basic with the church.

QUESTION: Did you practice a lot?

HINTON: Yes, I did a lot of practicing. I think this is very necessary. We have a saying here in New York. This jazz cat was walking down Seventh Avenue and he saw another jazz musician and said, "Hey Baby, how do you get to Carnegie Hall," and the guy said, "Practice, baby, practice," so this is the way we feel. Music is a very jealous god. The only way one can ever accomplish anything is to practice. One has to learn how to practice, how to study, and this is why we go to professionals. Just to play is not to practice. Practice means progress. It means learning. Practice sounds bad. When you are practicing something, you should be doing something that you are not acquainted with. It should sound bad.

When you begin to get where you can do it, then you go on to something else and you call that progress. We need professional help and guidance in order to show us how to practice and what to practice. I'm sure all instruments are more or less the same. I mean scale-wise, chord-wise, the techniques of breathing or bowing on the instrument. These have to necessarily be done because in one's work one might do one specific type of thing and not have any use for the other. As a jazz bass player, my bowing is always down. I am plucking away all the time. Somebody is going to ask me to bow one of these days and I have to constantly concentrate on my practicing. I concentrate on my bowing which is being neglected. Maybe a guy might bow more and he might be concentrating on his pizzicato and vice versa. Practice is a must. How much you do it is how much you need it. I hear people say, "I practice eight hours a day." Well, I don't think I could handle that because, as a professional musician, I don't have eight hours a day to practice. I'm playing most of the time, but when I am not playing, I can't let a day go by that I don't put my hands on my axe. I have gone on vacation with my family and not taken my axe. When I

came back, I felt like I had rusty nails on my fingers, so practice is very necessary. It is something that has to be done for one to stay viable in music. We have the saying, "Practice makes perfect" and nobody is perfect, so you are going to be aiming toward that as long as you live.

QUESTION: What would you tell a young player to do if he told you he wanted to learn to play jazz and especially wanted to do the kinds of things that you have done and still do?

HINTON: You have to practice. You have to get some professional guidance. You cannot learn it alone because you can fall into bad habits that can deter you and keep you from doing the things that you want to. Professional people can give you the expert advice about what you are doing wrong and steer you on the right track, but you have to do it yourself. Nobody can do it but you. You have to be diligent about it. You have to be honest about it. Shakespeare says, "To thine ownself be true." I don't know what you don't know, but you know so you have to tell me what you don't know, or I have to see what you don't know in order for me to be of any help to you. One has to be honest and truthful. It is

also according to what instrument you are into. If you are going to be a bass player, you have to have a certain amount of humility. We are the back of the bus students. We support the wooden base. You can't construct a building unless you have a foundation and this is where the bass is. The bass is the thing that identifies the chord. If it is a B-flat chord, I'm the guy who gives the B-flat chord. You must have a firm foundation and this is it. If you think that you would like to play bass, you should have a feeling of humility. "I want to help you." "I want to stand like Atlas and hold you up, Baby, and make you sound good." This is what we are all about. This is your prime prerequisite. This is the first thing that you must learn. This is what the bass is about--the lowest musical voice, the lowest part of a building. Now we have taken the bass farther than that. We go on and on. Everybody else gets through playing, but we play all night. We are the cats who stick in the back of the band and never stop. Everybody else stops. The saxophone player does fifty-five choruses and he stops and gives it to the trumpet player. The drummer gives it to the piano player for forty-four choruses and then they say, "You got

it, Baby." Now the bass man, after supporting everybody else, has to rise to the occasion if he possible can and make himself audible, understood, and presentable to the audience. That is a hell of a job, after you have stood and done it for everyone else, but this is our plight. This is the thing that is required of us as bass players and we must rise to these occasions. These are the points which one has to try to be successful at. Understand me, you've got to support. You are supposed to play. I could go technically into that, but I would have to charge a small fee because that is the way I make my living. If anybody would like to know some more about this, there will be a slight fee.

QUESTION: Talk about some of the different gigs you have had.

HINTON: My first gig was with Eddie South who was a great violin player. That was my first important gig. Then the next one was with Zutty Singleton and that was responsible for my going with Cab Calloway's band. Cab Calloway was a great influence. I came into his band and he said he would hire me until he could get a good bass player. I stayed in his band for sixteen years because he evidently could not find a better bass player.



I could expound on that and thank some of the very great people like Keg Johnson and Claude Jones who convinced Cab Calloway that he had better keep me because there wasn't anybody any better around at that time. That is another story and I'm going to save that for my book. Cab Calloway was very important because I went to New York on a prestigious gig. I've heard and I still believe that if you come to New York big, you will stay big and if you come to New York small you will stay small, so you have to try to get into this town in some sort of way where you are someone recognizable. If you come in here tippy-tippy-toe, you will stay tippy-tippy-toe. They say, "He ain't nobody," and they won't let you be nobody. I was in New York with Cab Calloway at the height of his career. We played the Cotton Club, which was the most famous place for black entertainment. The greatest entertainers came out of that place. There was Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Andy Kirk, and Lena Horn. It was the place where most guys met their wives because they had these beautiful chorus girls. Duke Ellington met one of the ladies and she was his wife. Lena Horn was a show girl in the Cotton

Club. Johnnie Hodges took his wife there, and Louie Armstrong married Mrs. Armstrong who was one of the dancing girls, or ponies as we called them. So I worked at the Cotton Club with Cab Calloway's band and Fifty-Second Street was flourishing, and I was accepted into this society of jazz players. Lionel Hampton was with Benny Goodman and he remembered me from Chicago. He was glad to see me. Lionel was doing some record dates on the side with Benny Goodman. I had worked with Teddy Wilson in Chicago in the thirties when Benny Carter sent for him in 1933 to come to New York, but nobody sent for me. It took me until 1935 or '36 when I got with Cab. I was glad to see Teddy go, but my heart was broken when he left Chicago and I stayed behind. Teddy was with Benny Goodman and Teddy remembered me. Teddy was recording for Billie Holiday, and when I was in town, Teddy would say, "Milt, come on and make some records with Billie Holiday." That was how I got into doing some of those historical records with Billie Holiday. Lionel Hampton was recording for RCA and he was doing some extra things. He said, "Milt come on down and make some records like those collectors items, things like "One Sweet Letter From You"

with Coleman Hawkins and "High Society" with Chu Berry. There were dates with Johnny Hodges, Ben Webster, Chu Berry, Jerry Jerome, and Charlie Christian. We were all recording with one another. We had arrived from Chicago, Kansas City, all points south and west, and we were in New York and recording. These were the things that established my prestige in this particular society--these records. We didn't make much money. Thirty dollars is all we got for recording sessions, but now they are collector's items. I'm proud to say that I was a part of them. I stayed with Cab until 1951. Cab Calloway broke up his band and I ran into Jackie Gleason. I knew him from when he was a comic in New Jersey and I used to have to buy him a drink. He remembered me and said, "Milt, what are you doing?" I said, "Well Jackie, I don't have a job." He told his agent to hire me and that I could do some things on his Music for Lovers Only. His agent really didn't want to because there weren't many black musicians doing a lot of recording, especially in classical and mixed bands and pop music. The agent said, "We already have a bass player." Jackie said, "Milt is a friend of mine. We'll put him on there." They did and I

evidently made good, or they liked me, or through the strength and graciousness of Jackie Gleason they kept me. I did all of the "Honeymooners" with Jackie Gleason. I did all of the Music for Lovers Only recordings with him. Other people heard me on those things and I got other jobs. Percy Faith was at CBS and had a big radio show for the Woolsworth store. They played classical music and a little jazz. Television hadn't even gotten popular then. "The Woolsworth Hour" on Sunday was what everybody listened to. Percy Faith knew that I had done some work with Hugo Winterhalter and that I could bow and play jazz. He needed a flexible bass player who could play both sides so he said to CBS, "I'd like Milt in my band," so I got the Sunday afternoon job with Percy Faith, "Music for a Sunday Afternoon." Patti Page had just done some big recordings, "How Much is That Doggie in the Window?" and "The Tennessee Waltz." She was coming to New York to do a big television show called "The Big Record." Her conductor came in and wanted to know who was around and they said, "Get Milt on bass." I made that show with Patti Page. From there I was lucky enough to get on all of the Eddie Fisher recordings, and then

Johnny Mathis came along and then Erroll Garner and then Aretha Franklin. I began to get established into this thing. Then Barbra Streisand was in "Funny Girl," and they wanted to make an album, so I did the album. Barbra was pleased and she took me to Las Vegas to do her opening at the International Hotel. That led into doing some things with Sinatra. Pearl Bailey had joined Cab Calloway's band when I was with him and she remembered me. When she did "Hello Dolly" and went on a world tour for the State Department, she asked me to go along with her. The very latest thing I was with was Mr. Bing Crosby which was the last engagement he did at The London Palladium.

QUESTION: Are there any particular things that stand out in your mind as being reasons why you have been successful?

HINTON: I'm not sure I'm a successful person. I'm very grateful for what has happened, but I could never say I'm successful. I don't know what success means. All I know is that I'm very grateful for what has happened. I have been able to survive in this music business and do the only thing which I know how to do. The only job I've ever had besides delivering newspapers is playing

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music. I've been able to keep abreast of the times. I think if I were to give any young person any advice it would be, first to be kind to each other, to be respectful to each other. Another important thing is to listen; listen to those people who came before you. Everything that came before us is what we build on. We have to listen to the people who came before us to know what they did and what they were like. We have to respect the circumstances, the pain, the pathos, and the obstacles they had to overcome. We must recognize that every generation has to do better than the generation before in order for it to progress. That is the reason we want a better life for our children and expect it. Our children have a better opportunity that we had and they must take advantage of these opportunities. We must listen to these children. We must listen to the people who came before us and we must listen to what is going on now and not close our ears and put anything down or judge it. We must know that God made every snowflake different. If you put every snowflake that falls under a microscope there are no two alike, so it was no problem to make every man different. Every man will have something to say that is different from every

other man. God said that everything he made was good. Let's try to find the good instead of the bad. When I listen to what other people have said, I say, "That sounds good, I wish I had said it." This is where creativity is. Everyone of us is going to speak in a different voice and say things a different way. We must respect each other for what we each have to say.

## DAVE HOLLAND INTERVIEW

QUESTION: Where are you from originally?

HOLLAND: I was born in Wolverhampton, England and I grew up in that general area.

QUESTION: When were you born?

HOLLAND: October 1, 1946.

QUESTION: Did your parents play any music at home?

HOLLAND: Not really. We had records. My father left my mother when I was about a year and a half old. He played saxophone but I didn't really know him. We always had music going on at home and it was encouraged. When you're growing up, there's always some kind of music going on. I used to listen to the radio and pick out tunes on the piano.

QUESTION: Was it any music in particular?

HOLLAND: Every kind of music. I mean everything. I was music mad even when I was four years old. I would sit for hours and pick out tunes. My first instruments were stringed instruments--ukulele, guitar, and piano. I was self-taught, mostly picking out melodies by ear. We had a few jazz records in the house, but most of my exposure to music was records that I heard later when I was about eleven or twelve. Somebody



started telling me about jazz music and I listened to Django Reinhardt at first, Ray Brown, and Charles Mingus. It was a natural progress on the music. At first I was happy with three or four chords. Then as I wanted to play more, I looked toward more developed music and met people who were interested. I used to go to clubs and see people and talk and we would exchange ideas. Somebody would say, "Hey, you know you can use this chord instead of that chord," and you pick up that information. It was a process of just finding people to pick their brains and find out what was happening. I went along like that for a long time. When I was sixteen I started playing acoustic bass. Before that I was playing electric bass.

QUESTION: Did you have any formal training?

HOLLAND: Just a little. I was mostly self-taught. There was a Dixieland jazz boom in London in the late fifties and early sixties. A lot of these records were coming out and I started to hear a more intricate bass line. I wasn't studying at all. My first real study was done when I was seventeen when I was in London.

QUESTION: So you are basically self-taught?

HOLLAND: Yes. My first gig on bass was with a dance band.

We were playing at a summer resort place. I faked my way into the band. I always had very good ears because I was self-taught and always learned by ear. I had an audition for this gig and I played all the tunes, but I played them all by ear. Nobody seemed to have caught on, or at least they thought I had enough feeling to make it, so I got this three-month gig, and during the three months I practiced every day about six hours a day. I learned all the music in their book and taught myself to sort of read their stock charts, but for me they were challenging. They were all standard tunes. Right after that gig folded I decided that my next move would have to be London to start studying. A lot of Americans were coming through London and I was always reading about Wes Montgomery, Sonny Rollins, and all these cats. I wanted to hear this stuff. I'd been listening to the records but I wanted to hear the real stuff. I managed to fall into a gig in a Greek restaurant playing a mixture of Greek music and supper music, but it meant that I was in London. I made it to London. I found a great teacher there and I started studying. I was with him about nine months and he encouraged me to go full time to the Guildhall School of Music. I wasn't really getting anywhere,

and this way I could get a scholarship. I got an allowance of a thousand dollars a year, plus my tuition paid, so any other gigs I did paid for my food and rent and so on. I could take gigs that were just things that I wanted to do, so I started pursuing the real playing gigs that were going on in London. Of course they were the ones that paid the less, but the music was nice. I started off playing in some New Orleans-style bands at first. I did that for quite awhile. Then gradually I moved into some more progressive groups. I played with John Surman and Evan Parker. I was trying to experience music in as many possible ways. I was still in my teens and I was just trying to get as complete a picture as I could. I wanted to learn orchestral playing. I wanted to be able to play with a conductor. I wanted to learn how to improvise. About my second year in college I started to see that this thing wasn't happening. I'd sit in an orchestra, and these cats would come in looking at the clock, and as soon as it came time to go, everybody would get up, no matter what was happening. They didn't want to rehearse, their attitude wasn't musical. They were very professional. They were working musicians. It wasn't anything to do with an

emotional response. In fact, that was discouraged. If you were enthusiastic, you were kind of strange. If you were early, people would look at you strange. I said, "This isn't really a creative situation. It's not putting creative demands on me." The thing that was putting creative demands on me was the improvisation that I was doing. I wasn't really sure until then that I had any kind of chance to do that music. I always thought that I was going to have to think about earning a living as well. It wasn't going to be a thing where I could just play the music that I wanted to play, but at that point it started to seem that I was working a lot. I was doing gigs that I wanted to do, my music was growing and developing, and it was very positive, so it was an obvious direction to be going. By my third year at music college I was working pretty regularly. Miles Davis came to the club one night. I had just turned twenty-one. He heard me playing and left a message with Philly Joe (Jones) asking me to join the band. I thought Philly was joking at first and I said, "Don't pull my leg like that and tell me what he wants to join his group." He said he wasn't joking and to call Miles tomorrow at the hotel. That next morning when I thought it was

about the right time to call, I called him but he had checked out of the hotel. I didn't hear anything from him for about four weeks. Then suddenly I got a phone call at two o'clock one morning, and he said, "I want you in New York in two days." I said, "Oh wow, two days. My whole life is here. How am I going to get that together?" He said, "Well, we really want you here. See what you can do." So I hustled around and got my papers, and that was my move to New York. It was my first real chance to play with a group on that level where there was that level of intensity. I was frightened.

QUESTION: What was it like?

HOLLAND: It was like stepping into the middle of a tornado. I was up on the stand holding onto myself trying to keep my feet on the ground. What was happening around me was just so compelling. There was so much movement. Tony (Williams) was playing so loud that I could hardly hear myself at all. I wasn't using an amplifier at that time. It wasn't really that usual to use an amplifier. There was a period of a couple of months of just trying to find my place in the music. I think that the thing that impressed me at first was the separation that was going on in everybody's

playing. In Europe there seems to be much more of a tendency to play in a more obvious kind of togetherness. In America there was a much stronger individualization of the musicians. Everybody was kind of playing their own tune. It was up to you to find a tune that you liked to play through the middle of it. At first I felt that none of them were really listening to each other. Then I started to realize that there was some sense here, that there was really a together motion, although the actual individual parts were very strong in their own right.

QUESTION: Did you practice with the band?

HOLLAND: No, it was just straight in. It's always been like that with Miles. You're supposed to know the music before you join the band. I'd listen to the records and I tried to learn them the best I could. None of the tunes were written out so I learned them from the record. Some of the more obscure ones that were harder to take down from the records I got from Wayne (Shorter) or Herbie (Hancock). By the third night I was expected to know the tunes without music. It was a question of getting on the stand and really getting it together while you worked. I guess Miles figures if you're going to make it, you're going to make it.

QUESTION: What encounter did you have with Miles?

HOLLAND: He was friendly right off. Our first gig was in Harlem, uptown. It was my second night in New York, and it was quite an exciting experience to be there. The club was packed full of people. I was the first one there of course and I had everything set up and ready. Tony walked in first and I was standing at the bar and he said, "How are you doing? Are you the new bass player?" Then he went out and then Wayne arrived and then Miles arrived. He came over to me and said, "How are you feeling?", and I said, "Fine." He said, "Okay," and that was it. Herbie arrived, and the next thing I knew he was on the stand, and we got on the stand and started playing. About an hour later it was all over because the stuff went straight through. There were no stops or anything. There was one tune and then the other. We might have started with playing "Agitation," and then the stuff was away at a really fast tempo. Then the next tune might be "Nefertiti," and the next one might be "Stella by Starlight," and the next one might be "'Round Midnight." It just went straight into the next tune and I was listening, trying to catch it.

QUESTION: Nobody called any tunes?

HOLLAND: Nobody called anything, and I was out there. After the set I came off. I didn't know how I had done. I had no idea whether I had played right, wrong, inside, outside, or what had happened to me. All I knew was that I was trying to keep together, trying to catch what was happening, but it was just a blur. After the set Miles came by and said, "Yea, you sound good," and gave me encouragement. It was a strange environment for me. I had never been to America, and even though we all speak English, the American attitude, way of life, humor, and philosophy are completely different from the English. I was dealing with so many new stimulations, and he was very sensitive, very encouraging and didn't take advantage of my weakness at that time. It was always very beautiful. I was scared in a sense. I wasn't scared of what would happen because I have an emotional feeling about the music that nobody takes away from me. I enjoy my music no matter what anybody says to me, but I was very nervous. This was an exceptional situation for me, so I was very relieved to see that the thing had gone down okay without any kind of heavy scene.



QUESTION: What was your concept of your improvisational playing?

HOLLAND: Well, I was in a lot of different places, because as a bass player, I was used to working with the situation that was given to me. In other words, if I was playing with a changes player, I would try to play the changes for him, and if I was playing with a free player, I would try and play a free situation for him. If I was playing in an Afro-American, Latin situation, Cuban situation, I would try and play that style. My thing has always been the music first, not to super-impose my concept. But as I got older, certain things became singled out as being particularly topical, important, new, contemporary, things that were to be discovered right now. When I got into a position where it was possible to organize my own gigs or to work with people such as Sam Rivers, I then was able to concentrate on my concept. Before that, when I was with Betty Carter, I wasn't playing outside, I was playing right in and I loved it. She was so beautiful. I think it is most important that you try and really play for the sake of the music. You try and find what the group level of music is going to be. You look at who you are playing with,

who you listen to, what's happening, and you try and be sympathetic, play with, and listen to whatever is happening.

QUESTION: How do you get all that together?

HOLLAND: You play a lot of music. You play everything. You play every kind of music that you can't get the experience of playing in big bands, rock bands, and orchestras. You play for weddings; you play for funerals. The jazz musician has always done that in New Orleans. The cats used to play at funerals. Every social situation where there was a close communion, music was most important. It functioned both as a way for people to relax together and as a spiritual force which united feelings. For me this is really the heart of jazz music. This is the essence of it. It's truly improvised music. It's people getting together and sharing their feelings.

QUESTION: Speaking of improvised music, what about the music that you play now? A lot of people refer to it as futuristic music. What do you think about that?

HOLLAND: They are behind, because this music has been around since the late fifties. This is music which is played without chords and without tempo

or with tempo but with a free application of tempo, freedom being the freedom of choice, freedom to choose what you do, not freedom to be chaotic or freedom not to have any rules.

QUESTION: I don't hear it as chaotic, I hear a very real structure.

HOLLAND: Well, you have been listening to it for awhile. You have been spending time with it. You sit down and try to play. You put out effort and energy; you extend yourself; you try to stretch yourself. People aren't encouraged to do this, you see. The people who talk about it as being futuristic have probably been exposed mostly to a very diatonic, very chordal music. If they heard you play a minor third against a major chord, it's going to sound wrong. They have all these kinds of conceptions of a very rigid form of music. It's really pushed on them by the media. When do you turn the TV on and see a jazz group? When do you turn the radio on and hear a jazz track? Very infrequently, compared to any other kind of music. Even European classical music gets more exposure because it's more supported by different people and foundations and so on. People look at this music as being strange and chaotic because they haven't yet been

able to distinguish the form that is being created as we play. The form sometimes extends to two or three hours. The forms are very long. We go through many different sections, many different moods, different feelings. Some of them you might get up and dance to. Other times you would be really into a concentration thing. Other times you'd be laughing. Other times you'd be crying. To me the artist is supposed to awaken the emotions, and the audience responds intellectually and emotionally. The concept of this music for me is to utilize my total experience. I have experienced symphonic music, and I use ideas from my experience. My music is the sum total of my life and experiences. When I play I try to make that real for people and I don't eliminate anything. I don't avoid the blues, because I think the blues is old-fashioned. I don't avoid the blues, because if the blues is what's happening, then we play it. The next minute we are playing something free, and that's the freedom for me, the freedom to choose from one thing to another.

QUESTION: I feel like there is sort of a philosophy coming out, like your music being a philosophical position.

HOLLAND: You can't help but be philosophic in a sense. When you start to think about what you do and what you want to communicate, it starts to become a philosophy, a reflection of a feeling or idea about life. I think if my music reflects any kind of philosophy, it reflects the idea of co-habitation, of sharing, of being sympathetic. I think one of the most important things in this music is the ego. I don't mean the elimination of the ego but the fact that we don't allow the ego to control the situation. You don't think, "I've got to take control of this music because I've got to let people know how good I am." If the music demands a certain thing, you go with that. The music is always the first thing and because of that you will become equal. You will become equal in the creativity of the music. We all create at an equal level.

QUESTION: All aspects of the music then are improvised?

HOLLAND: All aspects are improvised. Of course, we as musicians and composers have thematic material. There is not a creator who does not have thematic material. We have to have a vocabulary to talk. You have to have thematic material to create. It's the same kind of thing. What we do is try to make the thematic material vary everytime

we play it and develop it. Sometimes we will discard one idea and introduce another. This process goes on through the whole lifetime of creativity. You try to make the situation as new as possible. Of course you're not afraid of using ideas. You have your licks, your hot licks which you use for impact, not in a self-conscious way, but as thematic materials, things to create effects to make a starting point for a new situation.

QUESTION: That's why you can tell who the composers are.

HOLLAND: That's why when you sit down and listen to Stravinsky, it sounds like Stravinsky, and he had his own hot licks. Or Beethoven or anybody. That's right. If you analyze the scores, you'll find two or three pieces with the same motif, but it's used differently every time; it's always transformed. Maybe it's transposed to a new key or inverted.

QUESTION: Where does mastery of the instrument come in?

HOLLAND: Well, that's the other side of the situation. Mastery of the instrument is really the outlet for a player or composer. I've always considered that it was essential to really have some kind of freedom of creativity. I think you can be

creative with very little mastery. In other words, creativity isn't a quantitative thing but a qualitative thing. A person can be creative with one or two notes. I've heard some African music where the fifth is the only interval used, but it is used in such a beautiful way, and the effects and trills between the two are beautiful. It's not the amount of material you use but the way you use it. In the situation I am in now, we are trying to stretch the vocabulary, trying to develop the medium that we are working with. That requires a lot of studying, a lot of looking at different forms of music, a lot of analysis, and, of course, the final thing is to produce on your own instrument, and to find an outlet for it. I find my work is pretty much taken up between the two things--considering formal aspects of the music, theory, harmony, rhythm, analyzing other works, and conceiving music of my own.

QUESTION: What music do you analyze?

HOLLAND: Every kind of music, I think I automatically analyze everything that I hear. One part of me is saying, "That is a major point," and the other part is saying, "That sure is a beautiful solo." I always try to develop the ability to make conscious what I am hearing. If I listen to

Duke Ellington, I try to be aware of the voicings and whether the last chorus had the sax section in it, or whether the trumpet section was used, or whether there was a trombone in there with that chord with the saxes and so on. I listen to it from a learning, student point of view, seeing how it was put together, how it was orchestrated. I also listen to classical music. Lately I have been listening quite a lot to Webern and Bartok. I try to get records which are long-lasting records. Some of these records I'm talking about I've been listening to for fifteen or twenty years, and I hope I will be listening to them for the rest of my life. Good music is something you should always go back to. You always hear something new in it; you always renew your experience of it because it is a reflection, something for you to see yourself in. One of the great things about a work of art is that it can stimulate a different response in the same person at different times. It reflects the depth of creation. Certain things, certain pictures, you look at once, and you see the picture, and that's the whole experience. You've seen it; you've absorbed it. Other pictures you look at and after awhile you



notice they have changed, colors have emerged or something. It is the same as listening to (John) Coltrane. The first time through you might hear this, and the second time through you hear that. As your understanding of the music grows, so your experience in what's being done grows. Duke Ellington was like that. I've listened to Ellington pieces that were recorded thirty or forty years ago and they still sound fresh, just because of the vitality and the energy that's there.

QUESTION: What would you say to a young player who came to you and wanted advice on how to get it together, to learn to play?

HOLLAND: The most important thing is to play. A lot of guys go home and start practicing. I think the first thing to do is to find a group of musicians to work with because that stimulation is essential. The true experience of playing is in working. You have to have the playing experience. No matter how much you practice, when you get to the gig it is always a different situation. There's something else going on. You're dealing with other people to start with. There's a drummer to be dealt with or a piano player, so the first thing is to find a good group of people to play

with. Then look at everything you can look at. Look at all the music you can, because if you're a young musician just starting out, what's made available to you will certainly not be the whole picture. Most of the music available is watered down commercial music. You have to explore into music. Historically, the music is very well represented on record, especially now that there are a lot of reissues coming out. A lot of things that haven't been available before are now available, which is a great step forward, so buy records, listen to records, and check out the development of your instrument. If you're a bass player, go back to Blanton, Pops Foster, and Slam Steward. Check out where it started and try to see the whole development of music so you have a chance to find out where you are. Bass playing didn't start with Stanley Clarke, which some people seem to think. I may be saying that lightly, but that is what is available to most people so that is the music they know. Students of mine have sat down and listened to Duke Ellington and can't believe their ears, that anything could sound so beautiful or that people could play together like that, so I think it is important to study the music from the records.

Learn to read music because it will never let you down. If you read music it's always an asset. It will help you enjoy music. It will help you create music. It won't stop you from improvising. There's no problem about that; it's only going to be an asset. Now certain disciplines you get into make you a little stiff for awhile, but you've got to see that as a developmental process. I would say to young musicians, "Be patient; don't get uptight." Don't get uptight if a thing isn't working, if it feels like it is bogging you down. See yourself with a lifetime in front of you and your work as a life's work. You will be very grateful for that after awhile since there is so much to get into.

QUESTION: You seem to be very calm and at peace with yourself and your music. Have you always been that way or have you worked towards that position? Is there a level of discipline involved?

HOLLAND: When I was younger I was an introverted kind of person. As I got older I learned to express myself more, externalize. I've always pursued things methodically. I had an uncle who was into crafts and building things, and I used to watch him for many hours in his workshop. He

would spend hours fixing something or building something. From him I learned patience and order. I realize that in order to accomplish anything there has to be an order to it; there has to be some kind of strong foundation before any structure can be built. This is something that I learned gradually. As I get older it becomes easier to function in these ways. You learn to direct your energy. Playing the bass I realized that I had to learn how to get the most out of the instrument with as little effort as possible. In other words, I realized the essence was relaxation. Playing this music one has to be open. One has to be without preconceptions. In order to do that, you have to just start from nothing and allow things to happen, so I guess I pursued that philosophy of letting things happen. I try to be patient, not rush things, give things their own time. There are a lot of frustrations in this business--trying to play music which is a little bit different from the regular music. One has to be patient with the situation and not get angry and insulted by the things that happen to you. For me it's the only way. If I'm angry, I'm out of control. When I say out of control,

I mean what's controlling me is the anger. I can be angry, but if I can direct the anger, channel it, it might be positive.

If you allow yourself to get angry, you become the anger, and you might be out of it for a day or two. What I try to do is be as relaxed as possible.

QUESTION: You talked about a period when you practiced six hours a day. Have you ever done that again?

HOLLAND: I still do. I practice six hours a day now, not regularly of course. On the road it's impossible, but when I'm at home, then I have the time to practice.

QUESTION: What do you practice?

HOLLAND: A lot of practicing for me now is playing. I just continue what I'm doing on a gig. Sometimes I might stop and go over something, not in order to rehearse something to play on the gig, but to work things out. I'll try and play something and if it doesn't quite fit right, I'll go back over it. It might have an implication to me that is interesting, so I explore that implication. I have time when I'm practicing to do that. When I'm playing there is the excitement of the moment and performance, so you don't have the time. Also I still practice scales,

arpeggios, and all the usual material. I have studied books which I don't use so much now. I mostly use material that I have written myself for practicing, combination exercises, just things that work out different technical problems. Working out your own exercises gives you a more individual approach to your instrument. Things you play on the gig you don't find in any kind of study book unless you develop them yourself. There are sounds that you hear that the only way to play them is to discover how to make them. Practicing is just a continuation of the work process.

QUESTION: Did you ever transcribe solos? A lot of players transcribe solos to copy a particular player. Did you?

HOLLAND: No, I never transcribed solos as such.

QUESTION: You never played anyone else's solo?

HOLLAND: Not on a gig. Never on a gig. When I first started I used to learn them by ear. I never wrote them down. I played a few bars on piano and then tried to play it on the bass, played another few bars and tried to play it on the bass, so it was always a thing with the instrument. I never sat down to write it out. I've done that since in practicing for ear training. I

would take down a string section just as practice but as far as transcribing solos to use, I never did that. I only did that to learn about the instrument, to learn about another person's playing. In the beginning you have to go through an imitative period. There has to be a period of checking the masters out or perhaps picking one out and getting deep into him for awhile and learning his viewpoint. Then the next very important stage is to try and always be original. Even when your playing at the imitative stage, you try and not repeat literally. You try to rework the material, to be creative so that you don't get trapped into being a copy of somebody. It's always important to be an individual, but the beginning point is definitely imitative and I think my models were Ray Brown, Charles Mingus, and Scott La Faro.

QUESTION: What are your feelings about other kinds of music? A lot of musicians are being put down for playing funk. What you thing about that?

HOLLAND: I think that if it is done honestly it's fine. My feelings are to do your thing, whatever you want to to. All I can say is try to be honest about it, make it real. If you really want to

play funk, then play it with all your heart. I'm not a musician who thinks there is only one type of music or that people should play only one kind of music. I'm knocked out by the variety of music and I enjoy that very much. My only feeling about it is that it is over-exposed, and what we play is under-exposed, so the only negative feelings that I have are to do with that. The fact is that the record companies don't take the trouble to promote our records. We have to be satisfied at this point recording for smaller labels. We're faced with the situation where, if the record company doesn't feel that the record is going to sell, they just put it on the shelf and people in Salt Lake City or Oklahoma City won't get that record. They are getting records that we did five years ago. What kind of chance do we have if our music isn't getting out there on record? That is the main form of advertising. One group might get two months in the studio and one hundred thousand dollars and come up with a record which is really low level. We get six hours in the studio and a small budget to work with, and we come up with something like Conference of the Birds. There's a great injustice going on in the music business.



If the companies can't handle it, then there has to be some kind of public support or government support for the music. America is one of the few places where they don't consider jazz to be the art of America. You go to Europe and people there consider you an artist playing one of the American art forms, one of the most important American art forms. The same feelings is in Japan, but in America it is very hard to get that kind of respect and support.

QUESTION: Do you have any plans for yourself as far as music goes?

HOLLAND: Well my plans right now are to play with Sam. I can't at this point imagine a musical situation which would be more in tune with what I want to do than what's going on here. I have the freedom to play whatever I want to play. Sam is a great musician. I have the greatest respect for him and it's a great honor to be with him. I am learning a great deal from him everytime I play. I think he is one of the most complete musicians I've ever played with. By complete I mean able to deal with anything you lay on him. He will respond to any kind of musical situation with the greatest honesty and the greatest musical integrity.

For me it's an honor to be doing it. Of course I have projects of my own I'd like to do, some involving written music. I'd like to do some solo concerts. I've got a solo record coming out this year. I'm hoping there will be time to do a short tour here and in Europe to do some solo concerts, but outside of that, what I am looking for is a musical situation that I can feel happy with and that I can use my total experience with, and this is it. We work with trio; we work with quartet; we work with big band. All the musical situations that I could wish for are available. Plus, I have a very close friendship with Sam and with Barry (Altschul). It stretches over many years, which has a lot of importance to me because it's really a marriage that goes on in this music. There has to be a feeling like that between musicians for it to happen. You have to respect each other, trust each other, and that's what's going on here. It's a very rare situation. I've been lucky in that I have been in a couple of groups with this kind of intensity and dedication. Right now it is the perfect situation for me.

QUESTION: Is there a conflict between the music and other considerations in your personal life?

HOLLAND: I must say that, if I didn't have such a wonderful wife, it would be impossible. She has a lot of patience and she is very tolerant when I have to go away for months.

QUESTION: Is she a musician?

HOLLAND: No, she's not a musician. She is a born groupie. She has been hanging around music ever since she was little. Her family were big jazz fans and they used to take her to see Ellington concerts when she was little. She shares my feelings of the importance of what we are doing. She loves to listen to the music because it has a meaning to her. I think that, if she weren't able to share that musical experience, it would make it a lot more difficult. When I'm home I'm still working--practicing, teaching or rehearsing. One of the most important things for a musician is that when he is at home he's really at home. It's important that he be able to put his total attention on the situation, but then that makes it possible for you to put your total attention into something else. I don't think you can be a part-time husband or father. It's got to be for real. Only then is it possible to really do what you are doing. You've got to be honest; you've got to share;

you've got make sure you grow together. It's a problem sometimes because I'm traveling around the world and my wife has to stay at home. I'm having these experiences in Hong Kong and Europe and Japan and traveling around America, and she's at home with the kids and the routine. It is really important that some contact is really strongly maintained so she understands where your development is at. I try and always make it possible for her to come and sometimes bring the kids too.

QUESTION: You had your family then at a time when you were really getting into the music. How did you deal with all the intensity that goes into preparing yourself for the music and your very real feelings about the people you love?

HOLLAND: It takes a lot of discipline. In order for you to do all these things, you have to be able to sort it out. You have to be able to keep your life together in various ways. After Circle broke up I was in very dire straits financially and my papers were not in order. I didn't have the right papers to stay in this country, so I had to go through a lot of changes like that. My wife was eight months pregnant with our second child at the time, so there were a lot of

pressures on me, but luckily we kept ourselves together. In fact we look back at those times and laugh and think that we sure had a good time then. All the way through it we thought positively, even when we were stuck out on the road. We tried to find something to enjoy, to find the humorous side of the situation. I think it is most important to have a positive attitude. Musicians who are negative all the time drag me. If a musician has got to be negative, what's happening? We've got to keep positive. We've got to spirits high, so that when we play, the music is high, and the people get high so everybody feels we have something to hope for. That's what is most important. Hope is all we've got. Hope is all there is, the hope and expectations of tomorrow. Without a positive attitude, it will never happen.

QUESTION: That's beautiful. Is there anything that you can single out that has helped you to be at the level of musicianship and communication that you are?

HOLLAND: I think that I owe a lot of it to music itself, and there are certain people who have touched me. Duke's music strikes such a positive level in me all the time. John Coltrane has

such dedication, honesty, perserverance, and integrity, Scott La Faro such empathy, sensitivity and listening ability. Those people really stick out as being examples of a certain way of playing and therefore a certain way of feeling and relating. They have been examples for me as to what I have to live up to, to really be what I think I should be.

QUESTION: Were you ever tempted to not play, to give up?

