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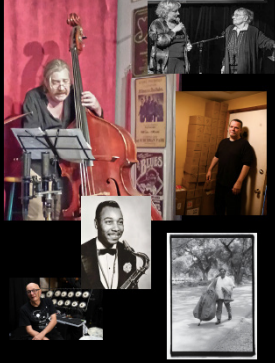
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THE INDEPENDENT JOURNAL OF CREATIVE IMPROVISED MUSIC



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ANNUAL EDITION 2023

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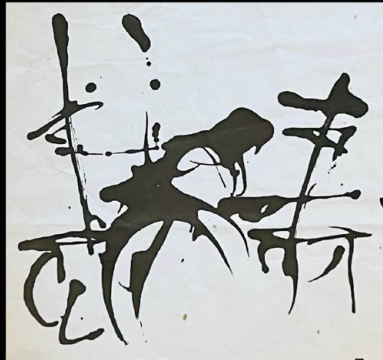
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Critic's Pick Top Ten Jazz Albums
Of The Year 2023

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Presented by Pauline Oliveros, as part of her New Vanguard Series, this concert took place in a packed bookstore in Kingston, New York. on July 23, 2006.

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Critic's Pick Top Ten Jazz Albums
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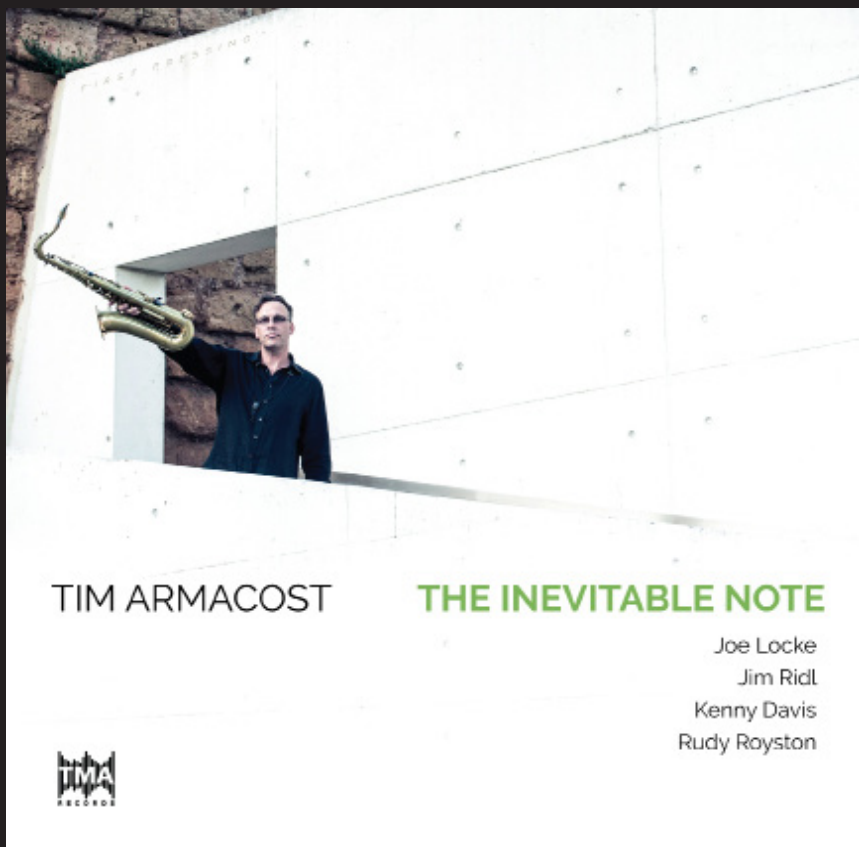
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Critic's Pick Top Ten Best Jazz Albums Of The Year 2023



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FIRE WITHIN

RICH HALLEY MATTHEW SHIPP MICHAEL BISIO NEWMAN TAYLOR BAKER

SAXOPHONIST RICH HALLEY RELEASES FIRE WITHIN

New release, available December 1, 2023 on Pine Eagle Records.

Fire Within is the new recording by Rich Halley, featuring a quartet with innovative pianist Matthew Shipp, standout bassist Michael Bisio and creative drummer Newman Taylor Baker. Halley's third recording with Shipp, Bisio and Baker sees the group building on their intuitive chemistry in a series of powerful improvisations, recorded in Brooklyn in July 2023.

Rich Halley has released 25 recordings as a leader. Fire Within follows Halley's critically acclaimed recordings *The Shape of Things* and *Terra Incognita* (with the same group), *Boomslang*, *The Outlier*, and *Creating Structure*.

"One of the major tenor saxophonists of our time."

Tom Hull, tomhull.com

"Heartland American jazz of the very highest order."

Brian Morton, Point of Departure

"Saxophonist Rich Halley has been turning out smart, bratery music for a couple of decades."

James Hale, DownBeat

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 - #1237 Ernie Krivda *At the Tri-C Jazz Fest* w/C. Black, M. Hayden, R. Gonsalves
 - #1238 Steve Swell's Nation of We: *The Business of Here...Live at Roulette*
 - #1242 Barry Wallenstein *Luck These Days* w/A. Birnbaum, V. Chauncey, N. Haiduck
 - #1243 Kazzrie Jaxen Quartet *Callicoon Sessions* w/C. Krachy, D. Messina, B. Chattin
 - #1244 JCA Orchestra *Stories* w/H. Honshuku, J. Hobbs, R. Stone, P. Scarff, N. Zocher, M. Cho
 - #1245 Mack Goldsbury's Quintet *Feat. Maciej Fortuna Live At CoCo's* w/S. Mahoney
 - #1246 Eهران Elisha Ensemble *Continue* w/H. Elisha, S. Bardfeld, D. Bindman, K. Filiano
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 - #1257 Doninic Duval-Vincent Loccisano-Chris Covais *The Project*
 - #1258 David Haneý *Angel Foot Shuffle* w/J. Priestler, A. St. James, B. Purdie
 - #1259 Eric Plaks New Trio *Sun and Shadow* w/John Murchison, Leonid Galaganov
 - #1260 Ted Brown Quartet *Live at Trumpets* w/J. Easton, D. Messina, B. Chattin
 - #1261 Don Messina *Dedicated to...* (double bass) solo
 - #1262 Buffalo Jazz Octet *Live at Pausa Art House* w/Bucheger, Rivera, Baczkowski
 - #1263 The Infinitesimal Flash Quartet *Live* w/J. Tchical, M. Marucci, A. Lane, F. Wong
 - #1264 Ray Suhy-Lewis Porter *Longing* w/Rudy Royston, Joris Teepe
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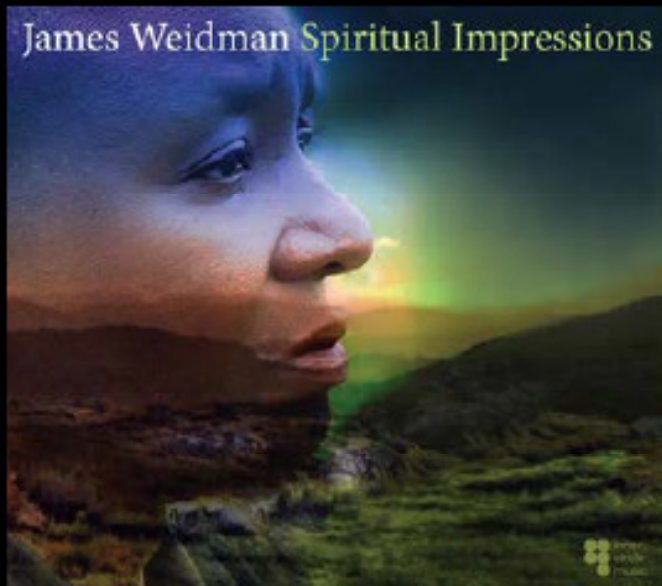
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TOP 10 RECORDINGS FOR 2018
CADENCE MAGAZINE


James Weidman Spiritual Impressions

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BRILLIANT NEW WORK..

from Milton Marsh an artist you might remember from his classic Monism album for the Strata East label in the 70s; still sounding every bit as brilliant, all these many years later! The set has Milton still working in the larger, more ambitious ideas we love from his other records; a blending of spiritual jazz and additional string players, in a way that

might be the closest approximation to the "black classical music" promised by Rahsaan Roland Kirk and others in the 70s! Yet Marsh is definitely his own visionary here, too carving out a sound that's as powerful as it is individual, with a unique sound that has us sitting up and taking notice all over again. Musicians on the recordings include David Eure on Violin, Stanton Davis on trumpet, Kevin Harris on piano, Carlos Averhoff on tenor, and Keala Kaumehi-wa on bass, with Marsh himself handling the Arrangements and Conducting his original compositions. Titles include: "Not Far From Home", "Great Expectations", "Dialogue", "Loving You", "By Design", "I Wonder Why I Care", and "Subtle Anomaly".



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102 Ernie Krivda Trio
103 Bobby Zankel Trio
104 Frank Lowe Trio
105 Gregg Bendian Project
106 Mark Whitecage Trio
107 Chris McCain - Billy Pierce Trio
108 Steve Swell & Chris Kelsey
109 Billy Bang 4tet
110 Herb Robertson/Dominic Duval/Jay Rosen
111 Vinny Golia & Ken Filiano
112 Luther Thomas 4tet
113 Sonny Simmons Trio
114 Paul Lytton 4tet
115 Joe McPhee 4tet
116 Steve Swell 4tet
117 David White 5tet
118 Sonny Simmons 4tet
119 Mark Whitecage 4tet
120 Joe McPhee & David Prentice
121 Kevin Norton Trio
122 Joseph Scianni - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
123 Lou Grassi Saxtet
124 Odean Pope Trio
125 Lee Steve Trio
126 Ivo Perelman Trio
127 Mike Bisio & Joe McPhee
128 Marc Edwards Trio
129 Paul Smoker - Vinny Golia 4tet
130 Joseph Scianni
131 Bobby Zankel 5
132 Joe McPhee 4tet
133 Roswell Rudd Trio
134 Ivo Perelman Trio & Rory Stuart
135 Brandon Evans 4tet
136 John Gunther Trio
137 Dominic Duval & Jay Rosen
138 Frank Lowe Trio
139 Chris Kelsey Trio
140 Zusaan K. Fastave/Noah Howard/Bobby Few
141 Dominic Duval's String Ensemble
142 Jon Hazilla & Sexabone
143 Khan Jamal
144 Bruce Eisenbeil Trio
145 Luther Thomas Trio
146 Roswell Rudd Trio
147 Claude Lawrence Trio
148 Glenn Spearman - John Howard Group
149 Steve Swell 4tet
150 Kahil ElZabar's Ritual Trio
151 David Bindman Trio
152 Ahmed Abdullah's Diaspora
153 Eliott Levitt 4tet
154 Tyrone Hill 4tet feat. Marshall Allen
155 Joseph Scianni Trio/ Mark Whitecage 4tet
156 Lou Grassi's PoBand
157 Mark Whitecage's Other 4tet
158 Arthur Blythe & David Evans
159 Frodo Giardinet 4tet
160 Thomas Borgmann Trio plus Peter Britzmann
161 Rob Brown - Lou Grassi 4tet
162 Joseph Scianni duets
163 John Gunther's Axis Mundi
164 Chris Dahlgren/Briggan Krauss/Jay Rosen
165 Andrew Chesire Trio
166 Ebran Elisha Ensemble
167 Ethnic Heritage Ensemble
168 David White 5tet
169 Bob Magnuson & Lou Grassi
170 Pucio Amanda Jhonas
171 Marshall Allen4tet feat. Mark Whitecage
172 Charlie Kohlhasa 5tet
173 Kowald, Smoker, McPhee, Whitecage, etc.
174 Kalaparush Maurice McIntyre Trio
175 Yuku Fujinami's String Ensemble
176 John Gunther 5tet
177 Hugh Rane & Marc Sabatella
178 Kowald, McPhee, Smoker, Whitecage, etc.
179 Michael Bisio & Joe McPhee
180 Marshall Allen4tet feat. M. Whitecage
181 Glenn Spearman & Dominic Duval
182 Burton Greene - Wilber Morris - Lou Grassi
183 Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
184 Steve Swell Trio
185 Joe Fiedler - Ben Koehn - Ed Ware
186 Paul Smoker 4tet
187 Patrick Brennan with Lisle Ellis
188 Th.Borgmann - Wilber Morris - Nicholson
189 John Carlson/Eric Hipp/S.McClein/S.Neumann
190 Ori Kaplan Trio Plus Geoff Mann, Tom Abbs
191 Odean Pope & Dave Burrell
192 Ahmed Abdullah/A Harding/W.Kamaguchi/Weinstein: NAM
193 Mark Whitecage's Other 4tet
194 Bruce Eisenbeil/Crosscuttr Trio
195 Sam Bardfeild's Cabal Fatale
196 Dom Minasi Trio
197 Blaise Swula Trio
198 Joe Fonda 5tet
199 Joe McPhee's Bluette

200 Elliott Levitt - Tyrone Hill 4tet
201 Lou Grassi - Tom Varner - Ron Horton - Tomas Ulrich
202 John Bickerton Trio
203 Steve Swell Trio
204 Bob Magnuson - Tom DeSteno 4tet
205 Kahil ElZabar's TriFactor
206 Tyrone Hill - Elliott Levitt 4tet
207 Marshall Allen w/ Lou Grassi's PoBand
208 Bhub Ramey - Jack Wilgus - Fred Lonberg-Holm - Bob Marsh
209 Joe McPhee - Joe Giardullo - Michael Bisio - Dominic Duval
210 Ebran Elisha Ensemble
211 Jay Rosen 4tet
212 Konrad Bauer & Nils Wogram
213 Donald Robinson Trio
214 Luther Thomas 5tet
215 Dominic Duval
216 Briggan Krauss - Chris Dahlgren - Jay Rosen
217 Ken Simon 4tet
218 Phil Haynes - Herb Robertson 5tet
219 Paul Smoker - Bob Magnuson - Ken Filiano - Lou Grassi
220 Kahil ElZabar with David Murray One World Family
221 Konrad Bauer/Nils Wogram/Dominic Duval
222 Phil Haynes & Herb Robertson
223 Ori Kaplan's Trio Plus4tetology
224 Rosale Washington & Tyrone Brown
225 Anthony Braxton
226 Paul Smoker - Bob Magnuson - Ken Filiano - Lou Grassi
227 Lou Grassi's PoBand
228 Wilber Morris & Reggie Nicholson
229 Yoko Fujiyama 4tet
230 Dave Burrell & Tyrone Brown
231 Masashi Harada Trio
232 John Gunther 5tet
233 Paul Smoker Trio
234 John Oswald - David Prentice - Dominic Duval
235 Anthony Braxton w/Alex Horwitz
236 Anthony Braxton
237 Avram Feler 4tet
238 Kevin Norton - Bob Celusac - Andy Eulau
239 Odean Pope - Byard Lancaster - Ed Crockett - J.R. Mitchell
240 Bobby Zankel Trio
241 Bruce Eisenbeil 4tet
242 William Gagliardi 4tet
243 Anthony Braxton 5tet
244 Rosi Herlein Ensemble
245 Steve Lehman 5tet
246 Alex Harding Trio
247 Kalaparush Maurice McIntyre Trio
248 Ned Rothenberg & Denman Maroney
249 Fred Hess 4tet
250 Charles Eubanks - solo piano
251 Burton Greene with Mark Dresser
252 T.J. Graham with Rory Stuart
253 Jay Rosen Trio
254 Tom DeSteno - Bob Magnuson 4tet
255 Steve Lehman 5tet
256 Mary LaRose - Jeff Lederer - Steve Swell - D.Duval
257 Joe McPhee's Bluette
258 Joseph Rosenberg 4tet
259 Jean-Luc Guionnet & Edward Perraud
260 John Howard - Tristan Honsinger - Jean Derrone
261 Dominic Duval String & Brass Ens.
262 Lou Grassi's PoBand
263 Adam Lane 4tet
264 Daniel Carter - Steve Swell - Tom Abbs - David Brandt
265 John O'Gallagher's Axiom
266 Matt Lavelle 4tet
267 Khan Jamal 5tet
268 Bob Washington Trio
269 David Taylor Trio
270 Alex Harding - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
271 David Wertman-Charlie Kohlhasa-Lou Grassi
272 Ursel Schlicht-Steve Swell 4tet
273 Carl Grubbs 4tet
274 Lucian Ban & Alex Harding
275 Frank Lowe 4tet
276 Elliott Levitt-Marshall Allen-Tyrone Hill 5tet
277 Lucian Ban & Alex Harding 5tet
278 John Tchicai - Pierre Dorge - Lou Grassi
279 Dylan Taylor & Kelly Meashey
280 Kevin Norton 4tet
281 Adam Lane/ John Tchicai
282 Andrew Lamb Trio
283 Joe McPhee-Dominic Duval-Jay Rosen: Trio-X
284 Joe Fonda-Barry Altschul-Billy Bang
285 Steve Swell's New York BrassWoodTrio
286 Avram Feler 4tet
287 Luther Thomas 4tet
288 Tom Abbs 4tet
289 Paul Dummal - Paul Rogers - Kevin Norton
290 Charles Eubanks
291 William Gagliardi 5tet
292 Steve Swell 5tet
293 Ernie Krivda 5tet
294 Odean Pope & Khan Jamal 4tet
295 Mark Dresser & Ray Anderson
296 Paul Dummal-Paul Rogers-Kevin Norton
297 William Gagliardi 5tet
298 Jazz Composers Alliance Orchestra