HOLLAND: Of course. I think that every musician who has ever dealt with creativity or any creator has a point of crisis where he questions, "Can I do it? Can I cope with it?" You deal with it by going back to it again, just looking at it again. Decide that no matter what I think about what I've got, that's all I've got. No matter what you feel about it that's all you've got to work with, so either you get on with it or you lay down and die. That's basically the two directions you can take. For me it's been a question of getting my spirits together. I've been through a few situations like that. Maybe a very close friend was going in a different direction. There have been times when I have been stuck for quite a period of time, not really feeling that I have been new or creative about

what I've been doing. There are times I have had to just get away from the instrument for a few days and cool out and maybe do something with my kids, do something different for awhile, a change of pace. Then it's right back into it. Start again; get back to it, find out what's happening; work through the problem. That's always been my thing because problems are challenges for me. Situations like that are really positive, the steps of the ladder, and if you overcome that, you're another step higher up your ladder of development. I take all that as a challenge in my development. When I'm in a crisis like that, it's trying to teach me something. It's a conflict of some kind in my life which is up to me to resolve in some kind of way. Up to this point, it's always been possible to resolve it musically. I don't think you have to be fixed about it. There might be a point where you say, "I have to move on to something else." I think I am basically a musician and I am always going to have to play music. It's in my blood; it's in my being. I think you have to realize your own potential and find the best way to use it. Perhaps it might not be music. If you have a crisis which isn't possible to

surmount, you may have to start considering other ways to utilize your talents and energies. I'm never reluctant to encourage a student to take other paths if it seems obvious that music is not the way. Music requires talent and hard work. The hard work is possible, but talent is something you have to be born with. You have to be able to hear music or respond musically. It's up to the individual to figure out honestly with himself if he is up to doing what he wants to do. You have to be realistic at the same time as having a dream. You have to be realistic about what your potentials and capabilities are. When I have a problem, my attitude is that if I work a little harder I might break through to the other side, and then there will be something else happening.



## HANK JONES INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

JONES: I was born August 31, 1918, in Vicksburg, Mississippi. Milt Hinton and I are the only ones to admit that. My parents moved to Pontiac, Michigan, when I was nine months old so I grew up there.

QUESTION: How did you initially get into playing? How did you get started?

JONES: I guess through the encouragement of my mother who wanted me to develop as much as I could. She got me started and I took lessons for about four years. I started out playing the classical studies and I practiced a little, but not enough. I don't suppose many young pianists practice enough. I got into jazz playing in school orchestras and dance bands. We used to play for school dances and things like that. Later on we got a job in Pontiac in one of the local taverns. I'd go to places like Lansing or Flint, Michigan, and play in the orchestras there. Then gradually I worked my way east.

QUESTION: Did you continue with your formal training or did you just have the four years of lessons?

JONES: After I left Pontiac and came to New York I began

to study with various teachers, but never on a sustained basis. I never had any what you would call formal training. I never went to a conservatory or music school. I never went to college, so I didn't get the benefit of that kind of training.

QUESTION: So you are basically self-taught?

JONES: Yes, all of my musical education has been with private teachers and in the public schools. When I was in school I was always involved with chorus, choir, glee club, or a cappella choir. In grade school I used to play marches on the piano for the kids to march in and out during recess.

QUESTION: What did you practice when you were just learning? Did you play scales or did you play tunes?

JONES: I practiced scales and arpeggios and studied short pieces. Later on I studied Bach and Beethoven.

QUESTION: A lot of musicians say they've had influences or people they look up to as they're coming along. Who were the people you idolized?

JONES: I have to say the first influence was Duke Ellington. Of course Duke had a band at the time and he used to play more piano with the band in those days. Other people who influenced me were Earl Hines, Teddy Wilson, Art Tatum, and Fats

Waller. Later on I moved east and I heard people like Bud Powell and Al Haig. There have been many people I have listened to. I am sure they have influenced my style in one way or another throughout the years. A few more names that come to mind are Errol Garner, George Shearing, and Oscar Peterson.

QUESTION: When did you first go to New York?

JONES: I went first to Buffalo. It would have to be 1943 because the next year I went to New York City.

QUESTION: What was happening in New York at that time?

JONES: Swing street, Fifty-Second Street, was probably in the later stages of existence. It was fading out at the time, but there were still clubs like the Onyx Club. Right across the street was the Three Deuces. The Downbeat was on that same side of the street and the Spotlight. On the other side you had Jimmy Ryan's and a couple of other little clubs that I forget the names of. It was going pretty well. At any given time you had all sorts of well-known people in town. Count Basie used to play the Downbeat Club. Dizzy Gillespie had the small group which included Charlie Parker, Max Roach, Bud Powell, and Curly Russell playing at the Three Deuces at any given time. Across

the street you might have Hot Lips Page or Stuff Smith or any number of other people. The first club I played in New York was the Onyx club with Hot Lips Page. Later on the Spotlight began with people like Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young.

QUESTION: You played with Bird (Charlie Parker) for awhile.

JONES: That's true.

QUESTION: What was that about?

JONES: Most of my playing with Bird was on records. I used to go out on tour with Jazz at the Philharmonic. Norman Granz used to be the promoter of it. A couple of times Bird was on the tour along with Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, and all these other people, and I can tell you it was a fantastic learning experience for me to play with Bird. He was a great teacher although you didn't think of him as a teacher per se, but you always learned so much when you were playing with him or listening to him, particularly playing with him, because then you got the actual experience of playing what you were hearing. You were hearing it and playing it at the same time or listening and following him, accompanying him. It was a great experience. I'm sorry I didn't get a chance to play a lot more with him, but I

did a number of record things with him. He used to record for Norman Granz and the Jazz at the Philharmonic label I believe. I guess some of those records are still around. I understood that in Kansas City they have a Charlie Parker Foundation. I'm sure they have a complete record of all this, but it was a great experience for me.

QUESTION: You mentioned Bud Powell. Did you know him?

JONES: Yes, I was fortunate enough to meet him. Bud had a dramatic influence on my playing because his was an entirely different approach. Yet I never really discarded the Art Tatum influence because I still have that. When you're playing solo on the piano, you play one way necessarily because you know you have to play the bass with your left hand. You have to provide your own harmonic background. You find yourself using a lot of left hand that you don't use if you're playing with a small combo or a big band, because then the bass is there. When you're playing alone, you use everything. You have more of an orchestral approach which is more in the style of Teddy Wilson, Art Tatum, Fats Waller, and Duke Ellington who played a very full, two-handed style. That's what you do when you're playing solo. So you never really discard those influences. No

matter what style I use today, I still have bits and pieces of all those other styles mixed in. I mentioned Oscar Peterson, who to me is an extension or continuation of Nat Cole. I think Oscar would say this too--that he admired Nat Cole very much--and I think you hear a lot of Nat Cole in his playing.

QUESTION: A lot people don't know that Nat Cole was a fine pianist.

JONES: That's true. I've heard him play solo and I don't think you ever heard this on records, but when Nat Cole played solo he sounded very much like Art Tatum. Now that is something that a lot of people don't know. I don't know why he never recorded solo, but he was really a tremendous player.

QUESTION: You heard him live?

JONES: Yes, I heard him play in his apartment when I used to go by.

QUESTION: I'd like to get back for a moment to your early experiences. It seems unique that three brothers have done as well as you and Thad and Elvin have done. There must have been a strong family influence. Thad also mentioned your mother as being very encouraging.

JONES: I have to agree. I think my mother, like most

mothers, wanted the best for her children. She recognized there may have been some small talent involved somewhere in the three of us and she tried to encourage it. She wanted me to go as far as I could, maybe even go to Europe to study with the great teachers there. I never got that far. I went to Europe, but I didn't get to study with the teachers. That was much later. She encouraged me as she encouraged all of us. By contrast, my father really wasn't too enthusiastic about it at first. My father was a very religious man, a seven-day-a-week church man. He believed in a Monday through Sunday type of involvement with the church. He felt that any kind of playing on Sunday was sinful. When I first started to play, I happened to be working in a club on Saturday night and at twelve o'clock I had to leave the bandstand because that meant I was playing on Sunday. I've backslid somewhat since then.

QUESTION: It seems unique to have three people in one family as I said, and all of you are going on strong in your own directions.

JONES: Elvin has made a tremendous impact on drumming. Thad has done the same thing with his writing and his playing as well. His personality just

permeates the whole room; he really is a tremendous person. Both he and Elvin are. But I don't know if it's particularly unique, because I'm thinking of the Heath brothers who are also tremendous musicians. One thing that has to take place before this can happen is that you must have a large family. There are ten in our family, so you must start with a large family so that you can have a group of three or four. I don't know if it's unique. I think it was probably the easiest thing we could find to do, and I guess that's what we did.

QUESTION: How does church music fit into your development?

JONES: We were raised in the Baptist church. We were all involved in going to church and singing in choir. I used to direct the junior choir, and I played for the senior choir too. In that respect my father was very enthusiastic about my playing music, but when it came to jazz, he was somewhat less than enthusiastic.

QUESTION: If a young player comes to you and says, "I really want to learn to play jazz. What should I do to get it together? What could you tell me?" What do you say?

JONES: The first thing I would say is to study and practice. You should become thoroughly familiar



with the instrument and have as complete a musical background as you possibly can. Take theory, harmony. Even composition couldn't hurt and then practice and practice. Listen as much as you can to records and artists in person if you can. All these things are important, but you can put the greatest emphasis on practicing and listening because that is the only way that you can really develop a point of view. You have to listen to a lot of different people. You learn what to accept and what to reject, dictated by your own personal taste. This I think is one of the cardinal points of developing. You must hear a lot of things to decide within your mind which direction you want to go in. That includes all of it, even off the wall music, avant-garde, whatever you want to call it. You listen to all of it and you decide which direction you want to go in and prepare yourself for it so that you have the chops.

QUESTION: A lot of musicians say that there is a time in their lives where they have to take a sabbatical and just practice. Was there ever a time when you did that?

JONES: No, although there were times when I wanted to. I could never afford to do that. I think that's fine if you can do that. Really I don't know

whether that's advisable or wise though to completely disassociate yourself from the musical scene. I think in doing that you cut yourself off from any current developments. I don't know how you can really do that and completely stay away. You have to do all these things concurrently. They have to all go on at the same time, and I think only in this way can you really develop and have a full, well-rounded development. You're still abreast of what is going on currently and at the same time you get as much of the background as you can. What a lot of young musicians forget, or perhaps they've never been made aware of, is that music didn't just start today or yesterday; it started way back a long while ago. You have to familiarize yourself with what went on in the past, as well as what is going on currently. Then there's some hope for the future.

QUESTION: How did you manage to keep practicing while working and playing and stay on top of it?

JONES: I'm not sure that I managed to stay on top of it, but I've tried. The only way to do that is to make a sacrifice and practice whenever you can. Whenever you do, try to make it count. You practice the things that will do you the most good. You concentrate on your weak points. This

is the essence of practice--to try to develop. If you keep working on the things that you already can do, then you do those things better, but the things you don't do as well will get worse. It's just a common sense approach. You practice on the things you need to practice on and you try to practice every day if you can. When you are on the road it is rather difficult to practice at all, so when you get back you try to make up for it.

QUESTION: In retrospect if you could go back and interject anything into your development that would make you a better player, better able to express your music, what would it be?

JONES: First of all, I would try to get into a good music school. I would try to study in a recognized school or college, like Berklee, Curtis in Philadelphia, Sherwood in Chicago, Julliard or the Manhattan School of Music and try to absorb as much formal training as I could. I would study all phases of music--theory, harmony, counterpoint, and composition. I would spend more time practicing and listening. Some of those things I have already done, but I would do them even more. I don't think you can do enough. I think these are the cornerstones of musical preparation. The

thing about music is that you never stop learning. This is a continuous thing. Everyday, every time out is a learning experience. You keep your mind open and you become receptive. At least you listen. You don't have to adopt everything you hear but at least you become aware of it.

QUESTION: How do you feel about music? Do you have a philosophy about it?

JONES: No, I don't think so. It's just a dedication to self-improvement. It's a constant thing. You just try to do the very best you can at all times which seems like an easy thing to say, but to implement this and to put it into practice can be very time consuming and sacrificial. You have to give up some things in order to do it. You have to make up your mind that you're going to devote a lot of time to self-improvement and that's it. It really involves a lot of hard work.

QUESTION: What would a pianist have to have together in order to function in your situation?

JONES: He would have to have the ability to relate to the other musicians. Let's think in terms of a rhythm section--drums, bass, and piano. We are there to support the solos. We provide the harmonic background, the rhythmic foundation for them to build on, so it's the ability to

relate to the soloist and to hold our rhythm section together as a unit and at the same time to provide impetus, life, energy for what's going on in front. This is the basic requirement of combo playing, ensemble playing, small group playing, or even big band playing for that matter. This involves listening very carefully to what's going on, being able to hear, to relate and implement, to help, to support, to inspire if you will performances by the soloists and hold the rhythm section together as a unit.

QUESTION: For example, today Clark Terry is coming in to play and you probably won't have much of a chance to rehearse. How do you handle a situation like that?

JONES: All the people who are here today for instance-- Carl Fontana, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, Milt Hinton and Clark--have all worked together over many years at various times. We haven't always been in the same group. All of us have worked with different groups, but at some point at some time, we have all worked together. It becomes then a question of just figuring out what he wants to do and in what key, and then we talk it over. Usually there's no written music. It looks a bit stiff if you're playing a jam or a jazz session to be reading

music if it's a small combo. This is an extemporaneous sort of thing and everybody generally knows the tunes.

QUESTION: A lot of young players who can play their instruments and really execute have been criticized for their lack of real musical meaning. Would you comment on that?

JONES: You can develop a great technical dexterity in the ability to move well on your instrument without really saying anything. The essence of good jazz playing seems to be a good improvisation. Now we really start talking about the ability to combine manual dexterity with meaningful lines saying something musically, to arrive at something that sounds not like a scale series or exercises but some kind of an improvisational line that has jazz meaning, that tells a story. What you're really trying to do is tell a story, maybe a series of stories. You're painting a picture. I think of it as a moving picture, a line that continually changes because the improvisational line continues. You don't stop in one place. You use the dexterity to paint the picture, but not as an end in itself, which I'm afraid some players do.

QUESTION: Do you see more of that in younger players?

JONES: Frankly, no. There are some older professional players who do that as well who should know better.

QUESTION: What is your concept of jazz improvisational playing?

JONES: I think it implies revising a set melody or a chord progression and developing a new line, a counter-melody if you will, and making it conform to the chord progression. The melodic line is what we're really talking about. Improvisation involves both a rhythmic and a melodic concept, and the two are combined into a separate, almost completely distinct melody, except that the new melody does conform to the same chord line. You're not so much concerned with the original melodic line as you are with the chord progression. If you carry the idea of improvisation to its logical conclusion, you probably will never return to the original melody. If you do, then you're not improvising anymore. By the nature of it, it has to be completely different from what went on before. Of course there can be relationships here and there. That's basically my idea of what improvisation is all about.

QUESTION: Do you think there is a difference between a person who can improvise and a person who can't?

JONES: When you say a person who cannot improvise, do you mean someone who cannot conceive a separate, distinct, and different melody from the original melody?

QUESTION: Yes. There are people who couldn't sit down and play anything that was not written down.

JONES: Yes, I've met people who are like that. They might be very good players. They may be able to interpret a written composition very well, very properly, and still not be able to improvise. It requires a certain freedom or detachment of thinking where you're not bound by written lines or the written composition. It really requires a sort of free flight. You let your mind, your imagination go. You have to imagine that you are a composer and that you're composing a series of lines. In some cases you can even compose a completely different set of chord progressions or a different harmonic concept for the tune, but it's really instant composition. Some people are not able to do that. The people who are able to do it do it with varying degrees of excellence or confidence.

QUESTION: Do you have any music that you like better than other music?



JONES: The music I like best is the music that I play best, and I'm not sure what that is. Are you speaking of jazz in relation to other music, or are you speaking of the different forms of jazz?

QUESTION: Let's talk about within jazz.

JONES: I like a combination of traditional jazz and modern jazz, but not far-out modern jazz. By far-out jazz I mean the type of music Cecil Taylor plays. I'm not familiar enough with that music to form any sort of meaningful opinion about it. If you're not familiar with the music, then you can't really like it. I don't really care for that type of improvisation although I'm sure it's valid. I like Art Tatum's approach to piano and improvisation and the Bud Powell school of piano is what I relate to best, so I guess that is what I like best. Speaking of myself as a pianist, I like arrangements and compositions in a mixture of traditional and modern.

QUESTION: What about other kinds of music?

JONES: I've listened to and played quite a few forms of music. I've never played country and western per se. I used to be on the staff at CBS when I worked on "The Ed Sullivan Show" and we would get country and western artists. I would play their music, but I've never really sat down and

played that kind of music in any improvisational sense. I like Dixieland. We used to have a radio show on CBS radio in New York called "Dixieland." We did a program once a week and it ran for two or three years. We also used to do another show of modern music on Wednesdays, so we played both types of music. As far as classics are concerned, I like Bach, Chopin, Beethoven, and Debussy.

QUESTION: Can you pinpoint the time when you started improvising?

JONES: That's a good question. I don't know. The safe answer would be that I don't know if I've ever improvised or not, but I've been involved in music for most of my life. It would have to be around thirty-five or forty years. I'm going to keep doing it until I get it right.

QUESTION: Presently you are just working with your own group.

JONES: Right now Milt Hinton, Grady Tate, and I have been involved in a series of engagements involving the three of us. We've played at Disneyworld, a club in Buffalo, The Downtown Inn in the Statler-Hilton up there, and we're going back to Disneyworld in August. We work together on smaller engagements around town, one nighters and things

like that. I don't have a set group of my own. Lately, I've been doing singles and doing concerts. ~~I did two and a half years with Benny Goodman with~~ a small group.

QUESTION: You worked at CBS for awhile.

JONES: Fifteen years.

QUESTION: What was that like?

JONES: There were parts of it that I liked. There were parts of it that I didn't care too much for. I think one of the negative factors about working in a situation like that is that you're not involved too much with jazz. A lot of work at CBS involved working with TV shows, particularly some of the variety shows. You play just that, a variety of music. Sometimes you would be playing for elephant acts, tiger acts, and sword swallows on the Sullivan show, but mostly background music. The music was secondary. There were interviews and comedians you didn't play for. You just sat there and laughed. The jokes were funny. You would play them on and then off stage.

QUESTION: What period of time did you play the Sullivan show?

JONES: Sullivan went off the air in 1972 or 1973. I'm not sure. I did the last three years of his show.

I'd been doing the old Gary Moore show, "The Jackie Gleason Show," "The Entertainers"--a lot of things--and I mentioned to you earlier the two radio shows, "Dixieland" and "The Jazz Show." I did "The Arthur Godfrey Show" for radio. There was a lot going on but very little of it involved jazz. That's the part that I regret, but in many ways I gained.

## THAD JONES INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

JONES: I was born March 28, 1923, in Pontiac, Michigan.

QUESTION: How did you get interested in music?

JONES: I was always a very ardent listener though not always a very quiet one I must admit. When I hear something that moves me, I express it. When I was growing up there was no television, just radio. I think the programming was much more imaginative than it is now. It appealed more to the mind than the eye. I would mentally try to construct a picture of the band that was playing and to see the soloists stepping up to the microphone. I played little mental games and fantasized in that way. I grew up with the sound of music in my head all the time, and I was definitely attracted to big band sounds. Then I began to focus my attention on the individuals. I was very taken with the sound of the trumpet. The trumpet seemed to be in agreement with being a boy and being loud, and I wanted an instrument that represented me. When I heard Louis Armstrong, I realized that not only was it a commanding instrument, but it was also an instrument of exquisite beauty. My uncle was a trumpet player, and he had just bought a new

trumpet and given me the one that he had been playing. I was thirteen and that was the instrument I learned to play on. Basically, I'm self-taught, but I don't think anyone just picks up a horn and starts to play. I went out and bought an instruction book and I found out how to put the instrument on my lips. I didn't do it like they did it in the book. I knew instinctively that everybody can't be the same, because if that were so, everyone would sound the same, be the same, have the same approach to the horn, and probably have the same type of technique. I placed the horn on my lips where it was comfortable and looked in the instruction book and followed the diagram that told what note was what. I learned to read and then how to play fairly well. I applied for a position in the school band, and much to my surprise, I was accepted.

QUESTION: Were your brothers playing then?

JONES: Hank had been playing piano for four or five years before I began to play trumpet. He was studying with a teacher named Carlotta Franzell who was quite an accomplished pianist, as well as a truly fine operatic soprano. She could really sing.

Elvin started playing later. Elvin had a twin brother who died when he was a child. Hank used to say that the reason Elvin was so complicated was that he was two people playing instead of one, that he took on the soul of the twin.

Elvin used to sit up behind his drums and work his left foot for fifteen minutes on the sock cymbal. Then he would work his right foot on the bass drum in conjunction with the left. He got both feet going, but they would be doing something different. Then he'd start using his right hand on the cymbals, and he never quit doing those other things. Then he'd start using his left hand and doing something different. Then he changed the pattern around, and this is how he practiced. He practiced the independence of limbs. If you listen, you can't put your finger on what he's doing. He had that thing perfected.

QUESTION: What was your home and family situation like? Did your parents encourage music?

JONES: Yes, my mother especially. My father did not so much in the beginning. In our younger years he was very strict with us because he wanted to give us a very strong moral and religious background. Church was a big part of our lives at

that time. My parents were very religious church goers. Every Sunday the whole family was sitting up there, and sometimes it was a full day in church. We got so much church, that it was really beginning to get to me.

QUESTION: Do you think church music played an important part in your musical development?

JONES: Definitely. In addition to the Baptist church we went to, there was a Holiness church down the street. They were unfettered and unafraid to show their emotions. We used to go around to these churches, and if they had their windows open, we'd chin ourselves up so we could look in and see them. I loved to see the people shouting and see this guy work with his tambourine. That was music.

QUESTION: How did you start playing jazz?

JONES: Having Louis Armstrong as an idol made it fairly easy for me. I began to try to play some of his solos after I had gotten into playing. I felt that, if I didn't acquire the techniques required to play trumpet, I'd never be able to express the things I thought about. I applied myself very diligently to practice seven to eight hours a day.

QUESTION: What would you practice?



JONES: I went from cover to cover of the Arban book two or three times. I had a good buddy who also played trumpet, and he used to play duets with me for practice. When we got out of school at three o'clock we'd go to either my house or his, alternating every other day. We had our horns out by four o'clock practicing, and we did so until the mother of the house where we were practicing told us flat out to stop because it was too late and people were tired and sleepy. We did this every day in addition to the time we spent practicing in school. Saturday was the day we really looked forward to because then we could practice all day.

QUESTION: How many years did this go on?

JONES: It went on the whole time we were in school. I participated in all the solo and ensemble festivals. The first one I went to I had a fairly ambitious solo and the band leader tried to get me to change because he felt it was too demanding for me, but I knew I could play it. My brother Hank was accompanying me at that time, and I remember we had to sit and wait four or five hours before I was called to play. The longer I waited, the more nervous I got. When I finally got up to play, it was a complete

disaster. All of a sudden everything refused to work. I was nervous and got that false vibrato. Everybody started talking right in the middle of the song. I was lucky to be able to get through the damn thing. I was so mad and angry at myself because I knew what had happened, and I had allowed it to happen which was even worse. Naturally, my rating was probably the lowest rating they could give. I resolved that I was going back the next year and that I would take first place in the competition, and that's what I did. First of all, I knew that the reason I failed the first time was because I didn't believe in myself as I should have, and that plays a big part in it. I've found that out about a lot of playing. If I make myself conscious of the degree of difficulty of a piece, I always wind up not playing it as well as I should. If I relax and get into it, instead of thinking how hard it is, there's no problem.

QUESTION: Did you go to college?

JONES: No.

QUESTION: How did you learn to write?

JONES: There was always a piano in the house, and I was drawn magnetically to it. As soon as I heard what could happen when you placed your fingers on

the keys, I became really interested and I wanted to create sounds for myself. That's when I began to tentatively write.

QUESTION: How old were you when you did your first arrangement?

JONES: I think I was fifteen when I did my first arrangement. It was something I heard on a record that I used to listen to. I could hear all of the parts, so I took it off the record just to see if I could do it. It was like an exercise. However, I remember the first arrangement I did was before that one. I wrote every horn in a different key. I probably wrote the first outside arrangement in history. When the guys played it, everyone tried hard to keep from laughing because they knew I was serious. It was on a piece called "My Blue Heaven." The next time I wrote I copied the record. I think it was a Tommy Dorsey piece called "Losers, Weepers," and to this day I can't even recall the melody. I took it off, and much to my surprise, it was almost exactly like the record. Then I tried to do things I was thinking about that didn't concern recordings that I'd heard. I was strongly influenced by the sounds of Duke Ellington. I liked the way he

used his instruments in ensembles and the pure sounds that he got. When I tried to duplicate that sound, I found it was not possible because you could get the notes, but to get the people to play with the same quality of sound as Duke's men was something else again. That's where his sound came from. I said, "Ah ha, it's personal, so go inside." It didn't matter what anybody else did because if you were able to extract the very best of you and if you tried to live up to your full potential as honestly as you could, then that's what was important.

QUESTION: What do you mean?

JONES: I'm talking about honesty, the integrity, the belief that what you do is right, the decision and commitment to do it in spite of everything. To be honest with yourself about it and to have the honesty which gives you the knowledge that what you do is you and not something that belongs to somebody else. Even though I was drugged with going to church, I realize the importance of it now because you need that part in your life to balance. I'm grateful that my parents saw fit to give us that type of training; it's been invaluable. A lot of things I took for granted have really proved true and have

helped me form decisions and have made my life easier. They've given me a little more fiber I can fall back on in times of real stress. At the same time, when Mother saw that we were interested in jazz, she seemed to be very happy. She thought that it was the most creative music that was ever played. We had stacks of records of different people. She liked to listen to the blues singers. We had a lot of Burt Williams, the legendary black comedian. He was a very funny man and a philosopher. That's another thing. For anything to be truly meaningful, there has to be a reason for it. I think that all of this training we had in our early years helped to really shape our reasoning and our philosophy. Music is philosophy.

QUESTION: How is that?

JONES: It deals with logic and beauty and gives it everything that life is. Mother encouraged us, and one thing that really stuck with me is when she said, "I don't care what it is that you decide to do as far as your life is concerned. Just make sure that you do it really well." We took that to mean that we couldn't be a bankrobber, a thief, or a criminal, but whatever endeavor we chose to take, she could be

perfectly happy if we gave it our full selves and did as best we could. We said, "We want to be musicians; we want to play music." She said, "Then that's what you'll do." Just like that--no problems. I didn't have the new horn that I really needed so she said, "We'll just have to see that you get a new horn." To her, everything was basically simple, and when you think about it, it is. She had a directness about her that just cut through all that flim-flam. This is where you want to go, so let's go. She really helped me out a lot, and when I was commissioned to write a piece for the Bicentennial for the Jazz Mobile, I thought of her. I got a grant from the government. They said to write a piece and gave me some sort of description. It was rather vague. I thought about the piece, and you know the first thing I thought about? I thought about the fact that my mother and father are not here. They are not alive to even know the progress the kids have made, so I thought, "That's what it is. That's going to be the piece that I am going to write." I called it, "My Centennial."

**QUESTION:** Is there anything you could point to that stands out in your mind as one of the most influential

things in your life that has shaped you as a person and/or musician?

JONES: I don't know. There are so many things. There is a picture that comes to mind of my mother. We used to have sessions at the house every Tuesday. We used to hang out a lot. Our community was very close knit. It was a very warm, open jazz community at that time. We used to always get together and talk. Tuesday night was the one night in the week when nothing really was happening, so we got together.

Joe Brazil had bought a home out on the north side and he used to invite all the guys over to play at his pad. We would have sessions over there from time to time, but a lot of times Joe would be busy, and the pad wouldn't be available. That was the case when we were talking one night and someone said, "Man, I sure would like to play somewhere," so I said, "Why don't we go on out to our house?" They said, "Playing?". I said, "Yeah," so they said, "Okay."

I called Mom and said, "Mom, all the guys down here want to come out to the house and play. Is that okay?" She said, "This is your home," so I said, "Okay, we'll be out after awhile."

She said, "I'll be here."

We started off with five or six of us talking, and by the time we got to the house, there were about a dozen musicians. I remember my mother sitting in the dining room while we were playing in the front room. She was sitting there with her robe on and she had the sweetest smile on her face. She was just listening. I think just seeing her and her total acceptance of our way of life was very important. She proved her honesty to us and to herself. I think of that one single incident and then, too, the eventual understanding that I had with my father. I just came to know him when I was in the army. I came home on furlough in 1944 and my father met me at the door. I had six days at home. I had a two-week furlough and I traveled for eight days on a train--four days coming and four days going back. That's when I was stationed out in Seattle.

The six days that I spent at home were maybe the most rewarding ever. I finally got a chance to know who Pop was. I couldn't wait to get out of the bed in the morning so I could get downstairs and talk to my dad. I couldn't wait, and he'd be there waiting for me. We'd talk all day every day. When I left that man, I felt so open. I



never had anything like that happen to me before in my whole life.

QUESTION: What's your concept of improvisational playing?

JONES: First of all, I'm not a strong believer in methods, because to me, improvisation means just that. It is as free and uncluttered as an eagle. To compare it with linguistics is not right. I think logically you have to have some kind of idea of what the harmonies are and what they can and should be, but that's as far as your logic should take you. Logic isn't the only thing involved in playing. It's the knowledge of the chords and the technical facility that you have and use on your instrument that takes you over the boundaries that have been imposed on you. You think your way through a problem spontaneously up to a point, and then sometimes it doesn't require thought at all. If you hear something, a chord that you like, and it strikes your ear and your mind at the same time, you transform it into an active thing by responding to it technically. That type of playing really is what appeals to you. I like to hear a person create harmonic patterns. Whatever method is used, as long as it's done spontaneously, is acceptable. That's what improvisation is.

QUESTION: What makes your improvisational approach so different? You play like Thad Jones and harmonically it's very rich.

JONES: I think, that for the most part, we play what we are. We are like whatever we play. Depending on your outlook of your philosophy of life, your playing will reflect whatever your philosophy is. You can't separate a person from the music; it's not possible. If you're really committed, the music and the man are one and the same thing. Music is just like carrying on a conversation between two or more people. You're going to have moments of highly charged emotion, and at times it's going to be very blissful, very dreamy, very sedate, sometimes very stern, very commanding, but it runs the gamut of about every emotion. If the conversation is extended long enough, you will cover just about all emotions.

QUESTION: What's the difference between the person who can improvise and the person who can't improvise?

JONES: You can't be afraid to play whatever you want to. You should always be willing to learn more about what you want to do. I think that's the key right there, the willingness to learn and the dedication it requires to commit yourself to that course of action. Generally, that's the

difference between people who can play and people who can't. It's not a big mystery, but if you really want to play, you find the method that enables you to do so. It sounds so basically simple, but to have that single-mindedness of purpose that will enable you to disregard everything that is unimportant to you and do what you want to do is what it takes. It is a very discontented musician who's constantly bemoaning the fact that he's not doing what he wants to do. What you have to do is very basic. You have to commit yourself to that course of action; then take steps that enable you to do what you want to do.

QUESTION: So you think dedication and single-mindedness are the keys?

JONES: I don't mean that you disregard or disdain everything else. You're picking up all different types of vibrations, vibes that deal with the human being. I think that is what gives your playing the beauty that is necessary to any kind of playing. I listened to Charlie Parker, and I was more impressed with his ability to play ballads. He had what I call stunning technique. People don't realize how tremendously fluid this man was on his instrument, but his ability

to play a ballad taught me how much a human Charlie Parker was. That is the type of playing where you have the opportunity to express yourself. Ben Webster was a perfect example of that type of playing. When you heard Ben Webster play a ballad, you knew how really beautiful he was in his heart. Ben had a beautiful idea; he never played a ballad that he didn't learn the words to. Isn't that beautiful? You can't remain aloof; you have to get close to people to project.

QUESTION: Do you do that? You have written and played some beautiful ballads.

JONES: I used to be a singer. I used to sing ballads, so I got in the habit of listening to words. I listen to them in a near subconscious state more than I make a conscious effort. What I like most about ballads is that there's a certain majesty that a ballad has that playing redneck country doesn't have. It's a moment to reflect, a quiet time, a time to be with yourself, and I think that's what I dig most about ballads. I understand the words to the piece. For instance, you can pick out one phrase of a ballad that really sums up the whole piece. Then it isn't necessary to learn all the rest of the words. Like "It's funny how love becomes a cold rainy

day, funny that rainy day is here." Just to say the words gives me the vision and opens the door that will help me play. Another one of my favorite ballads is "Deep Purple."

QUESTION: What are some of your thoughts on the younger musicians today?

JONES: Rubinstein made a very important statement. They asked him what he thought of today's young musicians and he said, "They have tremendous technique, but they don't play music." It's true. I'm finding that whole concept more and more in younger musicians now. They're getting into a purely technical expertise as far as their music is concerned. They have absolutely nothing to do with the essence or the personality of music, with expressing the idea, with completing an idea, or with becoming a part of. They have extracted the essence. They have not touched the essence of music. They have excluded their personality. They're so aloof until they don't make personal contact with music. It's sickening to hear all of that going to waste.

QUESTION: What do you say to young musicians who come to you and ask, "What do I need to do to get it together?"

JONES: First of all, you have to find out what it is

you want to get together. A lot of times people really fool themselves, and they do it deliberately, which is the dumbest thing in the world because they're wasting their own time, and that's the only thing they've got. You have to find out what it is you want; then find out what you have to do to get it. That's all.

I think a lot of guys don't focus their attention on what it is they truly want to do. They allow themselves to be distracted. They use all sorts of excuses like "I had to study" or "I had to do this because I needed the money." Any excuse is better than none, and just about any excuse is used. I went through that whole thing. I went out on the road, and I went through a period where I worked with carnivals, with burlesque shows; I did the whole trip. There were quite a few carnivals in those days, and they were salvation for a lot of musicians who were on the road at that time. Most players, unless they had a highly organized trip, were invariably stranded when the carnival came through town and needed some players; that's who you hooked up with, so I understand about having to do things. I did it as a matter of survival. I played with carnivals because that was the only way I was

able to earn any money, but that taught me something. I knew I didn't have to go with the carnival. I could have washed dishes somewhere or I could have gone into the field. In those days, cotton picking was in style. I could have done all that, but I made my choice. You know what? Whatever choice I made I never griped about it. I said, "This is my decision and that's the way it's gonna be." I never gave it another thought. I was the one who had to live with it, so I did. As it turned out, it was very fortunate. I learned a lot and got a lot of experience and it brought me a little closer to people, too. Every experience we have invariably brings us closer to the people. I have a philosophy in writing. I think each chord is the last chord I'll ever write.

QUESTION: Tell me about that.

JONES: It's just another way of saying that there is not bad music. Like Art Tatum used to say, "There are no bad notes, just notes in the wrong place." I try to treat each chord as if it is the chord, the only chord, the ultimate. In construction and in beauty, I try to give it all the color I possibly can, and that's my philosophy, basically, of writing. I try to treat each note

as the most important I'll ever write.

QUESTION: What about in your playing?

JONES: I try to do the same. It's the seriousness of life that motivates and compels the music out of people. It's like their relationship with life. It's a form of communication with your inner self and the almighty God. When you think of music as that type of religion, you realize that, first of all, there's no halfway point in music if you really want to play it. It's all or total, or there's nothing there. That applies not only to the player, but to the listener. I think that's one of the reasons why jazz is such an experience --because it requires total listening, a total involvement by the listener. It isn't the kind of music you can judge casually. You can't treat jazz that way. It requires all of you because it's being created by all of that person. When you listen to Charlie Parker, for instance, it's very hard not to become totally unaware of everything else outside of that sound. Or listen to John Coltrane and have your mind be half on John Coltrane and half on something else. I don't see how it's possible. When I'm listening to John Coltrane, my mind is totally on him and what he was trying to say. If I get this feeling as



a listener, then you can imagine what they felt as players. It's mind-boggling--the commitment these men had--and that's the way it's got to be.

QUESTION: When did you make this commitment?

JONES: A long time ago. I don't even think it was conscious. It's something that happens gradually and something that's always in the back of your head. That you always know. I knew that I wanted to be nothing else but a musician, and I knew that I wanted to be a jazz musician, so everything else became secondary.

QUESTION: Was there ever a time when you felt you weren't putting everything you had into it?

JONES: Yes, there were a couple of times. I really got down on myself and it caused me to look inside myself a lot more closely and to find out if I was really honest about it or not. Usually, at those times I'd withdraw and do a lot of reading until I worked it out in my head. It was just that I allowed myself to be sidetracked, and that can be very harmful. When I realized that, it just put me right back on course, so there was never any problem after that. Then I formed the band, and we knew that we'd do anything humanly possible to keep it going. That was almost twelve years ago. I think about that because we never

talked about it, but we fought, scratched, scrambled and borrowed. Anything that a band could do, we have done. We did everything but steal. Now it's becoming an accepted part of the music community. That's what we're really fighting for--our place in the community.

QUESTION: How did you get the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Band together?

JONES: Mel and I have been friends since 1955. I was working with Count Basie and he was working with Stan Kenton. We played a battle of the bands in Detroit. It was hotter than a son of a bitch that night. The temperature must have been about 103 degrees. We had on these gray suits and I was never able to wear that suit again because it took a bath. It was just like I had thrown that suit in the tub.

Basie's band worked out on the terrace in the open section, and Kenton's band played the first half of the night inside. At intermission we changed places. We had about thirty minutes off. I was so tired. I was very depleted. My energy source was at it's lowest level. I was just sitting there trying to recharge and find me a little open space where I could just sit down and not bother anybody. All of a sudden I saw

this cat come out. He was dripping too. He came right over to where I was sitting and sat down. The first thing he said was, "Shit, it's hot as a son of a bitch out here." Do you know what? Out of all of those musicians in those two bands, Mel and I were the only two who could sit down and talk.

I took him out to the Midwest Inn and he met nearly everybody out there. He hung out all night. We went out there and jammed, played all night long. To show you how our lives have been running sort of parallel--in 1963 he left California where he was living and moved to New York. I hadn't seen him. In 1963 I said, "There's a man who stays in New York . . . ." Neither one of us knew we lived there. We wound up working together with Gerry Mulligan and his big band. We became very frustrated with the way Gerry conducted the whole thing. It was as though every time things got emotional he got scared. He backed away from it, and that's when we wanted to play. We finally said, "We're going to get involved." As soon as that moment of total involvement presented itself, Gerry Mulligan immediately did something drastic. I was shaken so bad I didn't think I'd be able to make it. Fortunately, for

both of us, Gerry disbanded that band. That's when Mel and I decided we should get a band together. Now we didn't know anything about no band. We were just sitting backstage at Birdland and I said, "We ought to get our own band." Mel said, "Yeah, let's get a band. Look, you call eight cats and I'll call eight." So we sat down and made up a list of names of people we were going to call, and we called them. Do you know what? Everyone of them said, "Yeah."

QUESTION: You're kidding. Who was in the first band?

JONES: We had Jerome Richardson, Jerry Dodgion, Eddie Daniels, Joe Farrell, and Pepper Adams. We had Garnett Brown, Bobby Brookmeyer, Cliff Heather, and Tom McIntosh in the trombone section. The trumpet section was Jimmy Owens, Jimmy Nottingham, Snooky Young, and a cat named Jimmy Maxwell. The rhythm section was Richard Davis, Hank playing the piano, Mel, and a guitar player by the name of Sam Herman. That was the original band. We called up people and everybody we called said, "Yeah man. You damn right. When is the first rehearsal?"

QUESTION: Did you have any charts?

JONES: I had eight or nine arrangements that I had written. Basie had asked me to write an album

for the band. He said, "I want to make an album just playing your music," so I wrote out these tunes. The band rehearsed them, Basie paid for them, and we never used them. Everytime I would see him I would say, "Basie, what about it?" He'd always say, "Oh yeah, man, yeah. We've got that record coming up. It ain't gonna be long." That's all I'd hear. So I said, "Okay, I have the scores and xeroxed copies of all the parts." They can buy arrangements, but they don't buy your score. You keep that. The original score belongs to you. You are not compelled to give that up to nobody. I had that and we had the xeroxed copies. We were rehearsing at the original A and R Studios on Forty-Eighth Street.

The cat told us we could rehearse for nothing. He said it would be a good chance to break in some new engineers. They could record us and learn the techniques of recording. It was beautiful. It was a reciprocal thing and it wasn't hurting nobody. It was after regular recording hours, so there was no question about the availability of the studio. We set the first rehearsal for twelve midnight. It was on a Monday. I thought since all of these guys

are coming, the least I can do since we're not paying them for the rehearsal is to make it a little more pleasant for them.

I bought a bottle of cognac, a bottle of scotch, and a bottle of vodka. I bought three bottles. I was the first one there. Rehearsal was supposed to begin at twelve, and I got there about a quarter of eleven. About ten minutes after I got there, my brother Hank came in. Hank doesn't drink, but he brought three bottles. He thought the cats might want a little something. A few minutes later, here came the trombone player, Cliff Heather and he brought three bottles. About twelve cats came in there with three bottles. When we got there, they were doing a jingle. It was supposed to be finished at eleven. Then they said they'd be finished at twelve. Then they said, "We've got to go over it again." They didn't finish the jingle until one o'clock in the morning. All of these guys were there an hour before rehearsal was supposed to start. That was the first time that had ever happened. All of these musicians were sitting there waiting. Everybody was glad to see everybody else. It was beautiful. Do you know what? We waited for over two hours and nobody left. Nobody left.

As a matter of fact, we were getting madder at the cat. We said, "Man, why don't you get them people out of here so we can play?" There was so much love in that room. It scared me into happiness.

The first professional job we ever had was at the Village Vanguard. The place was packed; I never saw so many people in that place before in my life. The band was on the stage getting ready to play. Mel was back there on drums, and I was left standing out in front. Rehearsal was one thing, but we were getting ready to play. I was thinking to myself, "What have we done? Here we are sitting up here with about eight or nine arrangements and what the hell are we gonna do?" I began to panic, and I turned around and looked at Mel and Jerome Richardson who were sitting in the front row, with their hands crossed, smiling. I asked Jerome, "What am I gonna do?" He just smiled. I said, "Mel, what am I gonna do?" He started smiling too. He said, "I don't know." So I said to myself, "I know this much--I wrote all of these things and I know basically every note in them. I've got all these cats who can play, so I'll just have to figure out a way to play it in sections. I'll

take this opening section, lead it into the middle section, and between each section I'll open it up for solos. I'll point to different guys and have different guys get up, and maybe I'll change the rhythms around in different places." All of this was going through my head, and all of a sudden I kicked a number off and the next thing you know I began to conduct the notes. I created some signals. When we wanted to stretch it out, I took my hand and did this (gesture) and they understood what I meant. Then when I did this (gesture) it meant bring it up. Then I began to refine the signs, and now we've got a whole new set, but most of it I invented on the bandstand. Nine times out of ten the guys don't know what I'm going to do. Mel asked me one time, "What is that?" I used to crack them up. There are certain little things you can do. You can extract a portion of the arrangement here, you can delete a portion of the arrangement here, you can delete a portion there, you can reinforce a portion here, and if you do all of these things while the basic things are going on in the rhythm section, you have what amounts to a completely different arrangement. Everyone would be doing something different, but all of



that would come after a rising crescendo of sounds, then all of a sudden back into the original arrangement. That's the kind of thing our band really does best, and that's what we're noted for because we try to create and reshape the music while we're on stage. That's why it isn't necessary to have a book that's almost a foot thick. You can suffice adequately with a book that's 150 charts, because if you're in a state of constant change, then in effect you have 5,000 charts in that book.

QUESTION: What's required of you on your gig in order to make the music happen?

JONES: I feel like today I'm different than I was before. Each day brings a different sound and different feel to the music. The notes don't geographically change their location, but the feeling, and the way to express that note changes. I'm aware of that little change inside of me, and I try to express that thought to all the guys on the bandstand. All of a sudden, it seems as though our communication expands and we become very conscious of what's taking place. We accept it and flow in that direction together. That's why I make a conscious effort to make everyone aware of that constant change in us every day.

We try to express it in music.

QUESTION: When do you find time to write?

JONES: I just have to write whenever I can.

QUESTION: With all the writing you do, how do you keep up with the trumpet?

JONES: You have to understand that I was a player before I became a writer. Basically, that's my love. I think writing supplements that love that I feel for the horn, and it gives me more of a feeling of being in tune with the horn because of my ability as a writer. My ability as a player supplements my ability as a writer. They run parallel; they run together.

QUESTION: A lot of time you write ensemble passages that sound improvised. What is that?

JONES: In writing lines I try to write the things that I would play as a soloist. I write a line that I would want to play in my solo. I was really impressed with writing. I listened to a lot of arrangements. One thing I began to realize is that the true impact of the band is not on the syncopated beats. 1-2-3-4 is probably the strongest rhythm force in the world. When a band syncopates it dissipates the impact and reinforces with something else. Like the drummer will have to reinforce the horn passages,

because by separating 1 and 2, you have minimized or diminished the force. I realized how much more simple, but effective, the true forceful acts were.

QUESTION: What do you say the role of discipline is in the development of musicianship?

JONES: I was listening to the avant-garde roll onto the scene, and I thought it was very undisciplined because it didn't include others. It said, "This is what I want to do, so the hell with the rest." Discipline is a control, and if you are really controlling what you want to do, it will include others. It can't exclude anybody. If you have the discipline and have taken it to the ultimate, that's peace of mind. You must include others. When you have the technique, the design, and the discipline, you evolve into a completeness. All of the different things seem to match. It's like that old saying, "Harmony without application isn't harmony at all." It doesn't do you any good to know it if you can't play it, and it doesn't do you any good to have peace of mind if you can't share it.

QUESTION: Do you still practice the horn?

JONES: Yes. I'm beginning to get back into it.

because the kind of work that's coming up is going to demand more. I've been doing a lot more jobs with a small group.

QUESTION: Who are you using as a small group?

JONES: Just myself and rhythm section. We've got some gigs coming up in the future where we'll use a quartet. It's a lot of fun. You have to demand more of yourself in a situation like that in order to make it as interesting. Playing and dealing with a certain sameness of routine can become boring. I have to practice and devise different ways to make it more interesting to me, harmonically and rhythmically.

QUESTION: Do you do technical things in your practice?

JONES: Sometimes. If I feel that that part of me needs real work, then I go back to basics. I try to get into a flow where I can respond without any conscious effort, instinctively or automatically. I try to improve my knowledge of a chord and expand it out so that in playing I get to that part and know that is a direction I can go. There's a certain routine you get in as far as practice is concerned that mysteriously covers the things you have trouble with when you play.

QUESTION: Do you play every day?

JONES: No, I don't; sometimes it's impossible. When I get to the hotel and have some time, I take the horn out and familiarize myself with it. It's very difficult to pick up the horn cold and expect to express any idea that you have. Physically, you won't be able to do it, so it's necessary that you get your body into working conditions so you can respond more faithfully. The mental thing is really where it is seventy-five percent of the time. What you think and the way you think and how you approach a problem determines whether that problem's going to be solved or not. Most problems that I'm confronted with are mental. It's my attitude toward them that makes it either difficult or easy. Practice is definitely very important whether you do it or not, because like in my case, I don't have the opportunity to do it often, but I realize the importance of it and I sometimes suffer from the lack of it. I can feel this, and it causes a lot of frustration and makes me angry at myself, so I immediately resolve to do something about that problem. Practice is definitely important. When I was learning the horn, I used to be referred to as a classical player. I had all the techniques down--double-

tonguing, triple-tonguing--and I had played most of the standard trumpet solos at that time. I think that part of it is necessary because it gives you a strong base from which to operate when you're confronted with a technical problem. I played on the CBS orchestra for about seven years. I had to play a lot of music that ordinarily I wouldn't even come in contact with. It required the knowledge of certain techniques about the trumpet. I found that I was able to function really well at concerts. I never really had too much trouble with it.

QUESTION: Have you studied classical writing and composers?

JONES: I have some scores that I look at from time to time. I have Stravinsky scores and I have Wagner scores. Wagner really impressed me with his ability as a writer more than any of the classical composers. I'm most impressed with his style. He had a positive approach to the orchestra and he really extracted the sound. When I was in Europe this past summer, I brought back with me an album that was recorded by the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra that I enjoyed very much. It was excerpts from the opera, Siegfried. There was no singing; it was all instrumental. It was some of the most fantastic

writing that I have ever listened to in my life. The man was a genius, no doubt about it. Wagner should be studied in every music school in the world just to listen to his writing and the various combinations of instruments of the orchestra. They are really superb. I like Ravel also. I think Ravel wrote some very beautiful things, but his writing never carried the power of Wagner. Wagner could write a simple line, and by the time he would reinforce it with various instruments, he had movement and he had power. Another writer who impressed me was Puccini. I think he wrote the most beautiful melodies I have ever heard. I really focused on him fully when Leontyne Price was a guest on the show that I was playing on CBS. She sang an aria from Puccini. There were three trumpet parts. We had four trumpets in the orchestra, and since I was the newest man, I was the guy who didn't have to play. I sat out on that one. I sat out in the auditorium, and I heard this woman sing Puccini. When I came back from wherever that woman took me, I was crying like a baby. Leontyne Price was enough to get to you right there, but to hear her sing Puccini like that was something else.

There was a black woman from Laurel, Mississippi, and an Italian, and all of a sudden they were one. Ain't that something? Who would have thought it? They made it so real to me. I have never had any experience like that before in my life. I went out and I bought so many Leontyne Price records. My wife said, "What are you going to do with all this?" I said, "I'm going to listen to it." I also have about twenty different versions of Siegfried at the house.

QUESTION: Do you have anything coming out soon?

JONES: Yes. We were signed with A and M records and we were recording on the Horizon label, but they discontinued the label. The parent company A and M, made the mistake that most companies make. They refuse to give jazz the support that it needs. They're in the business of instant turnover, and you know what that means. They're making a mistake there. They are helping to destroy a whole culture. We are trying to fight. Mel and I took part in an interview with a representative of congress from Michigan, and hopefully we're going to get some congressional action on this whole thing.



QUESTION: If you could go back and change anything you wanted to, would you change anything?

JONES: Not one thing. Everything was just like it was supposed to be, and I think God intended for it to be that way. If he didn't, it would probably have developed in another direction. If God intended for it to be, that's the way it is. Everybody embarks on the course that is best designed to give them the knowledge that they need for life. When you sum it up, there were some truly grand moments, some really majestic times.

## DAVID LIEBMAN INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

LIEBMAN: I was born in Brooklyn, New York, on September 4, 1946.

QUESTION: How did you get into playing?

LIEBMAN: It was just something you did. I was living in Brooklyn in a pretty straight ahead middle-class Jewish neighborhood. We played at school. We did shows, sings, dance bands, and things like that. By being in music you were able to stand out and do something different from everybody else. Mainly I was getting into it to play dance music for wedding and bar mitzvahs. They were straight ahead gigs. When I was about twelve or thirteen I started saxophone. I was studying in school. You got your lesson and then you went downstairs and had a dance band workshop. You learned all the tunes that you had to play for weddings and that kind of stuff. I started working gigs when I was thirteen. I started going to the Catskill Mountains resort area for the summer and playing every night. I was becoming a musician, but it was always going to be just to help me get through medical school. That is what I always wanted to do. I wanted to be a surgeon. I was always tight with doctors

because I was in the hospital a lot. I had polio when I was three. It took me until I was about twelve to get it straight. I wore a brace and that kind of shit. I was into a different space because of that. I was pretty straight ahead. I kind of over compensated for everything. I was on top of what I had to do. Music was something to help me get through, according to the way my parents saw it, and I could dig that. Then I started hearing cats play. I remember the first time I heard a cat play jazz. He was one of the teachers at this school in Brooklyn. He was a young cat playing jazz and teaching to make ten bucks an hour. That is what took me out. I couldn't understand how he moved all of those keys that fast. I said, "I've got to do that." I didn't even know what he was playing. I was thirteen or fourteen at the time. I had started to go up to the Catskills and there were a lot of good players. Marty Morell, Arnie Lawrence, and Eddie Daniels were some of the cats who were there.

QUESTION: What year was this?

LIEBMAN: This was the period when I was in high school, between 1960 and 1964. I got together with a couple of cats in school and we had a band.

We called it The Impromptu Quartet. One guy is dead, another guy is a psychiatrist, and the other guy is still playing piano. I played with David Bowie for a few years. That was my first group. We played rock-and-roll and weird sweet sixteen gigs, but we were also into jazz. The piano player and I were into jazz. Then I started meeting musicians. I went to New York and started seeking it out. I went to the Village and took my horn. They told me that there was jazz in the streets of Greenwich Village so I took the train to Greenwich Village. There wasn't jazz on the street. There were folk singers and coffee houses.

QUESTION: Were you playing in school bands while all of this was going on?

LIEBMAN: Yes. I was playing in the school band and dance band. I was doing everything in the music department at school. I was playing clarinet at that time. That was my first instrument after the piano. According to the teacher, you had to start on clarinet. They had my mother conned. The theory was that anyone who played saxophone in a show band or played club dates was going to have to double on clarinet and eventually flute. That was true. Clarinet was harder than saxophone, and by learning clarinet first, you overcame

the hurdles. I played clarinet for the first year, then saxophone, and finally flute. Then I went back to piano. Classical piano was my first instrument. I studied with a neighborhood teacher before I got into the saxophone. I must have been about nine years old at the time. I was pretty good at it but I hated it. I was into rock-and-roll. I listened to the radio like a maniac. I was a collector of forty-fives like you have never seen. I've still got forty-fives at home of Jerry Lee Lewis, Elvis Presley, the Shirelles, and all of that shit. I knew every tune by heart. That was my social life--dancing, hanging out, and parties. I loved the saxophone in that music. Duane Eddy's band had a great saxophone player and Bill Haley had a great saxophone player. I remember some of the tunes that were hits: "Rudy's Rock," "Honky Tonk," and "Walking with Mr. Lee." There was Bill Doggett on organ and The Bill Black Combo. There was a group named Johnny and the Hurricanes who made a tune called "Cross Fire." That is what I heard in New York. That was the music of the time. I was taking classical piano and hated it. Finally I said, "Look Ma, I gotta play some of that music that I listen to." It was really

funny because my piano teacher was a little fat lady who was cool. She gave me "Love Me Tender" by Elvis Presley. That was my first tune with chord changes. I decided I couldn't go along with that too long so I switched to saxophone. Finally I got in high school and started hearing jazz and digging what was happening. My first real friend besides this piano player who was named Mike Garson was Bob Moses the drummer. He was my first compatriote. We got it on. That was the beginning of a heavy music relationship. His parents were into jazz. He lived in New York. He knew everybody and Rahsaan was his Godfather. I mean he was cool. Somehow his parents were into that circle. They were hip. It was like a whole other world to me. I was coming from Brooklyn and that was a different world. I said, "I ain't going to be no doctor. I ain't spending fifteen years in school." I dug immediately that there was no way that I was going to spend ten or fifteen years doing it before I got out there. I didn't love it that much. Then I thought I'd be a music teacher. I wanted to be cool, but I didn't know about the jazz thing. To play jazz was cool, but to be a professional jazz musician was out. I didn't know anybody who

was that, so I went to college and got a degree.

QUESTION: What kind of degree did you get?

LIEBMAN: I got a degree in American history from New York University. I started out as a music major but I couldn't use the classical thing. I knew I wanted to do music so I thought I would be a music major and get something out of it. The first day I walked into Queens College they gave me a listening list that covered the next four years. It was a list of all the classical works you were required to know from Palestrina to Berg. I had never really listened to classical music except for the required music. I had played a little Beethoven on piano but I couldn't relate to all of that, so I said, "If I am going to have know this, I am going to have to spend the rest of my life in the music library. I want to know what John Coltrane is doing." That was the beginning of the recognition that I was going to have to go another way. I was about eighteen at the time. From then on I got serious. I started studying with the right cats. I studied with Lennie Tristano, Charles Lloyd, and the best classical sax teacher in the City, Joe Allard. I went to college and finished, but I didn't do music in college. I learned history

and got a teaching certificate. What I dug about teaching was that at that time I could substitute teach for two days and make sixty bucks take home. I was a substitute teacher in the New York City school system per diem. I went to a different school everyday. They would call me at seven in the morning and I had to go. That was out. A sub's ass was grass. It didn't even have to be a bad school for them to kill you. There was one class where these kids were going to throw me out the window by two-thirty. The principal told me to just make sure that they didn't kill each other. He was serious. I had made the decision that I didn't want to work any more music gigs that I didn't like. I played club dates all through high school and college to make money and I started to hate it. The more I learned about jazz and another way of life, the more I hated all of that shit. I hated the whole world, the square music, and those weird people. you were playing for. I wanted to kill them all. There I was playing and trying to make them have a good time at their son's wedding, and I could care less about Mr. and Mrs. Pole Pollock. I was getting real revolutionary. I was eighteen, and that was 1965 when shit in this country was



starting to get heavy. I had started to find out a lot of shit and I couldn't be fooled anymore. A consciousness was coming upon me as a person growing up in New York City. I was going through LSD, the Beatles, pop culture, tune-in, turn-on--the whole number. I wanted to learn how to play, so I taught two days a week and the rest of the week I was spaced out. I just practiced and played.

QUESTION: What did you practice?

LIEBMAN: I started with Charlie Parker and took his solos off and studied the chords. I had a piano, drums, and a bass amp at my place and had cats come up and play. Anybody could come at any hour to play. I had a loft at Nineteenth Street and Seventh Avenue. There were two other lofts there. Dave Holland lived on the second floor and Chick Corea lived on the first floor. When I moved, I gave my place to Mike Brecker who lived there until about a year ago. The whole building has been music since I can remember and I was the first tenant. I just stayed in the pad all the time. I ate rice and got into microbiotics and a lot of drugs. I got out.

QUESTION: Who were some of the cats who came through your pad?

LIEBMAN: Bob Moses, Carl Schroeder who plays with Sarah Vaughn now, Lenny White, and Steve Grossman were always up there. Dave Holland, of course, and Chick, and the Breckers were there. It was about ten to fifteen cats in contact, but nobody was known then. It was just when Chick and Dave had started with Miles. Dave had just moved to America. They were hardly known. The Breckers weren't known. Nobody knew anybody. We were all driving cabs, or in my case, doing a lot of substitute teaching. Nobody was playing a gig. We formed a cooperative called Free Life Communication, which is still in existence. It was a self-help kind of thing. We got grants from the New York State Council for the Arts. We did a thing like the AACM (Association for the Advancement of Creative Music) in New York. We had about forty cats involved in it. It was a pretty deep kind of thing. We were not working and we dug that we couldn't work because most of us were white and were not known. We knew that the only way our music was going to get better was to go out and play for people. We went to churches and put concerts on. We charged a buck and a half at the door and put flyers out on the street to advertise.

QUESTION: Did you get large audiences?

LIEBMAN: We would get fifty people. If it were some cats who were known, we would get between 100 or 200 people. Nobody made any money, but we paid our expenses. Sometimes we maybe lost eight bucks. It was a scuffle but we were playing. Then slowly cats got known. I got gigs with Elvin and Ten Wheel Drive and I stopped doing the organization. By then I was about twenty-five years old.

I neglected to say that I drove a cab for a week, saved my money, and went up near Woodstock and rented a house for 130 dollars a month. I practiced for five months. I stayed there until my money ran out.

QUESTION: What would a typical practice day be like?

LIEBMAN: I had an eight-hour schedule. I don't remember what the exact order was, but I probably played the saxophone for about an hour doing long tones and scales. I would do my real straight stuff. Then I would spend several hours taking solos off records. I would write them out. Then I would spend several hours working on the solo that I wrote out. Then I would go to the piano and learn tunes. That would take me from nine in the morning until five or six at night. Then

I would have dinner, go to sleep, get up and do the same shit the next day. That was a four- or five-month period. I graduated from college and went away the next day. I was really set on doing it because I thought I had been in school too long. I was into college when I started, but by the time I finished, I thought it was the stupidest thing I ever did.

QUESTION: What happened after that?

LIEBMAN: I went back to New York, got the loft on Nineteenth Street, started playing, and taught two days a week. That went on for a year and a half until I got the gig with Ten Wheel Drive. That was the first time I had a gig.

QUESTION: What was that whole scene about?

LIEBMAN: That was a gig I didn't mind doing. It wasn't in the category of gigs that I wouldn't do anymore. It was a jazz-rock band of the period of Blood, Sweat & Tears, and Chicago. This was the newest thing, the first popular fusion thing. It was about 1969. Ten Wheel Drive was one of the first studio bands. These cats were all studio players so the band changed three or four times. I was in one band that went on for a year. It was the final band before the group broke up. We made two albums. I got paid 150

dollars a week just to be in this band. I was on call. We rehearsed all the time and we played. It was a daily gig. It was a rock-and-roll band. There were ten cats with roadies and a bus that picked you up for the gigs. It was a good band. We had a chick singer and five horns. I was playing baritone sax most of the time. I got money so I bought my first soprano.

QUESTION: Who put the band together?

LIEBMAN: It was a big business deal that was put together by Polydor Records. It was big money. It was one of the first of that kind of band.

QUESTION: What happened after Ten Wheel Drive broke up?

LIEBMAN: I formed a band which was the predecessor of the band I now have with Pee Wee (Ellis). The name of the band was Sawbuck. That was where I first met Pee Wee. It was a burning band. It was a jazz-rock band. We were in existence at the same time as Dreams which had Randy and Mike Brecker, Billy Cobham, and John Abercrombie. They were in New York and better known than us. We didn't have any known cats at that time and we were working the Westchester area mainly. We stuck it out for awhile. That band went on for about a year and a half and eventually recorded as a group called Gotham because the name had to

be changed. We recorded on Motown records.

QUESTION: What was your next gig?

LIEBMAN: I thought that I was going to end up being the kind of musician who was being turned out in Blood, Sweat & Tears. This was a whole new area called jazz-rock. There was some big band oriented shit like Blood, Sweat & Tears, Chicago, Cold Blood, Tower of Power, and Dreams. This was a big thing then and still is now. I figured that was what I was going to get into. I figured that I would go from gig to gig with this band that we formed and do the same thing. It was not jazz. Then I got the gig with Elvin (Jones). I said, "Holy shit, now I've got a chance to really find out what Coltrane was doing." I was playing jazz during my loft period and listening to Trane. That was all we did. Then when I got into Ten Wheel Drive, I got into rock-and-roll again like when I was a kid and had the top fifty. I figured I was a white cat and there weren't many white cats playing jazz. A lot of them were slipping in with jazz-rock shit so this was a chance for me to make a living in music. I was digging it for the first time. I didn't want to be a studio musician because it was too out for me. I couldn't stand

the discipline. I didn't have that kind of head. I couldn't do a Broadway kind of performing thing because of my leg. What the hell was I going to do? I figured I was a white cat and I was not as good as all of those guys in New York. I knew who could play. I wasn't a great player then. I got in this jazz-rock thing and formed this band with Pee Wee and I figured that was it. It was a great band. We had guitar, bass, drums, and four horns. We didn't have a keyboard player. We had one guitar who was a strong, incredible guitar player. We had a burning singer who was better than David Clayton-Thomas. We were a burning band that played twenty-minute solos. We were not slick at all. We were totally funk'd out and loud. We were working little gigs in dives. This was around 1969 or 1970. Then Gene Perla got the gig with Elvin. I had been playing with Gene, Jan Hammer, Miroslav (Vitous), Don Alias, and Steve Grossman a lot down at Gene's loft. That was another center. Perla and Hammer lived together at the time. I thought "Dig that, he is working with Elvin. Maybe the shit is starting to get closer." Elvin had Gene Perla, Joe Farrell, and Frank Foster in the band. Joe Farrell had already been there for three or four

years. One night about midnight Gene called me up and said, "Hey, Lieb, I am over here at Slug's." Gene was the first friend of mine who had a heavy gig. He was well known. He had played with Nina Simone, but he took Wilbur Little's place with Elvin. Wilbur had taken Jimmy Garrison's place. Anyway he said, "Elvin says that you should come down and sit in." I got the vibe. I thought that maybe Joe was leaving. I didn't know what was happening. I was scared as shit. I walked in the club and Elvin was just beautiful. As soon as I walked in, he came over and met me because we knew each other through faces. I had experiences with him when I was working with Pete La Roca. Pete was my first real jazz experience during the teaching period. The first band we had was with Chick Corea and Steve Swallow and then eventually we used every piano and bass player in the City. Pete is now a lawyer. He gave up because he wanted to be a leader. He didn't want to be a sideman. He was Trane's first drummer. He also played with Sonny Rollins. I had met Elvin one night when I was with Pete at La Boheme in New York. I was very close to Pete. He was my first inspiration. I got a recommendation to try out for Pete's band from



Bob Moses who was working with Steve Swallow and Gary Burton. The band was Chick Corea, Steve Swallow, and Pete La Roca. Nobody was real well known. Chick was just starting to get known, but those were the baddest cats around. I mean these were some bad musicians. I went for an audition and I was nervous. My stomach was in butterflies the whole day and the day before. These cats were so smooth and slick. I was reading this tune and whatever it was I was cool. Pete said, "Yes, Dave, okay." That started the relationship with Pete. He needed somebody like me who would do anything to play with him. I mean anything. We got five dollars a night and it didn't matter. I wanted to play with Pete La Roca because it was Chick Corea, and after Chick it was George Cables, Larry Willis, Jimmy Garrison, Miroslav, Eddie Gomez and everybody. Pete got a lot of gigs during the six months that this band was happening. I was with him all the time. He got whoever he could to play bass and piano. We worked at this place called Danny's. We worked at The Scene and we worked at the Vanguard one weekend. He really wanted it to work, but Pete is a heavy perfectionist. The word drummer does not really describe him. He is an underground cat who is incredible.

He was really showing me the shit. I was playing with a heavy cat. One night I said to Pete, "Man, we can't keep this band going. I can't keep doing this." We were getting five dollars a night at La Boheme at Sixty-Ninth and Broadway. We worked there for six weeks--two weeks with Chick and Dave and the rest of the time with other cats. This was real, man. Elvin lived around the corner so he came in one night. He was real nice to Pete, and Pete looked up to Elvin like he was his father. Elvin asked, "How is it going Pete?" Pete said, "Well, I don't know man. I can't keep this together much longer." Elvin came over to me and said, "Are you playing with Pete?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Well, you stay with Pete." Then he walked out. I knew Elvin from the neighborhood. Anyway, Gene called me down to Slug's. I walked in and he said, "Hey, Dave, you ready?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Let's go." Joe Farrell didn't play the set. I went up and played the whole set.

QUESTION: What did you play?

LIEBMAN: We played "Night in Tunisia," "Yesterday's," and the blues. It was a trio. Gene, Elvin, and I played the set. I came off the stand and Elvin said, "I've got a record date next week. I want

you to make my record date," and he laughed. I was just in heaven. That wasn't the gig, but I went and did the record with him called Genesis. At that same time John McLaughlin did a record and I did that. The name of the record is My Goals Beyond. It has Billy Cobham, Charlie Haden, and Airto on it. It is a beautiful, beautiful record. I love that record. This all came the same month--sitting in with Elvin, recording with Elvin, and making the record with John McLaughlin. I figured the shit was starting to change. Something was happening. Then six months later Elvin called me for the gig. Before that I started subbing for Joe when he couldn't make it. I would take his place at the Vanguard and play a double gig while I was doing Sawbuck. Then one night Elvin called me from Chicago. I wouldn't answer the phone. I was with this chick and I said, "I ain't getting up. I don't care who it is." I was just tired. I was living in another loft downtown on Warren Street near the World Trade Center. I had a chick, I was cool, and I was doing this band and trying to get it together. She answered the phone and said, "It's Elvin Jones." I got out of the bed and went to the phone. He said, "Dave, I am a little hung

up, man. Joe can't make it out. I am in Chicago and I need you to come out immediately for this afternoon. I have a clinic. I want you to continue on the week." I caught a seven o'clock flight and got to Chicago. The first gig was with a trio at a little college outside of Chicago. It was Elvin, Gene, and me. I played the entire weekend with him. He called me down to his room the second night and said, "I want you to join my group." Well, that was it. I was very attached to Sawbuck and Pee Wee and the cats, so it was not as easy to leave as I make it sound. I was real involved. Rock-and-roll bands become families. It gets heavy. It is a little different from jazz even though jazz bands are getting like that. There is no sideman shit. If you're in the band, you are committed. There is none of that professional shit. Everybody is into it. We were close. This was the first time I had to leave a band. I said to them, "Elvin Jones wants me to join his group." You have to understand that these were all guys who wanted to play jazz. They were all doing the jazz-rock thing because that was what they did.

QUESTION: What did the band say?

LIEBMAN: They looked at me like, "Man, are you kidding?"

You ain't got no choice. You've got to do that." It was beautiful. Elvin Jones, John Coltrane's drummer, wanted me to be his saxophone player. That was enough said. I had to do it. Sawbuck went on for six months or so after I left. Without being boastful, I think that my presence was very important in that band. It was falling apart at that time anyway and business was bad. We were trying to be a cooperative band and that was a big mistake. You can't have eight cats trying to make business decisions like what record label to go with or what terms to agree to in a contract. Anyway, I got out of that and I went with Elvin.

QUESTION: What was that scene?

LIEBMAN: It was jazz--three sets a night, six nights a week, club after club. It was bebop and Elvin Jones.

QUESTION: Who was in the band when you got in?

LIEBMAN: It was me and Joe Farrell at first. Then it was me with Jan Hammer for awhile on piano. That was unbelievable. Then it was me with Grossman. We used two saxophones. Elvin liked the front line of two saxophones. He liked that sound. That was one of Elvin's better bands. He knows that people remember that band. We made a live record called Live at the Lighthouse. That was

heavy, man. The band was all white. Dig this. Three young white cats with Elvin Jones--Liebman, Grossman, and Perla. It sounds like a law firm. We were with Elvin Jones, the master drummer, Mr. Africa. It was out. We were playing Slugs three weeks in a row in the middle of summer. It was a heavy experience. I was a jazz musician. I had arrived at the point where I was playing jazz every night.

QUESTION: Can you point to any specific things that really contributed to your getting to the point of being a jazz musician?

LIEBMAN: I have been very fortunate to have had great teachers. I feel that you are a reflection of whom you learn from. If you were lucky, you got it. If you were not, you just didn't make it this time around. It really has nothing to do with you. I met Coltrane once. I had him as an image of what music could be like. That is why I wanted to play saxophone. At first I wanted to play jazz because the guy moved fast. That was my level of liking jazz. I liked it because it was technical. From there, I went into a concept of jazz as being heavy music. I dug that the musical was spiritual. I started getting into my head. My values changed. I

was getting hip. I was getting educated. I realized that the music was out. I had Trane. Charles Lloyd, and Joe Allard for teachers and as influences. My history teacher in school was a great influence. My next-door neighborhood was a great influence. My parents were a great influence. I had good people who supported me in what I did. They supported me in the sense of saying, "We believe in you and you have always been pretty good at whatever you do. You've been together so far so go ahead."

QUESTION: What was your improvisational concept during the time that you were with Elvin?

LIEBMAN: I was still really coming from Trane..

QUESTION: How has your improvisational concept changed over the years?