299 Deborah Day & Dominic Duval
300 David Eisenstadt 5tet
301 Jimmy Halperin - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
302 Ernie Krivda 5tet
303 Odean Pope 4tet
304 John O'Gallagher w/Masa Kamaguchi-Jay Rosen
305 Patrick Brennan 4tet
306 Kalaparush M McIntyre & The Light
307 David Taylor Trio
308 James Finn Trio
309 Chris Kelsey 4tet
310 Scott Rosenberg's Red
311 John O'Gallagher w/Masa Kamaguchi-Jay Rosen
312 Marco Enrie - Lisle Ellis - Peter Valsamis
313 Lou Grassi 4tet
314 Mary Anne Driscoll - Paul Murphy
315 Gebhard Ullmann - Steve Swell 4tet
316 Burton Greene & Roy Campbell 4tet
317 Marc Pompe 4tet
318 Ken Wessel - Ken Filiano - Lou Grassi
319 John Gunther Trio
320 Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen
321 Dave Taylor-Steve Swell 5tet
322 Khan Jamal 5tet
323 Mike Bisio 4tet
324 Avram Feler - Mike Bisio
325 Adam Lane Trio
326 Stephen Gauci Trio
327 Jay Rosen
328 Trio-X: JoeMcPhee/ DominicDuval/JayRosen
329 Chris Kelsey Trio
330 Prince Lasha & Odean Pope Trio
331 Byard Lancaster 4tet
332 William Gagliardi 5tet
333 Bobby Fwy & Avram Feler
334 Ernie Krivda 5tet
335 Adam Lane Trio
336 Carl Grubbs Quartet
337 Lucian Ban-Alex Harding
338 David Haney Trio
339 Burton Greene Quintet
340 Byard Lancaster 4tet
341 Sophie Duner 4tet
342 William Gagliardi 4tet
343 Joe Fonda's Bottoms Out
344 Lou Grassi's PoBand
345 Burton Greene Trio
346 Mat Marucci - Doug Webb Trio
347 Dominic Duval's String 4tet
348 Jimmy Halperin & Dominic Duval
349 Michael Bisio & Tomas Ulrich
350 Seth Weicht 4tet
351 Stephen Gauci 4tet
352 Steve Swell - David Taylor 4tet
353 Odean Pope 4tet
354 David Haney Trio
355 Burton Greene solo piano
356 Mat Marucci - Doug Webb Trio
357 David Haney & Julian Prester
358 Chris Kelsey 4tet
359 Stephen Gauci Trio
360 Michael Bisio
361 Stephen Gauci 4tet
362 Kalaparush McIntyre 4tet
363 David Schitter - Dominic Duval - Newman T.Baker
364 Khan Jamal & Dylan Taylor
365 Bobby Zankel Trio
366 Ernie Krivda Trio
367 David Haney & Andrew Cynille
368 Chris Kelsey 4tet
369 David Haney & Gregory Cyrille-Dominic Duval
370 Bill Gagliardi-KenFiliano-LouGrassi: ESA Trio
371 David Haney Trio
372 Michael Bisio 4tet
373 Ernie Krivda
374 David Amerer Trio
375 Tomas Ulrich's Cargo Cult
376 Bill Gagliardi-KenFiliano-LouGrassi: ESA Trio
377 David Amerer Trio
378 Odean Pope 4tet
379 Jimmy Bennington Trio
380 Tomas Ulrich's Cargo Cult
381 Tom Siciliano Trio
382 Brian Landro & Doug Webb
383 Andrew Lamb Trio
384 Nate Wooley + Taylor Ho Bynum 4tet
385 Tomas Ulrich's Cargo Cult
386 David Haney 4tet Avenue of the Americas
387 Diane Moser - Mark Dresser duo
388 Frode Gjerstad - Paul Nilssen-Love
389 Andrew Lamb Trio
390 Jimmy Halperin - Dominic Duval
391 Jon Hazilla - Ran Blake
392 Adam Lane 4tet
393 Bob Rodriguez Trio w/Dominic Duval + Jay Rosen
394 Odean Pope Trio w/Marshall Allen
395 Kalaparush McIntyre 4tet

new from **Cold Blue** music



John Luther Adams
Darkness and Scattered Light

Darkness and Scattered Light presents celebrated Pulitzer and Grammy-winning composer John Luther Adams's mesmerizing, elegant, virtuosic music for double bass—two solos and a work for five basses—performed by bassist extraordinaire Robert Black.

Black's performance on this album has been nominated for a 2024 Grammy.

"This is one of the most beautiful albums I have heard in years. . . . It is a fascinating, devastating kind of beauty. . . . It would be hard to imagine a better match of composer and performer than John Luther Adams and Robert Black."—David Lang

"No one on the planet can make the double bass sing, dance, and flow as freely as John Adams. And Robert Black. Robert has single-handedly reinvigorated the technique and repertoire of the double bass."—Michael Gordon

"Darkness and Scattered Light shows the depths of the double basses, all played on this recording by Robert Black. Through its masterful brilliance, the piece shows the expansive vision that informs Adams's music. . . . Robert Black is a palpable presence here."—Julian Cowley, *The Wire*

"These patient ruminations and airy dances, suffused with fierce urgency and shadow, could only have been created by Adams. The music is visceral and visceral at once, and Black is responsive to every challenge and nuance."
—Steve Smith, *Night After Night*

"John Luther Adams . . . one of the most original thinkers of the new century."
—Alex Ross, *The New Yorker*

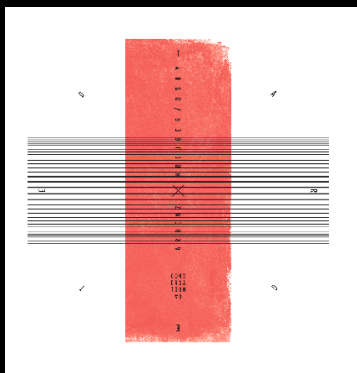
"His [Adams'] music has repeatedly conjured up visions of Buddha's sermons."
—Julian Cowley, *The Wire*

"His [Adams'] music becomes more than a metaphor for natural forces: it is an elemental experience in its own right."—Tom Service, *The Guardian*

This album is available at all good record outlets—both online and brick-and-mortar, as well as at Bandcamp and Cold Blue Music's website.

www.coldbluemusic.com

Critic's Pick Top Ten Jazz Albums Of The Year 2023



Florian Arbenz X Greg Osby / Arno Krijger Conversation #9 Targeted

Continuing a two-decade relationship with American sax great Greg Osby, and igniting a new one with Dutch Hammond organist Arno Krijger, Swiss drummer Florian Arbenz presents Conversation #9: Targeted.

The recording is part of an ambitious project to release twelve albums with 12 drastically different ensembles, which will be coming to a close in 2024.

A coming together of three highly skilled improvisers who, in their own ways, strive to continue the jazz tradition, the record showcases a careful selection of three original compositions alongside three jazz standards: Seven Steps to Heaven, Freedom Jazz Dance and I Loves You Porgy. Discover all albums in the series, available on CD or vinyl, via FlorianArbenz.Bandcamp.com

"You'll want to put the album on repeat!" Jazz Views (UK)

***** Jazz Trail (USA)*



New CIMPoL releases:

CIMPoL 5032-5036:

CIMPfest 2011: LIVE IN VILLACH, AUSTRIA

DISK 1: Ernie Krivda Quartet DISK 2: Avram Fefer Quintet DISK 3: Steve Swell Sextet
DISK 4: Ken Filiano Quintet DISK 5: Bill Gagliardi Sextet / Adam Lane's Villach Orchestra

CIMPoL 5037:

Trio-X - Live at Kerrytown

Joe McPhee (trumpet) - Dominic Duval (bass) - Jay Rosen (drums)

CIMPoL 5038:

Trio-X - Live at the Sugar Maple

Joe McPhee (trumpet) - Dominic Duval (bass) - Jay Rosen (drums)

CIMPoL 5039:

Trio-X - Live at Craig Kessler & Janet Lessner's

Joe McPhee (trumpet) - Dominic Duval (bass) - Jay Rosen (drums)

CIMPoL 5040:

Trio-X - Live in Green Bay and Buffalo

Joe McPhee (trumpet) - Dominic Duval (bass) - Jay Rosen (drums)

Earlier CIMPoL releases:

5001	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	AIR: Above and Beyond
5002	Odean Pope	Serenity
5003	Joe McPhee & Dominic Duval	The Open Door
5004	David Bond Quintet	The Early Show (live at Twin's Jazz)
5005	Salim Washington	Live at St. Nick's
5006-5012	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Live on Tour 2006
5013	Gebhard Ullmann + Steve Swell 4tet	Live in Montreal
5014	Ernie Krivda	Live Live at the Dirty Dog
5015-5019	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Trio-X - Live on Tour 2008
5020-5024	CIMPfest 2009: Live in Villach, Austria	Live in Villach, Austria
5025	Seth Meicht and the Big Sound Ensemble	Live in Philadelphia
5026	Eric Plaks Quintet	Live at Bronx Community College
5027-5030	Trio-X: Joe McPhee - Dominic Duval - Jay Rosen	Trio-X - Live on Tour 2010
5041	Mat Marrucci Trio	Live at Jazz Central
5042	Teresa Carroll Quintet	Live at Dazzle

Critic's Pick Top Ten Jazz Albums Of The Year 2023



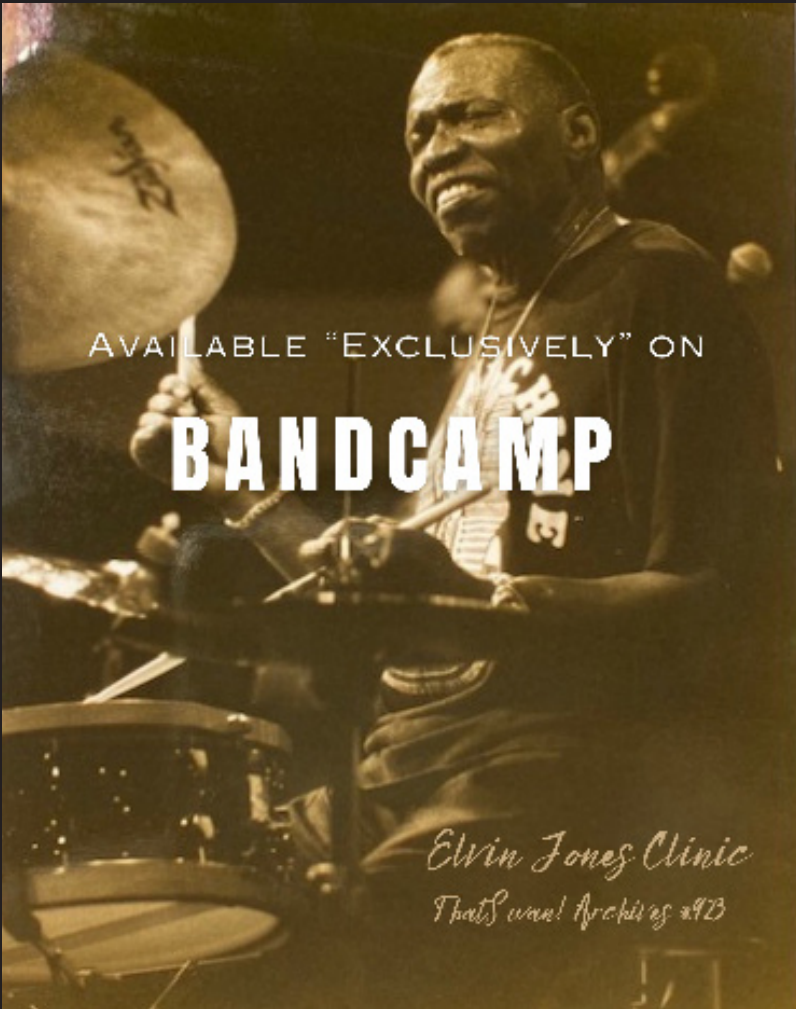
Anthony Branker & Imagine What Place Can Be For Us? A Suite in Ten Movements on Origin Records

Walter Smith III / tenor saxophone
Philip Dizack / trumpet
Remy Le Boeuf / alto & soprano saxophones
Pete McCann / guitar
Fabian Almazan / piano
Linda May Han Oh / double & electric bass
Donald Edwards / drums
Alison Crockett / vocals & spoken word
Anthony Branker / composer & director

Reviews

"a sweeping opus with sociopolitical and poetic content woven into a musical tapestry with his band Imagine which manages to be at once cerebral, emotive and viscerally exciting." – DownBeat

"Musical beauty in the service of thought, or perhaps the reverse" – Paris-Move



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This page has been left (almost) blank intentionally.
This page is a symbolic break, what precedes is advertising, (free of editorial influence), what follows is editorial (free of advertising influence).