LIEBMAN: You just start to hear more of what it is that makes a record sound good to you. I just started to know more and more why it was so good. At first I didn't know what was good so it didn't matter. I could listen to Brubeck or Coltrane and it didn't matter to me. Then I started to know what was good because I was playing with cats. I was listening, watching, and reading. I was really into the pursuit of knowledge. I was into talking to cats or reading anything that

had to do with the music. My ear was getting better so I was getting better. If you just keep doing it, you get better. The woodshedding after college got me the basics and the loft thing made me strong. I was a pretty good player but I didn't think that I was a great player. I was getting educated into what was good. I started to try and do what was good. Tone, time, feeling, building solos, and all of the musical considerations started to be important to me. It wasn't just playing. My first concept was that I should just play fast and weird. Then I finally learned that you've got to play chord changes so I buzzed through the the chord changes; it is making art with the changes. I also learned what you can do without changes. I started to appreciate Archie Shepp, Pharoah Sanders, Albert Allier, Ornette (Coleman) and that whole school. By the time I played with Elvin, I had a pretty good training in Trane, Sonny, and Miles (Davis). I knew the music. I knew a lot of tunes. I knew the language, and I can say that I certainly knew Elvin's language. I had seen him more than anybody. Trane and Elvin were it as far as I was concerned. I could hear some of what they were doing. A lot of guys play with Elvin and get thrown, but to me he is



the easiest guy in the world to play with. It sounds real natural to me. Elvin takes some getting used to because he has a very different drum feel. It is not a typical, ordinary feel. He plays a certain kind of flow of triplets. I had really heard a lot of it, and I guess that is why I sounded good when I sat in with him. Some other cat who is a good player and never loses his place might play with Elvin and get flustered and lose his place if he is not used to Elvin's flow. He is playing in such a floaty kind of loose way. He is very loose and elusive but he is always there. My concept stayed pretty much the same until I got with Miles.

QUESTION: How did you get the gig with Miles?

LIEBMAN: I knew Miles from the neighborhood. I knew him through Dave and Chick and hanging around a lot. Dave and Chick lived in my building and they were playing with Miles, so when they played in New York I would go to see them. We were living together and we were very close. We were into the same diets. We were all into yoga and all of that crazy shit. We were out. Those cats were heavies. I was taking my cues from them. Chick was practicing Berg and Charles Ives and all of that, and they were getting the group, Circle,

together at the time. I had seen Miles coming to gigs, and once he had come over to the pad and hung out. Miles had Grossman already and knew me from Grossman. When Miles had hired Grossman, he had come and heard us play at a place called Danny's. Grossman and I did a concert with two bass players, two drummers, and a piano player. We used George Cables, Lenny White, Bob Moses, Lanny Fields, and Dave Holland. Miles came down to hear us. It was a Sunday afternoon and we filled the place. Miles liked Steve Grossman so he hired him. By the time I got with Miles, Steve had left and Carlos Garnett had been in the band. I followed Garnett. That is how I knew Miles. It was the New York circle of people and I was working with Elvin Jones. All the cats in New York knew who is working with whom. After a year and a half or two years with Elvin, we were accepted by everybody. At first, the heavies would come out to hear us. I think the vibe was kind of weird because Elvin had hired two white saxophone players. There were probably cats who were better and we were playing like Trane, but I guess Elvin had his reasons. I don't know. Maybe I am just paranoid. After awhile, whatever it was went away and I felt cool. I didn't feel

funny being in the Vanguard playing in front of all of the cats. I held my place. Then I did On the Corner with Miles. Grossman was supposed to do it and he didn't show so they called me. I remember it very well. I was in Brooklyn at a doctor's office. They called my mother who is a teacher and she called me at the doctor's office and said, "A guy named Teo Macero just called and said that Miles Davis is recording and he wants you to come right now and record." I hung up the phone and the speed at which I traveled was unbelievable. I went from Brooklyn to Fifty-Second and Madison during lunch hour so fast that you wouldn't believe it. I had my axes with me. I knew that the session had started at ten and would be over by one so I wanted to get there. I got there and couldn't find a parking place so I left my car in the street. I got to the studio at twelve-thirty. I walked into this little alcove and I could see into the studio and the recording booth through the glass. The setting was great. It was this giant Columbia studio where the New York Philharmonic records. I saw Miles through the glass. He motioned for me to come in. Dig some of the cats who were there. There was Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, and Harold Williams playing keyboards. There was

Jack De Johnette, Don Alias, Badal Roy, John McLaughlin, Larry Young, and Billy Harper. Everybody was at their instrument and there was so much tension. Everybody was frozen in attention. I walked in and just stood there and didn't say anything. Miles didn't say one word to me. He walked over to Jack and in this low voice said, "Jack, I just want you to play this one thing that I will show you." He went over to the drums and played this weird rhythm thing and Jack said, "Yeah, okay." Miles said, "I just want you to play that. Don't change it." It was so quiet in the studio, and Miles was hardly talking above a whisper. In the meantime, the red light was on the whole time. I found out later as I recorded with Miles that they run the machines all the time and record everything that Miles does. The music started and it was this weird music. It was the first track on On the Corner. I couldn't hear the key and I didn't know shit. Michael Henderson was playing bass. I didn't know what was going on. I was just looking at the cats. Miles hadn't looked at me since he had told me to come in. Miles finally turned, looked at me, and wiggled his fingers like he was playing a soprano saxophone. He still didn't

say anything. I got my soprano out and I was a couple of feet away from him. Without saying anything he came up behind me and pushed me toward the mike and he softly said, "Play, play." If I put that record on for you right now, I could tell you everything that I was thinking on every note that I played. What I played at that moment is what is on the record. There are some funny notes in there. I played something but I was out. I didn't know what key they were in. I was out to lunch. I didn't know what was going on. I was hanging out after the session with Miles and the other cats listening to the playback, and he came over to me and said, "I want you to join my band." I didn't think he was serious so I said something to the effect that I was playing with Elvin and I loved it. I was really close to Elvin by this time. He was like my father. I had been with him for about a year and a half. We were tight. I didn't take Miles seriously, so I split. That was August. The next January he showed up at the Vanguard one night when we were working. I knew he was there and I knew that he was definitely checking it out. During the break he asked me to join his band. I felt better this time

because he was on my grounds. He came to hear me. I didn't take somebody's place like I did on the record date. I took it seriously and I said, "I've got to ask Elvin. If Elvin needs me, I can't leave." I told him he should ask Elvin. He said, "I'll call him." I got home that night and the phone rang and it was Miles. He said, "I talked to Elvin and he said it's alright. I'll see you tomorrow night." I went to work the next night at the Vanguard and I saw Elvin. He came over to me and said, "Miles called me last night and he wants you." I said, "I know." He said, "You've got to go. If Miles wants you, you've got to go." I was almost in tears because I loved Elvin. It got real emotional. Elvin put this grin on and said, "Man, you know I love you, and Miles will be a great experience for you. Don't worry about it." Miles came in the club that night and stayed the whole night. He invited me to his place to hear some tapes. He said, "You don't have to play this stuff anymore. I've got a great band." He was heavy into Sly (Stone). He was really into a track on the Fresh album called "In Time." We talked money and got that straight and then he said, "I am playing the Fillmore Friday night. I want you to work

with my band." That was the one gig that they reopened the Fillmore for. It was Miles Davis and Paul Winter.

QUESTION: What year was that?

LIEBMAN: It was January of 1973. So that Friday night, which was the next night, I worked with Elvin and Miles. I worked the concert with Miles. That was over by eleven-thirty, and then I went to play with Elvin. I finished the next week with Elvin at the Jazz Workshop. Then it was Miles. That was the next stage.

QUESTION: What was happening in that band?

LIEBMAN: I don't know, man. It was some space shit. It was not until I had been in the band three months that I started to hear it and realize what it was musically. Miles is an amazing musician. He is also an unbelievable band leader. He knows how to relate to people for what he needs. He gets out of you what he wants. He hires you because he hears that it could be, not because it is. He makes it that way. You will never play with anybody the way that you play with Miles. It is true. Most cats change after they leave Miles. It is amazing if you think about it. He makes you do it by the power of suggestion, by who he is and by his strength and musical

personality. Musically, he is a great rhythm player. He plays rhythm. He uses space. I was playing through an amplifier with three guitars and an organ. I was electrified for the first time. That band was funky city. It was a rock-and-roll band. It was loud. You couldn't hear a note of the soprano if it wasn't amplified. I learned a lot, even though I was at times very frustrated musically. I also learned a lot about funk playing with those guys. I stood in front of Michael Henderson every night. He is a bad cat. I don't care what he does now, he is bad. Miles played great. I didn't know what it was until I had been playing in the band for a few months and heard a tape. It clicked in my mind. I heard it. It was jungle music and space music. It was a mood and then another mood. It was sound, space, a lot of jungle, caribbean, and cultures. It was really eclectic music. It was a rock-based thing with jazz. It was Miles. It was an amazing experience. I played in a way that I will never play again. I played unbelievably fast. I will never play that fast again. It was very intense from beginning to end. It was always loud, but listening to Miles play soft was an unbelievable lesson. I learned



the notes and how to be lyrical. I learned how to use a rhythm section. That is what Miles can do better than anyone. Miles can use a rhythm section for space and to highlight what he does. That was a lot of the stuff that I learned from him. I also learned about being a band leader and taking care of business. Miles does not always take care of business, but that is taking care of business as far as Miles is concerned because it helps to create the legend about him not showing and walking out and all of that.

QUESTION: Did he do that when you were in the band?

LIEBMAN: Yes. I went as far as Texas once and turned right around and went home. We were all there and Miles didn't come on the plane that he was supposed to. The concert was cancelled. I got paid but it was out. He would be sick or just not feel like it. There were times when I was with him that I saw that he just didn't feel like it or he was sick. There is no question about the fact that Miles was not well during this time. He has been really sick. Last year he was in the hospital for bronchial pneumonia. He didn't know that he was carrying it for two years. He was killing himself. That is why he hasn't worked. He is trying to recover. He is getting better, and he

will be out there soon.

QUESTION: Why did you leave the band?

LIEBMAN: I saw that it had to end. He had told me that he didn't think that I would be there more than a year. He knew it, and I knew it because the music was limiting for me. He liked saxophone and he liked me but I didn't play that much. I was playing with some other guys and forming my own group. I would do a Sunday at the Vanguard or play the lofts. I was also doing Open Sky with Bob Moses. I had two groups. One group was playing free and the other was doing the straight ahead late Trane thing. I left Miles after the Brazil tour. My band started in April of 1974. It was Lookout Farm. That brings us up to the recent down beat article that I did, which explains why I am doing what I am doing now.

QUESTION: Your collaboration with Pee Wee is really interesting. What is that?

LIEBMAN: We stayed personal friends from the time of Sawbuck. We didn't play together because he was doing it with Esther Phillips, Sonny Stitt, Jack McDuff, and all over the place. It was a whole different trip. It was rhythm-and-blues and soul-jazz. That was his bag. He produced records,

played organ, and wrote tunes and did what he had to do. His gig was basically being Esther Phillips's band leader. I told him when I left that I was going to do Sawbuck again. I didn't know that in seven years this was going to be the big fad of the world and that if you did it you would be called commercial, because when we did it the first time, we were dying. I don't dig people saying that I sold out because people don't understand that I had a burning band in 1970. I only have tapes to show that it was an incredible band. The thing that Pee Wee and I have fits perfectly together. He comes from one thing and I come from another. We both play saxophone and we get along. It was the right step. I had to bring Lookout Farm to a conclusion even though we worked a lot. We were in Europe twice, Japan, India, everywhere. We won the Critics Poll for the group deserving wider recognition last year. We were known as an underground group. I never made any money with that group. I lost money. We struggled, we carried our own shit, and we drove 10,000 miles across the country and back. That was a real family, musical, and life experience.

QUESTION: Who was in that group?

LIEBMAN: Richie (Beirach), Frank Tusa, Jeff Williams, Badal Roy, and myself. We did three albums. Then when Pee Wee and I got together, we got the drummer who had been in Sawbuck. He had been with Sly for the last few years. That is my whole thing up to this point.

QUESTION: What advice would you give a young player who wants to learn to play?

LIEBMAN: It's everything. You've got to listen. Musically, you have got to take care of business. You have to learn the literature. You have to know who is what and why. As I was saying before, my concepts changed as I found out more. That is education. It's like the saying that money makes money. Well, knowledge makes knowledge. One thing relates to another and it grows. I'll tell you what you really have got to do.

QUESTION: What is that?

LIEBMAN: You have got to get down with your head and get together. You have got to get out in the world. You've got to move away from home. You've got to pay some dues. You've got to become a man. It wouldn't be fair to say this to a sixteen year old, but if you really want to know what you have to do, this is it. When you do it and how you do it is your business, but this is definitely

what you have to do, not because I did it, but because that is what you have to do to be a human being and that is first of all. You have to take it out of the music. The music part of it is just a matter of sitting down and learning the words. It is just a vocabulary. Learn it from A to Z. Memorize it. Study it and know it backwards and forward. It is like reading a book. That just takes brains, discipline, and work. You have to have talent in order to be good as far as the music goes, but what about becoming a human being? That takes sweat. You have to get out there. That is the thing that a clinic cannot give. A clinic is a clinic. It addresses itself to the technical and intellectual end of things. It is concerned with the absolution of information.

QUESTION: Have you every thought of possible alternatives to the clinic?

LIEBMAN: The best system in the world is the apprenticeship system. I think that this is true in any field of business. In India the musicians study with their masters for fifteen years, and they live with them and take care of them. In a sense, that is how they pay for it. I don't know if it has to go to that level because this is America, but the apprenticeship system is where it's at.

If a cat wants to know, he should hang out with me and I will show him through a natural process, or he will go and do it on his own. We are usually in such a rush that everybody just speeds through. I believe in the apprenticeship system because you first do it with a teacher and then you go out and do it on your own. The drawback is that in American your shit is supposed to be together by the time you are twenty-five. In India and Africa where the culture is not so sophisticated and the values are different, you may become a master musician when you are fifty. I think that a young musician has to become an artist in life. To become an artist in life you've got to be a good person--moral, honest, sincere, disciplined, have a sense of humor, have a heart, be talented, smart, educated, aware, and a good human being. You've got to make your life be artistic. You have to live your life in a creative manner. I have learned a lot from musicians. Pete La Roca told me about the Sufis. Chick Corea and those cats told me about Scientology which I learned something from. I got into yoga and karate because I knew someone who was into that. I got into playing bamboo flute the same way. You learn from your influences if

you are a positive person who is open to being creative and living your life in a positive way. That is what is happening in order to make yourself an artist. After that, you become great in your craft. It is the same with music, politics, medicine, law or whatever. That end of it is creative but you have to take care of life business which is the real crux of the matter. That is what should be taught. It can't be taught because it is ethics and you can't teach ethics. You can only spell out the ethics of a particular culture, time, individual, or society. You teach C seventh to F seventh which is the same thing. If you do that with love and you get that across, it is cool. That is why the (Jamey) Aebersold Clinics are positive. The teachers here are cool. They do it for the love of spreading the knowledge. They are giving, playing with cats, and answering questions, and that is quite a trip when you are talking to a sixteen year old kid. You are making an impression. It is just like me being sixteen and seeing Trane. For them it is the same thing. A cat came up to me today, and I thought that he was going to ask me a question. He opened his book and said, "Will you give me your autograph?" I expect that after

a gig or in Japan or weird places, but this is here and I was a little embarrassed. He told me that he idolized me and I said, "Thank you." That is the kind of thing that I mean. As a teacher, you are an example. That is quite a responsibility, and that is where it is at for everybody who is at a place like this for a week. It is a very, very special vibration. Everybody is into music for five days. The professional, fifty-year-old cats, sixteen-year-old cats, cats with four kids, cats with dope problems, cats with no money, cats with millions, cats with cars, cats with bikes, cats with holes in their socks that smell, and cats with perfume are all into the same shit. They are all here studying Charlie Parker. I love it. If you are talking about unity this is it. Look how easy it is to get 250 people together. Charlie Parker, the C seventh chord, or whatever. I think it's great and I feel privileged to be in it. I couldn't do it all the time because it is hard. I do it because I need the rejuvenation. I am always a little drugged when I get there, and I am probably going to be tired of it by Friday, but I am cool. Next week I will say, "That was positive. I know I did one week of positive shit



in 1977." When I look at my calendar at the end of the year, I can say that I did one positive thing for someone else because playing music is one of the most self-indulgent things that you can think of.

QUESTION: What do you mean?

LIEBMAN: You are bathing yourself in self-glory. It is heavy. It is because you are good that you feel the way you feel and you have earned it, but it is a constant come. You are getting a constant feedback, but if you don't teach, you are losing the biggest contact that you have with the world and you are in deep trouble. That means making some type of sacrifice. You have to get the information to the cats who are going to spread the vibes. The greatest thing in the world is to spread knowledge. You owe it.

QUESTION: Were you ever nervous before a performance?

LIEBMAN: Yes. I was nervous most of the time until I had been with Elvin for about a year. Anytime I played with heavy cats I was nervous. I was nervous that my musical weak points would show. I was concerned about things like being out of tune, out of time, rushing, losing my place, and the things that were hard that made the professionals sound great. When I got up with the

greats, I knew that they were going to do it great and they did most of the time. That consistency is what makes them great. Being great is not being great for great's sake, it is playing great all the time. I dug that these cats were always consistent. They were not going to lose the place, play the wrong chord change, come in at the wrong place, or create any musical embarrassments. I would just hate to do something that would cause people to look at me and say, "He can't play." This caused me to be nervous. When I played with Pete La Roca, I counted every beat when I wasn't playing because the way they played would throw you if you were not used to it. It was so complex. He was loose and slipping, but the form was always there. I am talking about really complex music and incredibly fast tempos. I counted every beat. I would be up there going, "One, two, third bar, eighth bar, ninth bar." My head was in the case. I concentrated. It was the same with Elvin. I concentrated; I listened to his solos and counted. I did this until I finally got comfortable and started to relax. Relaxation means that sometimes you listen and dream at the same time. I might walk off the bandstand and my head would be in China. It would

depend on the nights, but until the time that I felt that kind of security, I was on the case. I was nervous. I would say to a cat like Steve Swallow whom I became close friends with, or Pete La Roca, "I'm nervous, man. I just don't think that I'm good enough." He would say to me, "You wouldn't be here is you weren't good enough." I had to take that into account. I said, "I am with Elvin Jones so I must be good. I'm with Miles Davis. I must be good. Something must be happening." When I got with Miles, that definitely changed my life. There is no question about it. My whole image of myself changed. I mean I got out. I became it. I was living Miles. We hung out a lot. I was hangin' out with him so I got like him. I am an impressionable cat. I pick up things. If I move a certain way, it might be from an old friend from Brooklyn. If I talk in a funny voice, it might be like Elvin. You get kind of like an actor. That happens until you get your personality together. I got into it because my whole self-esteem came up. I wasn't nervous anymore. Not only wasn't I nervous, but I wanted everyone to know who I was. I went through a lot of changes. I also realized that making a mistake doesn't mean a thing. You are

supposed to make mistakes. That means that you are really playing. I am talking about on an abstract level; I don't mean making constant technical mistakes, even though you make them sometimes too, because there are a lot of things to think about when you are playing. What is a mistake? If it's a wrong note, you'll make it right. You learn how to do what they call faking in music. It is not so much faking. It is being musical about everything that you do. When you do that, there are no mistakes. I might have still made the same mistakes that I would have made, but the whole paranoia which was all a game was no longer there. Everybody has to go through their personal traumas to get to a state of mind where they feel good all or most of the time. That is what happened to me and that is when I stopped being nervous. My life and music became inseparable. I started to see what all of the cats were saying. I used to go up to cats and say, "Show me something," and they would say, "Well, you've got to live your life. I can't really show you anything." I later realized that is true. You can only look a guy straight in the eye, say it, and hope that he understands you. You have got to pay dues and he will know in the

end what you meant. I know now that they meant it when they said it to me.

QUESTION: What do you see for yourself in the future?

LIEBMAN: I see my life the way it is.

QUESTION: I read in down beat that you were getting a lot of criticism about the kind of music that you are playing with Pee Wee. Would you comment on that?

LIEBMAN: I am getting criticism from some of the people who were closest to me because I have been into a very pure form of music. Lookout Farm was a very straight ahead group as compared to what has been happening. We played some electric rock-and-roll but we were a pretty straight ahead group. We were not a 1975 or 1977 group. We were kind of a throw back with combinations of new stuff. I am being very honest about the musical time and place that we are in. It wasn't a revolutionary concept. I am getting shit from it because I was into a thing and I changed. It seems like I changed for business reasons and it is partially true. There is no question about it. I do want to sell more records. I do hear that music being played and I like to play it. I can play it better than what I hear happening already. I can make a contribution in that music the same way Lookout Farm made contributions to post-

Coltrane-type music. I feel like I want to make a contribution in this music and then go on to another music, maybe free music. I like playing a lot of kinds of music. My life is going to keep changing. I went into it for a lot of reasons. I went into it because I had Pee Wee, I wanted to do it, I promised myself, and whatever. Maybe I went into it because I listened to Duane Eddy when I was nine. I don't know. It is all one thing. I hope that this band is a successful band. I am not going to lose touch with jazz. That is obvious by the fact that I am doing Aebersold clinics. I have been playing jazz all week. I haven't heard one rock beat all week. I haven't even heard the blues too much. The blues is one of the musical reasons that I went into playing this music especially with a guy like Pee Wee who has such musical insight. Playing the blues is the most important thing to playing jazz. It is the feeling of jazz. Black people played the blues and that is where jazz came from. That is the feeling. Musical styles change and people of all colors and times make contributions, but that is after the fact. The music that we know as jazz derives from the blues. I never played a lot of blues before now. If I had been

from Philadelphia and black, my training ground would have probably been organ trios and rhythm-and-blues gigs. My training grounds were the Catskill Mountains and show tunes. This was an advantage because I learned the same tunes that the beboppers were playing. By the time I knew what bebop was, I was well versed in the tunes because they were playing the tunes that I used to play for dance music. They played tunes like "Don't Blame Me," "I'm in the Mood for Love." I couldn't believe when I heard Coltrane play "My Favorite Things." I flipped out.

Pee Wee is a great blues player. That is his stuff. I figure that I am going to stand next to this cat like I stood next Miles, Elvin, and Pete La Roca. That is where I really learned music--playing next to the heavies. I want to stand next to this cat and learn what he has got to give me, and it is obvious that the exchange is mutual. That is why it is such a beautiful relationship. It is very hard for people to understand but it is very beneficial on both ends. I have got to get back down. I am objective about myself. I know where I came from. I know where my life has been and where it is going and what is happening. I want to get

as much as I can. I can play the clarinet all day long, man. I am a horror. I can sound like the cat in Tel Aviv. That shit is in my blood. That is why the soprano saxophone is happening with me. I've got learn the blues because I play the tenor saxophone. I love jazz and I am going to play it until the day I die. I am an exponent of it. I will be more and more as cats die and time goes on. Who is going to be left who played that music and played with those guys twenty years from now? It is a challenge because I know how Trane and Bird played. I'll never play like that but they won't play what I play either. I have what I consider a certain style of music and a certain way of playing. The other shit is fun and a challenge. I don't feel the way I used to feel. I was really driven with Lookout Farm and when I was playing with Miles. I had a lot of wasted energy. I wasn't open to the good vibes. I was too intensely involved with what I was doing. It was the whole thing of career and being a saxophone player and having a great band. Success is what you do. I don't feel that way now. I know that I am going to play no matter what happens. I am going to play tomorrow and next week. If it's only for fifteen people I don't care. I just want to play.



## MARIAN McPARTLAND INTERVIEW

QUESTION: Where are you from originally? Where were you born?

McPARTLAND: I was born in a town called Slough which is near Windsor. All of my relatives are from Windsor. On my mother's side everyone played or sang. One of my great uncles used to sing in the choir for the King in St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, so I have a little musical background. One of my uncles played cello; another played in the local symphony. One had a music store; one was a composer. My mother played piano and that's actually how I learned, by hearing her play Chopin at home. I learned to play strictly by ear. I never took a lesson until I was nine. I remember asking for lessons, but for some reason or another, my parents wanted me to learn the violin. I don't know why. My mother said, "Oh, you play the piano very well by ear. You don't need that. You should take the violin." So I did what I was told. I took the violin. That's the way I learned to read music, from reading the treble clef of the violin.

QUESTION: Did you do that for a long period of time?

McPARTLAND: No, only for two or three years. I liked the

teacher a lot and I was always telling her I wanted to play piano. She also taught piano and she told me she would teach me piano also, then she died, unfortunately, and I did nothing. I played for kids at school. That was my big claim to fame. I played nursery rhymes in kindergarten. Then I played songs and school songs and I composed the school song. We made several moves during my teenage period, and then I finally got to study. My parents could see I wanted to be in music and I didn't seem to be much good at anything else, and so they listened to the teachers at school who said they thought I should study music. I auditioned at the Guildhall School of Music, which is like Julliard over here, and was accepted.

QUESTION: How old were you at that time?

McPARTLAND: I was about seventeen or eighteen.

QUESTION: You were just out of high school?

McPARTLAND: Going to the Guildhall was sort of like going to college, but in an English school you are supposed to take an exam called a school certificate and that's the equivalent of high school graduation over here, but I didn't do that. I left or they let me leave. I don't know why, but they did. I went to the Guildhall and I really tried to

make up for lost time. I took piano, composition, singing, theory, sight singing, violin as a second instrument, and then I just worked night and day at trying to catch up. I played scales and practiced for eight hours a day. I practiced so much that my parents used to be annoyed. I'd leave for Guildhall early in the morning, stay there all day, come back at night, practice, and go to bed. I was immersed in the whole thing.

QUESTION: What was your introduction to jazz? Where does that come in?

McPARTLAND: The introduction to jazz came about before I had left high school. My boyfriend was an avid jazz fan and had a lot of records by Duke Ellington, Art Tatum, and Fats Waller. That's what really got me started listening to jazz.

QUESTION: Had you started to play jazz yet?

McPARTLAND: I was playing everything I could hear on the radio. I had always done that. I played whatever the current hit tunes were. I tried to copy Teddy Wilson and Art Tatum. Even when I was at the Guildhall I would always try to play jazz pieces on the side. And then I had another boyfriend who played a little jazz piano. We would get together and play for each other. We would sit down and I learned a lot of tunes that way. He

would say, "Hey, listen to this," or, "Listen to this record." Then we would listen and afterwards we would play. This went on for about three years. Then I became more interested in jazz than I was in classical music. I got as far as getting a couple of scholarships at the Guildhall, and I won some money prizes for composition. I was really doing fine, but I had this insatiable desire to play jazz, so I went and played for Billy Mayerl, who was the pop pianist of the day. He offered a jazz course, so I went up to his studio to take this course. He heard me play, and instead of teaching me, he offered me a job. He had a four-piano act he was getting together, so I left the Guildhall. I dropped everything. My parents were furious. I said, "I have to go. It's something I must do. I must go. I promise I'll come back to school later on." I went and played in the four-piano act.

QUESTION: What kind of music were you playing?

McPARTLAND: We were playing awful pop stuff--things that you probably don't even know, like an old tune called "The Bells of Saint Mary's." From there I went into another group, Major Bows and His Discoveries. I was hired to play piano for all of the discoveries, audition them, to

rehearse, to play in the show, to rehearse the pit band at the different theatres where we played. We played all the Vanderbilt theatres in England. I've done things you wouldn't believe. All of this finally led up to World War II. When the war broke out I was playing in a two-piano act with another girl. I didn't think I'd be much good in the woman's army, so I joined the English equivalent of USO. We toured all over England with a show consisting of a trio: me, bass, and drums. It had two comedians, a girl singer, and a juggler. It was a typical variety show. Then I joined the USO, and after the invasion I went to France with the first group that went over. That's where I met my husband, Jimmy. He was there as a foot soldier with an anti-aircraft gun crew. They pulled him out of that and put him in the USO with our group. That's how Jimmy and I met. We were married over there. Jimmy and I worked together in the show. I really began to learn a lot about jazz then because they had these wonderful records for the soldiers called V-Discs. They were made in the States by everybody for the G.I.'s. Art Tatum made some; Stan Kenton made some. All the jazz greats made these records for the soldiers. They would be

lying around in some recreation hall, and I'd sit down and play all of this music. I was absolutely floored by the music I was hearing. Eventually the USO folded and we came back to the States in 1946. We came to New York and started visiting people. We stayed with Gene Krupa for two weeks. He was a friend of Jimmy's. I would sit and listen to all of this music. I heard Louie (Armstrong) at a place in New York called the Aquarium. I sat in at Eddie Condon's. I was like a kid in a candy store. I couldn't believe this was happening to me. Meanwhile, I was learning something about different styles of jazz. Jimmy has always been more of a traditionalist, so I have that repertoire down-- all of those dixieland tunes, "Royal Garden Blues" and "Muskat Ramble" and all of those tunes. I learned all of the standard tunes. Then we went to Chicago. We started working in a little group-- Jimmy, myself, a bass player, and a drummer. We worked all over Chicago in all the clubs--the Blue Note, the Brass Rail, Capital Lounge, Silhouette. The Silhouette is where I met Billie Holiday. I worked often with her and played with her a few times. Out there I met everybody-- Duke Ellington, Louie, who was a great friend

of Jimmy's, Jack Teagarden, Count Basie. I met them all.

QUESTION: While this was happening, did you have any idea of the scope of what you were doing?

McPARTLAND: Not really. It just sort of seeped into my pores. I was working at the Brass Rail with Jimmy, and in those days we would work from nine until four and thought nothing of it. Then we'd get in the car and go out to the south side of Chicago and hear Jackie Cain and Roy Kral with Charlie Ventura and their group. They were playing at a place called Jump Town. Or else, Billie would be in town or somebody would be in town to hear and this is what we would do--go out and hear other people play. Gradually this all started to make my playing change. It was constantly changing. Jimmy would say, "You should have your own group. You shouldn't be playing with me. You're restricted." Jimmy has always been a great help to me. Then we moved to New York and we spent a lot of time in Boston. I worked for George Wein at the first Storyville before he ever had the Newport Jazz Festival. Jimmy and I were in a house band in Boston at this hotel, called the Buckminister Hotel, in Kenmore Square. George had the hotel and in the basement was a jazz club. That's where I remember

meeting Dave Brubeck and Ella Fitzgerald. I had met Sarah Vaughn in Chicago and Dizzy Gillespie and so on. All of this was feeding into the computer, me! This is how I learned to play. In those days there was no jazz education. Jazz education consisted of someone's saying, "Don't play that chord. That's not the right chord. Don't play so much in the bass. Play more like Count Basie because you're getting in my way. Don't play down in there where the bass player is playing because you're covering up his notes." So you see, this was jazz education from other musicians.

QUESTION: It was like on-the-job training?

McPARTLAND: Yes. This is how musicians got their education years ago. People would tell them, "Don't do this," or, "Do this," or you would just listen, learn, and adapt.

QUESTION: Did you practice a lot during this period too? What did you practice?

McPARTLAND: I practiced. I would put little arrangements together for the group. I learned different types of things. I remember "How High the Moon" was all the rage and I made a little arrangement of that. As I think of it now, it seems pretty corny, but I guess it wasn't all that bad. I made arrangements of some standard tunes. Nat King



Cole was very big at that time and I learned a lot of his things, including "Lush Life." I just learned tunes from listening. I did practice. I would sit down and run through a tune just to see if it was right. I soon learned millions of tunes I never saw the music to. I know a lot of tunes from different eras, for example, the old tunes and all of the standards like "Stardust" and "Body and Soul." Now, of course, I know all the John Coltrane, Stevie Wonder, and Thelonious Monk tunes. You have to know tunes. It's a shame, because kids in school today may know ten tunes written by Gary Burton or Steve Swallow, but then they go out on the job and they don't know "Honeysuckle Rose."

QUESTION: How did you learn all of these tunes?

McPARTLAND: I just played them. I'd hear them.

QUESTION: You learned them by ear?

McPARTLAND: Yes. I'm not saying that is the way it should be done, but that was the only way I knew how. I never had anybody to tell me. I got started kind of late. I was in my twenties when I met Jimmy. I didn't really start to play with any kind of rhythm or decent feeling for jazz, as he would tell you if he were here, until later on. Jimmy and I met in a tent playing at a jam session. I was so eager to play. Jimmy told me he looked

across the room and he saw this chick sitting there. Right away he started telling people, "Jesus, a woman player. I just know she's going to sound terrible," and he says, "You did." My timing was bad, and I was so eager to play I just played all over everybody, so that was something I learned in a hurry--not to do that!

QUESTION: What is your concept of jazz improvisation? What does it mean to you?

McPARTLAND: I've changed my thoughts about this so many times. Music keeps changing and there's no one definition. I used to discuss this with Duke. He used to avoid the whole thing. He didn't like the word jazz. He used to say, "I don't like that word. It's music." But, you have to qualify it in some way, and improvisation is instant composition to me. That's the best way I can describe it. It applies to classical music as well as jazz. I could sit down at the piano and play a tune totally improvised like Keith Jarrett does. You know he's not the only one who can sit down and improvise for forty-five minutes. I'd be happy to challenge him to a battle anytime. That's my definition of improvisation. It's putting your personal experiences and your feelings and something of your own into what's really instant composition.

Even if you play the blues, "Straight, No Chaser" for example, you play the line. You say, "This is the melody. These are the chord changes." Then you say, "I'm going to compose my own tune on top of Monk's tune. I'm going to put his on one side for a minute or two and do my own thing, or maybe I'll use a little part of his tune and put in a few notes of my own, or maybe I'll still use his melody and change the chords." Eventually you change the whole thing. You change the harmony or you change the melody. Perhaps you make up a different melody, or maybe you change the key or you change the tempo, but what you're doing is instantly changing a theme that has been written by Monk. That's one kind of improvising. Now the other kind is just to sit down and really play whatever comes into your head. That's something else. Some of the things I've written have come about like that. I'd sit down at the piano and mess around with nothing particular in mind, and suddenly a melody shoots out. That happened with "Ambiance." Suddenly this tune came out of nowhere and fell into place, so I wrote it down. I played it and recorded it. Then Thad's (Jones) band recorded it. I was so gassed

to hear Thad play my tune. That really put it on the map. I could have played it all my life, but to have Thad play it, puts the Good Housekeeping Seal on it.

I don't think you can sit down and say, "Okay, I'll write a tune in ten minutes." A lot of people do that, and a lot of the tunes of today sound that way too. Sometimes you have to struggle to get it together, but with that tune I didn't struggle. I think I was inspired by my subconscious. I'd been listening to Herbie Hancock, to some of his earlier stuff, like that record called "Fat Albert" and then the one that had "Cantaloupe Island" and some of those earlier things like "Maiden Voyage" on it. I was very imbued with his conception of thoughts--Bill Evans too, for that matter--so that's probably where it came from.

QUESTION: Speaking of listening, do you have a listening preference?

McPARTLAND: Yes, I like to listen to whatever is going on. I'll listen to anything that's happening because I have to do so many things. If you're going to play for ten-year-old kids, it's no good playing "Black, Brown, and Beige" or something like that

because they don't know what you're doing, so I would maybe take some tune like "You Are the Sunshine of My Life" or "Raindrops Keep Falling On My Head." They all know these. That's how I get to listen to things like Led Zeppelin because that's all these teenage kids listen to. So I thought, "Maybe there is something I can learn that I can apply to what I do," and I finally got this little tune, "Stairway to Heaven."

QUESTION: You seem to be so current in your knowledge of music, as well as keeping your place within the framework of what you like to do. There are a lot of people who are not current.

McPARTLAND: I know, but I think to be a good musician you have to be current. It's like being a doctor or a dentist. You have to keep current. You can't use a drill that's thirty years old. You have to be up on everything because life is changing so fast and the world is changing. Everything is changing. You can't just be old hat. I just love being involved in things that are happening.

QUESTION: Where do you see the old standard tunes in relationship to building a foundation for learning to play jazz? Do you think they are necessary?

McPARTLAND: It depends. I think it depends a lot on what you have in mind to do. Actually, I think no matter

what you have in mind, it's essential to have a good repertoire of tunes. If you're interested in being a club performer, or once you get into the real world, you will soon find out that knowing all of Gary Burton's tunes is fine, but you will also have to know such tunes as "Misty," "Honey-suckle Rose," and "Satin Doll." Some of these old tunes are definitely overplayed I know, but at the club where I play, I think the audience would be very happy if I would just play "Send In the Clowns," and "What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life," and "Satin Doll," all night long. The minute you play something they don't know, their faces get a mystical look like, "What in the hell is she doing now?" That's not to say I don't want to play some Gary Burton tunes once in a while, because I do, but in any event, you have to have so much information at your fingertips. The people who are going into music education today are desperately needed. It's so horrible to see kids who don't like the music they learn in school. They can't wait to get out of school, go home, and turn on their radios and listen to the rock stations. First of all, I think this is because the average teacher doesn't like kids. Secondly, I think teachers should be terribly creative, and

I don't feel a lot of them know how to be creative or even know what books to use. I know I'm talking off the top of my head, and if I had a class of kids trying to teach them how to play an instrument, I wouldn't do any better than these teachers. After having spent so much time in school myself, I really have to give the teachers credit. I think it's the hardest job in life. To play a piano in a night club is infinitely easier than teaching school.

QUESTION: In what respect?

McPARTLAND: In teaching you're giving and you're trying to get something across to people who are really not that receptive and whose attention span is half a second. You have to perform for them, be theatrical and get their attention in any way you can. It's very tiring because it's all going out. You're giving to them and there's not that much give and take. The only time you get equal giving and reciprocating is when you have a very inspiring, very dynamic, very strong, and very creative teacher. This is what I would like to see more of in the schools.

QUESTION: What would you say to a person who came to you and said, "I really want to learn how to play jazz. I want to learn jazz improvisation." What would you say to them?

McPARTLAND: I suppose it would depend on whether this person has to start from scratch. I would assume they already knew a little about the piano. If you're talking to someone who is totally unknowing about the instrument, I'd probably say, "You must take some basic piano lessons." I don't know if I would want to deal with someone who had not had a little experience.

For someone who had, I would tell them to listen to all kinds of music and to not be afraid to sit down and try things. Students fall into so many different categories. You get one who plays classical music and can't take his eyes off the printed page. To him I would say, "Put the book away and try to learn something by ear. Pick out a tune you like and see if you can pick it out on the piano." In fact, I've made students do this. Then I'd say, "Add the chords and then write it out and look at it." Mostly I would tell him to listen and not be afraid of playing wrong notes. Listen to lots of different music and live performances and try to put down on the instrument what he hears. I'd tell him to go to the piano and try to play what he heard.

QUESTION: Is there a special thought process that you go through when you play? I noticed, while



listening to you play, your conception of lines appears different.

McPARTLAND: Oh, it's changed so much. Ten years ago you wouldn't have heard me play that way. You'd probably hear something that I did that was very corny, but I've tried to take off a lot of things like Coltrane's "Giant Steps." I have listened to a lot of horn players. This is because years ago somebody said to me, "Piano players always listen to other piano players. You should listen to horn players as well." So I do. I always loved Duke's big band and his voicings. I listen to newer tunes like "Maiden Voyage" and also Miles's (Davis) Kind of Blue album. When that album came out there was a great excitement. It was a landmark, a milestone. Suddenly everybody was talking about modal tunes.

QUESTION: Several people have mentioned that album, Kind of Blue, as a turning point in music.

McPARTLAND: Well, it really was. I remember when I first heard Dizzy. I was in Paris in somebody's apartment with Django Reinhardt and Jimmy. We were sitting there and Dizzy was playing "Hot House" and "Salt Peanuts." I was saying, "Gee, what's that piano doing? What are those chords?" I was excited. It was Al Haig or whoever was

playing with him in those days. I couldn't wait to find out how that was done, but I had no one to show me. I just listened and learned. Then I'd sit down and watch someone comping, like Roy Kral comping behind Charlie Ventura. That's how I learned to comp, just watching and listening to records and other people--Lennie Tristano and George Shearing for two. Then I'd hear tapes and listen to what I did and think, "That's not it. That's not right. Try it again," but as I got older, I think the process has speeded up. I'm not getting in my way as much as I did years ago. I'm getting over the insecurity and self-consciousness and wondering if someone will like this. Now I don't care, because if I like it that's all that matters. I'm the one who has to like it. I'm not afraid to go to people and say, "I'm not doing this right." For example, last night I was playing "Spain," and it was so bad. All I could think about was, "I'm not playing that tune right. Next time I see Chick (Corea) I'm going to ask him to play that tune for me and show me how to play it so I really get it right." There's a certain positive way of doing it. He does it and I'm not doing it. Years ago I would have been afraid to ask.

QUESTION: Right now you are working in New York?

McPARTLAND: I've just closed. I'm getting ready to do something I've never done in my life. I learned to play the Grieg A Minor Concerto, and I'm doing it with the Rochester Symphony.

QUESTION: You also teach, don't you?

McPARTLAND: Not what you call regular teaching. I've stopped now because I've been so busy. I suppose what I do is kind of criticize--have someone play and criticize their playing. I make suggestions like, "Don't overplay" or, "Leave a little room." Perhaps I tell them who to listen to, maybe I write out a couple of things for them. I'd say, "The rhythm section could have gone along all right without you if you'd stop for a minute or two." That's one of my own problems that I'm always trying to cure.

QUESTION: What situations do you play in most?

McPARTLAND: Over Christmas I played with Jimmy's band which is essentially a Dixieland mainstream group. We played old tunes like "All of Me," "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Sunny Side of the Street," and stuff like that. Within the group I did my own things. I did three or four tunes of my own, solos with the bass player and the drummer. Then I went back to The Carlisle Hotel for a solo job.

I'd hire a bass player once a week just to have something different happening. In between all of this on Sundays I'd book concerts. I went to Bates College in Maine and I broke in the Grieg piece with a second piano player. I had someone play the orchestral part on the piano. Then I went to Raleigh, North Carolina, and I did a concert with a trio. Then I went to Potsdam so I could play the Grieg with their orchestra. That was my first experience of playing the Grieg with an orchestra. I was scared to death.

QUESTION: Do you still get anxious?

McPARTLAND: Oh, sure. All the time.

QUESTION: Do these feelings ever leave?

McPARTLAND: No, I don't think so. I think it's something you cannot overcome. You can keep it in check. You can reckon with it and keep it so that it doesn't take possession of you, because if it does take possession of you, you'll panic and then it's all over. I think people who don't get a little nervous are kind of insensitive. They seem to think they know it all. Having confidence is another thing. I don't know how to describe it, but there are some situations that I feel very confident in, although I still might be a little

nervous. Like tonight I'm going to play and I feel pretty good because solo piano is an area I am used to playing in, but then when it comes to the things with the band, I'll be thinking, "I hope I get all of these things done properly."

QUESTION: How do you cope with playing with inexperienced players in a school or clinic situation?

McPARTLAND: Well, I'm not going to turn around to the guy and say, "Listen, you're playing wrong notes." The guy might be nervous because I'm there, and I'm a little bit nervous because I'm there. Sometimes I wish I had a little more time so I could work with this person or that person, but the only think that really bugs me a lot or upsets me is if I have a drummer who really drags. It's not so bad to rush, but it's really a sin to drag. Sometimes you work at a school where the drummer really doesn't have the chops to keep up the tempo and you're trying to whip up the tone and say, "Keep going," but the whole band sags. That's a terrible experience, but it happens. What can you do? Tomorrow's another day.

QUESTION: What would a person have to do to be able to sub for you?

McPARTLAND: They would have to know a lot of standard tunes,

and this might sound strange, but they would have to be on time and be well dressed. For example, if somebody came in wearing a tee-shirt, big boots, and a hat with a feather, they wouldn't make it at the Carlisle. I know that sounds silly but that goes with a lot of jobs. They would have to be able to announce the numbers and be able to handle any request that would come up--not any request, but the average ones that come up like "Misty." Now I've gotten very temperamental and I tell the head waiter, "No requests," but I still take some nevertheless.

The thing that I don't do too well is read. I'm a lousy reader and that's something that I'd like to improve. Learning the Grieg did improve my reading. I've found out that just reading improves your reading. Years ago when I was playing for those shows I read a lot better because I used to have to read charts. That's a good thing to be able to do. When you're in school I think you should take advantage of everything you can. I remember seeing a billboard announcing Fats Waller playing at The Palladium in London, and it never occurred to me to sneak out of the house and get on a train and go to hear him, whereas kids over here hang around

stage doors and come around and ask questions.  
That's good.

QUESTION: Do you have a particular method or approach to handling voicings?

McPARTLAND: No, I guess I like to do things spontaneously, but I'm changing that idea a little. I think I should sit down and play things through more often. Now Bill Evans is a lot more careful. He works things out more often than I do. He likes to sit down and mess around with one tune and try it ten different ways. I do that on the job. I learned "Send in the Clowns," from the music. Then I recorded it, but the way I play it now is nine thousand times different from the way I did it on record. Maybe Bill Evans would have spent his time doing that at home and going through the different changes and ideas and experimenting, but I can't do that. I don't know whether I'm lazy or if I'm just of a different temperament. I just like to try things on the job. If it doesn't come off I say, "Okay, that's all right; I'll do it another way." In other words, I don't like to play it safe and have everything pat. I've never rehearsed a jazz chorus in my life. Maybe it would be a good idea if I did. I know some people who go home

and try out changes. Maybe I should do that, but I like to be spontaneous.

QUESTION: Do you still practice?

McPARTLAND: I practiced every week up to four or five hours a day trying to learn the Grieg. It was a very humbling experience. My teacher who has been a friend of mine for twenty-five years showed me how to get a better sound out of the piano--not to bang on it, to do things with the pedal, to pace myself, not to wear myself out, to work from my back and shoulders. These were things I had never learned and there I was looking at her with my mouth open. I never learned how to do that before. It's so exciting. You keep thinking there's so much more to do.

Next year George Shearing and I decided we are going to do the Mozart E-Flat Piano Concerto for two pianos. He knows it. I don't know it yet. I have to learn it. That's my project for next year.

QUESTION: What part has your family situation played in your whole development? Your relationship with

McPARTLAND: Jimmy has been pretty important, especially in getting all of that music together. I've come full circle. I went through a period of putting down any music except the current music



whether it was bebop or whatever. To play a Dixie-land tune was very old hat and corny for me, but I've gotten over that. Music is music, no matter what era it comes from. All music has its place in the hereafter of things. For example, if there were no King Oliver, there would be no Louie. If there were no Louie, there would be no Miles or Dizzy. If there were no Dizzy, there would be no Jon Faddis.

But back to my family. I guess my mother playing the piano was really the one who got me started, although I don't remember anybody encouraging me that much. They would say, "Oh, that's nice dear," but they didn't really know what I was doing. As I got older they were annoyed that I didn't do what they wanted, which was to be more respectable.

QUESTION: Do you think anyone can learn to play or that it is some special gift?

McPARTLAND: I think that every child is born with an ability to listen and play and have rhythm, but not everybody has the advantage of hearing music or being around a musical instrument. A lot of parents will tell me that they have a child who seems to show some musical talent. I say, "Do you have a piano or bongos or a guitar or anything he can play?",

and they say, "No, he's too young." I say, "If he's interested in music, then he's not too young. Get him something to play on. Let him do it."

I think there are some people who are blocked because of their life styles or because of what happened to them as kids. I think everybody has a basic ability to like music and play music. Nobody should ever say, "I can't," or, "I never will."

## BLUE MITCHELL INTERVIEW

QUESTION: Where are you from?

MITCHELL: I'm originally from Miami, but I've spent more time professionally in New York.

QUESTION: When did you move from Miami to New York?

MITCHELL: I started playing professionally in 1951, traveling with The Paul Williams Band which took me to New York. I had met the band in Detroit. We traveled around the country and worked out of New York. In 1952, I joined The Earl Bostic Band. He played out of New York and traveled nine or ten months out of the year. I stayed with him until 1955. So, I've been in New York since 1951, until about five or six years ago when I moved to Los Angeles.

QUESTION: How did you start playing?

MITCHELL: I got my first trumpet in 1944 and I really didn't know anything about the trumpet at all. I just knew I could make a sound on it. My first teacher was a neighborhood guy who taught all the youngsters on the block trumpet. I studied with him three or four months. I never played with a band until I got in high school. We rehearsed and played proms and parties. That's when I realized that I liked playing the

trumpet. I worked around and got offers from some of the local bands in Miami through '45 or '46. Then I got my first offer to go on the road and I left high school to go with a local band out of Miami. We traveled quite a bit. We made money for a minute, not a whole lot of money, but it was good experience until we started starving.

QUESTION: How old were you then?

MITCHELL: I was seventeen. That same year I met Cannonball Adderley and his brother Nat in Tallahassee at Florida A & M. Eventually, I went back to Miami. I went back to high school and attempted to finish. I got even more involved with the trumpet. I was working locally and I was enjoying that more than I was school. So I left school with about a year to go. I just completed the eleventh grade.

I worked professionally in Miami with a small jazz band. We had tenor, trumpet, and a rhythm section--Sam Jones, Johnny Birdeye, on the tenor saxophone, Noel Cruz on piano, and Richard Robinson on drums. We would play with nothing planned. We just listened to records and brought in different tunes ourselves. I would have to get my own part. The saxophone player

would get his own part off the record. I wasn't too familiar with chord changes, but Miami was the place where all the big bands from New York used to come down and play dances. I got familiar with a lot of guys from New York that way. By the time I started playing with Paul Williams and working in New York, I knew a few of the guys.

I also worked with Chuck Willis on tour from New York through the South all the way down to Florida till his band broke up. I started working with various cats around New York like Sonny Rollins, and Thelonius Monk, and Lou Donaldson. I made my first jazz recording around '52 with Lou Donaldson, Art Blakey, Percy Heath, and Horace Silver. It was a Lou Donaldson session. I wasn't even supposed to be in on the date; they had already rehearsed for a quartet, but I came in and played a couple of solos on two or three of the tracks. I stayed with Horace and joined his band, working and recording with him on Blue Note and recording for Riverside under my own name through the early '60's. Then Horace negotiated a contract with Blue Note for me when I completed my recordings for Riverside. Sometimes

we worked with the Horace Silver Quintet minus Horace, with Cedar Walton or Walter Bishop on piano. When Horace terminated the group in '65 we continued it. We worked three years with Chick Corea on piano and Al Foster on drums. Then things got bad for jazz, because they started discoteques. Clubs were using the jazz groups that were already established, like Art Blakey, Dizzy; and J.J. Johnson had a group during that time. They worked but it was hard for us to work as a group because we were new. I came to Los Angeles to rehearse with the Ray Charles Orchestra in '69. I stayed with him through '71, traveling nine or ten months a year. Then I got with The John Mayall Band which was a blues band. We did two three-month tours a year. I got a chance to go to Australia and New Zealand with that band. It was the first time I had gotten a chance to make professional money. We traveled first-class. The money was good, and I thought it was a good chance to save as much money as I could. I was still affiliated with recording at Blue Note for Mainstream Records. After Mainstream I recorded a couple of things for RCA. I've started recording my first album for Impulse ABC records. Since I've

been in Los Angeles, I've worked a little bit with big bands and different groups, but not as much as I'd like to.

QUESTION: You did an album with Bill Berry's Band?

MITCHELL: Yes, Louis Bellson also, and Frankie Cat and Nat Pierce. He has a big band, called The Juggernauts I've played with quite a few good bands and I've gained a lot of experience with them. Before I came out here I was just used to playing with small groups, which is a different experience altogether. My career has been pretty successful up to now, I think that I have a lot to be thankful for. Since I started playing I've always been associated with some kind of group making some kind of money, whether there was a whole lot of money or a little bit of money, keeping the horn on my mouth. Overall, I've enjoyed my whole career up to now and I'm looking forward for it to get much better. I'm doing quite a bit more now on my own. Harold Land and I have been associated for the last couple of years and we hope to be doing more together, recordings and personal appearances.

QUESTION: How did you get your trumpet playing together before you started playing professionally? Who did you listen to?

MITCHELL: To tell you the truth, when I first got a trumpet I had no knowledge what a musician was, or bands, or music at all. It was the big band era at that time. All I heard was the music that was played on the jukeboxes. I like The Harry James Orchestra and I'll admit that he was the first trumpet player who I listened to and tried to imitate. There was a tune he played called "Back Beat Boogie." I'd also heard Louie Armstrong. Later on, one of my friends came up with a Dizzy Gillespie book with all the bebop tunes in it. I was very impressed with it, but it looked a little too difficult for me. And then I heard Charlie Parker. If I had known at the time, from the age of fourteen to seventeen, that I could have gotten more out of it, I'd have pursued it. But I didn't know what to pursue; I was mainly going on my own natural ability. I knew I wanted to play and be associated with music. Other musicians who I knew in other bands were doing the same thing I was doing and it was very fruitful. As a matter of fact, most of my learning was done during that time I started playing. I credit it to association with other musicians and bands because I didn't know what I was doing.



Sometimes even up to this point I still don't know; I question myself whether I really know what I'm doing.

QUESTION: A lot of the people I've interviewed have a concept of jazz playing, a way they think about playing jazz. What's your concept of jazz playing?

MITCHELL: Playing with other musicians, sharing ideas, workshop, working things out, playing what comes natural, listening to jazz records. I know there have been different evolutions, but it's basically the same jazz that was being played before my time. It just happened that every ten years or so jazz would turn another leaf and progress. It was the same jazz played by younger musicians with fresher ideas. My feeling is that it all came from guys who played before us and guys who played before them. Jazz is just improvising and sharing ideas. I guess that's what I really want to say. You can't do it by yourself.

QUESTION: Do you think you can teach someone to improvise?

MITCHELL: Not really. You could show them what to do and how you do it, but their concept would be different because it would be coming from them. I'll play a solo and you can copy it note for note, and by the time you learn it, it'll take on

another whole different thing. You would have had it under your hand, and you tend to want to make improvements. Ideas do come differently. One idea inspires other ideas. Even on your own solos you play ideas that you think you hear in your own mind. By the time you play it you hear something else, so one idea inspires another. It's fortunate that we are in a business where you can continue to learn. It has no end. You can express your own ideas. I've found out since I've been playing the trumpet that the only reason why I can't play everything I'd like to play is my ability. If everyone had the ability to play everything they thought about, they could play it.

QUESTION: When you say ability, do you mean the ability to play the horn?

MITCHELL: The ability to play the horn and be in charge of range, sound, and endurance. You've got to get control of the horn where you can play in any register and get the sound you want, play as long as you want. Then it is just a matter of getting the idea under your fingers. It's not an overnight thing. A lot of times you never even notice it when you are improving. It should be constant. Try to keep improving your

ability, so your ideas will come more easily.

QUESTION: What do you tell young players who come to you and say, "I want to get it together; I want to play; what should I do?"

MITCHELL: You have to be inspired by somebody or some kind of music to want to play. If you want to play like Freddie Hubbard, all you've got to do is get some of his records, and if you can play at all, you'll try to learn as much about the way he plays as you possibly can. The only way you can do that is to have the ability to play like he plays, and the only way he got the ability was to woodshed. You don't necessarily practice solos. When you practice to correct yourself you practice sound and endurance and range. The ideas for solos come naturally. You have to be inspired and then of course you have to experience a lot of things. You can't just pick up a horn and play; that comes with years of actually experiencing it yourself.

QUESTION: Did anyone else in your family play?

MITCHELL: No. My mother was associated with music a long time ago. She said she played the violin and the piano but I never heard her play. She knew about music but never pursued it professionally.

I'm the only musician in my family.

QUESTION: You named some people who inspired you, but who in particular could you cite?

MITCHELL: I first heard Miles Davis when he was making records with Charlie Parker. He was easier to copy; his solos were less difficult than Dizzy Gillespie's or Fats Navarro's. He didn't play as complicated as the rest of the guys. I used to listen to his records and I'd listen to his solos and take them off note for note because I couldn't solo myself. It was a way to express myself a little bit through him, just learning his solos. It inspired me, inspired different ideas in me. When it came time for me to actually play I could only play so much of Miles Davis. Then the rest was left up to me. Eventually I started being confronted with having to play myself and it wasn't easy. I've always been very critical of my own playing. I never felt I was doing my best. I always felt there was something more that I could do, or what I did I could do better or should have been able to do it better.

QUESTION: Did you put in a lot of practicing on the horn?

MITCHELL: I practiced mostly when I was at home in Miami

with other guys. I used to practice routine exercises out of the book by Herbert L. Clarke, but actually I never wanted to play that routine stuff, long tones and all. I wanted to solo like most cats when they first get an instrument, but because I didn't practice those routine exercises, before too long I had problems. I started working with Horace Silver and I had to apply a different kind of way to play. My chops gave out and I started losing air from both sides of my mouth, playing from my chest which I didn't know was wrong. Half the night I couldn't hit a G above the staff. Art Farmer told me about an old German trumpet teacher. What he did was give me a routine practice which involved sound, long tones, and resting in between notes. It was like I had to start all over from the beginning. It gave me a little more knowledge about what I was doing wrong.

QUESTION: What would you say is the most important thing that stands out in your mind in the development of your ability and career as a successful jazz soloist?

MITCHELL: I guess I attribute it twenty-five percent to my natural ability and fifty percent to my association with other musicians and different

bands I have worked with, and the other twenty-five percent to the teacher who told me how to correct my mistakes. I haven't yet completed successfully what I would like to do.

QUESTION: What is the thing a young player ought to have his mind on if he wants to be a successful jazz soloist?

MITCHELL: He needs to think about what he wants to play like or who he'd like to sound like, which has nothing to do with his practicing ability. He should take time out first to do routine basic practice. You know they give you basic training in the army and the rest is left up to you. It's the same procedure. I've got battle scars all over my lips from playing unorthodox, playing wrong. But the best part about it is that I know what I have to do in order to correct it. It's just a matter of me doing it. One of these days I will be able to prove it instead of just saying it. I'll be able to prove that what I'm saying is right about learning to play. It takes a lot of ability.

QUESTION: On the gig you are playing now, say you couldn't make it one night and you had to call somebody in to substitute for you. What would they have to have together to make that gig?

MITCHELL: First, they'd have to know the tunes. In order to know the tunes you have to rehearse them and have the ability to play them. The rest is up to him as far as soloing is concerned. You can't expect everybody's ability to be on the same level. But you have to play the charts and read changes. Everybody is not required to play as much as the other person but just be able to compliment the job.

QUESTION: Where does the name Blue come from?

MITCHELL: It's a nickname. It started in high school. My wife told me to stop telling everybody all those lies about having a sad face. She said, "Tell them that you are dark and black, and that's why they call you Blue, because you have a dark complexion."

QUESTION: Is there anything else you'd like to add that you think is important?

MITCHELL: Well, I can only tell you about my own experiences and how it affected me. Everybody didn't have the trial-and-error experience that I went through. I went ten years doing what I thought was good. It was just the way I knew how to play the trumpet. It wasn't the right way. It was the only way I knew how to play the trumpet. I didn't stay with a teacher and have him teach

me exactly what I should do in the case of certain things. If I'd known then what I know now, I would have. You have to be in control of the horn; otherwise it'll be in control of you, and you'll come out with the battle scars like me.



## RUFUS REID INTERVIEW

QUESTION: Where and when were you born?

REID: February 10, 1944, in Atlanta, Georgia.

QUESTION: Did you start playing bass at first?

REID: No, trumpet. I played in junior high, in high school and in The Air Force Band. I guess you could say I was a professional trumpet player, though not a very good one.

QUESTION: Did you eventually just drop the trumpet?

REID: Yes. In school I never played the bass, but when I went by it, I'd hit the strings. I don't know why. I just wanted to touch it. When I joined the service and was in the band, I had all kinds of time to practice. They had a bass there. Late at night when everyone else was sacked out, I would drive over the practice room. I got a book and taught myself. Before long I got a gig with a civilian guy in Montgomery, Alabama, Al Stringer. I thank him to this day. He's the one who did it for me. I heard he needed a bass player so I called him. He said, "Come on down and I'll listen to you." I played "Misty" in E-flat. I had just learned where E-flat was on the bass a couple of weeks before that, but I got through the song and the cat hired me. I played for him about a year and a half. He taught me

a lot. He got me playing the right changes. I was seventeen at the time. All the cats in the band were old enough to be my father. It was beautiful. Once I learned the music, he never let me play it wrong. We played all kinds of music. We played at two or three different clubs, fashion shows, and proms. We played the music off the jukebox, but also jazz. I hated to leave. To this day I don't know if he knows how much he did for me.

QUESTION: Did you play at home? Did your parents play?

REID: My father played the piano. My mother played the piano well enough to get through some hymns at church. My father played semi-professionally.

QUESTION: Did you have any early training, such as formal lessons?

REID: No, we couldn't afford that.

QUESTION: Where are you from?

REID: I was reared in California. My mother wanted me to play saxophone because they had brought my brother one and didn't want to buy anything else, but I didn't want to play saxophone. I took lessons at school, but they were more like group lessons. Actually when I went into the service I was surprised I got into the military band. I got in by the skin of my teeth. I thought I

could play, but once I started playing bass I knew that I really didn't know anything. I could react and read the dots on the page, but I didn't know anything about music. That's why if I deal with some school systems I'd have to change them.

QUESTION: How would you change them?

REID: I'd change the whole concept of teaching. Students are intimidated from the very beginning. You can't play this until you play that first because this is hard. The student hasn't even touched the horn yet and he's being beat up 'side the head. Students should be able to play something without being afraid of it. They don't know it's hard until you tell them. I know it is easier said than done. There are only a handful of teachers who can play the music. I really think the students learn by what the teacher does as well as teaches. They have to see it, hear it, as well as read about it. Anybody who can play was taught by somebody else who can play, or they got next to someone who actually broke through the barrier so that they could see that change. I don't care how they were taught; they were inspired by someone who could really play. That's why so many players today get uptight about teaching--because they don't really play. That's

why I used to go hang out with people like you're hanging out with right now. I could easily say, "I really don't need to talk to you," and hang up the phone. There might be two or three reasons why I don't need to talk to you. You might probe so deeply that you might uncover something that I don't want you to know that I don't know. Consequently, when I see a lot of young players, I can't really go left. If I don't feel like talking to a cat, I tell him I'm not feeling well and to talk to me tomorrow. I try to be nice and not really nasty to the kid. I remember when I was in their place, and I know how I felt when a cat really turned me off. A few years ago I did a clinic with a band from La Crosse. That band could really play. It was one of those schools that had a lot of money. This cat could write really well, and he wrote tailor-made for their band. Those kids played because their music was theirs. They had respect for their cat because they knew he knew what he was talking about. You see a lot of people teaching school who don't have any business being there. I went to Northwestern University. It's a prestigious school and they have people there getting master's and doctorate degrees who can't even play music.

QUESTION: I have a theory that most people who teach music don't try to get into music but just try to teach the physical means of making music. For instance, when they listen to a cat play, they talk about how he executed or how his tone sounded.

REID: That's the only way they can analyze it because they don't know what he's doing aesthetically. That's the only way that they can try to verbalize it--to grab hold of something technical. That's why it's so difficult for people to deal with jazz players, especially those who can execute well and do have a good tone. They don't know what he's doing. He's playing something that's way over their heads. I've grown a lot with my concept of playing because I can go to the blackboard and talk about what I'm doing. But that's only half of it. I have to be able to do what I'm teaching in order to be a good teacher.

QUESTION: What advice do you give players who come to you and say they want to play jazz? What would you tell them?

REID: I'd have to find out very quickly if they were really serious about what they wanted to do. Before I even take the time to go through the

stuff that they must deal with, I have to be sure that they're ready to come to grips with it. Then I lay it out. They have to practice, learn how to listen and gain a concept. Then they have to build confidence. That comes with practice. Those two together become consistency. Everytime I pick up my bass I can cancel out everything except what I'm doing. I become totally engrossed. That's a lot to ask of a person, especially if he's not aware that he has to do that. I've had a lot of students come to me and say they want to learn. Some have a lot of potential, so I tell them what they have to do. It took me a long time to learn that I had to do that because I was lazy too. When I met Ray Brown, I knocked on his door and saw him practicing his scales. I thought, "Why in the hell does he have to practice?" Then I realized that's why he's so good. He practices so much that when he's not practicing he doesn't feel right. If he doesn't practice, if only for fifteen minutes, his day isn't done. I had a lot of students tell me they couldn't make it to class or that they didn't practice. When they aren't willing to do it, they won't make it. I try to inspire them. I've gotten to the point where I tell them the truth. I try to be diplomatic

and not turn them off. I've come to grips with myself about how I feel about music and playing. In a regular school you have to teach those who are interested and those who aren't, and I don't like that. That's why I won't teach in a regular school.

QUESTION: What kind of things do you use in teaching the bass?

REID: You have to be a little more specific. That's one of the reasons that I wrote my book. It was twice as thick when I first wrote it. When I began to weed it out, some people said that I could make this book into three volumes to make some money. I said, "No," because I could delete the transcribed solos, discography, and the couple of tunes that I wrote, but as far as I am concerned, the stuff which must be learned before a person can become an individual in his playing is here.

QUESTION: Do you use your book in different ways with different cats?

REID: Yes, I have to. I have to deal with each individual on a one-to-one basis. I might switch the stuff around because some people grasp certain concepts more quickly than others.

QUESTION: You have another book out now on the thumb

position. Is that just an extension of The Evolving Bassist?

REID: Yes, essentially it is a technique book. There weren't any books on the market which associated the electric bass with the acoustic bass, and their being related in any way. The cats playing the electric bass still play the same things that the acoustic bass does. The sound is different. Most jazz-inspired persons won't pick up a classical book. I have things in my book about bows. Some cats don't even own bows, but that is a part of the instrument, so I introduce it. Psychologically, I introduce it without intimidating them in any manner.

QUESTION: Tell me about your schooling. How did you get into studying at Northwestern?

REID: I went to school in Seattle for awhile. The head of the department went to school at Northwestern, and he encouraged me to go there too. He had a good teacher there. Four other schools accepted me: Iowa, Indiana, UCLA, and Northwestern. I didn't want to go to Los Angeles, being from California. Iowa City, Iowa, and Bloomington, Indiana, didn't really do much for me in terms of just cities, so Chicago was it. I'd never been there before, but the teacher was supposed to be



really good, so that's where I went.

QUESTION: Did you play acoustic and electric bass at the same time? Do you treat them the same way? Do you use the same fingering?

REID: I combine different fingering because I don't believe in the fingering they use on the electric bass as a guitar. The guitar is much smaller. I'd rather use my own fingering. I do combine them because, as a string bass player, I have a tendency to play horizontally, whereas guitar players play vertically. When I was with Al Stringer I was getting good on my electric bass. I explored and tried things. Nobody told me I couldn't. I can almost do anything on the electric that I can on the acoustic.

QUESTION: You play a six-string electric bass. What is that like?

REID: It is just like a guitar in terms of tuning. The possibilities of the instrument are really something, but I may not ever get to explore it as I would really like to. I don't really want to split myself like that. When I was with Eddie Harris I got to play both, but if I were given a choice, I really wouldn't play the guitar.

QUESTION: Can you point out any specific things that are important factors in your ability to play jazz?

REID: I don't know if there is anything that I can actually verbalize. There's a feeling. I guess ego is a part of it, because I enjoy playing and being listened to. I don't know what drives it. These are things that I ask myself sometimes. Why do I feel the way I do? Why am I really enjoying this band? If you said a couple of years ago that I would play with a big band and really enjoy it, I would have doubted it.

QUESTION: Say you couldn't make it to the gig one night and the band was looking for someone to take your place. What would the cat have to have together to handle that gig?

REID: The strongest prerequisite is that he'd have to swing. He must be able to read pretty well. He must not only just read, but be able to interpret that into swing. You have to be alert. When I first sat in with the band, I had to be all ears. The music was there, but the band had opened it up. They played a part here and a part there. Mel Lewis was constantly giving me cues. The trombone player was helping me, but I never took my eyes off Thad, and that impressed them the most. He even did some of his calisthenics and I reacted to some of them. He wasn't expecting it and it cracked him up. I was able to watch and play at

the same time. That comes from my classical training, playing with a conductor. That's probably what destroys so many cats who want to sit in with the band. They play too much, and they're not really listening and watching.

QUESTION: Why do you think that you have reached a level of success as a professional musician?

REID: Because I'm reliable. I've got a bass and an amplifier that work. I own a tuxedo, I have black suits, and a car that runs, and I own an electric bass. I get along with people and am able to interact with other professional musicians. I do whatever needs to be done at the particular time. If I don't like certain things that go down, I just don't do them. You learn after you get knocked down by some cats. You become hard, but I've never had to starve. I'd go cook or wash dishes somewhere. I've never felt that jazz musicians had to be dope addicts to prove that they were dedicated to their music. If Miles Davis called me up, he would have to talk to me on a one-to-one basis if he wanted me to play. I've been spoiled. That's why I'm able to go to New York and appear on the scene and work. I'm not saying that I've got all my stuff together, but I have some of it together.

QUESTION: Was there ever a time when you had to block out the world and practice?

REID: I pick things up rather easy, so it was easy for me to take things for granted. I got shocked into really practicing. You can practice an hour and get a whole lot of stuff done that is constructive. Some cats who say that they practice six or seven hours a day are full of bull. There may be a handful of cats who do that. These cats may be playing six or seven hours a day, but they aren't practicing. They're playing the same stuff they played the day before, not trying anything new. They are still messing around with the things they know. In my case, I've been doing it for so long that it's part of me. There's still a lot of stuff that I can't do like I think I should be able to. There will be a time when one day I'll be playing it so much that it will all be there. It will be there solid. I feel blessed that I am able to make a living playing the music that I'm playing because I've played all kinds of music--bar mitzvahs, country and western, Italian--but I never lost sight of what I wanted to do.

QUESTION: How many years have you been improvising?

REID: I've been playing the bass about 15 years. I

played trumpet in school about five years, so I've been trying for twenty years.

QUESTION: What about your educational background?

REID: I have an associate degree from Olympia College in Bremerton, Washington. Then I transferred to and graduated from Northwestern, where I got a bachelor's degree in performance.

QUESTION: Did you do any activities in high school such as band and general music?

REID: Anything that had music in it, I was in.

QUESTION: What do you think the difference is between the Los Angeles and the New York music scenes?

REID: There are a lot of cats in California who have moved there from New York. They were tired of the whole hectic New York scene. I think the reason that they are able to take over in California is because their stuff is so strong. It had to be strong in order to survive in New York.

QUESTION: A lot of cats say that New York is just a prerequisite.

REID: New York is really no different; yet there is a grave difference. I've been mentally going to New York for ten years. Cats say that you should go to New York, and if you can rise above the energy there, you're doing okay. There still is no other place, even though things are probably

worse now than ever before in terms of places to play and the money. There is still more happening there than any other place in the country. You name it--classical, shows, jazz, rock--but it is the attitude that is important. I went there to get some fresh pressure. You have to have that confidence and consistency, not cockiness but assurance. If you know that what you're doing is on the right track and you have your convictions and your head together, you'll be alright, if you can play. I was told many years ago, and I didn't believe it at the time, if you play good you'll always work. You'll always be noticed. The word of mouth is as hip as computers.

QUESTION: What is your concept of improvisational playing?

REID: It's changed a lot over the last few years since I've had to get my thoughts together to try to teach it or verbalize it in such a way that someone who knows nothing about it could comprehend it. In the beginning I played trumpet, and I used to try to play like Miles, just what I had heard. I wasn't worried about how long it took me to get there technically. I was just trying to do it the best way I could. I guess that's probably my strongest thing. I don't think I've lost that. There are a lot of cats

who've gotten deeply into improvisation from the academic standpoint. They tend to get engrossed in it so that it becomes a long process. I call it your first ear, which means you don't know anything. You just hear and react. You don't know right from wrong and you don't care. It's just a raw reaction. Then you get educated, and you start filtering through the stuff and you get frustrated. You get so engrossed with the technical aspect sometimes that you lose sight of the ear. Ultimately, I think you'll go back to the ear, but now it's a fatter ear. If you could take all that education in between as a means, just stuff to feed on as a reservoir, and back to the ear, it would be ideal. Right now I feel that I'm just beginning to play what I hear. I don't think changes any more. I don't think so much about the harmonic structure, but my concept from the outset hasn't changed. I have gained more knowledge as to the vehicles I can use to play.

QUESTION: In your opinion, what is the difference between a musician who can improvise and one who can't?

REID: A musician who can't improvise can still be very good at playing classical music or something written down, but he's programmed and he's not

thinking. The difference between someone who can improvise and someone who can't is that the improviser's mind has to be working all the time. He has to be thinking. The other player who is strictly playing European music doesn't have to think. He is programmed like a typist who has learned the keyboard. It isn't going to move; it isn't going to change. Nothing is going to happen. The only thing that might change is when the cat relaxes a little bit and might make a mistake. In improvisation the person is making a conscious effort to do something different and still be technically together. It's all in the mind.