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN CADENCE

acc: accordion
 as: alto sax
 bari s : baritone sax
 b: bass
 b cl: bass clarinet
 bs: bass sax
 bsn: bassoon
 cel: cello
 cl: clarinet
 cga: conga
 cnt: cornet
 d: drums
 el: electric
 elec: electronics
 Eng hn: English horn
 euph: euphonium
 flgh: flugelhorn
 flt: flute
 Fr hn: French horn
 g: guitar
 hca: harmonica
 kybd: keyboards
 ldr: leader
 ob: oboe
 org: organ
 perc: percussion
 p: piano
 pic: piccolo
 rds: reeds
 ss: soprano sax
 sop: sopranino sax
 synth: synthesizer
 ts: tenor sax
 tbn: trombone
 tpt: trumpet
 tba: tuba
 v tbn: valve trombone
 vib: vibraphone
 vla: viola
 vln: violin
 vcl: vocal
 xyl: xylophone



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FRONT COVER
 Clockwise from upper left
 Conrad Bauer
 Mary Halvorson
 Tomas Fujiwara
 Jamaaladeen Tacuma
 Ursula Rucker
 Tim Motzer
 Tomas Svoboda
 Dan Healy
 Roy Ayers
 Keiko Jones
 Elvin Jones

Inside This Issue

CADENCE MAGAZINE EDITORIAL POLICY

Established in January 1976, Cadence Magazine was a monthly publication through its first 381 issues (until September 2007). Beginning with the October 2007 issue, Cadence increased in number of pages, changed to perfect binding, and became a quarterly publication. On January 1, 2012 Cadence Magazine was transferred to Cadence Media L.L.C.

Cadence Magazine continues as an online publication and one print issue per year. Cadence Media, LLC, is proud to continue the policies that have distinguished Cadence as an important independent resource.

From its very first issue, Cadence has had a very open and inclusive editorial policy. This has allowed Cadence to publish extended feature interviews in which musicians, well known or otherwise, speak frankly about their experiences and perspectives on the music world; and to cover and review all genres of improvised music. We are reader supported.

Cadence essentially always has been and remains "the best independent magazine of Jazz, Blues, and Creative Improvised Music that money can't buy."

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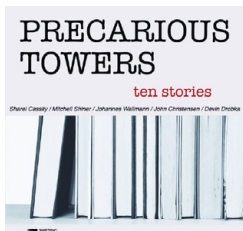
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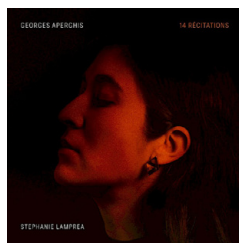
WAYNE ESCOFFERY—LIKE MINDS—SMOKE SESSIONS
 THE HEAVY HITTERS—SELF TITLED—CELLAR MUSIC
 PRECARIOUS TOWERS—TEN STORIES—SHIFTING PARADIGM
 TERELL STAFFORD—BETWEEN TWO WORLDS—LECOQ
 GEORGE COLEMAN—LIVE AT SMALL'S JAZZ CLUB—CELLAR
 MUSIC
 JIM ROTONDI—OVER HERE—CRISS CROSS
 LOUIS HAYES—EXACTLY RIGHT!—SAVANT
 RON BLAKE—IS THAT SO? MISTAKEN IDENTITY—7TEN33
 PRODUCTIONS
 CONSTANTINE ALEXANDER—FIRETET—SELF RELEASED
 ED CHERRY—ARE WE THERE YET?—CELLAR MUSIC GROUP



REISSUES/HISTORICAL - LARRY HOLLIS

JOHN COLTRANE/ERIC DOLPHY—EVENINGS AT THE VILLAGE
 GATE—IMPULSE
 MILES DAVIS—IN CONCERT AT THE OLYMPIC PARIS —FRESH
 SOUND
 BASIE ALL STARS—LIVE AT FABRIK VOL. 1—NDR KULTUR

DEBUT: ANTHONY HERVEY—WORDS FROM MY HORN—
 OUTSIDE IN MUSIC



VOCAL: JOHN PIZZARELLI—STAGE & SCREEN—PALMETTO

LATIN: IVAN LINS—MY HEART SPEAKS--RESONANCE

NEW RELEASES - BERNIE KOENIG

DAVID HANEY, JULIAN PRIESTER, ADAM LANE, MICHAEL BISIO
 LIVE AT THE DEEP LISTENING INSTITUTE CMR 019
 THE SOCIETY FOR ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC MUSIC IN THE UNITED
 STATES MUSIC FROM SEAMUS VOL 21 NEW FOCUS 2012
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 FOCUS



STEPHANIE LAMPREA 14 RECITATIONS NEW FOCUS
 GUY BARASH KILLDEER NEW FOCUS

CHARLIE APICELLA & IRON CITY - THE GRIOTS SPEAK:
 DESTINY CALLING, ORIGIN RECORDS
 TOMAS JANZON NOMADIC - CHANCES MUSIC
 RICHARD BEAUDOIN - DIGITAL MEMORY AND THE ARCHIVE
 NEW FOCUS

NEW RELEASES - LUDWIG VAN TRIKT

OÛAT PLAYS PER HENRIK WALLIN - THE STRANGE
 ADVENTURES OF JESPER KLINT (DOUBLE LP) UMLAUT
 RECORDS



TURBULENCE AND PULSE - ASHER GAMEDZE -
 INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM
 COIN COIN CHAPTER FIVE: IN THE GARDEN... MATANA
 ROBERTS - CANADA CONSTELLATION
 RUDY ROYSTON - DAY - GREENLEAF MUSIC
 KAISA'S MACHINE - TAKING SHAPE - GREENLEAF MUSIC
 RENDERINGS - CHUCK OWEN AND THE WDR BIG BAND -
 SUMMIT
 WITH BEST INTENTIONS - JOCHEN RUECKERT - COLONEL
 BEATS
 ZACK LOBER - NO FILL3R - ZENNEZ RECORDS
 TOMAS FUJIWARA - PITH - FIREHOUSE 12

Top Ten Recordings 2023



BUILT IN SYSTEM - CHIEN CHIEN LU - GIANT STEPS ARTS

NEW RELEASES - JEROME WILSON

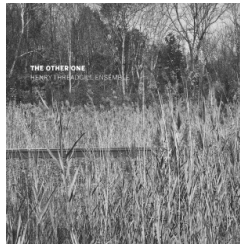
JAIMIE BRANCH, FLY OR DIE FLY OR DIE FLY OR DIE ((WORLD WAR), (INTERNATIONAL ANTHEM)
 JAMES BRANDON LEWIS RED LILY QUINTET, FOR MAHALIA, WITH LOVE, (TAO FORMS)
 LEAP DAY TRIO, LIVE AT THE CAFE BOHEMIA, (GIANT STEP ARTS)

TYSHAWN SOREY TRIO, CONTINUING, (PI)
 INGRID LAUBROCK, THE LAST QUIET PLACE (PYROCLASTIC)
 DANIEL HERSOG JAZZ ORCHESTRA, OPEN SPACES - FOLK SONGS REIMAGINED (CELLAR MUSIC)
 DAN ROSENBOOM, POLARITY (ORENDA)
 ROXANA AMED / FRANK CARLBERG, LOS TRABAJOS Y LAS NOCHES (SONY MUSIC LATIN)
 KRIS DAVIS' DIATOM RIBBONS, LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD (PYROCLASTIC)
 ERICA SEGUINE / SHON BAKER ORCHESTRA, THE NEW DAY BENDS LIGHT (SELF-RELEASED)



NEW RELEASES - KEN WEISS

ANNA WEBBER – SHIMMER WINCE – INTAKT
 HENRY THREADGILL ENSEMBLE – THE OTHER ONE - PI
 JIM & THE SCHRIMPS – AIN'T NO SAINT – INTAKT
 SATOKO FUJII PIANO SOLO – TORRENT – LIBRA
 INGRID LAUBROCK - THE LAST QUIET PLACE – PYROCLASTIC
 MICHAEL FORMANEK ELUSION QUARTET – AS THINGS DO – INTAKT
 KRIS DAVIS DIATUM RIBBONS – LIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD – PYROCLASTIC
 TYSHAWN SOREY TRIO – CONTINUING – PI
 LEAP DAY TRIO – LIVE AT THE CAFE BOHEMIA – GIANT STEP ARTS
 SUSAN ALCORN SEPTETO DEL SUR – CANTO – RELATIVE PITCH
 HAROLD DANKO – TRILLIUM – STEEPLECHASE



TOP HISTORICAL RECORDINGS - KEN WEISS

LES MCCANN – NEVER A DULL MOMENT – LIVE FROM COAST TO COAST (1966-1967) - RESONANCE
 AHMAD JAMAL – EMERALD CITY NIGHTS-LIVE AT THE PENTHOUSE 1966-1968 – JAZZ DETECTIVE
 WES MONTGOMERY WYNTON KELLY TRIO – MAXIMUM SWING-THE UNISSUED 1965 HALF NOTE RECORDINGS – RESONANCE
 CAL TJADER – CATCH THE GROOVE-LIVE AT THE PENTHOUSE 1963-1967 – JAZZ DETECTIVE
 CHET BAKER – BLUE ROOM-THE 1979 VARA STUDIO SESSIONS IN HOLLAND – JAZZ DETECTIVE

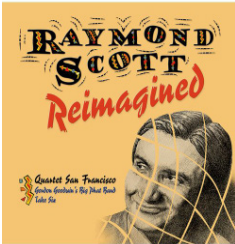


NEW RELEASES - SCOTT YANNOV

JANE BUNNETT AND MAQUEQUE – PLAYING WITH FIRE – LINUS ENTERTAINMENT
 GUNHILD CARLING – GOOD EVENING CATS! – SELF-RELEASED
 KENT ENGELHARDT & STEPHEN ENOS – CENTRAL AVENUE S WING & OUR DELIGHT – MADD FOR TADD
 NOAH HAIDU – STANDARDS – SUNNYSIDE
 ALINE HOMZY – ECLIPSE - ELASTIC
 JON-ERIK KELLSO AND THE EARREGULARS – LIVE AT THE EAR INN – ARBORS



Top Ten Recordings 2023



JAMES BRANDON LEWIS – FOR MAHALIA, WITH LOVE – TAO FORMS
 QUARTET SAN FRANCISCO & GORDON GOODWIN - RAYMOND SCOTT REIMAGINED – VIOLINJAZZ
 OHAD TALMOR – BACK TO THE LAND – INTAKT
 SAM TAYLOR – LET GO – CELLAR MUSIC

REISSUES, HISTORICAL - SCOTT YANNOV

TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI – TOSHIKO'S BLUES 1953-1957 – FRESH SOUND

SONNY CLARK – THE COMPLETE BLUE NOTE SESSIONS – MOSAIC

JOHN COLTRANE WITH ERIC DOLPHY – EVENINGS AT THE VILLAGE GATE – IMPULSE

MILES DAVIS – IN CONCERT AT THE OLYMPIA PARIS 1957 – FRESH SOUND

JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC – THE COMPLETE JAM SESSIONS 1950-1957 – MOSAIC

DAN LEVINSON – CELEBRATING BIX – TURTLE BAY

LOREN MCMURRAY – THE MOANINEST MOAN OF THEM ALL – ARCHEOPHONE

MULGREW MILLER – SOLO IN BARCELONA – STORYVILLE
 MICHEL PETRUCCIANI – THE MONTREUX YEARS – MONTREUX SOUNDS/BMG

HAZEL SCOTT – COLLECTED RECORDINGS 1939-57 – ACROBAT



NEW RELEASES - FRANK KOHL

JOHN SCOFIELD - YANKEE GO HOME

DAVE STRYKER - PRIME - STRIKEZONE RECORDS

DONNY MCCASLIN - I WANT MORE - EDITIONS RECORDS

SCENES- VARIABLE CLOUDS - ORIGIN RECORDS

FLORIAN ARBENZ - CONVERSATION #9 TARGETED

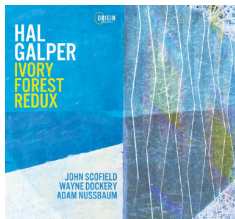
FRED HERSCH - ESPERANZA SPALDING- ALIVE AT THE VILLAGE VANGUARD

HAL GALPER - IVORY FORREST REDUX - ORIGIN RECORDS

TOM KENNEDY - STORIES

ANTOINE BOYER - TANGRAM

BIRELLI LAGRENE - PLAYS LOULOU GASTE



NEW RELEASES - NORA MCCARTHY

HENRY THREADGILL, THE OTHER ONE, PI RECORDINGS

DOM MINASI, ME MYSELF AND I, UNSEEN RAIN RECORDS

TIM ARMACOST, THE INEVITABLE NOTE, TMA RECORDS

MATT VON RODERICK, CELESTIAL HEART, BFD SONY, 2023

DAVID STROTHER, EAR REVERENT, DIGITAL

KUBA CICHOCKI, FLOWING CIRCLES, BJURECORDS (BROOKLYN JAZZ UNDERGROUND)

ANTHONY BRANKER & IMAGINE, WHAT PLACE CAN BE FOR US? A SUITE IN TEN MOVEMENTS

SANTI DEBRIANO & ARKESTRA BEMBE, ASHANTI, JOJO RECORDS

CANDICE IVORY, WHEN THE LEEVE BREAKS, THE MUSIC OF MEMPHIS MINNIE, LITTLE VILLAGE

JACK DESALVO AND CHRIS FORBES, BREAKING THE DRAGON, UNSEEN RAIN RECORDS



Top Ten Concerts 2023

Top Ten Philadelphia Gigs 2023 Ken Weiss



1/13 Cyrus Chestnut at Chris' Jazz Café with bassist Eric Wheeler and drummer Chris Beck marked a rare area appearance for the accomplished pianist. His solo on "Nardis" featured striking runs up and down the keys, mirroring breaking glass was memorable.



1/20 Bobby Zankel and the Wonderful Sound Time Travelers - Bobby Zankel (as), Isaiah Collier (ts), Sumi Tonooka (kybd), William Parker (b), Pheeroan akLaff (d) at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) were stunning and numbing with two long sets filled with spiritually charged climaxes.



2/9 Kahil El'Zabar's Ethnic Heritage Ensemble with trumpeter Corey Wilkes and baritone saxophonist Alex Harding at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) was full of Funk, Groove, Jazz and African elements, further establishing Kahil El'Zabar's longstanding Ethnic Heritage Ensemble as a rare and passionate life force.



3/10 Sun Of Goldfinger at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) Tim Berne (as) David Torn (g, elec) and Ches Smith (d, perc) were joined by special guest New Orleans accordionist (also clarinet, electronics and voice) Aurora Nealand for a presentation of (often) raw and evolving music.



4/15 James Blood Ulmer's Black Rock Trio at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) Ulmer's triumphant return to Philadelphia after an absence of 20 years with drummer G. Calvin Weston and electric bassist Mark Peterson found him merging swampy Southern Blues with the sting of Funk and modern Jazz. This performance followed a solo set the night before that was also a stunner.

Top Ten Concerts 2023



6/2 Void Patrol at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) was the third ever performance of the stellar quartet of Elliott Sharp, Billy Martin, Colin Stetson and Payton MacDonald. Fusing elements of Jazz, Drone, and Metal, the music was often in flux yet maintained connectivity and cool headbanger episodes.



6/10 Fieldwork at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) brought together Vijay Iyer (p), Steve Lehman (as) and Tyshawn Sorey (d) for the first time since 2016 for 3 nights. This final set was appropriately compared to “being at a religious event” by a noted local musician.



7/8 Marilyn Crispell (p), Mark Dresser (b) and Gerry Hemingway (d) at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop). Anthony Braxton’s dynamic rhythm section from the mid-’80s through mid-’90s ferociously covered the maestro’s works with breathtaking unity.



8/22 Shakti – John McLaughlin (g), Zakir Hussain (tabla), Ganesh Rajagopalan (vin), Selvaganesh Vinayakram (perc), Shankar Mahadevan (vcl) at Glenside’s Keswick Theatre was a stunning cross-cultural explosion of virtuosity and passion.



9/8 Patrick Zimmerli’s Messages at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop). The composer/soprano saxophonist leader led saxophonists Chris Potter, Ron Blake, Román Filiú O’Reilly, pianist Edward Simon, bassist Scott Colley, and drummer Timothy Angulo through a newly adapted suite of music that had Classical roots but felt firmly entrenched in post-modern Jazz. The music frequently surged and Potter’s solo was stunning.

Outsiders Improvised & Creative Music Festival

The 8th Annual Outsiders Improvised & Creative Music Festival – December 2, 2022

By Amy Gordon and Ken Weiss

Esteemed Philadelphia bassist, composer and fashion icon, Jamaaladeen Tacuma, has worked with a stellar array of scene makers throughout his long career, including Ornette Coleman, Grover Washington Jr., Jeff Beck, Carlos Santana, Pharoah Sanders, The Roots, Vernon Reid, G. Calvin Weston, Marc Ribot, Derek Bailey, Peter Murphy and Anthony Davis, while still continuing to tour, produce and record worldwide. Since 2015, Tacuma has presented his annual Outsiders Improvised & Creative Music Festival in Philadelphia with a mission to showcase diverse styles of risk-taking, progressive music and groundbreaking artists. After a short hiatus of in person events due to the pandemic, the 2022 festival took place on four nights with the first two shows taking place at South. The first night on 11/11 was titled Coltrane Configurations with Tacuma, Odean Pope (ts), Marlon Mosez Merritt (g), Nazir Ebo (d), June Lopez (elec), and then 11/12 with the Tacuma Quartet - Tacuma, James Carter (sax), Calvin Weston (d), Jake Morelli (el g). The 11/19 festival event at the Painted Bride Art Center's new West Philly home, the Outsiders Improvised & Creative Music Festival Explores the Metaverse, was hosted by record company/media company Ropadope. Starting with a film screening of Battle of Images: a tribute To Paul Robeson featuring Tacuma, the Ebony Strings Quartet, Marshall Allen, and Nazir Ebo, a live performance followed with Strings & Things - Tacuma, Mary Halvorson (g) and Tomas Fujiwara (d). The live performance and film screening were broadcast into virtual reality as avatars for viewers around the world watched via The Ropeadope Lounge to create a unique presentation joining the realm of live music with the VR world. The avatar world may be a bit unsettling for some but the trio was a surefire winner with novel music. Halvorson consistently conjured up her distinctive sound, and it was fascinating to watch her rub up against Tacuma, who is arguably the funkier (and hippest dressed) man in Jazz. Halvorson wasn't shy in doing her thing and giving Tacuma a path to follow or diverge from, and the segments where she approximated his funky basslines were pure gold while shining a light on her musicianship. The freely improvised set drilled down into a few head-bobbing, pure funk sections – to the delight of a grinning Tacuma- but they were short-lived – quickly returning to new musical areas. Fujiwara was a revelation, responding to and supporting the varied sounds – not an easy assignment. Tacuma has recorded with Halvorson but this was his first encounter with Fujiwara. Late set, local tenor sax terror, Terry Lawson, best known for his involvement in The Forerunners, The Odean Pope Saxophone Choir, and the Sun Ra Arkestra, was brought up to complete a quartet, altering the direction of the band with his demonstrative blowing. Tacuma concluded the festival at the venue it first started at in 2015 - the Community Education Center. The 12/2 program, Power to The Poet, was conceived as a tribute to poet and activist Jayne Cortez – who was married to Ornette Coleman and in whose Firespitters' band Tacuma had membership in. Tacuma further explained his connec-

Outsiders Improvised & Creative Music Festival

tion to poets being that he's played behind many of them and that attention to detail is required because, "It's all about the poem." He also produced the first album by the Last Poets. Four talented poets took the stage separately, championing pure variations on themes of struggle and opening up to LOVE. Each artist made their case that words were their sustenance, their oxygen, as if without them, they couldn't breathe, wouldn't survive. The words poured out like lullabies at times but with strong messages and wisdom serving to raise listeners' spiritual levels. Jamaaladeen Tacuma's Band of Resistance (Tacuma, drummer Daryl Burgee, keyboardist Kayla Childs and guitarist PM Eaton) backed the first two poets - Pheralyn Dove, who attested that "words can heal, words can give you grace," and spoke of "back in the day," of hearing Coltrane for the first time, and about "when your mom served Kool-Aid, before we ever realized the time we were in, before we ever realized the world would stretch out before us...back when we knew it all, we had all the answers," and then came riveting word-smith Patrick Rosal, a Rutgers University-Camden professor, who took the stage and declared Jayne Cortez and Ornette Coleman to be big influences in his life. His "Ode to the Machete" was done in tribute to his late friend - Puerto Rican poet Willie Perdomo. The machete has held purpose as a tool for the yard as well as for revolution in the Caribbean and in Rosal's Philippines - a commonality that Rosal noted bound the two friends together. Rosal's rap-style delivery infused danger into his piece on an illicit union of wartime opposing forces, "enemies" merging / "falling in love" (the most powerful peace-pipe) in the Philippines, expressed through story, frenetic arms, legs, head pumping us along into a fine poetic pulp, sharing the beautiful story in verse of how the result of a forbidden love affair generations ago in the Philippines, how that creative spark led to his very existence. Visionary the Poet followed, a young law student called on to fill the spot that Raphael Xavier was to have held, until he caught ill. She performed solo with her own powerful "simp" affirmations, touching on giving one's self totally to another and wanting "to love past the poison ivy of my upbringing." She also delivered a piece inspired by the killing of Philadelphian rapper PnB Rock and the rise of gun violence in this country. After touchingly filtering throughout the audience, offering red roses as a gesture of gratitude, connection, beauty and giving back, she engaged the audience in a group affirmation session by asking all to recite "I refuse the urge to recycle my traumas because I know I am worthy of a new narrative..." After a short segment featuring veteran funky electric bassist Mama Marcy, who had a very fun face-off with Tacuma (a man never to be out-funked), the event's headliner made her appearance - Philly's beloved native spoken word legend - Ursula Rucker - who made her name with years of powerful and emotionally charged presentations on top of well-crafted pieces that speak of truth and positive declarations. History has it that Tacuma was the first one to take her to Europe when she was barely out of her teens- after convincing her mother that he would look after her - and she quickly found her fame as a result of that exposure. Rucker took the stage under a cloud of despair - her mother died in April and she's been in deep mourning ever since. Her attire was an eye-striking mix and match array - "If you're going to come to a Jamaaladeen show to perform, you raid your closet!," she explained. Commencing with Jayne Cortez's "Find Your Own Voice," Rucker ended the set with her well circu-

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lated “L.O.V.E.” piece which is typically done as a mystical ode to a special love but on this night a tearful rendition was what she was able to offer in tribute to her lost mother. Driven by her never severed Mama - Baby Love Cord / heart-chord in Rucker's (only speak of) LOVE, spoken at this event through tears that pierced listeners' hearts, releasing collective and individual wounds while basking in the energy augmented by Tim Motzer's guitar accompaniment. Rucker gazed heavenward while releasing what were originally composed as sweet lyrics but now were delivered with the force of a sledgehammer, revealing a soul struck down, hitting the hearts of those in attendance and leaving a mark...

SHORT TAKES

PHILADELPHIA, PA:

The Godfather of Neo-Soul/Jazz and R&B legend Roy Ayers at City Winery on 11/22 was sold out with an audience dressed to the nines and excited to see one of their favorites in the flesh. Sadly, Ayers at 82, at least this night, was frail and played very sparingly. The band had plenty of great tunes to cover – beginning with “Red, Black & Green,” “Searching,” and “Everybody Loves The Sunshine.” Ayers was animated at times – such as on “Don't Stop The Feeling”- and played to the audience. It was nice at the end when a beaming Ayers received a standing ovation from the house...Danish saxophonist Lotte Anker and American drummer Chris Corsano at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 12/8 marked the first time Anker had played before a live audience in the States since the pandemic. It wasn't her first time back in the country, she was flown to New York last year as part of a three-day Ivo Perelman large project recording session. Anker brought two of her three axes with her for six planned gigs on this current American tour – soprano and alto saxes - and demonstrated remarkable command of both of them with exceptional tonguing technique to form a full complement of sounds from overblowing to growls, done with an acidic tone. At times it sounded as if she was releasing a flock of birds from her alto. She also pleasingly used that horn after taking a sip of water, which she kept in her mouth, to irritate the reed and produce gurgling, bubbling sounds. Corsano, ever inventive on his small kit, used a full arsenal of small items on his set to format his own unusual sounds. Together, the two struck a balance while exploring their chosen instruments in uncommon ways. Post-set, Anker said, “I love to play with Chris. He's so inventive, I don't want to just play pitches, I want to play more expansively.”

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1/19 Jamaaladeen Tacuma Mary Halvorson Tomas Fujiwara



12/8 Lotte Anker Chris Corsano

Short Takes - Philadelphia



9/23 Heart Trio - William Parker - Cooper-Moore - Hamid Drake



9/21 Ambrose Akinmusire

Short Takes - Philadelphia

The big news in town is that Ars Nova Workshop and Fire Museum Presents, the city's two most active presenters of improvised music, both took major steps to secure their futures. It took over two decades but Ars Nova Workshop has settled into a permanent home at Solar Myth, the former Rock club Boat & Saddle on South Broad Street. In response to having to track down and use venues all over the city for the past 20 years, founder Mark Christman was quoted in the local paper as saying lightheartedly that he had pursued, "The business of presenting unpopular music" in nomadic fashion. Now things have changed. The organization is in control of the performance space of the all-day café and Jazz bar.

The plan is not to schedule music every night of the week – it will be three nights at the most along with one-of-a-kind residencies and collaborations in the tin-ceilinged back room with an avant-Jazz and experimental focus. Jazz albums and books are available for sale as a bonus, although proceeds of those do not go to the organization unless they are their own releases. Fire Museum Presents has always operated on a much smaller budget than Ars Nova, and that budget at times has too often come out of the pocket of founder Steven Tobin. After 21 years, Tobin determined that Fire Museum had to transition into a nonprofit organization in order to survive. Thankfully, after setting a humble goal to raise \$5,000, that amount was rapidly far exceeded and the future was set for Fire Museum to continue presenting a mixed bag of experimental and World music at sites across the city...Chris' Jazz Café proudly celebrated its 33rd anniversary with hometown ace guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel's all-star quartet with Aaron Parks (kybd, p), Eric Revis (b) and Gregory Hutchinson (d) on 9/16-17. The first night's second set began with Parks on Rhoads for "Undercover" but he stuck primarily to piano after that. The set's highlights came with the soaring "Solé," which included a winding piano intro, followed by Rosenwinkel's classic tune "Star of Jupiter" that allowed the leader to flash on guitar. His fingers blurred up and down the fretboard while his head tilted down and then backwards, his eyes tightly closed and twitching, and his lips twisted into a pleased smirk. The band let loose, led by Hutchinson's machine gun drumming attack at points. At tune's end, Hutchinson blurted out, "That's what I like – badass!" FYI- for those of you planning to talk during a Gregory Hutchinson performance – you're in for a rude awakening. Watch out – he will call you out! Also of note- Rosenwinkel played with no hat on for the first time ever that I've seen. The club looked fabulous with wonderful new stage lighting and safely distanced table groupings while continuing to professionally stream most performances around the globe. Here's hoping Chris' runs another 33 years...Ambrose Akinmusire's quartet (Sam Harris, p; Russell Hall, b; Tim Angulo, d) at the City Winery on 9/21 took the audience on a journey that traveled from sublime intimacy to atmospheric soundscapes to a late boisterous section. Akinmusire presented a unique set that often utilized droning bass and skittering drums setting a dreamlike backdrop to episodic bright trumpet passages and thorny piano. Content to sit out long portions of the set, the leader hung in the back of the stage and let his well-disciplined band create on their own. About two thirds into the night, the attitude changed and Akinmusire played through "A Moment in Between a Rest," demonstrating his mastery of the trumpet by lightly blowing and controlling sound. He concluded the performance with "Roy," which he

Short Takes - Philadelphia

explained was, "One of my mentors [Roy Hargrove]. This is just a thank you to him." After a pause and a deep breath/sigh, he played mournful and spacey lines alone before the band joined him one-by-one for a very short piece. During the set, Akinmusire had invited audience member Anthony Tidd to join him on stage to no avail. A smiling Tidd told him post-set, "You know, I was never getting up on that stage like that!" Akinmusire said he was 19 the last time the two had played together ... William Parker (b) can be excused for announcing he was in Chicago on 9/23, as a busy touring musician, one town, one venue, can start to look like the last. Furthermore, it had been a rough day – his Heart Trio [Cooper-Moore, assorted homemade instruments; Hamid Drake, d, frame d] played the Painted Bride (Ars Nova Workshop) but he didn't realize the Bride finally sold their old building in Old City after much legal battle and moved to a temporary West Philly storefront space [in a historic Black and Jazz neighborhood]. The band went to the old location then to the new spot and then back to the old location thinking they had been mistaken. Needless to say, the trio was a bit gassed by time they got it right - delaying the Nate Chinen (who has moved to Philadelphia from Beacon, New York) interview of Parker. Chinen, at the urging of Cooper-Moore began with, "What is your issue with Jazz writers?" Parker answered with, "You know the phrase innocent until proven guilty?...Every writer is innocent until they write something." When asked why his trio is now called the Heart Trio, Parker said it was the name picked for him when they played the latest Vision Festival and that it was appropriate in that their music is not pre-thought – "It's all coming from the heart." Once the band hit, the music spoke for itself. Parker and Drake are widely considered to be the tightest bass-drum combo in Jazz and that title expands in this band with Parker playing his numerous World instruments including gralla, donso ngoni, and bamboo flute, along with his bass (for a short segment). Cooper-Moore, always the entertainer, played a wild patch of piano along with his ample array of homemade instruments including the ever popular diddly-bow and lovely horizontal hoe-handle harp. Each musician came from a very spiritual place and the music often reflected elegance and mysticism. Near set's end, they rendered a minimalistic piece that was highlighted by Hamid's frame drumming and recitation of a Tibetan Buddhism prayer learned from his many years of studying the religion...Los Angeles based Italian percussion/gong master Andrea Centazzo returned to town on 10/5 (co-presented by Fire Museum Presents and Clavius Productions) at The Rotunda as the first leg of a short (rare) tour that was to include Brooklyn and Chicago. Centazzo is no longer traveling with 300 lbs of equipment – he's down to 40 lbs. at this time. His setup included a MalletKAT, frame drums, an array of tambourines and a wall of no longer manufactured chromatic octave Paiste gongs. He presented his "Cycles of Life" project, a solo multimedia concert bringing to light several aspects of his 50 years of musical research. As he has been doing since the '80s, the performance blended his percussion with electronics, computer sequencing, digital sampling and original videos, "Giving to the listener the emotion of a new sonic adventure in Jazz, World and Contemporary avant-garde music." The program is a remake of some of his most significant works from the last few years. Opening with a segment from his Tides of Gravity, a project produced in association with NASA, and then moving through Mandala, a piece that shows his love for Indonesian