QUESTION: Emotion is considered to be very important in playing jazz. Do you think your emotion must be filtered through your intellect to be effective?

REID: Sure. My level of consistency is at a level so that, even if I'm not feeling good or if the vibes on the stand aren't what they should be, I can still play at a high level, but when the stuff is really happening, I can't really tell you how it feels. Sometimes it's very scary. Many things can happen that you can't put your finger on. The more you know--I don't care how you learned it--has to affect the way you play.



It goes back to the thought process. If you let thoughts get in the way, the playing comes off kind of sterile. You hear a guy playing who doesn't make any mistakes, never plays any wrong notes. Everything is perfect. He is being controlled by the intellect. He doesn't let any natural impulses come through. I find it very hard to play using only my thought processes and not my emotions. I don't play like that if you really hear me play.

QUESTION: You've played on the Jamey Aebersold records. How do you feel about using records to teach people to play jazz?

REID: It's a teaching aid. That's all it is--an aid. It won't teach anybody how to play. My book won't make anybody a good bass player. It will give him direction and some insights and thoughts for him to start thinking about his own self. That's what the records are about--a compilation of ideas put down by Charlie Parker. Dave Baker and Jamey (Aebersold) and others have analyzed his playing to the seventh degree and documented it, but that is all it is--just a teaching aid. There are a lot of players who can run through Bird's stuff, but it is really hard to break through that steel wall, to get to the place

where they can take that stuff, twist it up, mold it, and put it in their own horn. There is a young trombone player in Thad's band who is really good, but his playing consists of licks he has learned. He can play them well, but he hasn't come into his own yet. He hasn't broken any barriers. Right now he is in the stage of emulating. J.J. Johnson played like that a long time ago. I don't have it together yet either. I've learned and copied some stuff from Ray Brown, Paul Chambers, and Ron Carter, but I don't play like them. Eddie Gomez used to do some stuff, and I used to wonder how he did it, but once I figured it out, I put it aside and use it once in awhile.

QUESTION: How do you get through the stage of imitation?

REID: Personally, I don't like anything that's the same. Playing with Eddie Harris brought out a lot of inhibitions. I wouldn't have been able to see if I could do different things. He allowed me to do whatever came to my mind on the bass. A lot of it sounded like shit. Some of what I tried took me into a whole other thing, and I began to be quite independent. It made me a stronger player, so when I play in the context of Thad's (Jones) band, which is a pretty inside context, we've taken the music outside. I think in terms of

how this band was first conceived and how we've taken it out. Harold Danko, myself, and now Mel Lewis is opening up. He's like a little kid now he's so happy. For what it's worth, I feel really good because I felt I had a lot to offer the band and they had a lot to offer me. I needed some discipline and also some freedom. I haven't had to compromise my playing whatsoever. Once I started to think about the music I realized that there were some things I couldn't do because they wouldn't fit the music. Some cats play things just because they can, without thinking about them from the musical standpoint. I'm trying to gain the environment. If you haven't ever done a thing, you don't know what it feels like. You've got to have that experience. That trombone player has got the natural stuff happening. All he needs is to stretch out and not be afraid to play a wrong note. The stuff he's playing might be so strong it might be right.

QUESTION: If you don't ever make mistakes, you don't play anything.

REID: I've made mistakes that were so strong they fooled everybody.

QUESTION: Do you have a particular style of music you prefer over all others?

REID: I like a lot of different kinds of music. I like to play all different kinds. I've played in all kinds of bands. I'm really enjoying this band. I surprised my wife one day walking down the street singing my part on a tune. I never did that before. There is some chemistry happening in this band. It's fitting in with what I like to play. I had a chance to play with McCoy Tyner and Sonny Fortune quite a few years ago. It was just those two cats. I don't know if I'd like to play like that again. I don't think that I could be a member of McCoy's band and play like that all the time. Then again, I have to think that if I played with him I would probably entice him to do some of the things I do, but in the context of just listening to his bands and listening to him play, I don't know. I think the players in his band bogart him. I don't think he really wants to play all that stuff on a constant basis. He plays so much piano in so many different styles. I think a lot of cats also took advantage of (John) Coltrane. Pharoah Sanders is another one who has been taken advantage of in terms of riding along with him when he was strong. I'm really enjoying this band right now. I'm really enjoying this kind of music.

Even though it's a big band, it's a little big band. I don't think I've been in a band where I could play like I really wanted to.

QUESTION: Do you have any ideas of doing your own thing one of these days?

REID: Yes. It's getting closer, but I really haven't thought about it. I've worked with Nancy Wilson for the last five years on and off. Basically I've been free-lancing; I'll be doing some things with Dexter Gordon soon. I'm really trying to pour most of my energy into this band.

## SAM RIVERS INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

RIVERS: I was born on September 25, 1930. Actually, I was born in El Reno, Oklahoma, but my parents didn't stay there very long. I grew up in Boston, Massachusetts.

QUESTION: Who were some of the people that you grew up with?

RIVERS: I grew up with Alan Dawson, Joe Gordan, Gigi Gryce, Jaki Byard, Quincy Jones and a lot of other cats.

QUESTION: What was it like?

RIVERS: There was definitely something happening in Boston at the time. We didn't care anything about the cats from New York. We were way into it. Gigi Gryce was a real good writer even then. Other cats were around like Charlie Moriano and Nat Pierce. Tony Williams also came on the scene a little later.

QUESTION: How long did you stay in Boston?

RIVERS: I stayed there a long time. I guess it was eight or ten years. Then I spent some time on the road with T. Bone Walker. As a matter of fact I was with T. Bone when Miles (Davis) called me. I left T. Bone to join Miles.

QUESTION: How did Miles know you?

RIVERS: Tony was with Miles and he told Miles about me. Tony had these tapes that we had done in Boston and he kept telling Miles that he wanted him to hear them. Miles would say, "Some other time." Finally, one day he listened to the tapes and said, "Who is that?" He was on the phone the next day.

QUESTION: How did you get your playing together?

RIVERS: Well, I have always been very direct so I wrote my own exercise book. I just thought about the hardest shit that I could think of and wrote it down. Then I practiced it. That was my exercise book. After a while I was flying through the exercises. I've still got the book at home.

QUESTION: What part does being around other jazz musicians play in developing jazz improvisational skills?

RIVERS: It plays a big part. I often remember some of my hanging out experiences. One of the most outstanding days of my life was when I hung out with Bird (Charlie Parker).

QUESTION: What was Bird like?

RIVERS: It is hard to say, man. He never did say much. He was running after the bag most of the time. He was sort of inside himself. He never had to

say anything because he played it all. I never saw him practice. His music was natural. He changed the course of music. Everybody who is playing now is coming from Bird. In a lot of cases, cats don't even know that they are coming from Bird.

Cats don't understand that what Bird was playing was not about changes. Bird was just playing a lot of melodic ideas over tunes. He didn't follow the changes in the sense that Bean (Coleman Hawkins) did. Bird and Pres (Lester Young) were just singing on top of the tunes. As a matter of fact, a lot of notes that they played didn't even fit the changes they played, but the sound was very beautiful. They were playing melodies. That is the same thing that Miles does, but Miles knows the changes and can play all of his stuff on piano. All of the things that he did with Gil Evans were worked out. Stan Getz is not into changes either. He reads well but he solos by ear. You can always play by ear after you hear someone else do it. But the strange thing is that nobody was playing like that before Bird--maybe Charlie Christian but that is about it.

QUESTION: How did you meet Bird?



RIVERS: At the time I met Bird I was going to school in Boston. I was hanging out with a lot of other musicians who, like myself, would go to hear all of the cats play when they came to town and go backstage. At the time, I was living in house with Jaki Byrd and about eight or nine other cats. Sometimes we would play in the basement of the house all night. Whenever we would meet cats like Bird, we would invite them over to our house to play. One night we told Bird that we were having a jam session at our house and we wanted him to come. Well, anytime anyone would mention a jam session to Bird he was ready. It didn't matter to Bird who was playing. He would play Dixieland, swing, or anything else. He never turned down a jam session. Anyway, he came on by. When he got there he went in the bathroom and stayed in there for what seemed like two hours. The other cats were playing when Bird came out and pulled his horn out. I will never forget it. Jaki was playing "Body and Soul" at the piano. Bird started to play and that was it. He played "Body and Soul" for two hours. Now, a lot of cats say that Bird would only play two choruses when he played a tune. He might have done that

in clubs or on records, but in a jam session he played different. After hearing Bird play "Body and Soul" I have not touched it since. I don't even go near it.

QUESTION: How old were you at the time?

RIVERS: I was about twenty years old.

QUESTION: That must have been quite an impression.

RIVERS: Yes, it was. I also knew Pres.

When Pres would come to Boston I would go by his house. A lot of times we would wake him up. The first thing that he would do is put one of his records on the record player. After he would get dressed he would say, "Come on youngsters. Let's go eat something." Lester was more of a talker than Bird was. Anybody who would sit in a band and hold his horn up in the air sideways like he did was gone. Pres was out.

QUESTION: Some people say that they find it hard to believe that musicians like Pres and Bird were real. What do you think about that?

RIVERS: I can understand that, but the fantastic thing is that Bird's records really don't present a clear picture of what he was playing. Bird was cautious on records. What he put on records was exact. The records sound loose but Bird

didn't really take any chances on records. If you ask Miles, he will tell you the same thing. Bird played different in person than he did on record.

There are also some records Bird made in Europe that don't sound anything like the records he did here, even though they were made around the same time. When I went to Europe and heard some of Bird's European records I couldn't believe it. I was kind of drugged because I didn't hear those records when I was into learning Bird's solos and checking him out. These records had some other stuff in them, but by that time I was already into my own thing so it was too late for me to do anything with it. If I had heard those records fifteen years sooner, they would have helped me on my way.

QUESTION: Did you study Bird pretty close?

RIVERS: Yes. I had Bird's solos down note for note.

QUESTION: Who else did you study?

RIVERS: I could play like Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Roy Eldridge, Chu Berry, Dizzy (Gillespie), Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis, Illinois Jacquet, and a lot of other cats. I had a lot of cats down. I just played along with the records. What I really did was learn to hum the solos and then

play them on the horn because if you can hum it, you can play it. You can figure the notes out later. Once you get familiar with a style, it gets easier. However, there are a few cats who are always difficult to imitate. Cats like Eddie 'Lockjaw' Davis are very hard to copy because their style is hard, but cats usually zero in on the cats who are easiest to imitate. Lester was easy to imitate. It took them a long time to figure Bird out, but the cats finally got to him. It also took a while to get to John (Coltrane), but he could be figured out because he always played right on the changes. You can also hear Diz playing right on the changes and cats like Miles holding over the changes. As I said earlier, I could play Bird's solos note for note, but I just played them at home. I never played them in public. I always had my own thing going, even from the beginning. I had learned so many different ideas until it just worked out to be my own thing.

QUESTION: How long did it take you to learn one of the solos?

RIVERS: I don't remember. I was hanging out with Hampton Reese and he could sit down and listen

to Bird and transcribe his solos note for note without even playing them on his horn. He would just listen to them and write them down.

Around this time we had a band in Boston that would play a tune like "Billie's Bounce" just like the record, note for note. The whole band would do this in unison. We did some other things at the time that were pretty out. One thing that we did was all solo together on certain parts of the tunes. At the end of the tune we would all play any note that we felt like. We would hit some way-out chords.

QUESTION: When was this?

RIVERS: Around the late forties or early fifties. Older musicians would be standing around saying, "What are they doing? What is wrong with those boys?"

QUESTION: Who was thinking all of those things up?

RIVERS: Jaki Byard and Reese, as well as other cats. These cats were very experimental. There are a lot of cats who are just getting around to some of those things now, not to mention the cats who still can't get to it. They can't feel it.

QUESTION: Do you mean that you were doing things like that in the forties and fifties?

RIVERS: Yes, but we were still inside the measures. We hadn't taken it all the way out, but when Ornette (Coleman) broke it, that did it.

QUESTION: How did Ornette take it out?

RIVERS: Damned if I know. I never met Ornette until later. It was in the sixties. I didn't meet him until 1965, but he hit around 1958 with that stuff. I remember a particular day that we were sitting around and a cat brought this record in and said, "Hey man, has anybody heard this?" I think it was Ornette's first record called Shapes of Things to Come. It was some strange music. The cats were really listening. As far as I was concerned, it was out of sight. I was knocked out the first time I heard it. I was laughing the same way I was the first time I heard Dizzy.

I will never forget this trombone player who was there. He was a short white dude. He was griping all the way through the record. Finally near the end of it he jumped up and started screaming and took the record and broke it. He gave the cat the money for the record and told him to go and buy anything else but that record. He got very violent. First, he took the record off the machine and then he cracked it, jumped

up and down on it. The rest of the cats just looked at him in a daze. However, most of the cats were pretty open and knew that that was where it had to go. Ornette has had that happen to him more than once. I remember one time when somebody snatched the horn out of his mouth and stepped on it. That happened somewhere in Texas. He was playing a plastic horn and the people didn't like what he was playing, so they took his horn and stepped on it, but that is the same thing that Ben Webster did to Charlie Parker the first time he heard him. Ben said, "What in the hell are you doing, man? The saxophone ain't supposed to sound like that." Those were his words. As a matter of fact, I had Woody Shaw curse me out, even in this day and age. I was standing there looking at him in a state of shock. Here it was, 1976, and this cat said, "Man, I find your music most repulsive."

QUESTION: Did this happen in your club?

RIVERS: No, we were playing a concert in Europe. I didn't have Dave (Holland) then. I had my man Joe Daily with me. He was playing tuba and baritone horn. He would probably be with me now if he wasn't teaching school. I normally use a quartet, but he can't make it and I can't

find anybody like him. The time Woody Shaw came down on my music I was using a trio. It was me, tuba, and drums. I know that this instrumentation got to him right away because there wasn't a bass to help carry the lines. Woody really cursed me out.

QUESTION: Well, what are you doing?

RIVERS: I don't know man. It just comes out. What can I say? I just listen to the creator. It just comes through me. That is all. I don't know how I do it. I just do it.

QUESTION: What is your concept of improvisation?

RIVERS: It is spontaneous.

QUESTION: Is there a particular way that you think about what you do?

RIVERS: No, not now. It is just spontaneous, but there was a point when I did. That was when I was inside the changes. Now I just play. My group does not rehearse anything. We just play. There is no written music involved.

QUESTION: Do you call tunes?

RIVERS: No, we don't call anything. We don't even talk about anything. We just play. It is spontaneous improvisation in the truest sense of the word. The music is the music.

As far as improvisation goes, you never have to



create from a point of nothingness. Everything is an action or a reaction. Hopefully you get to the point where you react to what you hear. You react to sound. You either hear a sound that you can contribute to by adding something to it or you hear a sound that you like the way it is. Sometimes you may hear a sound that you want to change so you react in such a way that you change the sound. If you have your physical execution together, then all you have to do is open your heart.

Most cats who are into it and know what is happening are pretty natural at it. They have a natural talent. In my case I think that when I first picked up the tenor I was playing. I have been a musician all my life.

QUESTION: What was your early home life and musical training like?

RIVERS: My mother and father were both musicians so I started on piano. I later took the violin and some other instruments.

QUESTION: Did you take lessons?

RIVERS: Yes. My mother was a piano teacher.

QUESTION: Did you start out on jazz?

RIVERS: No. I started with the traditional exercises in the regular books published by Carl Fischer.

I also studied the violin. From violin I went into the school marching band.

QUESTION: How old were you when you started piano?

RIVERS: I was about five years old. I was just reading music. I was not improvising at all. I also played church music.

QUESTION: What instrument did you play in the marching band?

RIVERS: I was playing soprano saxophone and then I changed to trombone. I also played baritone horn and clarinet. I got into all of these instruments because of the unique system that the school band program worked on.

QUESTION: Where was all of this taking place?

RIVERS: In Little Rock, Arkansas. I went to a Catholic school. The priest who was over the band had the best teaching system in the world. What he did was require the seniors to teach juniors, the juniors to teach the sophomores, the sophomores to teach the freshmen and on down the line. The school had grades one through twelve. I got into the band real early. I must have been ten years old. With this system, the priest would come to rehearsal and raise his baton for the downbeat. That was all he did. The students did the actual teaching. If the band didn't

sound right the seniors got marked on how the other people played. By the time I was in the twelfth grade, I was teaching soprano saxophone, trombone, baritone horn, and clarinet.

QUESTION: Did you go to college?

RIVERS: Yes. I went to Jarvis Christian College in Texas. I played trombone in the band and the tenor saxophone player got most of the solos but the tenor player couldn't play. One day I got mad at him and grabbed his horn and blew him away. After that I went and got a tenor. After I started playing the tenor, I decided to keep playing it.

QUESTION: What happened next?

RIVERS: Then I went into the navy, but I didn't go in the band because when I went to hear the band it sounded terrible. I was about eighteen at the time and I could play. I was very cocky. I said, "I'm not going into that band." And I didn't. I went into navigation. It was lucky for me that I did, because the band had to play in the officers' quarters while I was off duty every night. I worked in the daytime. Then I would go out at night and play.

QUESTION: Where was this?

RIVERS: In California, not far from San Francisco. My first gig was working with Jimmy Witherspoon. He wasn't even singing then. He was a master of ceremonies. He met people at the door of this club and greeted them. Later on when I heard the name of Jimmy Witherspoon associated with singing, it surprised the hell out of me.

QUESTION: What did you do after the navy?

RIVERS: When I got out of the navy, I went up to Boston and entered the Boston Conservatory of Music. That is when I met all of the Boston cats. Everybody was in school.

QUESTION: You said something earlier about Ornette Coleman having the same effect on you as Dizzy when you first heard him. When did you first hear Dizzy?

RIVERS: I heard Dizzy when I was in the navy. I was playing a Billy Eckstine record that Dizzy soloed on and it took me out. I went and got the whole band and told them that I'd just heard a crazy trumpet player on one of Billy Eckstine's records that they had to hear. They came and listened to it and one of the cats said, "Hey man, that has got to be a mistake. How did that cat get on that record?" I thought it sounded good. As a matter of fact, I heard Diz before

I heard Bird. The first thing that I heard by Bird and Diz was "Groovin' High." My brother told me, "Diz is mean but you gotta hear this cat who they call Charlie Parker 'Bird'. My brother was playing bass.

Clark Terry used to tell me stories about the first time Bird came to St. Louis and was playing in Jay McShann's band. The cats would say, "Man, they have got a cat in Jay McShann's band who never plays the same solo twice. Everytime he plays he plays it different." During that time it was not fashionable to change your solos. Usually cats would play the same stock solos in the bands. They would play the same kind of phrasing to fit the background. Whenever they would get it hooked up they would keep the same kind of feeling, but Bird didn't do that. He would play differently every time. A lot of cats tell stories about Bird going and woodshedding after the other cats laughed at him because he couldn't play, but a lot of Bird's thing was natural talent because even though Bird was a good reader he wasn't much into changes. He was hearing all of the things that he played. He was not an educated musician so that was all he could have been doing. He couldn't sit down

and write out an arrangement or for that matter tell you what chord he was playing over. He could tell you when it sounded right but he couldn't tell you what it was. That is why anything that cats played with Bird he was right on top of. Bud Powell used to change chords and keys on Bird but it didn't bother him a bit. Bud would get evil with Bird and change keys in the middle of a tune. Bird would just look over at Bud and keep playing. Sometimes he would change two or three times in one tune. Bird would never make a mistake during all of those sudden modulations.

QUESTION: When did you start playing jazz?

RIVERS: Actually, I was with a band before I went into the navy.

QUESTION: At what point did you decide that you could play?

RIVERS: I never thought that I could play. I have just steadily kept trying. I am never satisfied. As a matter of fact, I quit playing for a couple of years. I thought that I couldn't get it together so I quit playing altogether. I gave it up.

QUESTION: When was this?

RIVERS: In the fifties. Maybe 1955.

QUESTION: Do you mean that you didn't play at all for two

years?

Yes. I didn't touch the instruments at all.

QUESTION: Why was that?

RIVERS: I got drugged because I couldn't get all of the things out that I wanted to. I was blowing cats away but I wasn't satisfied with what I was doing. Just because one cat blows another cat away doesn't really mean anything. It is what you are trying to do yourself that counts. At that time I could go and play with anybody who came to Boston. All of the tenor players who would come to Boston I could wash out. I am including almost everybody on the scene like (Stan) Getz, Zoot Sims, a lot of cats. If they came to Boston and came to a jam session, that was it, but all of this time there was something else that I was trying to get to.

QUESTION: When did you practice and how did you do it?

RIVERS: I just sat down and practiced. I would practice for hours and hours--maybe five, six, or seven hours at a time.

QUESTION: Did you work a day job?

RIVERS: No, I was going to school in the morning, practicing in the afternoon and playing a gig at night. I had a gig playing for dances. There was a show that went on for about an hour and

then we played for dancing for about an hour. It was piano, drums, and saxophone. We set up in a line with the piano in the middle. The guy played a spinet piano. The first night I went to the gig, and when I walked in the piano player said, "How are you doing?" That was it. He just started playing. He didn't say anything else. He didn't ask me what I knew or what I wanted to play. He just started playing. He was an old stride-style player. There was not a tune you could call that he didn't know. He knew all of the tunes. He would just start playing a tune, and if I didn't know it I would just have to sit there and listen. I learned a lot of the tunes that I know from this cat. At the time, I was playing them by ear because I really was not into the changes, but I really checked out tunes by ear. I was working on the changes at the same time. Sometimes when the piano player would get real juiced he would say things like "Back in the late thirties when I was playing in Chicago in the speakeasies and Al Capone would come in, I would play this tune for him. This was Al Capone's tune." He would then proceed to play Al Capone's tune. He would tell me stories about a lot of cats and then play their



tunes. He was fantastic. He had a thing about being able to play the favorite tunes of people who came to the club where he played. Anybody could walk in the door of the club and if he knew them and their favorite tune, he would segue right into it no matter what he was playing. The cat whose tune he was playing would then come up with a five-dollar bill and lay it on the piano. He was on the case, taking care of plenty of business.

QUESTION: Do you remember the piano player's name?

RIVERS: Yes, his name was Larry Willis.

QUESTION: Whatever happened to him?

RIVERS: I don't really know. He may not be around now because he was pretty old then. He was coming out of Meade Lux Lewis and Albert Ammons. He was a little more modern than that and would get into Fats Waller's style.

QUESTION: What were some of your other playing experiences?

RIVERS: I played in Jay C. Higginbotham's band.

QUESTION: What kind of musical experience was that?

RIVERS: We played straight and swing. It would probably be hard for some cats who hear me now to conceive of me every playing with Jay C.

QUESTION: Who are some of the trumpet players you have known?

RIVERS: I knew a lot of cats, but Clifford (Brown) and Fats Navarro stand out in my mind. Clifford was a real clean cat who didn't smoke, drink, or fool around. He was a nice cat. He had one of the most singing trumpet sounds that I have ever heard. Records didn't really capture his sound. It was so pure. You can't tell that on a record, but in person his sound was so sweet. He was a very methodical cat who had it all hooked up. One of the few cats to really extend Clifford's thing has been Freddie (Hubbard). You can listen to Miles and hear a different kind of projection. Miles is the kind of cat who can take anything he plays and make it something. Miles is very intricate. However, Freddie could have been Clifford extending himself.

QUESTION: Did you know (John) Coltrane?

RIVERS: Not too well. I met him but I can't really say that I knew him. The first time I heard Coltrane with Diz he sounded just like Dexter (Gordon). This was in the late forties or early fifties. He used the same kind of phrasing as Dexter and everything. That was when he changed to tenor. He had been playing alto in Dizzy's big band and he sounded like Bird. Coltrane was really an alto player and that is

probably why he had a lighter sound than most tenor players. He never really got a real heavy sound but he got broader. It was a lot like Pres's sound. It was a heavy sound but it was broad.

QUESTION: When did you go to New York?

RIVERS: I went to New York when Miles sent for me.

QUESTION: What was it like with Miles?

RIVERS: It was nice. However, I didn't stay with him that long.

QUESTION: Why did you leave the band?

RIVERS: He got Wayne (Shorter) to join the band. Wayne had been playing with Art Blakey. Actually, it was supposed to have been a trade. Wayne was coming with Miles and I was going with Blakey. Instead I went with Andrew Hill. I stayed with Andrew for awhile and from there I went with Cecil (Taylor). I stayed with Cecil for about five years. I was working with McCoy (Tyner) at the same time that I was working with Cecil. That was a mind expanding experience.

QUESTION: When you were with Cecil, did you practice?

RIVERS: Oh, man! We rehearsed four and five hours straight in one sitting. We did this everytime we rehearsed. He still does the same thing with his group.

QUESTION: Would you work out the arrangements?

RIVERS: Cecil might have twenty pages of written music for one composition. He would write new music for each concert. If you take twenty pages of notated music, plus the solos, you hve got a two and a half hour concert in nothing flat.

QUESTION: How was the music written?

RIVERS: Cecil has a special way that he writes. He sits down at the piano and gives you each note that he wants, a note at a time. You would have your horn and he would give you the note he wanted you to play.

QUESTION: Would he also give you the rhythms?

RIVERS: Yes. You could write it out any way that you wanted to, but Cecil would give it to you a note at a time. He would tell you what it was, then you would play it with him. Sometimes we would play one measure for an hour or so. It didn't matter if you couldn't get it right away because you were going to be there until you did. After you played one phrase long enough, you had it. It didn't matter about the tempo. Cecil has got that kind of concentration so he would make you concentrate, too. I see articles written about Cecil's music that say it is all free improvisation, but that is the

furthest thing from the truth. Cecil's music is one of the most disciplined and structured musics out there. It is very tight and exact. It is damn near scientific. There is nothing spontaneous about Cecil's music but the solos. You can't tell when the solos start and the notated music begins so it all sounds improvised. People think that everything is spontaneous because of the way that it is written. That is the way that music is supposed to be. It is supposed to sound spontaneous even if you write it. That is what music is all about. It is never supposed to sound like it is written down. It is supposed to sound like it is coming from inspiration. It's like Duke Ellington's music. That is why nobody could successfully copy Duke. You won't find anybody who sounds like Duke. The reason is that Duke just set up guidelines for the cats in his band and they would play differently each time. Consequently, all of the bands had to copy Count Basie's because his thing was more structured in the sense that they could dig where he was coming from. As a result, you get the Maynard Ferguson, Woody Herman, and Buddy Rich bands. Stan Kenton's band is coming from Jimmy

Lunceford. Jimmy's band used to sound like that back in the thirties. Stan Kenton copied him note-for-note. If you check out some old Lunceford records, you will hear the high-note man and everything.

QUESTION: What do you mean when you say that the music is not supposed to sound like it is written down?

RIVERS: When a cat composes, he is writing down his improvisations. Sometimes it may be a free improvisation. Most of the time it is based upon a chord structure, but it is still improvisation. The music is supposed to flow. In other words, a musician writes down his solos.

QUESTION: What do you think about Thad's (Jones) band?

RIVERS: That is also an off-shoot of Basie. So is Frank Foster. However, they are a little more beefed up, but it is still Basie. Most of the bands interchange personnel which also contributes to uniformity. Actually, it is the same band. Cats go between Basie, Thad, Frank Foster and Toshiko Akiyoshi and Lew Tabackin. It is the same type of thing that Maynard Ferguson, Woody Herman, and Buddy Rich have going. It is the same band. They use the same cats who come out of the same schools. The cats they get come

out of Berklee, North Texas State, and a couple of other schools. They all sound the same. If a cat is playing tenor he sounds like Stan Getz or John Coltrane. If he plays alto he is going to sound like Bird. All of the trumpet players sound like Miles, Freddie, or Dizzy, and all of the trombone players sound like J.J. (Johnson). The piano players sound like McCoy (Tyner) and the drummers sound like Elvin (Jones). All of the bass players sound like Ron (Carter). That is it. That is the national standard. Everywhere you go you hear the same thing. I also neglected to say that if a tenor player sounds like Trane, it is like his middle period. Nobody is talking about exploring the areas that he was into before he died. After Trane played "Giant Steps" he left all of the cats behind. "Giant Steps" stands for them as the epitome of John Coltrane. Everything else after that point is discarded.

This is 1978 and we are talking about music that happened in 1958. That is where everything is happening jazz-wise in this country. Modern music is really very basic, but the difference between contemporary music and past bebop is where all the cats are.

QUESTION: What do you mean by freedom in your music?

RIVERS: Freedom means that you don't have to use chord changes, if you don't want to. If you play beyond II-V-I changes you have suddenly left everybody in the country behind. There are a few cats who are out there and that is it.

QUESTION: Did you go through a stage where you learned changes?

RIVERS: Yes. There are some cats who don't though. They are in big trouble. They will have to go back and get it just like (Archie) Shepp is doing right now, but Shepp is lucky because he can go to the university and teach the history of music while he is learning to play his horn and get paid to do it. How many cats get that lucky? You don't hear about the cats who go out there and don't know the changes. They don't last. If you can't read and don't know changes, you are in a world of trouble. I don't know what it is, but this kind of foundation gives you the needed background. I can't say that you don't use the information gained by learning changes and learning how to read, because you get a melodic and harmonic way of playing that carries over to any kind of musical situation in which you find yourself.



I also feel for cats who can't play the blues. That is something else that is very serious. It doesn't matter if you are out or in; if you can't play the blues you are definitely in trouble. That is the way I look at it. If a cat can't feel the blues he doesn't have any business playing this music. The blues is basic, but some cats just can't do it. They sound very stiff trying to swing.

QUESTION: What about the European situation?

RIVERS: There is a difference between here and Europe. In Europe they could never swing, so this free shit is right up their alley. They are very happy. The people over there are screaming and screeching their asses off. All the white boys in Europe can play free.

QUESTION: Can they play changes?

RIVERS: Not really. The few who can play changes are still trying to swing and they sound stiff as hell. Most of the young players are just out there screaming. The thing in Europe now is to talk about German jazz, Polish jazz, French jazz, and any other kind of jazz. If they come up to me with that shit, I say, "What the hell are you talking about? What is Polish jazz? What do you mean? Do you mean Polish jazz is

Polish musicians playing black music?" For some reason they don't want to say that any form of jazz played by people from other countries is merely black music being played by the musicians of the country.

There is this Japanese group that has copied Cecil's group and they sound just like them. The piano player sounds just like Cecil, and the other players sound just like Cecil's group. They go all around the world and play like Cecil. The Japanese are very happy about that and proudly say that they have a man who plays just like Cecil Taylor. For them that is an accomplishment, but for an artist that is not a compliment, because what every artist wants to do is express his own thing. He wants to make his statement. To say to an artist that he sounds like someone else is the highest insult. That is a drag. It is all right to sound like somebody when you are learning. You are very pleased if someone tells you that you sound like Bird or Trane because you are trying hard to get their thing out, but the level of true artistry is one that requires a personal statement.

I'll tell you something else that really shocks

them. I say to them, "What would you say if you walked into a concert hall and saw an all black symphony orchestra?" They say, "That would be sort of strange." I then say, "Well, don't you think that it is the same kind of strange when you go and see an all white jazz band." I wonder what they feel then. If they can't get the message from that, they are just out, but I think they get the message because you can't get around that one. You can't really make a blanket statement like that because my bass player, Dave Holland, is from England. He is a hell of a player. I also have Barry Altschul on drums who is also on top of things.

QUESTION: What do you think about funk music?

RIVERS: I can dig it. I have always been into that.

QUESTION: Would you play funk?

RIVERS: I have played it and still do. We play some all the time. Everytime we play we get into some grooves like that. We go everywhere. That is what the freedom of music is really about. You are free to play the blues if you want to and you are free not to play the blues. The choice is yours. That is what you are talking about when you talk about freedom. You can do what you want. You can play changes or not play changes, that is

if you can play changes. You can't get locked in anywhere.

QUESTION: Do you ever listen to European composers?

RIVERS: Yes. I listen to everybody. I played a lot of those things on viola when I was in the school orchestra. I would play a school symphony concert and then rush down to the gig. I would go from playing viola in a string quartet to playing tenor in a club. It was some different stuff and for awhile it bothered my ear. On the gig we would play kind of loose, but in the string quartet everything had to be tight and in tune.

QUESTION: Do you own a club in New York?

RIVERS: Yes, I started it in 1970. I had a lot of music and I wanted a place to rehearse. The only place you can do that in New York is in a loft. If you want to, you can play twenty-four hours. I rehearsed my group and started giving concerts. The concerts were a success so I am still doing it. A lot of groups have played there. One reason that the club has been successful is that there are fifty-five or sixty clubs in New York, but they won't hire the cats who play free music. I had all of New York in that respect. We pack them in every night. We are located

about two blocks from New York University and we get a lot of students. We are also right in the tourist and artist neighborhood. It is real cool. I used to do concerts everyday but now I only do them on the weekends.

QUESTION: What do you think about jazz education?

RIVERS: I don't know. I have talked to a lot of students who are really dissatisfied with where it is at present.

QUESTION: Do you think that jazz can be taught and that you should teach it?

RIVERS: Yes, you can teach it because of the records that are available. The teacher points out to the student what has happened concerning the music and what he has to do. A teacher can show a student the way but it is up to him if he goes or not. That is all that you can do. That is all that any teacher can do. You have to get for yourself. It is what is called research.

QUESTION: Are there any other aspects of your playing and your music that you would like to talk about?

RIVERS: I think that the spiritual aspect is a very important part of it. That is the unexplainable part--how things happen in your life that bring about certain awareness and realizations

you may never know. What I think about spirituality is kind of different because I think it can't be religion as we know it in America because it is a business. I feel that spirituality is within a person. It involves the life code that they live by as far as being human beings. It is part of being a human being and being part of the universe. I believe in ESP, yoga, and Zen Buddhism. There are some things that you just can't explain. I really can't explain how I play. I could have explained it when I was into changes but I can't now, because I don't really know what is going to happen. It is like being a real skilled navigator in uncharted space. The navigator is out there and has to be ready to do his part whatever happens. There is no way that I can explain what I am doing because I don't know how it happens. All I know is that it is going to happen. I know that the minute I pick up my horn one note will lead to another and it just keeps going. I am thinking in terms of each note, in terms of phrases, sounds, rhythms, harmonies, space, and mechanics. It is a very complex, unexplainable process. It is just there. Now, it can be analyzed after the fact just like

every other theoretical thing but it can't really be explained. It is completely amazing to me. I am used to hearing myself now so I am not that surprised anymore. I can listen to myself critically to better myself, but if I pick out one of my old scores that was done six or seven years ago, I am thoroughly amazed. I try to think of the thought processes I went through to create the score, and I don't remember. I don't even know how it happened. If it wasn't there, I wouldn't believe it. By spirituality I mean just being in tune with whatever it is around us. Some people have the same thoughts at the same time as other people, but unless they are aware and willing to try and communicate, they may never know it. It is not unusual for two scientists to invent the same thing at the same time in two completely different parts of the world. The camera is a good example of that. Two cats invented it at the same time in different parts of the world. The thoughts are around; we just have to open up to them. Some people can pick them up and other people can't. They just are not in tune with them. You have to work to be in tune.

If you really get to a level of creating, you

can't explain it. It is more or less inspiration. At least as far as I am concerned it just comes.

QUESTION: Do you remember things that happen while you play?

RIVERS: I have an idea of how I played. But, if there were no tapes of it, it is gone. What I will remember are the things I play that I have played in a previous concert. What I do in that case is try to rephrase these things in a way other than the way that I did them before. That makes it impossible for me to get in a rut. Since I have no guidelines I try to forget as much of the past as I can before I get on the bandstand. I try to wipe the slate clean and use my ability as an artistic creator. It is not a thoroughly conscious kind of thing. The subconscious has a lot to do with it. As a matter of fact, I never play with my eyes open, so that I get totally into the sound. I am not quite sure sometimes if I am into a conscious thing or not. I get kind of jumbled up at times. But, the bottom line is the fact that I can't really explain it. I don't think that any person who is involved in a creative effort can really explain how he does it. A lot of it is inspiration. You can't figure it out and you can't work



it out. It is not calculated; the ideas just come to you. Where they come from I couldn't tell you.

QUESTION: What are the most important things that got you to that level?

RIVERS: It has been the whole thing. A lot of it is getting into all of the different music that I have gotten into with all of the groups that I have been with. Two great influences were Cecil Taylor and Andrew Hill. To make a long story short, everybody has influenced me. However, I can probably say that Cecil has been the main influence because I was with him longer than the other groups. Playing with Cecil was one of the most exhilarating experiences in my life up to that point. It was really high energy. If I got nothing else from Cecil, I got that. I also got a stronger sense of confidence in what I was doing. Cecil is a cat who believes in standing up for what he believes in. He has been one of the most attacked cats in the business. I didn't have too much of a problem because I was accepted for my ability to play changes and play the blues. John Coltrane got the same kind of acceptance. If you could play "Cherokee" through the keys, you were pretty cool.

If you happened to go out from there, the cats might look at you a little different, but they still accepted you because they knew that you could play. They look at you a little different than they do a younger cat. There is a respect that is mutual. They know that you wouldn't do anything to the music that was not cool. My ability to write also helped me gain acceptance, but that was not until 1963 or 1964. Before that I had played in some improvisational symphonic groups that played European music. That was in the late fifties.

QUESTION: Where was that?

RIVERS: I was playing with the cat who is now dean of the Boston Conservatory. He had an improvisation group that I played saxophone in. He played trumpet. He wanted to play jazz but he was more into a classical thing that was kind of stiff. We played free music.

QUESTION: Was it notated?

RIVERS: Sometimes he would have graphs but it was essentially improvised. Sometimes he would throw ink on a piece of paper and we would play that. Sometimes we would go to the museum and play paintings that were hanging on the wall. This was in 1958. At the same time I was playing

with Herb Pomeroy's band. The cats in Pomeroy's band thought that the improvisational thing that I was doing with this other group was a joke.

QUESTION: What are your feelings concerning preferences of style?

RIVERS: I think that if a musician doesn't feel a style of music it would be dishonest and hypocritical for him to play it. I have a lot of respect for a lot of older musicians who could be into what we consider more contemporary music but won't play it because they don't feel it. If you don't feel it, you can't do it. A cat may be able to play it on his horn and go through the technique of what is happening, but if he doesn't feel it, it is all for nothing. I feel all the music that I play. That is why I do it. If I didn't feel it, I wouldn't do it. No matter what I think about what I do, it is also coming from the heart as much as from the head. I respect cats who do that. As far as the cats who just jump out and start screaming with no foundation, they won't be heard about too long unless they get something to add to what they do. I tell cats that all the time.

QUESTION: Do you run into a lot of young musicians like that?

RIVERS: No. The music is so complicated that most young cats try to get into the traditional.

QUESTION: You are often called a futuristic musician. What do you think about that?

RIVERS: Well, what the people call modern music has been around for about twenty years now. I don't think that you can call the music avant-garde either. Actually, the music is just suffering from a lack of exposure. It is strange for me to be out here playing like I have been for the past twenty years and still be called new. I find that odd as all hell. How can I be considered new when I have been doing the same thing for twenty years? I don't know how to take that but there it is. I am well-known around the recording people and record distributors but I guess I am considered strange because they can't give me orders. It is a hell of a situation to be in. They know that I know what is happening and that I can run a record company as well as do music, but it is not the kind of music they want to distribute. It is not the kind of music they want to make popular. One of the reasons is that the companies listen to what the older musicians say about music and the older musicians don't say anything good about my music. The cats who are

in the business respect the older musicians so they listen to them. The business people don't really know. In other words, a critic of music becomes a critic by hanging out with musicians and listening to what they say. So, if a musician is respected by a writer and gives him a bad review of another musician, the writer immediately responds accordingly because he probably can't hear anything in the music. He gets his ideas from an expert in the field. What can you do? You got everybody against you. The agents go to talk to the club owners and they ask, "What about Sam Rivers?" The agent says, "Oh, you don't want Sam Rivers. I've got Stan Getz and Woody Herman. Sam Rivers is difficult. You can't talk to him."

QUESTION: What do you mean when you say that the record companies don't want to make the music popular?

RIVERS: I mean that they make the things popular that they want to make popular. They make the people in this country buy what they want them to. Not only that--they make stars out of lemons. That is why they are so cynical. You don't have to play music for them to make you a millionaire. You don't have to be able to act for them to make you a star. You don't have to play shit.

They can do it. Experiments have already been done on it. One of the first experiments was done with Fabian. He was just a face that they picked out while driving down the streets of Philadelphia. The face had been decided on as being the one that would sell. They say it--and boom--Fabian is a star, the saddest cat in the world, but they did it. They have gone further than that with the group, The Monkees. They put them together by having a bunch of musicians come in and line up. They found the right combination of faces and that was it. They made them a group. They know that if they can make something sell that ain't shit they had better not hip the public to what is good. They would be fools to raise the standards of the public. If they did that, the public would be discriminating. They could then see through all the bullshit. That is the last thing that they want of a public. They don't want you to think about what is good and bad. They can deal with cats who can't play because these cats know they can't play. They know these cats will come into the studio and won't have it together. They can tell them what to play from the control booth. That is why it takes six months for some of the

rock groups to make one record. A jazz group goes in and gets two or three days at the most.

QUESTION: Do you agree with the term 'free' jazz?

RIVERS: Actually, I wonder if the people who say that know what it means. I know what it is, but I wonder if they have any idea what they are talking about. Free jazz is freedom because there are no rules. We don't have any rules at all so it is free in that respect. The rules are set up as we go. After it is done the rules are there. In other words, you don't know about the composition before you do it.

QUESTION: What do you say to the other musicians when you walk on the stage to play?

RIVERS: Nothing. What is there to say? We know each other really well because we play everyday.

QUESTION: Why do you play everyday?

RIVERS: To make sure that we don't get into a rut. The more you play the more open you are. The more you play the less repetitious you become. You keep working to keep creating. It's like I said before. I just know that I do it. I go to the music with a clean slate.

QUESTION: Do you always start the music?

RIVERS: We usually start together. After the first note, the music is the music. We just play. If someone decides to go into a key, to play a

particular tonality, we do it because we have all been to school and studied solfeggio. All the cats I play with can hear really well. I think we are the only group that is playing like this. The other groups use some type of thematic material that they use as a point of departure. We don't do any of that. We have one of the most unique groups on the scene in terms of being truly spontaneous. Most other groups use a traditional plan. They play the head of a tune. Then the solos repeat the head and take it out. They all use the same form. My group is the only one I can think of whose complete professional career is based on improvisation. I have not used any music with this group in six years. Actually, I have had a group doing this type of thing since 1967. Our music is strictly creative spontaneous improvisation.

QUESTION: Do you feel that this kind of improvisation can be taught?

RIVERS: Yes, up to a degree--that is if a person has talent. A talented musician can be shown the way to do it. I am working on a book that contains these ideas. The only reason that I am bothering to write the ideas down is I don't know of anyone else doing it. I don't know of



one teacher in one university in the United States who knows anything about this kind of music. They all stop with the II-V-I. My book is on composition. I don't think it will change anything as far as music schools are concerned. The music departments that I know about are not involved in the creative process at all but are more or less involved in the stifling process. The main concern is to make you a functional musician who can go out and fit into a studio band, pit orchestra, Woody Herman's band, Buddy Rich's band, symphony orchestra or the like. It doesn't go any further than that. That is the total music world as far as school goes. These are also the only musicians that the musician's union is interested in. They aren't interested in musicians like myself, Ornette (Coleman), Cecil Taylor, or (Charles) Mingus, but we have to keep on pushing.

QUESTION: Do you teach privately?

RIVERS: I teach my students how to be soloists and develop their own style. I have my students write their own exercises. It boils down to that. You write and practice only what you are going to use as a soloist. You don't practice anything that you are not going to use. Why practice

something that you are not going to use? Only  
practice what you are going to use. That is it.

## MARVIN STAMM INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

STAMM: May 23, 1939, in Memphis, Tennessee.

QUESTION: How did you start playing?

STAMM: When I was twelve I wanted to get out of music and art because I couldn't draw and my voice had changed and I couldn't sing. I had a great soprano voice when I was about nine years old and I was embarrassed. My voice changed, so the only thing you could do was pick up a horn or something. I picked up the trumpet because I had heard a record of Clyde McCoy's, "Sugar Blues." I started playing strictly to get out of those classes. I had never thought about music before, never had any inclination for it, but it really turned me around. When I was fourteen, and I'd been playing two years, I made up my mind that music was what I wanted to do. I didn't know quite where I was going or what I was going to do, but that all took care of itself. If you can play and you're sincere about it all, and if you are a nice person who knows how to be with other people and knows how to relate to other people, you'll make it. You must have these qualities: be a good player, be a good person, and have an ability to relate to other people and be considerate of them. Consideration

goes a long way. When somebody hires you for a job, be on time, and be straight and ready to go.

QUESTION: How did you get to New York City?

STAMM: Originally I am from Memphis. I was born and raised there. When I graduated from high school I went to North Texas State University and stayed there for four years. I graduated in 1961 and joined Stan Kenton for a couple of years as his jazz trumpet soloist. I left him at the end of 1962. My first marriage broke up so I hung out in Memphis a little bit; I hung out in Houston a little bit and finally decided to go to Reno, Nevada. That was in '64. I stayed there one and a half years doing shows--big productions, nudey girl shows--or backing up singers like Andy Williams and people like that who came to Reno. It was fun. A good bunch of guys were there.

Then Bill Chase called me to go with Woody's (Herman) band so I joined them at the end of August of '65 and stayed with them until June of '66. I hung out around Memphis and Dallas again and saw some old friends and got myself together. I knew I had to make a decision to go to Los Angeles or New York or go back on the road and there was no where else to go. I'd been with Woody; I'd been with Stan. I got two calls within a period

of two weeks. I got a call from Harry James, and I got a call from (Count) Basie's band. I kept thinking it would be a groove to go out and play, but what I'm really doing is putting off the inevitable. Either I had to go to New York or Los Angeles to play. I had been on the road and I had reached a point where I was not getting anything else from it. The guys I really wanted to play with were in New York--Bernie Glow, Snooky Young, and Ernie Royal, people like that. I really didn't want to go to Los Angeles. I didn't know anyone in New York or Los Angeles so it was six in one hand, a half dozen in the other. I decided to come to New York. I'd saved about three grand over the four years that I'd been playing. I figured that would last me six months if I was really tight, and if it didn't work I could go back on the road again and save up some more bread and try Los Angeles, but I came to New York and met Ernie Royal right away. He helped me a lot. A week after I was here Jimmy Nottingham was sick and he sent me in to sub for Thad's (Jones) band, and they liked the way I played and made me first sub. Whenever Snooky or Notts had to be out I would sub for the band. Snooky was always out that first year because he was with Peggy Lee doing a

lot of traveling with her, so I got to play with the band a lot and got a lot of exposure. The band was about two years old at that time. Gary McFarland, Al Cohn, and all the guys would come down and hang out at the Village Vanguard on Monday nights.

QUESTION: When was that?

STAMM: That was '67 and it was really exciting. Jerome Richardson was in the band and he would contract for Quincy (Jones). Jerome helped me get into some things, and some other guys like Oliver Nelson, also helped me out. I got into the jazz bag and it was a groove. I had a chance to really make it here. I had a chance to get into the studio thing and that's what I wanted. I made my decision then that I didn't want to go into the jazz thing. It worked out really well. Now I've been here ten years, and I'm really ready to get with more jazz playing again. I'm more confident of myself. I really dig playing. That's what I want to do more than anything, so I'm doing studio work and going out to play as much as I possibly can. I like getting out and grooving with young people when I go to different colleges and high schools and universities. I dig where I'm at. The only thing I'd like is to play more

jazz, but that will come in time too.

I've met some beautiful cats who have helped me all along the way, I didn't do it myself. When a guy sent me in to play or called me to play, I played. That part I did, but there were a lot of nice guys who really recommended me and made sure I had something to play so the leader could hear me. Ernie Royal was one; Snooky was another. Bernie Glow, Clark Terry, Marky Markowitz, Johnny Frosk-- a lot of guys went out of their way to help me. You can't do it by yourself. Then you pass it on. If somebody hits you in the mouth and you can't play the trumpet anymore, does it make you less of a person, or does playing the trumpet make you any more of a person? It doesn't take very long for anybody who is really into music to pick out the guys who are really playing or the guys who are trying to impress somebody. I go hear Dizzy whenever I can. I've heard Dizzy when he sounds stupendous, and I've heard him when he's sounding good but you know he wasn't feeling great that night. Nobody plays the same every night, but even when he wasn't at his top peak, he always sounded good. When I hear Dizzy play and he gets into his bag where he plays a lot of fast stuff and his chops are right up there and he can

roar all over the horn, you never feel like he's doing that to impress anyone. That's whatever he's using at that moment to express himself. There is nobody like Diz. There's nobody like Thad either. They are two people who impress me more than anyone else. Two others are Louie (Armstrong) and Clifford Brown. I'm not talking about style or who can get the furthest fastest. I'm talking about total musical sensitivity and what they can do with music. Dizzy and Clifford on the trumpet. To me they say so much and are so sincere. I feel the same way about Charlie Parker. I feel the same way about Phil Woods. I feel the same way about (John) Coltrane. Certain people have the gift of touching you so deeply with music that comes from inside of them. Its just phenomenal.

QUESTION: You know there is a big trip about jazz musicians, the person who plays jazz gets a bad reputation. What do you think about that?

STAMM: Jazz was saloon music always. There seems to be something about jazz musicians who want to live that life. Many of them are self-destructive. Starting about the time of my first marriage when I was about twenty-two, I got heavy into smoking pot. That wasn't so bad in itself except I was



staying out of it all the time and I was using it to escape. Then when I could afford it, I started drinking a lot.

QUESTION: How do you think that affected your playing?

STAMM: I thought everything was fine, but I was wrong. I made a record called Jazz on a Sunday Afternoon, recorded live at the Village Vanguard. I played with Joe Farrell, Garnett Brown, and Richard Davis. They did about three albums that day. It lasted a whole afternoon. Diz was there and I was scared, so I got high. Then I started drinking. Then I found out the time segment for my session was moved back, so I got high again and started drinking again. When I went on the stand I was out of it. I thought I played my ass off. People came up to me and said it was marvelous, but I listened to the record and I knew it was bullshit. I don't know; maybe they thought I was really playing outside. I wasn't outside; I was out. Now if I have a gig to play from nine to one, I'll wait till about eleven-thirty to have a drink. If I have a couple of tastes before the gig starts, by the time I get to the middle of the gig I want to go to bed. I lose my desire to play. I know guys who get on the bandstand so drunk you think they can't stand up and then play their ass off.

Zoot Sims is famous for being able to do that, but not many are like that--very few trumpet players. I love playing too much. I've found when I start getting heavily into anything, it numbs a certain part of me that I need to relate to the music. I've learned what I can do and still remain in control and keep that contact with the music and the instrument. I know once I go beyond that I've lost it. I love music too much to want to lose that, because I don't get to play enough as it is. As far as the studio thing is concerned, you're only as good as your last date. If I walk into a session and I screw up bad--I mean they just couldn't get anything out of the session--I want you to know everybody in town would know about it the next day, and rightfully so. They pay me good money to come in and do that. They're on a budget. Everything is money, budget, time. If you can't play, you don't deserve to be making the money or be in the position of prestige that being the top studio man in New York, Los Angeles, or Chicago brings. You don't deserve it if you don't make it. It's strictly merit. That's the cold hard facts. As soon as the sound comes out of your horn it is heard.

QUESTION: What do you tell young players when they come seeking advice?

STAMM: First, what do you want to do? How many guys are going to be able to be jazz stars like Freddie (Hubbard)? Woody Shaw is a beautiful jazz player, but he's never quite been able to get the thing perfected. Basically, it's not a matter of playing; it's a matter of personality. Freddie has got that personality. Woody is a much quieter, laid back kind of cat. I think the best thing for a guy to do today if he wants to be a soloist is to try to be the best trumpet player he can be. There's a lot of enjoyment in being able to play in a session, to be able to play lead, to be able to play symphonic music, to be able to play jazz. The more music you can enjoy, the wider your scope of enjoyment in playing the horn. Also the more music you are familiar with, the more you can put into your jazz playing. A lot of guys go through college and get an education degree so if they don't make it in playing, they can fall back and teach. What if you really studied hard to be a great trumpet player, but you didn't quite have whatever it took to get that contract to make yourself a jazz star. Instead of going back to teach school you could still be playing your horn

in the studios, playing with great players and doing like I do. Maybe you're not creating a storm at Carnegie Hall, but you can go up to Canada to play, or you go out to Detroit to play, or you go to Chicago. You have a ball just playing. Maybe you don't have twenty-five women breaking down a dressing room door to get to you, but you know when you pick up your horn you're fulfilling music that is inside of you. So, you don't become a star. You can still play the music you love, and you can still make a living on your horn instead of teaching school five days a week, unless that's what you want to do, but a lot of teachers are teaching only because they couldn't do something else. When you've found a dedicated teacher you've found a gem. But how many are there? I haven't run into many. Whatever you do, you should be the best trumpet player you can be.

QUESTION: What do you think it takes to get it together?

STAMM: You have to get down to the basic fundamentals. Even the guy who says he never practices or takes lessons had to do something to get his fingers together. He had to something to get his chops together to get a sound. There are certain things he did. Maybe they weren't the formal long tones or flexibility exercises or scale things, but

whatever he did was a developmental thing to bring him farther and farther along on his instrument. I don't know if Dizzy took any formal lessons or not, but you can't tell me that somewhere along the line he didn't do certain things to develop himself constantly. He did it, even if it was sitting down practicing some certain things or chords to get them under his fingers. That's technique exercises; that's flexibility exercises; that's the ability to get over the horn. Each person perceives the fundamentals differently. Somebody asked Gerard Schwarz what he practiced, and he said he practiced only for maintenance. That's basically what I do. I have a practice thing that I can do in forty-five minutes. If I'm in a hurry I can maintain my chops, my flexibility, my fingers--everything--on that kind of a schedule. Now there are certain days when I don't have time to practice because I'm so busy, but I get to that at least three to six days a week. I try to practice as much as possible, but I usually take Saturdays off. On Sunday I sit down and do my forty-five minute thing to maintain myself. Maybe I get out Herbert Clarke and play some etudes just to pick up the horn and play music. But sometimes I'm tired like last

week. I had three days off because of a holiday, so I didn't play the horn two days. Sometimes I find that it really refreshes my head to get away from it, but most of the time I only get away one day a week. I take Sunday and practice two hours and then I'm ready for Monday because basically I make my money as a studio player, Monday through Friday. Whatever jazz things I get to do keep my head together. I can't make a living doing that because I'm not a star in the category of Clark, Dizzy, Freddie Hubbard, and people like that. I can't work forty-five weeks a year commanding enough of a salary to make it playing jazz, mainly because I don't want to be a star. When I go to play jazz nobody requests any songs, and if somebody does, I don't have to play them if I don't want to. When I go to Canada four weeks a year or go somewhere with my quartet, we blow. We don't have to play an hour and a half set of rock-and-roll and blow jazz on top of it. I can play all the tunes with all the groovy changes I like. I don't have to go out and play a medley of my hits. I'm not putting anybody down who does. All I'm saying is this is my preference. Dizzy is one of the few guys who doesn't have to conform

to that either, because Dizzy is so established and so recognized for being the player he is. Clark doesn't either, but if you go hear a jazz concert of Freddie's, you will never hear him pick up the horn and start playing bebop, which is basically what he is. Maybe he doesn't even want to, but Freddie has a great desire to be a star. It's important to him; that's what he wants to do.

I'm a very much different personality than Freddie.

I want to be a quiet family man. That's for me.

It comes down to what you want to do with your

music. Freddie has chosen his way, Herbie (Hancock)

has chosen his way, I've chosen my way. My fun

in playing jazz is a little jazz club where I can communicate with all the people directly, and

it's just a quiet thing. The other stuff is just

not where I'm at, so I've chosen to make my living

as a studio player when I can stay at home and

play jazz in Canada four weeks a year in a little

club. I take my quartet down to Washington a

few times a year and do a few other gigs here

and there and go out and do clinics at colleges

universities and a few high schools. I get my

kicks that way. I make my living playing studio

work, so when I play jazz I don't let anything

interfere with what I want to do with the music.

I don't have to sell it; I don't have to package it. Every time one of those guys goes to make an album he has to make a hit. I admire the hell out of them and I wish I could do it, but like I said: everybody's got their own thing.

QUESTION: How did you practice? What did you do at the time when you considered yourself really getting it together?

STAMM: I went through the Arban book. There used to be an outline called The Arban Prescott Outline that set up a lesson routine for you. I don't even know if they have it anymore, but it worked strictly in conjunction with the Arban book. It set up certain exercises out of each section: tonguing, double-tonguing, triple-tonguing, lip slurs, songs, long tones, and certain finger exercises. When I got to college I had a teacher named Haynie who was quite a good technical developer. He took me through a lot of the French books, but you don't have to go through thousands of books. If you surrounded yourself with ten basic books you'd have enough to practice for the rest of your life--the Herbert L. Clarke Technical Studies and the second and third volumes of the American hardback edition of Arban's. The second is technical and the third is characteristic



studies. The Charles Colin lip flexibility books are terrific. You don't have to get to the ones that take you to double C, but you can work on the ones that take you to F and G. I'll tell you what I would do for practicing the trumpet. If you come to New York, study with Carmine Caruso. He will straighten out your chop problems. He's the best man for guys in trouble. He is an objective teacher. He's not even a trumpet player so he never tells you to do what he does. He never tells you what your problem is. He sees it and gives you exercises to cure the problem before you even know what the problem is, so you don't have a chance to start manipulating your chops or mind around to psych it out. All you have to do is do the exercises like he tells you, sooner or later you'll come around. He is a great man and he has helped me tremendously. I was with him for six years, and if I have any doubts about anything I call him and go in for a checkup. He's writing a book now. He put out a book before, but it wasn't right. He is going to take his time and he's going to do it absolutely right this time, and it's going to be bad. If you were going to Los Angeles, I would tell you to study with Jimmy Stamp. He is an excellent trumpet teacher and he

can probably cure a lot of your problems too. He gives excellent fundamental exercises. From what I understand he is also a teacher who works with each person as an individual.

QUESTION: What is it like in the studios?

STAMM: I think the studio players are the greatest in the world--and the greatest all-around players and the most flexible players. There are some guys who are basically jazz players and have been in the studios for years. One of the violinists at the session today is a former concertmaster for the New York Philharmonic. He stayed for three years, then quit because they wouldn't make changes he felt could have truly improved his section. He said, "To hell with this. I can make a fortune in the studios. Why waste my time with the Philharmonic?" You've got guys who can play any kind of music at any time of the day or night. They just pick up the phone, rush down to the studio, and start to play.

Today's session was very easy, but the flugelhorn is not an in-tune instrument, particularly when you get down on low B's. How do you get two guys to walk in and play with the right touch, the right feel, immediately and make music? The conductor never had to say anything to us except he would

like a happier phrasing, and he got what he wanted. There is more to it than just walking in and saying, "Oh, that's an easy part." The first thing is how do you get that in-tune because the low register is notorious. Then you've got to get the phrasing right. It's more than a hamburger commercial. It's getting guys to sit down and get teamwork going and bring out the music in it. What they do with it after we have recorded it is none of our business, but at that moment we have got to make it. It could have been like the session I played yesterday with Randy Brecker and Marky Markowitz. We did a jingle for The New York Daily News, a take-off on an Earth, Wind, and Fire tune, "Get Away." There were three trumpets and three saxophones playing the same thing. You walk in and you're done in thirty minutes. You're working with people who want the highest quality performance in the shortest amount of time with the highest degree of proficiency and musicality and techniques because they're on a budget. You've got to do it in front of a microphone, and it has to be done quickly and precisely.

QUESTION: Do you feel differently now then at your first session?

STAMM: At my first session I was sitting down at fourth trumpet and I knew every man in the fifty-piece orchestra was listening to the fourth trumpet. I just knew everyone was listening and they weren't, but that was my own feeling. Now I'm not afraid to walk into any session. I'm not afraid of what they will put in front of me. The only thing that frightens me is that I'll walk into a session for some writer who will write too high for me or even a good writer who will write something he should have called Jon Faddis for. That's not my style in other words. I'm not a high A or B-flat player. To be honest with you, I would rather no one write more than a high F for me. I can play F-sharps; I can play G's. There have even been times when I've played A's, but I prefer not to. That's not my standard equipment. Jon Faddis knocks that stuff off like somebody sitting on a fence filing his fingernails off. He's trained to do that. If somebody's going to write something like that, they should call someone who has the talent. Joe Shepley has that talent. He can do a good job, but Jon is the most natural at it. Most of the writers are pretty good. They know who they are getting. The only time there is a problem is when a guy comes in and doesn't know

who's in town or who does what, or he gets my name off a record jacket, so he gets me and starts writing like that, or there are new writers who come in and are really just dumb. They don't have the experience; they haven't studied and they haven't done their homework, but other than that, nothing bothers me. Put it in front of me; I might sweat over it, but I'll get it for you. If it's totally unusual, sometimes it takes a little while. I'm not the most perfect player in the world, but if you just give me the time to do it, I can usually get it before you go into overtime. I'll do it in the time called for. I will give you a musical product and it will be right. About the only other thing that scares me is something that you would write for Ray Crisara, like a symphonic excerpt. That doesn't bother me so much. Technique doesn't bother me; lead parts don't bother me. Earlier it would have. Ten years ago when I first came to town, it would have, because I thought everybody was listening to me. You always feel under the gun. Everybody is waiting to see what the new guy does. One of the things I did when I first got here was to keep my ears open at all times for every player in the orchestra, because you never knew where a musical

gem was going to come from. You hear somebody phrase something so beautifully, and play something that will knock you out.

QUESTION: If you call someone in to sub for you, what equipment does he have to have together to handle the gig?

STAMM: If I call somebody to sub for me, I've got to know that he can be a first trumpet player or he will be excellent third trumpet player or an excellent flugelhorn player and if called upon he can play any style of music with the same proficiency that I can. I have to have no doubts that whatever he's called upon to do, he will do a great job, just as if I'm called upon, I will go in and do a great job or I won't take it. If a guy calls me and says, "Marvin, I've got a record date for one trumpet; I would like you to do a piccolo trumpet part; it's right out of the Baroque style; it's tough and very technical," I would ask him first if that part is within my playing range. I can play most piccolo parts, but there are guys in town who play it better than me, like Ray. If he wants something that comes out of the Maurice Andre style, I'm going to tell him to call Ray, not me. The bucks I'm going to make on that gig aren't going to

compensate me enough to go and do a bad job. I always send in a guy who will do as good a job as I can or do a better job than I can because the man deserves that and he will appreciate me more. You never send anybody in who would do a lesser job because the guy will never forgive you for it. I've never lost any work for doing that. I send Randy Brecker in sometimes if I can't make it. There's a guy in town named Danny Conn who did Leprechaun for Chick Corea. Alan Rubin and I were originally supposed to do that, but both Alan and I couldn't make it because it involved a lot of rehearsal time, so they hired Bobby Millikan and Danny Conn, and they did a marvelous job. I use Danny a lot and I also use Jim Bossey because I know they can walk in and do anything. If it's a job where I think it's a jazz solo, I would probably try to get Randy. I like working with Randy tremendously, but a lot of times Randy's so busy in his own right that I can't get him. I can't get Lew Soloff or Alan Rubin or Marky or Bernie Glow when I need a sub because they are busy doing their own jobs. Danny isn't as busy as those other guys, so I usually get him. It gives him a little exposure and a chance to pick up some extra bucks. Sometimes if I get a call

to hire a brass section, the first guy I call is Randy Brecker or Marky Markowitz or Alan Rubin or Jon Faddis because I know whatever the guys want they can cover. I could call Bernie Glow or Mel Davis or Johnny Frosk. I can sit down and name you twenty trumpet players who could tear your head off--beautiful players. There is no reason to get a big head in New York, because if you got sick and never played again, they would have somebody to cover your spot in a minute. I'll give you an example: Bernie Glow was the busiest and most important first trumpet player in town sixteen or seventeen years ago. Five years ago he got sick and couldn't work for two years. The music world didn't stop one second. Everything just kept going right on. The guys who loved him missed playing with him, but the producers, the arrangers, the records, the jingles went right on without him. He came back and started working again, but in those two years nothing stopped. Bernie Glow is reputed to be and is accepted by almost everyone as the best first trumpet player in the world.

The Los Angeles studio scene is different. The only thing about Los Angeles is it is more open for a couple of guys to get in. Bud Brisbois and



Chuck Finley were probably the two busiest record date trumpet players out there. Bud quit and nothing stopped. You've got to understand your place in things. Certain people will miss you, but even that dulls after awhile, so everything is transitional. That's why as a person and as a musician you've got to keep going. That's the most important thing. I still say that it's hard here particularly to break in, but if you can really play or have the potential for it, try. Don't be forty and look back and say that you wish you had tried. We're geared to never fail or make a mistake, but as a human being that's impossible. It's trial and error everyday. Just aim for the top and do the best you can.

## CLARK TERRY INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

TERRY: I was born December 14, 1920, in St. Louis, Missouri.

QUESTION: When did you start playing?

TERRY: Actually I started fooling around with toy-type and makeshift instruments in my pre-teens. By the time I was a teenager I was in the Tom Powell Drum and Bugle Corps. In 1935 we were city champions. I was fifteen at the time. At about the same time I got involved in high school band and wanted to play the trumpet. I suppose that I was attracted to the trumpet because my oldest sister was married to a tuba player named Sy McField who was a member of Dewey Jackson's band. This band played around St. Louis all of the time. When the band would rehearse, the members would allow me to sit around and listen. If I was especially good, they would allow me to stay a long time, so I tried to be a good boy a lot so that I could stay for the rehearsal. When the band would take breaks, one of the trumpet players was particularly kind to me, and he would allow me to watch the band instruments and especially keep an eye on his. He would bring me pennies and candy for my watching his instrument.

His being especially nice to me is much of the reason why I was attracted to the trumpet.

One day when they were away on a break I felt so attracted to him and to the trumpet that I decided to try and make a note on it. He came back and I was puffing away until I eeked out a sound. He said, "Young man, you're going to be a trumpet player," and I, of course, was stupid enough to believe him.

QUESTION: Was this before the drum and bugle corps? --

TERRY: Yes, this is what really got me involved in the beginning.

QUESTION: Did other members of your family also participate in music?

TERRY: No, not really. My oldest brother played tuba because my brother-in-law taught him how to play it. My next oldest brother was a drummer, but they really never got involved. They more or less did it because Sy wanted them to. By the time I came along, I was asking him because I wanted to get into it. This was the extent of my family's musical background. No one else really got into it. The only thing that I can remember in the early stages is that we stayed down on the corner from a sanctified church and you could hear the rhythms all up and down the street. I think

that that experience probably helped instill a strong hearing concept into me.

QUESTION: When did you get interested in jazz playing?

TERRY: Around the same period because my brother-in-law was with this jazz band. I have been interested in jazz as far back as I can remember. As a kid, we would have little simulated-type bands that played on makeshift instruments. We played kazoos, buckets, tin pans, cans, and we made our own instruments.

I once made a trumpet out of a piece of hose pipe and an old funnel which I used for the bell. I bound the two together like a trumpet and used a piece of lead pipe for a mouthpiece. I blew a lot of trumpet on this instrument.

QUESTION: Did you take private lessons?

TERRY: I never had a teacher in my life. I came from a big family. First of all, my father didn't want me to play the trumpet because I had an older cousin named Otis Berry who had what was referred to in those days as galloping consumption. We now know that this disease is an advanced case of tuberculosis. My family attributed Otis's illness to the fact that he played the cornet. Otis had a paper route and would play to all of his customers. He would pull his papers along in a wagon

and play a tune for anyone who bought a paper from him.

Well anyway, Otis died from galloping consumption and the family said that it was because he played the brass horn. Nowadays, because we know better, wind instruments are often prescribed for people with lung conditions so even though the brass instrument was not the cause of Otis's illness, my father believed that it was and he forbade me to fool around with the horn. I had to either practice at school or go to one of the neighbor's homes to practice. He made it very difficult for me because he didn't want me to play it. Incidentally, he never heard me play professionally. He passed away before I really got into things. Actually, I left home at his request when I was sixteen years old. I wanted to buy a bicycle and he didn't want me to, so he put out the word that if I bought one of those darn things I'd better keep riding on it. I did.

QUESTION: How old were you?

TERRY: Sixteen. Around this same time I started working in little joints around St. Louis. The Lincoln Inn on Market Street was one of the first places I worked. I worked in a group called Dollar Bill and His Small Change. I was one of the pennies.

Anyway, my old man never did hear me play.

QUESTION: How did you develop the level of proficiency that you have on the trumpet?

TERRY: I had been listening to the trumpet players in Dewey Jackson's band. As a matter of fact, Dewey was a trumpet player himself. Also in this band were Shorty Black, Wendell Black, and Melvin Black, who along with Dewey played trumpet. They were all fantastic players. After listening to them, I would go and imitate the things that they did on the trumpet with my kazoo. When I got this little piece of brass and the makeshift trumpet, I saw the way they puckered up their chops to get a sound and tried it on my toy horn. I figured it out myself. Nobody told me anything. I didn't even have a mouthpiece at that time.

When I got in the drum and bugle corps in 1935, I became the proud possessor of a bugle. Of course there were no valves, but on the bugle I learned to double, triple, flutter, and du-dul tongue. I could bend notes to the point where I could almost play a scale on the G bugle. I can remember getting kicked out of the parades for jazzing up the marches. I had one of those long G bugles that they don't even make anymore. By the time I got my hands on a trumpet I already

had articulation down. I could do all of the tonguing, etc.

QUESTION: How old were you when you got your first trumpet?

TERRY: Well, I was still in high school when I first applied for band. They didn't have a trumpet available so the band director, Clarence Wilson, gave me a valve trombone. He said, "Here, take this and get the hell out of here. You can make more noise with this 'cause it's bigger. Get out of my face." He got rid of me by giving me a valve trombone, but I didn't really dig the valve trombone because I was all set to play trumpet after being brainwashed by Dewey Jackson and all of those cats in his band. I didn't dig the trombone. When a trumpet finally became available, he laid one on me and I got after it. It must have been 1937 or '38. It was a little jive Wurlitzer horn, but nevertheless I played it anyway. As I said before, I had all of the articulation down. It was then just a matter of practicing because I knew the scale from fooling around with the valve trombone. It was the same fingering, so when I got the trumpet it was just a matter of getting used to the smaller mouthpiece and the feel of the horn. After I played on the school horn, I got a horn that the neighbors

bought for me. The tuning slide wouldn't move and it was in bad shape, but it was my own horn for a change. I think they paid twelve or thirteen dollars for it at a pawn shop. That was my first horn. It was an old Conn.

I loved to practice all the time and I would ask a thousand questions. There were also a lot of books at school that I would use to practice. I would take the school books home and practice much more than my share. The teacher wouldn't have to ask me why I didn't have my lesson because I enjoyed it. To me it was a kick. I came from a big family. There were twelve or thirteen of us. The old man was poor and working hard labor at Clead Gaslight Company. They burned coke to make gas. On Christmas if we were fortunate enough to get one toy, we nurtured it and played with it all through the year. We also made our own out of old skates. We used to call them skate trucks. By the time I got my hands on a shiny thing like a bugle I was in heaven. I would shine my bugle everyday. I would even go home and practice on the bugle. As a matter of fact, I learned how to read music by practicing and reading open-position bugle calls. That's how I learned lip slurs and lip trills and things like that.



QUESTION: Would you say that is where all of your flexibility comes from?

TERRY: Yes. Did you know that in Mexico a trumpet student has to play on the mouthpiece for six months before they will give him a trumpet? The mouthpiece is where it all happens anyway. That is where you learn to articulate. From that point on it is just another matter of matching up the fingering with the chops, but you've got to get your pucker down first.

QUESTION: If a young player came to you looking for advice on how to become a good player, what would you tell him?