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music and video he shot at Java's largest temple, followed by Ancient Rain, based on Buddhist philosophy and Balinese patterns, and then a segment celebrating the life of Leonardo Da Vinci, and concluding with a musical cautionary tale expounding how we are ruining this precious world we live in. After completing the solo performance, he demonstratively dropped his mallets in a drop the mic moment and announced the night was over - "Does anyone have an oxygen mask? End of show!" He was to have also played with the trio that opened for him - Noa Even (bari s), Matt Engle (b) and Scott Verrastro (perc). The trio had their first performance this night and played a long droning improvisation that featured Even mining high register bari - bird call like at times - while Verrastro percussed away on beads, tiny bells, bowed brass and drums, before concluding with a short, more aggressive number...Noted Dutch performance artist/ vocal magician Jaap Blonk finely made his way to Philadelphia on 10/7 as the first stop in a 4-week US tour, his first return to the States in over 9 years. He was to appear in March of 2020 but his performance was one of the first to be canceled by Fire Museum Presents due to the pandemic. Steven Tobin of Fire Museum Presents was especially pleased to bring in Blonk to 2223 Fish as Tobin had been storing boxes of Blonk's merch that were sent to him over two years ago ahead of the canceled 2020 performance. It was worth the wait. Blonk is a charismatic performer - oddly very quiet off stage but dynamic once he starts his performance. Strikingly tall, thin and with long blond hair, he is a master at changing his voice, face and body gestures to impose his will on language and sound. He covered a number of his pieces including some historical poems, as well as fun pieces such as one that found him stumbling in front of the audience, jerking his body and making bizarre sounds. Upon its completion he said, "As you may know, this was called the 'Ambulance Drinking Song!'" He did a piece of his invented language - a language parallel to Dutch. He explained it as - "Only a few people in the world can understand Dutch so I have made up my own language that sounds of the Dutch language but it has no meaning so you are missing nothing!" Blonk also covered his famed rendition of Kurt Schwitters' phonetic poem "Ursonate," a piece he's been performing since 1982. Unable to get permission from Schwitters' family to perform it, he dodges copyright laws by only doing half of the poem and then saying the same portion backwards, so in effect, taking it all back to keep things legal. Of course, this is a stunning feat of intellectual prowess to observe and hear. Blonk later appeared with a local trio of top musicians - Veronica Jurkiewicz (vln), Salina Kuo (perc) and Julius Masri (perc) - for a largely electronics'-based session. Kyle Press opened the night with an impressive dive into multiphonics and overtone soundscapes using amplified alto sax and vocalizations...Ars Nova Workshop's first show at its new home -Solar Myth - was 22-year-old tenor saxophonist Zoh Amba and her trio with bassist Luke Stewart and drummer Ryan Sawyer on 10/25. Originally from Tennessee, mentored by pianist Michael Jeffrey Stevens in North Carolina, and based for the past few years amongst New York City's creative music community where she mentored with David Murray and others. The petite, pixie haired Amba is a force to be reckoned with. Comparisons to Albert Ayler are difficult to avoid as Amba blows fierce and ecstatic with lengthy questing's out of an instrument that appears oversized in her hands. Her first piece started

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deceptively introspectively until suddenly the gates of Hell opened and her unrelenting, thrashing approach to tenor warfare began along with muscular support from her rhythm section. Late in the tune, she sat down on the stage with her back angled towards the audience to strike colors from her black electric guitar. The second offering was surprisingly mellow, mournful and smoldering, showing a different side of her musicianship, later followed by more caustic tenor work. She doesn't resonate with her music being termed as based off of spirituals – she is quick to point out that it all emanates from her heart and that she has worked on her music. “I don't look at it as Free improvisation, even the stuff that's Free is not Free. I've worked on concepts, and the music morphs. Every melody means a lot to me.” Yes, indeed, and it's palpable, it's deeply human, it's coming from a broken past. Amba was set to go on tour with English singer/songwriter Beth Orton and then relocate to California... Every opportunity to hear Dave Burrell is time well spent. Although Philly-based, the 82-year-old pianist, who credits drummer Sunny Murray for his hearing loss, doesn't play often enough on his home front. Fire Museum Presents drew up a piano double header with Burrell and German veteran pianist Simone Weissenfels on 10/27 at the comfortable Philadelphia Argentine Tango School in Fishtown. Weissenfels, who has been active in Experimental, Jazz, and Classical music circles since the '80s, led off with a set rich in knotty notes, and intrigue. Playing with eyes closed, her storytelling music included stormy patches but for the most part, it was slow to mid-tempo pieces. She stood for one section, playing the inside of the instrument with a mallet and beads. Burrell followed with a set dominated by standards, shockingly, never quite getting to the hyperactive and deadly striking hands to keys that we've come to expect and savor. Instead, he took listeners on a journey that traveled from sublime intimacy to jaunty swing moments. It turns out he had just returned from a European tour with significant time spent in Italy where his acclaimed 1979 Jazz-Opera *Windward Passages*, Burrell's first collaboration with his wife, Swedish writer and librettist Monika Larsson, was performed by Burrell, Larsson and an Italian Jazz orchestra. He said, “Just getting back from Italy loosened me up. The Italian gig was looming large for a long time with the opera coming up and I had all this pent-up anxiety that didn't need to be. I was worried about if the musicians could do the project and [how it would be perceived]. But that didn't need to be – it went really well.” While in Italy, someone mentioned to him that nobody played standards anymore and that struck a chord, so he's been digging deep into the Great American Songbook ever since. “I feel indebted to Irving Berlin,” he said. At the Tango School, he began with a couple tunes attributed to his wife – the airy, melodic “For How Little We Know,” and the more choppy “Just Me and the Moon.” He did his “Melancholy Rag” that's based on “My Melancholy Baby,” followed by other chestnuts including “Come Rain or Come Shine,” which morphed into an ending Samba run, as well as “They Say that Falling in Love is Wonderful” and “Autumn Leaves,” highlighted by a late forceful twinkling of the high notes representing falling leaves, and then some cacophony to simulate the arrival of winter...

Photos and text by Ken Weiss

Concert Review

Charles Lloyd Ocean Trio at Seattle Town Hall - Earshot Jazz Festival

by Frank Kohl

Historically spanning over seventy years of musicianship Charles Lloyd has pretty much attained legendary status when it comes to the evolution of Jazz. With his wide range of experience like playing with everyone from Ornette Coleman to The Beach Boys to studying with composer Bela Bartok, he has lived an impressive life. As a leader I lost track of his own recordings after fifty. So here's a man who most clearly has a lot to say and his wisdom, passion and clarity of mind are the tools he uses to tell his story. Seeing him perform makes me realize once again that the person and the life that person has lived is what brings depth to the notes they play. Charles Lloyd is without a doubt a person that draws from that well. His notes are long, deep and mystical, not rushed, nothing to prove. He plays in the moment as he absorbs his surroundings, speaking with his bandmates and to his audience as he brings us to a place of peace and reflection.

I'm excited to be at Seattle's Town Hall-Great Hall for The Earshot Jazz Festival. Charles Lloyd will be performing with his Ocean Trio, the third part of his Trio Of Trios project. This installment features guitarist Anthony Wilson and bassist Harish Raghavan (replacing pianist Gerald Clayton). The Trio Of Trios is a series of three CD's featuring three different Trio's. The first CD was with guitarist Bill Frisell and bassist Thomas Morgan and the second featured guitarist Julian Lage and percussionist Zakir Hussain. Seattle's Town Hall venue is quite an experience in itself with a seating capacity of eight hundred and fifty seven, outstanding acoustics and an almost spiritual presence. The Earshot Jazz Festival audience is respectful and attentive to every note and to the significance of who Charles Lloyd is. Mr. Lloyd and his trio have come to the right place. We open with a free and spacious original featuring Charles on tenor saxophone. I'm immediately struck by how much the players listen to one another. Shaping and coloring the sound, waiting to feel the pulse of each other's phrasing. Charles gives memorable performances on tenor, flute and alto flute as we travel through nine mostly original pieces. The one standard I did recognize was the Ellington ballad "Come Sunday" done at a slothful pace in all its melancholy splendor.

Anthony Wilson is a guitarist that I'm becoming more and more familiar with, enjoying his work with Diana Krall, he is surely one to watch. The tone from his archtop and his inventiveness to make things happen allows the trio to travel to destinations unknown. Wilson can really deliver as a solo guitarist too, playing some amazing intros and unaccompanied improv that demonstrates his broad and spontaneous facilities. Bassist Harish Raghavan gives a stellar performance as his intuitive senses are fully realized. His solos are open and free allowing lots of space for his phrases to impact the trios interplay.

Overall I felt an opulent sense of privilege to be in the presence of Charles Lloyd, a musician who has traveled so far. The message his music conveyed to me was a message of peace and a demonstration that the life of a musician is worth the struggle and will someday bring one to a place of calm. There are not many of his generation left and to witness his vibrancy and keen sense of all that is musical is something I will never forget.

Dave Weckl Tom Kennedy Project at Jazz Alley

by Frank Kohl

I'm here at Seattle's Jazz Alley, the club is sold out and I'm feeling a great sense of anticipation. I've always loved Dave Weckl and Tom Kennedy as I've seen them many times with guitarist Mike Stern. As for saxophonist Eric Marienthal and electric keyboardist Stu Mindeman I know very little about them but I'm guessing that to be playing with this group they surely must be something special. Most of the music that will be played tonight is original material written by Tom Kennedy. He does mention that they're in the process of mixing what will be their new release and we will be hearing some of those tunes tonight.

The group opens with "Hurry Up" a Tom Kennedy original. Within seconds I'm transported to Jazz fusion heaven. The melody alone on this tune is worth noting with its long intricate motion and drama spaced out so nicely. This all leaves lots of room for drum fills and development of the group's rhythmic mantra. My curiosity about Eric Marienthal is realized as soon as he starts playing. His sharp and vibrant tone, technique and his nimble reactions to his surroundings is simply stunning. Stu Mindeman on keys is also quite impressive, anchoring the group in harmony, rhythmic energy and some exquisite solos. Throughout all ten pieces performed I'm really enjoying Tom's compositional skills. Each song has an extensive melody that travels so nicely through different sections of the tune as it allows lots of space for Dave to do his thing so beautifully. "Don't Forget Your Jacket" delivers some exceptional funk and insight into how closely connected Dave and Tom are. We get more of this high octane funk with "Bb's Blues" where Eric Marienthal delivers an incredible soprano sax solo followed by Stu Mindeman's powerful electric piano work. Tom is one with Dave as they solo together with soulful percussion. I especially enjoyed a piece of free improv with Dave and Tom. Dave describes how he and Tom grew up together in St. Louis and the way the two of them would practice as a duo when they were young. "Stories" from Tom's last cd offers more melody writing skills and outstanding solos by everyone. "Espiritu del Songo" another Tom Kennedy original that takes on the Samba in all its magnificences. Demonstrating again the compositional excellence and everyone's musicality in this powerful musical form. Dave Weckl delivers some blistering percussive energy and technique to this fine piece. The energy, writing and the musicianship all come together at this show and my brain is on fire with astonishment.

I first remember meeting Dave Weckl way back when I graduated Berklee and moved back to NY. A group of my friends from high school started a band called "Night Sprite".

They were very successful in the NY clubs. When their original drummer left they hired a young drummer from St. Louis and that was Dave Weckl. Back then Dave was a real showstopper and it's amazing to see the path he has traveled to become one of the worlds finest drummers. Tom Kennedy is on a similar path both with his playing and his skills as a writer.

Fusion has come a long way. From its beginnings (arguably) with Miles "Bitches Brew" to present day it is a large part of our Jazz landscape. The players are different, the level of musicianship is for you to decide but the one thing that's constant throughout is the drive to push the music to the next level.

Interview: John Overton Williams

JOHN OVERTON WILLIAMS (1905-1996) Of the T. Holder, Andy Kirk and Earl Hines Bands

By Bill Donaldson

In 1996, a newspaper published an article about John O. Williams after a reporter visited him in his room at Grant Hospital in Columbus, Ohio. I thought that Mr. Williams may have had more to say. And he did.

CADENCE: Did you grow up in Memphis?

WILLIAMS: Yes.

CADENCE: Did you learn to play the saxophone in Memphis?

WILLIAMS: No. I moved to Kansas City in eighth grade. It hurt my mother so. I played hooky from school, but there wasn't any way to play any music there. They didn't let any Blacks do anything there.

CADENCE: Was your mother upset that you moved?

WILLIAMS: She was upset that I failed eighth grade. I asked her, "Could I go to Kansas City" and stay with my favorite aunt, who was her sister? It was highly suggested that I go to Kansas City to get out of the environment I was in. It was because of a couple of boys; we just liked to play hooky. We didn't get into mischief. We'd just go down on Beale Street to the movies every day instead of being in class. So I failed. I wasn't in school enough to pass. There weren't any gangs or nothing. But we liked each other, these boys I hung around with. So I figured if I got away from them and moved, that would save me.

CADENCE: What was your aunt's name?

WILLIAMS: Everybody called her Babe. Aunt Babe.

CADENCE: What was her last name?

WILLIAMS: Marshall. Babe Marshall. [John and Mary Lou Williams rented a room in his aunt's house during the 1930's.]

CADENCE: What was your mother's name?

WILLIAMS: Her name was Polly and my father's was Tom.

CADENCE: Did you learn to play music in Memphis?

WILLIAMS: When I was around about eight years old, I started playing piano. I took about seven or eight or nine piano lessons. All the guys I was playing with, baseball and all, said I was a sissy. I quit, but I could read music. I had no idea that I'd ever be playing music until I got to Kansas City.

CADENCE: How did you get your first saxophone?

WILLIAMS: Ah, I was out on the street with—do you know the name of Ben Webster?

CADENCE: Yes. Did you know him then?

WILLIAMS: We were classmates. Yeah. He and Jack Washington were with Basie. We were all in the same class. Jack played baritone sax in Basie's band. In school, we were thinking about being professional musicians.

Interview: John Overton Williams

CADENCE: *What was the name of the school you attended?*

WILLIAMS: Sumner... Sumner High. Ben Webster and I were playing ball in the street, and I went in to use the bathroom in a friend's house after school was out, and his brother was practicing on a baritone saxophone.

CADENCE: *What was his name?*

WILLIAMS: James Thatcher. After I came out of the bathroom, I told him, "Jim, this seems hard," and he said, "No, this is easy!" He said, "Can you read music?" I said, "Yes." He said, "You place your finger here. You place your finger there, and so forth. This is B, this is A and C." It seemed real simple, and he helped me out. So I quit playing ball and went home and wrote a letter to my mother and I asked her, Would she get me a saxophone for Christmas? That was in the fall of 1921. So just before Christmas, she bought it. My saxophone arrived in Kansas City on January the second, 1922.

CADENCE: *So your mother bought it even though she was in Memphis?*

WILLIAMS: Yes. That's right. She had it shipped from Memphis to Kansas City.

CADENCE: *Did she ever come to visit you in Kansas City?*

WILLIAMS: Oh, yes. She had relatives there. She visited me in several places when I was playing after I was traveling.

CADENCE: *Did you like the school in Kansas City?*

WILLIAMS: I liked the school and all, but I found out I had a lot of talent. I was self-taught. I had to teach myself. Of course, I would ask Jack Washington—he was a good alto player—I'd ask him questions. Then I had a close friend who lived a block or so from me and I would ask questions. He was a professional. He liked me a lot, and I'd ask him and he would help me. So he saw I was getting along so well and he said, "You ought to be playing professionally." He said, "I'll tell you what I'll do." He had a job working in a ballroom three nights a week. He said, "Tomorrow night's my night to go to work. We're supposed to start at nine. Ten minutes to nine, you walk in." [Laughs] So I walked in on the job. And the guys never saw me before and I never saw them. They asked me, "Where's Godfrey?" That was his name. I said, "He's sick." They said, "Well, it's too late to get somebody else. Can you play that thing, boy?" I said, "I think so." It was too late for them to get anybody, and I was there. They started and were so satisfied with me that they had me as a regular in their band and put me in the union the next day. So that's how it happened.

CADENCE: *Who was the person who helped you play there?*

WILLIAMS: Godfrey. Godfrey Pleasant. Pleasant was his last name. That's how I got into the big time. Through him telling that lie and saying that he was sick and sending me in his place. And then after the pros heard me, well, I was hired into the union. That's how I got started.

CADENCE: *Was Ben Webster in that band?*

WILLIAMS: [Laughs] No. We were still in high school.

CADENCE: *Did you quit school in the twelfth grade?*

Interview: John Overton Williams

WILLIAMS: Yes.

CADENCE: Was that because you thought you could make more money playing music?

WILLIAMS: That was one reason. We won't go through all this about how it happened. You wouldn't be interested. [Laughs] You would need ten pages. But I did find out that the principal was only making \$200 a month. I had been offered that much, and I'd always wanted to travel anyway. So I begged my mother to let me quit school. She didn't want me to, but I finally won. That's how I began to really play professionally. Then I went back to Memphis for a while.

CADENCE: Were you in a band in Memphis?

WILLIAMS: No. I did gigs around there. But they didn't have no organized bands for Blacks in Memphis. There was no union or nothing like that.

CADENCE: But Kansas City had a union.

WILLIAMS: Oh, yes. But not Memphis. Blacks are not in the union there today. I was there just two years ago. I was on a panel at the Peabody Hotel for the jazz collectors [International Association of Jazz Record Collectors]. They have a convention every year. That question [about the musicians' union] came up from one of the guys in the city. There's still no Blacks there [in the musicians' union]. See, a lot of the cities like St. Louis and Kansas City, they had two unions, you know: the Black union and a White union. In Memphis, it was just the White union. No Blacks at all. So that's one of the reasons I left there in '28 and joined T. Holder's band.

CADENCE: Didn't you travel before you joined T. Holder's band?

WILLIAMS: Oh, yeah. Yeah, I did a lot of traveling.

CADENCE: You were in the Syncho Jazzers?

WILLIAMS: Ah, yes. That's right. But before that, though, I was with a show—a traveling show—for a whole year in all of '25. 1925.

CADENCE: What kind of show was that?

WILLIAMS: Well, there was—you'd have comedians, dancing girls. A regular review like, you know. We had Black theaters all over the United States for those Black shows.

CADENCE: Were the theaters mostly in the cities?

WILLIAMS: Yes, in the larger cities that could afford to have enough people to talk to. They'd have to pay the band and the performers.

CADENCE: What was the name of the group you were in before the Syncho Jazzers?

WILLIAMS: It was called [Buzzin'] Harris's Hits 'n Bits—kind of a funny name. Somebody had recommended me for the job with this show. They contacted me, and I met the show in Cincinnati, Ohio a week or two before Christmas in 1924. That's when I first met Mary. She was already with the show.

Then on to Cleveland, where I met John Williams, later to become my

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husband.... Acknowledged to be one of the finest baritone [saxophone] players, he was much in demand.¹

CADENCE: *Did Mary Lou come to Ohio to join Hits 'n Bits?*

WILLIAMS: No no, she was already in the show when they sent for me. I was in Memphis, like I told you, after I quit school, and some musicians had been traveling through there with a show or something. They needed a saxophone player with the show. He recommended me.

CADENCE: *Who was that?*

WILLIAMS: I have no idea. Well, I take that back. I can't think of who it was. It was a tenor saxophone player from St. Joe. His first name was Harry. I can't remember his last name.

CADENCE: *So you met Mary Lou when she was sixteen?*

WILLIAMS: No, I met her when she was fourteen.

CADENCE: *But you married her when she was sixteen?*

WILLIAMS: Yeah.

CADENCE: *How long had she been with Hits 'n Bits then, if she was only fourteen?*

WILLIAMS: Not too long. I couldn't tell you exactly. I would say some months anyway. That's just a guess. Of course, I wasn't even interested. I was very disgusted when I walked into the theater that night and [the boss] wanted to see what I could do and I saw a female piano player. I was ready to go back to Memphis. [Laughs] Because all the female piano players I played with didn't play much piano that I would like. I wanted Earl Hines stuff, you know. But when she sat down, she played Earl Hines stuff and everything note for note for note. I was just blown out of my head. I just couldn't believe what I was hearing. She was the best piano player I'd ever played with.

...When Mary Lou was only sixteen, she was already an amazingly precocious pianistic talent, as evidenced by recordings she made with her husband, John Williams's band. Her solo on "Midnight Stomp" [1927, Paramount, 1927] and "Now Cut Loose" [1927, Gennett]...are notable for both their advanced conceptions and virtuosic execution, second only to Hines and Johnson. Both solos...use broken "walking" tenths, right-hand octaves and tremolos (à la Hines), stomping shifted rhythmic accents, fleet hand-crossing over-hand cascade features, and other surprises...²

Hines's conception of the piano unified the striding left-hand of ragtime pianists and their successors (James P. Johnson, Luckey Roberts, etc.) with a new melodic-linear conception in the right hand. ³

CADENCE: *She played some Fats Waller music too, didn't she?*

WILLIAMS: ...Anybody she wanted to listen to. She didn't read music, though; this was at the age of fourteen. Jelly Roll Morton—every number he recorded—all of those she could play note for note. ...James P. Johnson...

CADENCE: *Did she learn how to play piano from her mother [Virginia Burley]?*

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WILLIAMS: You really learn to play all that by yourself by ear. So it's up to the individual.

My mother married a man named Fletcher Burley.... Fletcher taught me the first blues I ever knew by singing them over to me.... [My step father]... was a professional gambler, and sometimes he took me with him—to bring him luck, he said.... I used to play a few things on the piano. Often I received as much as twenty dollars in tips.... I was kind of smuggled in....Of all the musicians I met in my childhood, one who stands out: Jack Howard. 4

CADENCE: *She played in the church before that, didn't she?*

It was at that home on Hamilton Avenue that Mary Lou learned to play the piano. Her mother played organ at her church, and one day set Williams in her lap and allowed her to fiddle with the keys. Her mother found out very soon that Mary Lou was a natural talent. 5

WILLIAMS: One of the churches gave lessons. Her mother said [that taking lessons] would take her talent away, but her mother was thinking wrong. So I taught her to read music when we were together at night with the show [Hits 'n Bits] in 1925.

"In fact, she never took any formal piano lessons," said Helen Floyd, Williams's niece. 6

She never took a formal music lesson in her life. 7

CADENCE: *Did she read music before that?*

WILLIAMS: No. With those shows, you really didn't have to read a lot of music to be professional. We were in a different town each week. We played show music, you know, for dancers that came on and for singers and all. And you do the same thing over and over. [We didn't] need music.

CADENCE: *She must have learned quickly.*

WILLIAMS: A genius! She not only arranged. When she died, you know, she was a professor teaching jazz [laughs] at Duke University. She played a concert at Carnegie Hall and all.

"Ha, ha, ha—look at me! A high school dropout. Now I'm a college professor," [Mary Lou] wrote gleefully to John Williams.8

The Hines tradition, in the person of Mary Lou Williams, and the avant-garde, in the person of Cecil Taylor, collided in Carnegie Hall tonight. [April 17, 1977]9

CADENCE: *She arranged for Andy Kirk, though, didn't she?*

WILLIAMS: Yeah, she did some for Andy. That's how she learned to write: The guys in the band taught her how to write. I taught her how to read. The guy that was leader of [Hits 'n Bits] wasn't satisfied where the money was coming from. None of us got hardly any money at that time. So he had put in his word that he would quit.

CADENCE: *Who was he?*

WILLIAMS: A guy named Shirley Clay—a trumpet player out of Chicago. So one week after I was there, the boss made me boss of the band. So I was leading a band for the first time. I worked with them throughout 1925.

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CADENCE: *What kind of music did you play with Hits 'n Bits?*

WILLIAMS: We'd play a show...a review like vaudeville. It's hard to explain to people at a young age who haven't seen any of that stuff. There were a lot of chorus girls. And the next act might be dancers. The next act might be someone who does some kind of tumbling. That's just an example. There were lots of things people did at that time.

CADENCE: *Did you play through the whole show?*

WILLIAMS: Yeah, that was our job. That's what they paid us for. They had to have music. See, you had two tap dancers, you got a vocalist.

Mary Lou Williams: My stepfather fell sick, and it meant I had to support the family.... John Williams still had the band, which by now included trumpet player Doc Cheatham.¹⁰

CADENCE: *Were the theaters located only in the cities?*

WILLIAMS: Yeah. So right after I played Cincinnati one week, I played here Christmas week...in Columbus. I don't remember what the name of the place was. So anyway, we worked between layoffs and what-not. No work. I stayed with them for one year. Then we were stranded again in Kansas City, which was okay with me because I was home. Do you know about vaudeville? The Pantages circuit and all? Well, they were playing in a theater downtown with a Black cast. Back at that time, it was popular to try to have a five- or six-piece jazz band with dancers. So they had me come down and had me audition. They hired me right away. But they said, "We'll send for you next month in Chicago." I said, "Good." I didn't think they would hire me, but they did. They purchased uniforms and rehearsed a new act. And then we were booked for forty-two weeks on the Pantages circuit in 1926. But the main dancer [Seymour of the act called Seymour & Jeanette] died [of a heart attack at the age of twenty-seven].¹¹ So after this guy died, [Jeanette] tried to carry on, but it didn't work. So we were stranded in New York. While we were there playing with Mamie Smith and her husband, Burt Goldberg, they decided to try to put out a nice show around her. They've given credit to Bessie, but Mamie Smith was the first woman to hit on blues on Race Records, and the record was called "A Crazy Blues" [1920, OK/Phenola 4169]. She was a big gal. That was in 1920.

Actually, Bessie Smith was far from the first to record vocal blues. That distinction belongs to Mamie Smith (no relation). ...Mamie recorded "Crazy Blues" ... in November, 1920, and to everyone's surprise the record was a great success.... Within months the jazz craze, initiated by the ODJB, was replaced by the blues craze. ¹²

In 1927, after we were stranded in New York, Mary Lou went home to Pittsburgh. I sent her home. After the show broke up, I went to Pittsburgh and stayed. We were there about three weeks. And I decided I wanted to go back home to see my parents. So we both left Pittsburgh and went to Memphis. That was around Christmastime just before '28, so you could say 1927. That was our first Christmas with my parents. So I decided to get a band together

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there, which I did. I played on the plantations in Mississippi, like in *Roots* and all. That was after I became professional. I would play with anybody that wanted to pay me.

CADENCE: *What did you see on the plantations?*

WILLIAMS: That was really strictly for the.... I played twice—two summers. The master of the plantation, he came up—he picked me—to play for all the Blacks on the plantation. He was sent to Memphis to hire some music to entertain for a day. And that’s when I was just.... I couldn’t believe what I was seeing. Barefoot people out there. See, I was born right in the city in a place like this. But they were enjoying themselves.

CADENCE: *How many musicians went with you?*

WILLIAMS: Most of the time it would be about seven. See, they would hire—I never knew how many. It would depend on the leader in Memphis. He’d call us and say, “I want a band.” And we’d say, “How many pieces do you want?” So most of the time it was seven or eight pieces—which was not all the time. They would pick different guys that they liked. That’s why we had to take music lessons...to get out of there.

CADENCE: *Did you play in the open or under a tent?*

WILLIAMS: [Laughs] Out in the open, man! No tent. I was just lucky that I played on beautiful days. Out in the fields. They would have the chicken and the fish fried and lemonade. Poker game in this corner, dice game over in that corner. And they would play baseball out on a baseball field...on a corn field. And they were barefooted. I’d flinch every time they would step on something.

CADENCE: Did you ever have any trouble getting paid?

WILLIAMS: No. The only trouble I ever had getting paid was when T. [Terrence] Holder ran off with our money.

CADENCE: *Did anyone from Hits ‘n Bits go on to the T. Holder band?*

George Morrison: “I have trained a lot of outstanding musicians [in Denver] such as Andrew Kirk, who worked with me for many years until I encouraged him to go south and take over the T. Holder band. Another musician I trained was Jimmie Lunceford.... I encouraged him to go on to Tuskegee Institute to finish his musical education.”¹³

WILLIAMS: Oh, no. No no. Frankly, no one went on to T. Holder but me. See, I had an eight-piece band in 1928 in Memphis for eight months. I told you how I left [Memphis] because there were no jobs for Blacks. You couldn’t get a union job; there wasn’t any union [for Blacks]. So when T. Holder out of Texas wanted to go on a tour, he needed an alto saxophone player. He called me up and sent me a wire. We finally got to terms on a price.

Mary Lou Williams: “One thing I have to say for John: He knew how to talk up salaries. Memphis musicians were getting a dollar and a half or two dollars a night when we went there.... By the time we left, they were making five and seven bucks, and I was making ten.”¹⁴

John Williams: “Another band, led by Alphonse Trent, came through town, and his men recommended me for Fats Walls’s job—he was lead alto—after Walls

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had handed in his resignation to Holder. Then I bargained up my pay to \$60 a week. I said to friends, 'That's more than me and Mary are making here in Memphis....' Andy Kirk...was the tuba player and he was earning \$55; the rest of the guys, \$40."¹⁵

So I left Memphis. Of course, me and my wife—I took her with me. We were married in 1926. She didn't have nothing to do with the band at that time.

CADENCE: *Why did T. Holder take the band's money? Did he have family problems?*

WILLIAMS: Yeah.

CADENCE: *A divorce?*

WILLIAMS: He didn't want the divorce. He was crazy about his wife. She left him. He went to Dallas, Texas, to try to get her back. He took all our money with him! At Christmas!

CADENCE: *Was that in 1928?*

WILLIAMS: Yeah. So when he came back, some of the guys in the band said he pulled that stuff before. So they got together and voted him out. They took the band away from T. Holder. And the band voted and made Andy the leader. So that's how [the band] got to be Andy Kirk's. It was given to him.

Holder was one of the popular early trumpet stars of the Southwest, but, apparently because of domestic troubles, abandoned the orchestra in 1928.¹⁶

CADENCE: *Was he a good leader?*

WILLIAMS: He was a wonderful person, but that really wasn't his calling. We [the previous T. Holder band members] were in the band, but he had the name. See, Andy was a tuba player.

CADENCE: *He played bass saxophone too, didn't he?*

WILLIAMS: Yeah. But never in the band. He didn't play tuba in the whole eleven years that I was with him.

...In early 1936 Kirk had ceded his tuba position to the fine bass player Booker Collins, and after having Ben Webster and Buddy Tate successively in the tenor sax chair, Kirk acquired another major soloist, Dick Wilson. Another addition (in 1931) was the gifted drummer Ben Thigpen.¹⁷

So we got to decide in 1933. I took over as leader of the band. I called every song we played every night. I made up all the programs for the radio broadcasts.

CADENCE: *Didn't the first *Twelve Clouds of Joy* record have your name on it instead of Andy Kirk's?*

WILLIAMS: Yeah, that's the one I did in 1927. The first records I did were made before I even knew Andy. They were made in 1927, back with this act where the man died [Seymour]. The first records we made with the big band were in 1929 in Kansas City.

The Kirk orchestra's recording history began in [November] 1929 with two sides cut in Kansas City on the Vocalion label (under the name of John Williams and His Memphis Stompers)."¹⁸

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CADENCE: *What was it like in Kansas City in the 1930's?*

WILLIAMS: Just a wild town. It was open twenty-four hours a day everywhere.