TERRY: I would tell him that he has to practice his ass off, give up pussy, and everything else. If you really want to know the truth, that is the only way. I tried to get my grandson to practice, but I noticed when I came home one day that he was practicing while watching cartoons on television. I told him that he might as well forget it because he wasn't doing anything but wasting the horn's time. He may as well put the horn in the case and forget it. When you don't have the patience, fortitude, and desire to conscientiously go about your practice diligently, then you probably won't get very far. You should be so

diligently involved and conscientiously concerned about getting better until you enjoy practicing. In my case, when I got my hands on this shiny bugle I polished it because I loved it. I would go to school with raggedy clothes and holes in my shoes but my bugle was bright and shiny. Having come from a poor family, the bugle was something that was mine. It was real. For those reasons I was faithful to it and put in a lot of time on it. It is like anything else. You take out only what you put in.

QUESTION: Was this a period when you practiced a lot?

TERRY: Yes. I ate, slept, and went to the bathroom in the woodshed. I wanted to play so badly that I enjoyed practicing. I enjoyed accomplishing things. When I reached a point where I could see what I was accomplishing, it was really fun. If I was having trouble playing something and finally worked it out, it would inspire me to go on and do more and more practicing.

After you get one difficult thing down you go on to the next. You keep getting all of these things under your fingers and you get in the habit of conquering and accomplishing. It becomes part of your attitude in life. You get to where you won't

be satisfied at being defeated or left behind. You get accustomed to winning and you don't want to lose. Wanting to win has to be a part of your psychology. You can take some kids and give them a brand new five hundred dollar instrument, eleven hundred dollars worth of books and materials and still not get anything out of them if they don't really want to play. If they don't have the desire to really dig in there and watch themselves grow, it becomes a thing of just going through the motions. You reach a point in your playing where no one can bullshit you because you know when you are playing something right or wrong. No one can piss on your head and tell you that it is raining.

QUESTION: What is your concept of jazz improvisation?

TERRY: When we were young cats getting involved in what is referred to today as jazz improvisation, we didn't call it that. We just called it 'gettin' off.' A cat would just go off--just blow. Actually the term is self-explanatory because it simply means that after you have played the melody you get off of it and create a new melody. We had great respect for melody. Everybody would learn the melody. You stated it in the first chorus, then you extemporaneously counter-

wove a new melody. You used the old melody as a guide wire. This process was known as 'gettin' off.' That is what jazz was referred to in those days.

If a cat came to town, somebody would ask, "What does this cat play?" Somebody would say, "He is a good get-off man." Back in those days it wasn't even fashionable to read music. As a matter of fact, it used to be considered a deterrent to one's capabilities to create jazz. A cat might say, "Old so-and-so can play his ass off," and someone else would ask, "But does he read?" The answer would be, "Yes, but not enough to hurt his playing." Of course, that was a fallacy that we later learned was all part of a game to keep you out of a whole lot of things.

However, our concept was to learn the melody and then use it to create other melodies. This was long before people were paying any attention to chord progressions because at that point nobody knew anything about theory, harmony, composition, counterpoint, and the like. All we knew was that we would adhere to the melody and then take off. Whenever we played the blues we were well aware of the fact that there were three notes that you could use and nobody could contest those three

notes. They were the tonic, the minor third, and the flatted fifth. We didn't even realize in those days that those notes constituted the half-diminished chord and nobody cared if they had. All we knew was that those three notes could be played on any key in the blues and it would swing. Listening and being conscious of melody was a good background. This is what I always try to get young people to go back to. Young kids get involved in jazz and they try to think of it like building a house. They want to start on the fifteenth floor and build a skyscraper, but they don't realize that the higher you go the deeper the basement has to be. You have to dig deep to go up high. We have a building here in New York that is so deep that it has its own set of trains. It is the Empire State Building. That building couldn't be that tall if it wasn't so deep. It might fall. Now we have the modern approach to improvisation. The approach uses the analysis of chord structures as a basis. What we do in this respect is to take every chord within a composition individually and recognize it through chord symbols. Actually, what you do is create a little composition on each chord. These compositions are stored in the

memory for instant recall. You computerize them and they are ready for instant recall. There are many instances when you walk into the studio and a chart is passed out in which you have a series of chord changes on which to solo. The tempo may be very fast and you have sixteen measures to play. How in the hell are you going to have time to stop and figure out all of the notes. You have to know approximately what you can do when you see certain chord symbols. You actually use little compositions from your memory bank. If I have a C-minor seventh to play and I play no more than the tonic and the minor third, it can't be wrong because these notes are right in the chord. After analyzing what I do and talking to other musicians who improvise, we have discovered that this is exactly what we all do. We computerize certain things and elaborate on many of the possibilities. If you are playing a tune and the tempo is slow enough and you have time to think about it, you can realize all of the scales that complement the chords. This, in conjunction with your ear, can prove to be invaluable. Your ear won't let you go too far wrong if you are conscientious. If you are playing a minor tune and you keep putting a major third in there, then you know

very well that you are lying to yourself. You can't tell yourself but so many lies if you've got any sense at all. That is the system that we basically use. We put together the knowledge of chord symbols, relative scales, and established materials. In addition, you listen to the tune and pay strict attention to what is being played. You could be right and still be wrong. You might be accustomed to playing a tune that has the progression C-F-B-flat-E-flat and go somewhere and somebody calls the tune and plays a different set of chords. They might play C-C-sharp-D-E-flat-E before they get to the F. You can be playing right, but if you don't listen you can be very wrong. That is why you have to listen and have a knowledge of chord progressions.

QUESTION: What do you think is the most important thing in your being a successful musician?

TERRY: I think that you have to stay open and keep stirring. I have seen a lot of people close-up after they get set with money. They become satisfied. They reach what we colloquially refer to as a groove. It is a known fact that people who become satisfied settle right there. That is where you find them twenty years hence. The difference between a groove and a grave are

dimensions. Think about that. Don't groove too much. You should be out there searching and finding. I still like to think that I am fertile enough to try to get into some fresh ideas. I still do this even within the sphere of my own style.

QUESTION: What big bands have you played with?

TERRY: I played with Count Basie, Duke Ellington, "The Tonight Show," and Charlie Barnett. I've had offers from Lunceford (Jimmy), Cab (Calloway), Billy Eckstine, and many others. I have a scrapbook at home with telegrams from all of these cats inviting me to come and play with these bands. A few of them I did and a few of them I didn't. If you take fifteen years on "The Tonight Show," ten years with Duke Ellington, and five years with Count Basie, that takes up a pretty good chunk of your life. That is thirty years right there, and I'm only twenty-six and a half years old.

QUESTION: Do you have any final words of advice?

TERRY: Yes. Straight ahead.



## ERNIE WATTS INTERVIEW

QUESTION: What is your birthday and where were you born?

WATTS: I was born on October 23, 1945, in Norfolk, Virginia. Usually, I tell people I am from Wilmington, Delaware, because that's where I started playing music when I was thirteen. But I was born in Virginia, moved to Detroit when I was quite small, and I lived there until I was ten, then moved to Delaware.

QUESTION: How did you get started playing?

WATTS: I was in junior high when a friend and I decided to give it a try. I wanted to learn to play the trombone but they were out, so the man gave me a baritone saxophone. That is how I got started.

QUESTION: Once you got an instrument, did you start playing at home?

WATTS: Yes, I practiced every day. I just really got into it. It seemed like a natural thing. So when I got an instrument I started practicing, and I've been practicing ever since.

QUESTION: Did anyone in your family play?

WATTS: No. No one in my family has ever done anything professionally musically.

QUESTION: Did anyone in your family play at all? Was there ever any music in the house?

WATTS: They listened to the popular AM radio stations and whatever was popular at the time, like Duane Eddy and that kind of music. Johnny Mathis was new. Fabian and all the Philadelphia thing was going on so we got a lot of that, probably because Delaware is so close to Philly, but that's what we heard on the radio. There was a jazz station in Philadelphia that I liked later on. My next-door neighbor really liked jazz, and as I progressed with my playing, I'd go over and he'd lend me records. So I started learning about Cannonball (Adderley) and people like Miles (Davis), (John) Coltrane, and others. So I guess he was my first jazz influence.

QUESTION: How old were you when you first started to play jazz?

WATTS: Do you mean tunes and stuff? Well, I listened to the radio and Billy Bonn had a big hit, "Sail on Silvery Moon." It had a sound with two altos in thirds. Saxophones were playing stuff like "Harlem Nocturne" and I would try to play it by ear. Then I began thinking about improvising and playing tunes. Just as soon as I knew the instrument well enough to know the notes, I wanted to play tunes.

QUESTION: What is your concept of improvisational playing?

WATTS: Well, it's changing. I had totally melodic concept for quite awhile and then I was finding I had some gaps in my playing. I didn't have enough harmonic background. I didn't know my chords as well as I should because I learned by playing melodically, by playing things I heard in my head. So after awhile I decided to learn more about chords. I've been into that for the last couple of years. I've been playing harmonically rather than melodically and now I'm getting ready to put the pieces together, because to make music a complete picture, you have to have it all going together.

QUESTION: If a young player asks you, "What should I do to start playing jazz?" what would you tell him?

WATTS: Right now there is so much good stuff to learn from. There are a series of records put out by Jamey Aebersold and those are really great for learning how to play the music. The tracks are good, you can feel everything, and it's graded from elementary all the way up to superior. He's got modal albums, blues albums, Charlie Parker albums, and all of them are excellent. I'm going to get those records myself. Also, every jazz player should know how to play the piano. That's something I am lacking in.

QUESTION: Say you were scheduled to play and you needed a substitute. What would be required of him to play in your place?

WATTS: Well it would depend on what it was. If it were a live TV show, say "Sonny and Cher," that would be soprano saxophone, tenor saxophone, alto saxophone, flute, bass flute, English horn, piccolo, clarinet, bass clarinet, and so on for that kind of show. So to just walk in as a woodwind player, you have to be prepared to play almost anything. I take my instruments with me everywhere in my car so that I'm prepared. My car is my office. In my car I carry a bass clarinet, a baritone saxophone, two soprano saxophones, a bass flute, an amp and echoplex, a tone divider, and a couple of stands. That's not counting the stuff I carry into the studio and put in the back seat of my car, which is a piccolo, two flutes, an alto flute, a clarinet, and my tenor.

QUESTION: What did you do before coming to Los Angeles?

WATTS: I was on the road with Buddy Rich for a year and a half. It was really good for me, but I should have left a couple of months before I did. I was trying to stay on and earn some more money. It was my first full-time playing experience. I was at Berklee School of Music before then and that

began my first working, playing experience. I hadn't really been doing it very long before I came here, so I am lucky to be as busy here as I have been. Really I'm still learning how to play. Buddy's band was a great experience for me. A lot of players who were in that band are here now, like Chuck Finley, Bobby Shew, and Joe Debart. I met my wife when I was in the band. We kept in touch and when I left the band, I picked her up in Vancouver and came back here. At the time I was trying to decide whether to move to New York or here because I knew as many people there as I did here. But we moved here because we decided that it was a better place to live.

QUESTION: What do you think the difference is?

WATTS: I think living here is a better lifestyle, but I think there is more happening there with creative music. I kind of miss not spending some serious time there. I think I'd like to spend some time with McCoy Tyner, Sam Rivers, Archie Shepp, some serious musicians. But for raising a family and having kids at home, I think it's better out here. Anyway, if I lived in New York, I'd have to live in Pennsylvania or New Jersey because I couldn't live in the city, not with a family.

QUESTION: Do you have a preference for a particular style of music?

WATTS: No, I just love music, all kinds of music. I have no musical barriers. I love to listen to everything. I listen to Beethoven, Beverly Sills, Rostropovitch playing cello, Glen Brewer playing Bach. I really love good music.

QUESTION: Could you pinpoint anything as being more important in your being able to play? What are the things that stand out in your mind as contributing to your learning to play jazz?

WATTS: My main improvisational influence has been Coltrane, above and beyond everything. I am just getting into my own thing so that I don't sound like a bad copy of Coltrane. But I am still learning from him because his ideas are so clear. I was struck with Coltrane's sound on the Miles Davis album, Kind of Blue. His sound just blew me away, just his physical sound on the instrument. It was so eerie, so spiritual. He plays some entrances into solos that take the music to a whole different level, and although I didn't understand it at the time, it touched me emotionally. I didn't know what he was doing, but his sound blew me away. From that point on I was serious about learning to play. So Coltrane has

been my main inspiration and drive for the music-- his level of consciousness, his awareness, his clarity, and his playing.

QUESTION: What did you practice in order to get it together?

WATTS: Well, I got my doubles together. I didn't really train myself to be a studio musician; it just happened. I just wanted to learn a lot of instruments to give my music a larger palette, a larger selection of colors to choose from as I play. That ended up being good because it was doubles for studio playing. I studied privately on the alto. I won some competitions and I played with the Philadelphia symphony on concert tours. So I played classical alto in high school. That's what I always played because that's what my teacher was into. I taught myself how to play jazz just because I wanted to. At that time there weren't any stage bands. Nothing was going on. So I had to generate my own energy. But I'd play classical albums. I taught myself flute and clarinet and developed on my own.

QUESTION: Elaborate some more on the New York-Los Angeles differences.

WATTS: If you want to do some serious jazz playing go to New York, but if you want to live like a

human being and have a house and a family, move here. If you want to give your life to music and devote yourself totally to some serious music, move there. If I had to do it over again, I'd move there and just live with music. Really what I should have done after Buddy Rich's band was go on to New York and play with the people who influenced me and just see where I could have gotten. Then when I was tired of that, when I got to the point where it really wasn't happening for me, move out here, then get married. But I didn't do that at the time and things have worked out fine anyway. I feel like I'm a late bloomer. I've come in slow because it's taken me a lot longer to get myself together because I've had more of other things to deal with at the same time, whereas after this studio date I might go home and practice until three in the morning if it was just me. But when I go home tonight I'll have to spend some time with my wife and we have to talk about what went on during the day. We have to have a social thing ourselves because I haven't seen her all day. Now that's three hours of practice. If you're in New York and playing with people you love and your old lady's getting her pocketbook



ripped off that afternoon and you get home from work and find that out, the whole groove is gone. So I came out here to try to learn to play. It's harder learning to play out here because there are fewer people oriented to the type of music I'm oriented to. There are fewer people who get into Coltrane from Impressions on. Most of the people out here, if they talk about Coltrane, they talk about the Prestige days. They will talk to you about "Giant Steps," but after that he lost people. There is a different kind of music energy here. If you want to relate to music other than 1955 bebop you have to generate the energy yourself.

I create my own environment of music that I relate to. I listen to Eric Dolphy and Coltrane and Miles and people like that all the time. So the whole energy existence is in my head. It's there so that when I play I relate to that kind of music, because that's my environment. In order to do music seriously, you have to create an environment around it. If I'm not working, I'm practicing. If I'm driving home, I'm listening to a cassette. If I'm home and have time in the afternoon, I'm practicing. That's what I have to do for the way I want to play.

It takes all my energy.

QUESTION: Do you ever struggle between the music and something else?

WATTS: Yes, my family. When I was home with my mother and father I just practiced all the time. I had to do it myself so I grew slower. I didn't have a teacher who could tell me, "Put your energy into this," or, "Put your energy into that." I took private saxophone lessons, but that was classical.

QUESTION: How many years?

WATTS: All through high school, four years.

QUESTION: Did you sing in choir?

WATTS: Yes, I did that all through high school, too, three or four years.

QUESTION: What place do you think most shaped your personality?

WATTS: That's a very strange question because wherever you are shapes your personality at that time. The main personality builder is going on before you ever learn how to talk. A lot of your personality traits have been conditioned by your parents, so some aspects of my personality were conditioned in Detroit, other aspects in Delaware, other aspects here. I'm constantly changing. We can't talk about me as something that is already formed. We can't talk about me

as a stylist or as an artist who's already into his own thing. I'm just beginning to get to the point of having confidence in myself to open up and be me. I've had to find out who I am. In order to be yourself you have to find out who you are. Up to now, I've been an imitation of the people who I really like musically and an imitation of an idea of what I wanted in my lifestyle.

QUESTION: What about the lifestyle? A lot of people say that people who play jazz are out, but I noticed you talk about being into your family. You were showing me pictures of property where you were doing some building. It seems like a beautiful place to take your family.

WATTS: Well, it is a beautiful place to be, a beautiful place to be with music, too. I gravitate towards the wilderness, the woods, because that's where we all came from. Whether it was Africa or China or wherever we all evolved from, it was the wilderness. We have turned it into what we have now, which is an abstract concept that we made reality. We imposed our abstract concept on nature. So that is why I bought ten acres of land in British Columbia and I have a woods. The way the situation is nowadays, I had to buy my own woods.

In order to be creative, you have to be out.

In our society everything is relative and we're dealing with what society says we are. If you are called insane by an insane society, then you're okay.

As you grow up and if you're involved and affected by music that is free, music that is spontaneous, it affects your growth in harmonic areas. Most of my influences are from Impressions and modal music, where you hold on one key center. For a person who is young, it gives a whole different way of hearing music. So I had to learn how to play bebop. I had to force myself to learn how to play bebop. When Trane got into Impressions, when he got to A Love Supreme, he had over twenty years behind him of some heavy harmonic chordal playing. He played with Bird (Charlie Parker), he played with Dizzy Gillespie, he played with Monk and Miles, and he played every standard that was ever written in all keys. So when he got to Impressions, he was playing all of his harmonically oriented stuff. You listen to it when is playing in the key of D-flat and he's playing his minor third cadences. He's playing "Giant Steps" on that stuff. The bass is playing

one note, and the piano's playing one chord, and Trane is going through sequences of chords. When you learn about music, you can hear that. When you don't know about music, it just sounds like wonderful freedom. People say, "Oh, he's playing anything he wants." Well sure, he's playing anything he wants, because he has had twenty-five years of experience and time to figure out what he wanted to play. That's the difference.

So I had to go back, and I'm still learning how to play. But it's starting to happen. I've started playing duets with a piano player friend of mine and we wanted to work on chords. I think the best way to do it is to practice with a piano player. I just block out every chord and get into chords, scales, and triads. We started playing "Count Down," and "Satellite," and "Stable Mates," "Giant Steps," and all kinds of difficult harmonically oriented music. We've got that happening now and we are adding a bass player and a drummer, people who can play funk, electric, and some serious bebop, because we want to play all kinds of music. I've started taping the rehearsals. Now I can play the cassettes in the car and analyze my playing. I figure out what

I want to do and whether I'm making the chords sound. I'm getting to the point where I've got the chords sounding and now I want to get back to the melodic thing that I came from. With the knowledge I have of chords now, I need to play a little less and use fewer notes.

QUESTION: Well it doesn't sound to me like the instrument is hanging you up any.

WATTS: Well, sometimes it depends on the day. There are some days that I'm free and there are others that it is work to play. It depends on the day.

QUESTION: How do you feel about music as a business and the sessions that you have to do?

WATTS: That is practice to me. The music is simple. The most constructive attitude is to use it as practice. I work on long tones and breathing. Everytime you play, as long as your horn is in your mouth, if you're not doing anything but playing marches or whatever, you're working on something, some aspect of breathing or articulation. As long as you're playing, that's the important thing.

## SNOOKY YOUNG INTERVIEW

QUESTION: When and where were you born?

YOUNG: I was born February 3, 1919, in Dayton, Ohio.

QUESTION: How did you start playing?

YOUNG: We had a family band and my dad taught us. I was the musical one of the children. I started playing on instruments like the zither and things. Then they got me a cornet and I had a teacher for about a year. He was a guy who had quit playing and come off the road. He saw a little kid and thought he might do something. He taught me for about a year. That's all the training I had, other than what I picked up on my own. After we had the family band we all learned how to play. I had a brother who played trumpet very well. I think we would just pick up instruments and play. My daddy played guitar and banjo and he knew chords. He was interested in us learning how to read. That's why he got that teacher. He taught me and my brother at the same time. He taught us how to read scales and different things.

QUESTION: Who else played in your family band?

YOUNG: My sister played piano, my mother played guitar, my brother played drums. We had a family band and went on the road with a show. It was that

good.

QUESTION: Where did you go from there?

YOUNG: The first band I played with after that was in high school. I was the best trumpet player in school so I used to go play at the college over in River Forks. I was in high school, eighth and ninth grades, and I was playing with college boys. I left high school when I was in the tenth grade and went on the road with a band called Chick Carter. I stayed with Chick Carter for a couple of years. That's really where I got to learn how to play with bands and be a big band player. Then I left Chick Carter and went with the Jimmy Lunceford band.

QUESTION: How old were you then?

YOUNG: I was nineteen when I went with Lunceford.

QUESTION: Who was in the band then?

YOUNG: Gerald Wilson had played with me in Chick Carter's band and he got in Lunceford's band six months before I did. Gerald replaced Sir Oliver. Eddie Tomkins was playing lead trumpet in the band then and something happened to Eddie and he left the band in the middle of a tour. Gerald Wilson told them, "I know a little trumpet player who can do it back in Dayton, Ohio," so they sent back to Dayton for me and that's how I got



in Lunceford's band back in 1939.

QUESTION: Who was in the section then?

YOUNG: There was Gerald Wilson, Paul Webster, and myself. There were three trumpets. They hadn't even started with the four trumpets then. There were three trumpets, three trombones, five saxophones and four rhythm. That was the band. It was a fifteen piece band, sixteen with the leader. Lunceford made some of his most famous records with that size band.

QUESTION: Did you do a lot of recording with Lunceford?

YOUNG: Yes, I did a lot of recording with him. You can't get a lot of those records anymore. You have to luck onto them in a record shop or something like a re-issue.

QUESTION: What happened after Lunceford?

YOUNG: I came to California and worked with Les Hite and Benny Carter's band and then I went with Basie. I'm getting ahead of myself. I went back to Dayton and stayed in Dayton. Then Buck Clayton had to get his tonsils out and I replaced him for a month and that's how I got introduced to Count Basie. I played in Basie's band, but I was just playing in Buck Clayton's chair, which didn't suit with me because Buck was a potential jazz man. He was a jazz trumpet player and

I was a first trumpet player. So I went back in Basie's band and replaced Ed Lewis and played first in the band. I've also played in the section with Ed Lewis who was one of the greatest first trumpet players I've ever played with. Nobody knows that about Ed Lewis, but he was a powerful trumpet player.

QUESTION: Whatever happened to him?

YOUNG: I don't know how he got out of the business, but he wound up driving a subway in New York City. I guess age and time did it, because when I got to the band Ed was up in years. I had an edge on him because I was younger and more modern. You have to keep up with what is happening.

QUESTION: I was talking to Thad, and one of his comments about you was that you've been so flexible over the years in terms of being able to change from one band to another. What has given you the ability to change from band to band, period to period, era to era, and still maintain your place within the music?

YOUNG: An old trumpet player told me years ago, "Snooky, if you want to stay up on the trumpet, you've got to listen to other guys. You just don't listen to yourself and think you got it. You've got to listen to the young guys coming in,

because you're going to be playing their music. You've got to know what they're doing because if you don't, that's it." Russell "Pops" Smith told me that. He was one of the best lead trumpet players of his time. Nobody knows about him because he was in Cab Calloway's band. He got drowned in that band, because the musicians weren't too well known; it was all Cab Calloway. There was another trumpet player in Cab's band by the name of Jonah Jones. He's still around and he's a very powerful player. He never played a wrong note. Jonah Jones always had a great lip and endurance that you wouldn't believe. He'd play forever and end up on a high G just as if it wasn't anything.

Cab had some good men. I admired "Pops" Smith and I met him one day in New York, in one of the bars. I was just a kid. He liked me and said, "I hear a lot about you. You know you're making a little name for yourself." He's still around; he's still playing lead trumpet now. He said, "Listen to the young guys and watch what they're doing if you want to keep up." I never forgot that. I think that and wanting to play are what it is. I never wanted to do anything but play. That's all I ever wanted to do.

QUESTION: What's the main difference between Lunceford's band, Basie's Band, and The Tonight Show Band?

YOUNG: Style.

QUESTION: Was everything reading in Lunceford's band?

YOUNG: Everything was reading. That was one of the most reading-est bands; they read everything.

QUESTION: What is your concept of improvisation and how do you think a young student should learn to improvise?

YOUNG: You've got to study all the other players. I listened to and studied with Louie (Armstrong), and I studied with Roy (Eldridge), and I loved Dizzy (Gillespie). I studied these guys; I listened to them. I appreciated their sounds and things that they were inserting into music. Each one of these guys brought something different to music. You've got to listen to what's happening, keep your ears open to what's going on so you can play. Eventually you'll establish your own style. You might be sounding a little like Freddie (Hubbard), or you might have a little Clark (Terry) in you. Somebody might say, "Damn, I hear a little Snooky in him," or, "I hear a little Dizzy in him." Well, that's good because you're really building yourself. That's the way a young trumpet player comes

into his own. After a while you begin to think on your own; you can cut all those other people loose. Maybe sometime one of those licks will come out. Somebody will say, "Uh oh, I heard a little Clark there." But there ain't nothing wrong with that. That's just the way you feel at that time and they can still know who it is. That's the way a guy eventually becomes a stylist and finds his way. I know damn well Roy Eldridge listened to Louis Armstrong and changed his shit around and still played Louis but was doubling it up. Dizzy listened to Roy because Dizzy sounded like Roy at one time until he went off on his own. Everybody's bouncing off the other. You listen to the cats and take off from there.

QUESTION: How do you cope with putting in practice time on the trumpet and knowing what to do.

YOUNG: You've got to know what to practice. Schools and instructors will give you that. They will tell you what to practice to develop yourself. You can't get out on the road because there ain't no more bands like there used to be. You can't get it like that. So it's got to be through just doing it, and experience, and a determination within yourself. It's all within the man. It's

hard to say what to practice. It's the time you put in. You've got books, you study them and practice them. You just have to do it. You have to play the trumpet; you just have to play the trumpet.

QUESTION: Was there ever a point where you felt a conflict between music and whatever else?

YOUNG: The time when that happened to me was when I got married and my family came and I felt like I couldn't take care of them. Your mind starts drifting toward doing something else. It's very depressing to a musician if he's in a town where he can't survive musically. It's pretty bad. I went through that too. I left the big band because things got kind of strange toward the end of that era. I split and went home to Dayton in 1947. I was very drugged about playing because the musicians there weren't into anything. All they wanted to do was jam and they weren't reading anything. I had been out with the big bands and done it right and played it right. If you go into a small town like Dayton, Ohio, the guys there are jivin'. It's kind of disheartening. I stayed around there for ten years and I don't know how I got out and back.

QUESTION: Did you play the whole time you were in Dayton?

YOUNG: I played some, but that's what depressed me, the kind of music I was playing.

QUESTION: How did you keep your chops up?

YOUNG: I'd sit around and practice to myself.

QUESTION: How do you keep up your chops now?

I practice a lot. I make sure I get in a couple of hours a day in addition to working.

QUESTION: What do you practice now?

YOUNG: Mainly what I practice now is long tones and exercises out of the Clarke book or any book I might happen to pick up. I might do an hour of long tones before I even start to exercise. Then I'll do some flexibility exercises for the lips and fingers. That's about all the practicing I do. That's all the time I have, when I've got to do other things. I call it a warm-up, but it's really practicing. Whenever I go out, I'm damn near able to start as hard as if I'd been playing for two hours, because I have been playing at home. When I go on a gig, I'm ready. That's one thing Clifford (Brown) used to do. I didn't learn it from Clifford, but I heard that he would be on the job an hour early and he'd be blowing. It's being conscientious and wanting to do a good job. Every time you put that horn up to your mouth, you should be the best that you

can be. That's the only secret to trumpet playing. A lot of guys fool around and mess around, but if you want to be the best that you can be, you've got to work. Giving a guy a good count is what I think is important, giving yourself a good count. You know if you're not happy with your work, you're not happy with yourself. Lots of times I'm not happy with what I do, but the people like it so I say, "That's alright." I don't ever want them to be drugged with what I'm doing, but I'm drugged with myself.



## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW RESPONSES

The purpose of the study is to determine what relationships exist between certain experiential factors and percepts of a group of professional musicians who are adept at jazz improvisation. In Chapter IV various features in the backgrounds of twenty-nine improvising musicians are reported by means of typescripts of personal interviews. In this chapter comparisons are made to ascertain the relationships between selected experiential factors and percepts.

The information concerning experiential factors and percepts of the improvising jazz musicians fell into categories as follows: I. Demographic Data, II. Improvisational Concept, III. Initial Improvisational Attempts, IV. Early Experiences, V. Recommendations, and VI. Current Improvisational Situations. Because of the broad nature of each category, further subheadings were needed to achieve more specific analysis of the data. These subheadings are based on the criterion list of the interview guide in Chapter One.

#### Analysis of Interview Responses

Based on an analysis of the data from the jazz improvisers identified for participation in the study, the major

findings are as follows:

I. Demographic Data

- A. Birthplace: The ability to improvise jazz music is not effected by region of birth.
- B. Age Group: The ages of the group were distributed between twenty-four and sixty-seven.
- C. Musical Development Based on Regional Significance: New York City was cited by all of the studied population as the major area of international significance with respect to variety, quality, and inspirational intensity for the jazz musician.
- D. Educational Backgrounds: Educational backgrounds of the jazz improvisers are:
- (1) Twenty-six of twenty-nine were actively involved in music programs in high school.
  - (2) Eighteen studied music in college.
  - (3) Eight attained bachelor's degrees in music.
  - (4) Five who are now teachers attained master's degrees in music.
  - (5) No degrees higher than the master's were earned.
- E. Musical Background: All of the jazz improvisers in the study received private music

lessons.

F. Present Musical Situations: Present musical situations of the jazz improvisers are:

- (1) All are composers.
- (2) Twenty-six are recording artists.
- (3) Ten are studio musicians.
- (4) Six are authors.
- (5) Five are jazz educators.
- (6) One is a publisher.

G. Present Location: Present locations of the jazz improvisers are:

- (1) Fifteen live in the New York City area.
- (2) Six live in Los Angeles, California.
- (3) Two live in San Francisco, California.
- (4) One lives in Bloomington, Indiana.
- (5) One lives in Itta Bena, Mississippi.
- (6) One lives in Las Vegas, Nevada.
- (7) One lives in Albany, New York.
- (8) One lives in Knoxville, Tennessee.
- (9) One lives in Denton, Texas.

## II. Improvisational Concept

A. Definition of Improvisation: All of the jazz improvisers in the study define jazz improvisation as spontaneous composition which includes the aspect of performance.

- B. Contrast Between Improvising and Non-Improvising Musicians: All of the jazz improvisers have a concept of jazz improvisation.
- C. Personal Evolvment: All of the jazz improvisers recognize personal evolvment in the jazz aesthetic (commonly referred to as "hangin' out") as foundational to the formulation of the improvisational concept.
- D. Personal Involvement: All of the jazz improvisers cited personal involvement (commonly referred to as "hangin' out") as essential to the development of creativity in the improvisational concept.

### III. Initial Improvisational Attempts

- A. Motivation: All of the jazz improvisers were motivated to improvise by music of the jazz lineage in their early environment.
- B. Influential Personalities: All of the jazz improvisers named other jazz players as influential personalities in their musical development.
- C. Aspirations: All of the jazz improvisers initially aspired to emulate the personalities who initially influenced them.
- D. Ambitions: All of the jazz improvisers expressed desires to be professional musicians.

E. Complaints: All of the jazz improvisers expressed concern about the lack of guidance and knowledge in their early developmental stages.

#### IV. Early Experiences

A. Informal Training: All of the jazz improvisers went through a period of imitation.

B. Early Development: All of the jazz improvisers cite associations with other jazz musicians in performance and non-performance situations as important to their early development.

#### V. Recommendations

A. Formal Training: All of the jazz improvisers recommend formal training on the instrument.

B. Informal Training: All of the jazz improvisers recommend listening to and playing along with jazz records to facilitate the development of jazz improvisational skills.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study determines the relationship between certain experiential factors and percepts of a select group of professional musicians who are adept at jazz improvisation. The basic data for the study was collected by interviewing each individual from a group of professional musicians who are adept at jazz improvisation. The "focused" personal interview was used because it is most effective in revealing the intimate facts of each musician's personal development. Thus, twenty-nine professional musicians were identified for participation in the study. All participants were either professional recording artists and/or jazz educators of national recognition.

Each interview session was arranged at a time that was mutually convenient to the researcher and the participant. Each session was an open discussion of several subjects as outlined in the interview guide as follows: 1.) improvisation as a means of musical and personal expression, 2.) factors contributing to the subject's initial efforts at jazz improvisation and the nature of the initial improvisatory activity, 3.) early experiences contributing to the subject's

development of jazz improvisational skills, 4.) recommendations of activities that should be experienced by individuals desiring to develop jazz improvisational skills, 5.) present situations in which the subject is involved and the skills needed, and 6.) the overall experiences and percepts contributing to the subject's ability to improvise. These six general subjects are the basic categories used in this dissertation to classify the information obtained in the interviews. Under each major category there are varying numbers of subheadings.

From an analysis of the interview responses, conclusions concerning the similarities in experiences and percepts of musicians adept at jazz improvisation were drawn. A comparison of interview responses is provided in Chapter Five.

It was not within the scope of this study to provide specific lesson plans or instructional models for the teaching of jazz improvisation based on the data. However, it should be noted that, by identifying and categorizing the interview responses as described above, we have provided the teacher of jazz improvisation with information which will aid in preparing lesson plans for the individual needs of a specific class or private student.

### Conclusions

Bearing in mind the limitations of the present study and the analysis of interview responses, the following conclusions are offered:

Musicians who improvise well in the jazz idiom come from all parts of the United States and learn their art in many ways, but eventually they find their way to New York because it provides the stimulation and challenge to their creative improvisation that no other area can provide. Many of them settle permanently in New York but others are attracted by the performance and recording opportunity of Los Angeles.

Most improvisers in the jazz idiom began to study music in the public school and went on to take private lessons. Most of them studied the technical problems associated with their instruments with their private teacher, mastering the usual scales, arpeggios, and etudes that all students of instruments study. Some studied music in college but most did not finish the college curriculum because they preferred the stimulation of constant performance. The few that completed college degrees now combine a career of performing and teaching.

All of the musicians grew up in an environment where improvisation and jazz music was an everyday experience. They associate freely with others who improvise jazz and, in the early stages of their development, they imitated the styles of others. Most of them advocate playing along with phonograph recordings of their favorite musicians.

One invariable characteristic found in all of the musicians interviewed is an intense desire to create and



play music, i.e., they are strongly attracted to the practice of composing while they play, but in order to be able to perfect their improvising art, they require the constant association of others with whom they play, experiment, and create new ideas. They strive to develop a concept of jazz improvisation. In order to achieve the best that is in them, they must give free reign to the interplay of emotion and feeling, for this is the creative source of inspired improvisation. While improvising thus, they do not consciously try to imitate any style or totally rely or memorize stock figurations. At best they are constantly creating their own new materials. In order to earn a living, many of them work as studio musicians and make recordings.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

A search of the related literature provided evidence that much of the available material concerned with the teaching of jazz improvisation deals directly with the acquisition of technical playing skills within a stylistic context. As previously noted, little or no attention is given to the experiences and percepts that help shape the personality and abilities of the improvising jazz musician.

Because of the lack of scholarly research dealing with the relationship of experiential factors and percepts to the acquisition and development of jazz improvisational skills, the possibility for further study of this nature

involving professional musicians is almost unlimited. Further studies of this nature should incorporate musical, as well as personal interaction between the participant and the investigator.

As a result of the present study, other possible areas of investigation became evident. They are:

1. An experimental study implementing the specific recommendations made by interviewees concerning the development of improvisational skills.
2. Further and more detailed biographical studies for the purpose of developing a more accurate and complete history of jazz.
3. Further studies utilizing recorded interviews for purposes of oral history.
4. Studies which develop instructional models for the teaching of jazz improvisation.

The investigation of the teaching process as it relates to jazz improvisation is an involved task since jazz improvisation itself results from complex combinations of personal, intellectual, psychological, environmental, social, and cultural influences. Jazz improvisation is frequently concerned directly with personality development involving the improviser's emotional reactions to a particular playing situation. It is the hope of the writer that the complexity inherent in the codification of information important to the advancement of understanding in this area will not deter further research but will serve as a challenge.

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