CADENCE: *Did you play all night?*

WILLIAMS: No. The union wouldn't let you. If you had a contract and worked in a nightclub, you had to work from nine to four every night. But if you played in a ballroom—we did mostly ballroom work—well, that was just from nine to one. But in Kansas City, the union had it so that we only had to work three hours a night, from nine to twelve. What I meant by “crazy” was that every place was wide open. I mean, they didn't close either. The wholesale liquor stores were open twenty-four hours a day. You could walk in and buy a bottle of something and get some cups and drink it in there. [Laughs] Pendergast, he.... Do you know about Pendergast? He was running everything—prostitution, gambling—twenty-four hours a day. He's the one that flaunted it. That's why people finally said, “I'm from Kansas City” if they wanted jobs. But he's the one that opened it up. That's why all those great musicians like Buddy Tate, Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins came to Kansas City: because of all this work. We didn't have to look hard in Kansas City.

While some likened Pendergast's town to Sodom and Gomorrah, musicians knew that they had it made when they arrived at 18th and Vine, or checked into Local 627....¹⁹

CADENCE: *Did you travel by car?*

WILLIAMS: We traveled by car and train. There were a lot of trains back in that time. [Traveling by] trains was as cheap as a car almost. [When we traveled by car,] sometimes there was no place to eat. We'd drive three hundred miles to a job, and I might have \$300 in my pocket, and I'd end up ordering some baloney and crackers. A lot of the towns weren't big towns. After driving three hundred miles, I'd sleep in the car if I couldn't find a place to sleep. That's just the way Blacks were treated. Of course, the Blacks, you couldn't eat or sleep anywhere until the '60's. That's the way it was in the '20's and '30's. The big cities were altogether different. The big cities, they had Black hotels.

CADENCE: *Did you stay in homes when you traveled too?*

WILLIAMS: Mostly, I stayed in a lot of private homes. That's the way they had to take care of big bands. A Black doctor could take two [musicians]. And the undertaker, he could take two.

CADENCE: *Did you ever have serious problems?*

WILLIAMS: Not really. We had trouble in Kansas City once, but nobody in the band got hurt or nothing. In some of the bands, I do know some of the guys got hurt.

CADENCE: *While they were in Kansas City?*

WILLIAMS: I'm talking about the whole United States and the South. See, that's the trouble. People don't know what we went through. All this is new

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stuff to [younger generations], and that's why the races can't get together. They don't know what a struggle we had to survive.

CADENCE: *That's why I want to interview you—to let people know.*

WILLIAMS: I don't think people care. This has been going on a long time. I think it's getting worse. The only difference is now we got the law behind us. Then there was no law. Any kind of trouble in a small town—the kids and the sheriff—they were all in the same family. [Laughs] So you just didn't have a chance. But we were lucky. That's life; that's the way it was. No use crying over spilt milk. You live with it; if you can't, you die with it.

Mary Lou Williams: "On our way to the club [in Memphis] in the car, we passed an old Negro man on a bridge and someone yelled, 'There's a nigger, run over him, he's too old to live anyway!.... I waited until I was back home and let loose on the White driver, who told me then, 'The South always holds neck parties when your kind gets out of line.'"²⁰

But it's better than what it was, see, because it would have been impossible for me to be in the hospital here. Bessie Smith—she lost her life because they wouldn't take her to the hospital. She was in a wreck and they wouldn't take her there. The youngsters of today have no idea what the United States was like. You have to live with what's happening today, but it doesn't hurt to read books that describe what has happened to see how far the race has advanced. Who would have thought you would have had Blacks in the Senate and mayors and all of that? A person born fifteen or twenty years ago would think [the world] has always been like this, just like all the other things in life. You push a button, the light comes on. If you're born recently, you don't know I had to put out lamps every night. If Mama cooked three times a day, I had to build a fire three times a day. See, the people don't really really know what the difference is. We don't harp on it, I guess. Things are better. But if somebody wants to listen to it, I have to tell it like it is. What I went through! How long I was called names for no reason!

Mary Lou Williams: "Never in my life had I heard so many 'nigger, nigger, niggers.' No one had explained the conditions of the South to me."²¹

CADENCE: *I wondered about Mary Lou's last name: Burley.*

WILLIAMS: She had three last names.

[Mary Lou Williams was born Mary Elfrieda Scruggs. Successive surnames were Winn and Burley.]²²

She had three different stepfathers. I don't even remember them. But she was a Burley—B.U.R.L.E.Y.—when I met her.

CADENCE: *I've seen it spelled in other ways.*

[Schuller spells her name as "Burleigh".]²³

CADENCE: *Did she enjoy playing in the Kirk band?*

WILLIAMS: Ah, she loved it. She loved it!

CADENCE: *Did you arrange transportation for the band?*

WILLIAMS: No, I just took care of the music end of it. Headquarters in New

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York—the booking agent—handled where you go and how much Andy was going to get. We didn't know how much he got. We just knew how much we were going to get.

CADENCE: *Did you know Howard McGhee?*

WILLIAMS: Yeah, he played with Andy's band right after I left. We lived in the same hotel. All the great musicians knew each other. We all lived in Harlem. I mean, Cab Calloway, Duke Ellington, Fats Waller. So we saw each other every day and said Hi to each other.

CADENCE: *Did you ever see John Hammond?*

WILLIAMS: John Hammond was the one that changed Kansas City. He came out there and took Basie, Joe Turner, Pete Johnson, Hot Lips Page. He's the one that put Kansas City on the map.

Mary Lou Williams: "You see, what happened in Kansas City was that John Hammond came to town. He was knocked out by what was happening musically, because he'd never heard such a thing. And he began to get jobs for the musicians. He took all the good musicians out, and it hasn't been good since. It was very beneficial what he did, but it left no one there that anybody could copy or to continue what was happening, because everybody that was playing left."²⁴

CADENCE: *So you and Mary Lou stayed with Andy Kirk through the 1930's?*

WILLIAMS: Well, I left in '39. She stayed on another year or so.

[She left the bandstand and never returned to the Andy Kirk band after a disagreement with June Richmond in 1942, foreshadowing her abandonment of Paris and her temporary retirement in 1954.]²⁵

CADENCE: *Why did you leave?*

WILLIAMS: Well, I was [in bands] from nineteen years old. I was tired. Plus... plus...the big bands were breaking up. And Blacks just quit going to ballrooms. They were going into clubs and listening to combos. So that's how come guys like Tommy Dorsey and everybody.... See, we had hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of Black and White big bands across the United States. But the younger generation broke that up.

CADENCE: *So you ran a restaurant after that?*

WILLIAMS: Oh, I tried it for a while. With my luck, the help stole all the money. So I wasn't in it too long.

[Andy Kirk's biography states that Williams's restaurant was called the Kansas City Barbecue, located at 129th Street and Seventh Avenue in New York City. Red Norvo was reported as Williams's best customer.]²⁶

I was through with Kansas City by that time. We left there in 1936. That was it. We had been back there many times, but musically anything out of Kansas City was taboo. New York after 1936 was home.

CADENCE: *And then you were divorced in 1940.*

WILLIAMS: That's right.

CADENCE: *I read that the stress of traveling was the cause.*

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WILLIAMS: No. [Laughs] That's wrong. [Mary Lou] just told me, "If I see another guy I love better than you, I'll tell you." So she told me.

Mary Lou Williams: "I had told [John] that I didn't love him. In fact, I didn't love anyone for long."²⁷

The guy she fell in love with was my buddy, Ben Webster.

CADENCE: *But they didn't marry.*

WILLIAMS: No, they didn't marry. He had sense enough [not to]. I kept telling him, I said, "Ben, look, we've been running together since we were kids." So he said, "She loves me." I said, "Look around at what you're doing." He said, "She says she'll take care of that." So I laughed, and that was the end of that. See, Ben and I were always buddies. See, I mean, to Ben, it was like you and I talking about rehearsing and all. So that's why. She divorced me because of Ben Webster.

[Mary Lou] was in love with Ben.... When the Clouds of Joy went to New York in '37, [Mary Lou] stayed with [Webster] at the Dewey Square Hotel, according to saxophonist Harold Arnold. She also told John she wanted them to live apart for a year, and, after that, Webster would take care of the divorce.... John put his foot down: if she left, it had to be permanent. And [John] talked frankly with her about "the Brute's" unsavory reputation....²⁸

CADENCE: *Then she married Harold Baker.*

WILLIAMS: Uh huh. He beat her up and carried on, so she was with him for one year.

...Andy recalled to Peter O'Brien, "He saw Mary come running around a corner after a fight with Harold Baker. She'd hit him on the head with a Coke bottle and it was bleeding."²⁹

[Mary Lou] was over in Europe. They treated her so bad over there. I couldn't swear to it, but I bet you that she was stranded over there working two jobs a night. They had brought her back to the United States, and that's when she swore off of music. That's the reason. Because she had been treated so bad by the men. She asked me twice, "Would you come back to me?" When she made that proposition of "If I see anybody I love," she filed for separation. She said, "I'll do anything I want to do for one year. If I like it, I'll stay that way. If I don't, I'll come back to you." I said, "If you get out, that's it." So I kept my word on it. She found out that I was the best man that she ever knew. You don't know much at fourteen. I taught her everything she knew. [She was] a fourteen-year-old kid, and I was nineteen. I had a whole lot more experience. I was always her big brother. That's the kind of thing it was. I saw that she was taken care of and that nobody took advantage of her. So it was such a bad breakup, but it wasn't hard for us to break up. That's how we were still friends. John Williams: "I was like a big brother to her. She said, why didn't we get back together? I said no, 'It is over.' I was in love. I had a girlfriend, Kathleen Duncan, who would become my wife in 1951."³⁰

CADENCE: *Was she religious back then?*

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WILLIAMS: Not until she had all that trouble. Neither one of us was religious. I mean, we believed in God. We went to church and all that kind of stuff. Most of the time we'd sleep [in church] from working all night and everything. [Laughs] You'd get off of work from a nightclub at four o'clock in the morning, and mostly we'd all go to bed. Or we'd get a steak or something before that. A lot of people were getting ready to work [on weekdays]. Or you'd hang around and drink until eight or nine o'clock and go to bed. We were two crazy youngsters, and we'd bunk in [my aunt's] house. It didn't cost much. We didn't give her a lot of money, but things were so cheap there. You could get a five-room ranch house for \$2500 and own it. We kept putting off our house-buying. Automobiles.... One time, I had nine automobiles in eleven years. So... Young. Crazy.

CADENCE: *Is George Lee the person who convinced Andy Kirk to move to Kansas City?*

WILLIAMS: Yeah. Well, he didn't get him to do it. He told him someone would like to hear the band.

CADENCE: *That was at the Pla-Mor Ballroom?*

WILLIAMS: That's right.

George Lee, another important Kansas City band leader, happened to hear Kirk in Tulsa and recommended him for a long-term engagement at the Pla-Mor Ballroom in Kansas City.³¹

It was the finest White ballroom in Kansas City. I also saw St. Louis, so I know. It was the best in the whole state. See, you didn't play nothing but the big big big fine ballrooms. I got a tape there in my bag that was [recorded] live at the Trianon Ballroom in Cleveland in 1937. The Trianon was one of the finest ballrooms in Cleveland at that time. It was where your rich people—rich, White, everybody—well, not everybody because Blacks weren't allowed. We played for mostly White audiences, and the reason for that was the type of music we played. See, before "Until the Real Thing Comes Along" [Decca 642, 1936] we had fourteen sides to make, and we only had thirteen. So, we played a number we called "The Slave Song" [the song's original title using the lyrics of Harriet Calloway (who starred in Lew Leslie's 1929 production of *Blackbirds* ["With an all-star cast of 100 Colored Artists"]): lyrics by Dorothy Fields, music by Jimmy McHugh]. Everybody in Kansas City played "The Slave Song." So we told them, "That's how we'll settle that." He said, "I want you guys to get a new [title]." We could put "Until the Real Thing" on the number two side. So we recorded that, and that was the number that made the band. After that, they told us it looks like you'll have to play all ballads. We were the first Black band to put ballads on our records. After that, we did stuff like "Poor Butterfly." So we had to play music that the White audiences liked. Plus, we did all the hit numbers from the Broadway shows. So the college kids and all would listen to those bands. They knew what was happening. So that's why we played for Whites.

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CADENCE: *But Bennie Moten and Count Basie played in the Black clubs, didn't they?*

WILLIAMS: Oh, yes. Yes. George [Lee] played a lot of White [dances], but not too much in Kansas City. His band used to work in Nebraska and Iowa. He did a lot of work up there.

CADENCE: *Kansas City wasn't hurt very much by the Depression, was it?*

WILLIAMS: No. Pendergast bought it up. [Laughs]

CADENCE: *In the credits for the movie called Kansas City, you were listed as the composer of the song, "Froggy Bottom" [1929, Brunswick 4893].³² But I've seen Mary Lou also listed as the composer. Did you both write it?*

[Bob Blumenthal's text in the same liner notes states that the album's version is based on Mary Lou Williams's "score."]³³

WILLIAMS: No. It was Mary's idea [to write it]. Andy Kirk helped with the lyrics to it. They settled down between recordings. If we didn't have any songs, we would make up numbers. So that song was made up. It was while Mary Lou was learning to read and learning to write [music], and we gave her credit for [the song]. But I don't know why they put my name in [the liner notes]. Andy Kirk is the one who got the singers, but the drummer [Ben Thigpen] sang it. [Sings "Down to the bottom, to froggy bottom."] As I said, Mary Lou just made up the number. She was a lady, and we gave her credit for it. I didn't know [about the movie credit] until a friend of mine here in Columbus showed me a picture.

CADENCE: *Yes, the movie gave you credit for writing the song.*

WILLIAMS: Well, everybody makes a lot of mistakes. A lot of mistakes. I got so I quit reading a lot of interviews that Mary made. So many things are off the wall and never happened and never could have happened.

CADENCE: *Did Andy write "Bear Cat Shuffle" [1936, Decca 1046-B]?*

WILLIAMS: Andy didn't write nothing. Mary wrote that.

Mary Lou Williams: "You see, Andy used to sit down and take ideas of mine."³⁴

CADENCE: *Why did the band record "Christopher Columbus?" [1936, Decca 729-A]*

WILLIAMS: We bought that song for fifty cents in New York. See, you could buy arrangements back in that time for fifty cents. Everybody had ["Christopher Columbus"]. Do you know about Tin Pan Alley? When a new number came off a new show or something, everybody there would want you to play the number. So we went to a studio that week trying to look for some songs, and we wanted another number, and [Andy] said, "Let's play this one." So we rehearsed it and set up a time. I think Fletcher Henderson [played that song]. I know he used it for a theme song.

CADENCE: *Wasn't "Lotta Sax Appeal" [1929, Vocalion; 1936, Decca 1046-A] one of your songs?*

WILLIAMS: Now that one I did. I wrote that.

"Lotta Sax Appeal" was mainly a vehicle for Williams's baritone sax, played with a gruff and rather stiff, old-fashioned slap-tongue style.³⁵

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Mary Lou Williams: “John Williams blew a slap-tongue two beat on baritone [saxophone], when he wasn’t taking a solo, like a bass horn would slap. It eliminated the need for a tuba.”³⁶

CADENCE: *That was a hit for you, wasn’t it?*

WILLIAMS: There wasn’t nothing we did that was a hit. Not at that time. The only thing we did that was a hit was “Until the Real Thing Comes Along.” After that, we had several hits.

CADENCE: *Did you know Don Byas?*

WILLIAMS: Yep. [Knowing smile] He was a good tenor player, except when he was drinking. He turned out to be an alcoholic. He was one of Mary’s boyfriends. When he was working at the Cotton Club in New York, he jumped on her and beat her up. So Andy had to fire him.

Her lover, Don Byas, who wrote her tenderly lyrical love notes, was fired from the Clouds of Joy by Kirk after slapping her around publicly at a gig; possibly the last straw for Kirk who warned her to leave the men in the band “alone.”³⁷

CADENCE: *What about Dick Wilson?*

WILLIAMS: I enjoyed playing with Dick better than anybody. He and Lester Young. See, I used to know all these guys. Those were my two favorites. Mary Lou Williams became...one of [the Kirk orchestra’s] two stars; the other, in the late thirties, being the remarkable tenor saxophonist Dick Wilson.³⁸

CADENCE: *What did you do after the restaurant closed?*

WILLIAMS: I had decided to quit playing music. See, but after the restaurant failed, I went back to music. That’s when I joined Earl Hines. For six years I played baritone sax.

Dizzy Gillespie: “...That’s when I joined his band.... Next, they got Charlie Parker, but they didn’t need an alto player because they already had Scoops Carey, who played alto and clarinet, and Goon Gardner, who played also. Thomas Crump played tenor, like Lester Young, and Johnny Williams was on baritone. So Earl got Charlie a tenor to play.... People talk about the Hines band being ‘the incubator of bop....’ But people also have the erroneous impression that the music was new. It was not. The music evolved from what went before.”³⁹

CADENCE: *At the Grand Terrace?*

WILLIAMS: No no. No, the Grand Terrace, that was in his heyday. I played the Grand Terrace with Andy Kirk during the gangster days. [While I was in the Hines band, we] played all over the United States. Yeah, I played with Earl.

CADENCE: *Who else was in that band?*

WILLIAMS: In six years, we had about forty different people. Wardell Gray. Charlie Parker—Yardbird. Dizzy Gillespie. I got pictures of Dizzy Gillespie. Sarah Vaughan. I paid Sarah her first salary. I took care of the financing for Earl. So when new people came in the band, he turned them over to me to break them in and help them out. Just before that, right after the barbecue place broke up, I played with Cootie Williams. [In the Hines band I played with] Benny Green, Billy Eckstine. [Eckstine] had picked up the trombone just to be fooling around,

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but [he] never played it in the band. Singing was his [interest]. I worked with the Coleman Hawkins band for two weeks after he played “Body and Soul.” He got a band together. But it didn’t take, so it broke up. His home was in St. Joe, Missouri, but he moved to New York in the ‘20’s.

Cliff Smalls: “Wardell Gray came in on alto at first. Scoops Carey, the straw boss, didn’t like Wardell.... Scoops took the numbers at tempos almost twice as fast as we usually played, and Wardell....just ran through them.... ‘See what you got?’ John Williams cried. ‘I’ve been here all the time, and they’re playing them better than I am!’”⁴⁰

With openings scarce in New York and no prospects of further tours Hawkins had no option but to disband. Under a headline ARE NEGROE BANDS DOOMED AS MONEY MAKERS? the 1 December 1940 issue of Down Beat reported the band’s demise: “Coleman Hawkins’s recent tour with a large band was not successful. The day it returned to New York in November the band dissolved.”⁴¹

CADENCE: Did you play with Jimmie Lunceford too?

WILLIAMS: No. I had Jimmie Lunceford play in my band for four days. I had to go to Oklahoma to join T. Holder. I had four dates booked with my eight-piece band. And I was on alto sax. See, I asked Jimmie to take my place while I was gone. So he played with Mary. Mary directed [the band] and did what I would have done. But I never played with [Jimmie’s band]. Of course, at that time, Jimmie had a lot of schoolkids in his band. They weren’t good enough to play with me. High school kids. He was just farming that band. That was in the ‘20’s.

Mary Lou Williams: “Jimmie Lunceford...then an unknown saxophone player out of Denver...became a close friend of John’s, and they spent hours playing checkers together.”⁴²

During John’s trial period with the Dark Clouds, Mary fulfilled the bookings made for the Memphis band, some of them with Jimmie Lunceford taking John’s place as lead alto.

CADENCE: When did you move to Chicago?

WILLIAMS: In 1947. See, you couldn’t work as a Black musician in one town all the time. You had to go from town to town—one-night stands. Sometimes we’d go to six different towns in six nights. We’d drive a thousand miles. That’s what tired me out. See, those bands traveled all around and sent for different people in different places. Just like a baseball player, you’re with this team. So as I told you, I was tired of traveling. Plus, the big bands were breaking up. There weren’t no ballrooms for us to play at. We used to work all weekend. On the weekends, they would take their wives to the Deshler [hotel in Columbus] or the other hotels because all the hotels had a big band. And we played in the ballrooms. And all that dried up. So that’s when I went to Chicago. I tried to decide what I wanted to do...or what I could do because I didn’t know nothing but music.

CADENCE: Did you work in a hotel there?

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WILLIAMS: I worked as a bellboy in a Black hotel.

CADENCE: Which one was that?

WILLIAMS: Alpha. You wouldn't know it. There were about ten Black hotels in Chicago. That was one of the biggest.

CADENCE: What happened after that?

WILLIAMS: That's when I got the job at the factory. That's where I stayed on until I came here [to Ohio]. I stayed on there for twenty-one years.

CADENCE: What did you make there?

WILLIAMS: A big factory that made speakers. For everything that uses speakers.

CADENCE: Was that Zenith?

WILLIAMS: No, they made them for Zenith. Zenith's name was just printed on them. Philco's name: We printed that on them.

CADENCE: What was the name of the company?

WILLIAMS: Quam-Nichols.

CADENCE: I understand that you thought Chicago was starting to be rough, and you decided to move [to Columbus].

WILLIAMS: Yeah, we moved here in the '70's. We sold the house there and moved here. I've been here ever since. After working here on a job for a fellow.... I got the job in May and had to quit in October on account of hypertension and high blood pressure. So I haven't worked since 1971. I got sick [with congestive heart failure] in the last couple of years.

CADENCE: Were you married in Chicago?

WILLIAMS: Yes, in 1951 [to Kathleen].

CADENCE: Where did you meet your wife?

WILLIAMS: In Chicago. She was the desk clerk at this Black hotel, the Alpha.

CADENCE: Is she still with you?

WILLIAMS: Died seventeen years ago.

CADENCE: Have you lived with your stepson since then?

WILLIAMS: No. I live alone. See, being an only child from the South, it teaches you to do everything yourself. I washed, I cooked and sewed. I could do it all. In fact, I did all the cooking anyway because I'm kind of funny about my eating. With Mary Lou, I always did the cooking. That's the way my restaurant had all types of seasoning. So that's why it's hard for me to eat this [hospital food].

CADENCE: So what have you been doing since '71?

WILLIAMS: Enjoying myself. Cutting the grass. I like the TV. See, I took a vacation every year.

CADENCE: Did you ever play saxophone after you quit in the '40's?

WILLIAMS: Nope. I just made up my mind to put the music down. Straighten up and fly right and not have a girl in every town. Get a square job and find one woman. So I accomplished all of that. Smoked for thirty-six years. I drank for over forty—and I mean heavy. But the kind of work we did, it was hard to

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leave [liquor] because you were working in all the nightclubs, and that's where they were smoking. So I made it. They'd come up to you and say, "Oh, John, have a drink." And I couldn't refuse. So I was lucky that way. And you eat all the food to help you avoid cirrhosis of the liver. See, alcohol will burn your liver up. Cigarettes—I smoked two or three packs a week—not a day. So I was doing some bad things but used real common sense.

CADENCE: Do you still listen to music?

WILLIAMS: Oh, yeah. I mean, some of it that I want to hear. Sometimes an old timer would come over to my house who enjoys the type of music I enjoy. An old friend that I met who knew what was happening in the '30's and '40's and knew all about Jimmie Lunceford and all those bands. I have all of that stuff. I have forty recordings by Jimmie Lunceford and about forty by Earl. I've got just about everybody in my collection since I was seventy-five or eighty years old. It's in that era when they danced to that music you could get a kick out of. Once in a while, I'll play something to reminisce. Most of the time, I spend my time watching TV. I got a couple of soap operas that I like. The rest of the time, I'm by myself doing my washing, doing my cooking, cleaning up. And then I tape different things I see on TV. I got the lives of Nat King Cole, Sammy Davis, Billie Holiday. Of course, I knew her before she could sing.

CADENCE: Where did you meet her?

WILLIAMS: New York City. Her father [Clarence] played [banjo and guitar] with Fletcher Henderson, and he was a friend of mine. I used to go up to their house.

CADENCE: Do you mind if I publish what you said?

WILLIAMS: I wouldn't have talked to you if I did.

CADENCE: I appreciate your time, and I hope you feel better.

WILLIAMS: So do I.

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The Life of an East German Jazz Musician, Part 2: An Interview with Conny Bauer

By Jeffrey D. Todd

This is the second installment in a series of interviews that I conducted with free jazz masters of the former GDR. They are still active in reunified Germany, but I associate them with the former GDR because that's where they grew up, where their careers were forged, and where their reputations were made. The first, a joint interview with Baby Sommer and Uli Gumpert, was published earlier this year in Cadence volume 48, nr. 1. This interview, like the first a translation from the original German, is with the great trombonist Conny Bauer, who began his performing career as a guitarist and singer.

I came to each interview with a similar core of questions. Both interviews address the musicians' paths to the music profession, the types of music they've played in their careers, and the professional challenges they have faced since the reunification of Germany. Still, each interview took on a life of its own and went its own direction. While Baby and Uli addressed the East German institutional structures, from the educational system to the musical venues, in which their music-making took shape and form, and the change in the GDR's policy towards jazz, Conny brings up other issues: the difference in artists' social attitudes in the West as compared with the East; the economics of royalties in the GDR; how he came to find what was unique in his playing; finally, his concept of free melody-making and the importance of antagonism in music. Consequently, this interview is quite different from its predecessor and just as fascinating.

*We met in the breakfast room of my hotel in Friedrichshain, which, appropriately enough, has retained its GDR-era decor and feel. As recording began, we were in the midst of talking about the GDR's authoritarian regime and the sense of *Zusammenhalt*, or social solidarity, often cited as a trait of the population of the former GDR...*

CB: This dictatorship situation causes the populace to band together, because of the pressure placed on them. When that pressure is gone, each person stands on their own, and the closeness is gone.

JT: Do you think any of that has remained?

CB: Maybe among the older people.

JT: How did that social solidarity manifest itself?

CB: I don't know how it functioned in society in general, but I know how it functioned among artists. My sister is a sculptor, and she lives in Mecklenburg on a farm. Since she has been there, that is, for the last 30 years, she knows the artists around there. They drive through the region, through the countryside visiting friends, as much as you might do if you lived in Berlin. Sometime after reunification, artists from Mecklenburg, in the northern part of the former East Germany, were invited to Schleswig-Holstein in the West. They remarked

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that the West German artists from that area didn't know each other at all. So, at a meeting where the West German artists met the East German artists, they noticed that the West German artists were also meeting each other for the first time.

JT: (Laughs). That would be funny if it weren't so sad.

CB: Everybody fights to sell their own art and it doesn't interest them at all what other artists are doing. It's a bit different in the East, at least among the older folks.

JT: What do you think about the phrase that's sometimes uttered about life in East Germany: "We wanted to build something here"? Baby Sommer commented, "we wanted rather to dismantle something", meaning oppressive social and political structures.

CB: In the beginning, everyone thought that we could improve the GDR. We were born here and didn't know anything else. But that feeling left us pretty quickly.

JT: Then comes the question of the Wendezeit, before the GDR was assimilated into the capitalist system. How did you imagine the Wendezeit?

CB: I have to think about that one. It's been a long time, after all.

JT: But certain possibilities must have occurred to people.

CB: At the beginning there was a nine-month period of open borders, and people actually thought that it would continue so, that the GDR would be an independent democratic country with open borders like Czechoslovakia or Poland. But then the reunification happened very quickly.

JT: Why didn't it remain independent?

CB: Because everybody wanted the Deutschmark? I don't really understand why.

JT: If you agree on a common currency, then some degree of economic union occurs pretty naturally.

CB: But that doesn't even exist now! It's still the case that people in the East receive less money for the same work, because they allegedly don't create the same amount of economic value. Still after 23 years.

JT: How did you get into the jazz scene? You weren't a trombonist from the beginning, were you?

CB: In high school, I taught myself to play guitar. At that time I played dance music, but there weren't any discotheques. I was an amateur dance musician. At the beginning of the '60s, the foxtrot was the main dance and you played swing to it. We played all the old standards. We also played solo choruses, so it wasn't so different from jazz. Then, in the mid-'60s came English rock and roll. People didn't want to hear swing music anymore. There wasn't a jazz scene yet, just people who did that on the side. The radio supported us. They had their own jazz ensemble, and the musicians got paid for their rehearsals.

JT: Nice!

CB: They produced every month a jazz program. That was state-sponsored jazz. After a while I became a singer and guitarist in Petrowsky's band. Then I

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started practicing the trombone more.

JT: You were practicing when I called you. How long do you practice on a normal day?

CB: It's hard to say, because it starts in the morning and when I get an idea, it continues. I've got a practice room. I practice there usually for an hour at least, but it can be as many as five hours. It all depends on how I feel. I can't say in advance. Sure, there are specific practice routines I go through. That lasts a while, but mainly my practicing flows from my ideas and from playing. After all, that's the situation we experience on stage. Free improvisation. But few people really practice that. Most people deliver a finished product, and don't step onto the stage if they don't know precisely what's going to be played. I practice this free situation very consciously and consistently. It's very important to practice being in the moment.

JT: Do you still do solo concerts? What are your thoughts on the structure of a solo concert?

CB: I don't plan the structure of a concert, because my music challenges the physical limits of what I can do. Sometimes I have to take a break after 10 minutes, then the music gets calm. Sometimes it lasts longer; sometimes I can push for 20 minutes. After that it also depends on the material that I'm working with. My physical limits however create or set up a fairly logical dramatic structure. I don't think about it that much. I have ideas about how the ending might be, generally when the climax will be, and the conclusion. I do think about stuff like that, but that can all happen with different kinds of musical material. So I don't really think so much about the specific structure of the music. The material is well prepared in my practice, but the sequence is not planned out.

JT: When did you take up the trombone?

CB: Well, in the '60s I studied trombone in the conservatory in Dresden, in the program of dance and entertainment music. They taught us swing. So we played Count Basie arrangements. It was definitely a jazz program. We didn't have the real book yet; that came later on in the '70s. The professors didn't teach us much about scale theory. They taught us a lot of stylistic things, how you play so that it swings, feeling in triplets and so on. We learned that very well. But when it came to playing a solo chorus within a big band arrangement, they told us you got to write the chorus down. They thought it's not possible to just improvise that when you only have 12 bars of time. So we as students prepared our solos, learned them and then played them by heart. My teacher at that time told me: "When JJ Johnson has a solo, he plays so beautifully that must have practiced that! He can't have improvised that on the spot!"

JT: I guess they underestimated human creativity.

CB: Indeed they did. Very understandably so, because we didn't have a whole lot of time to practice in the GDR. Because the pay was so limited, we had to play so many times a month and the opportunities were there. It's not the way it is now, when I get up and start practicing at 8:00 and can stop at 10:00 in the

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evening. There's much more time to practice now. And you have to practice on a daily basis. Even now, if I leave for a couple of days on tour, when I come back I have to start again at the beginning. I've got to figure out where I stopped. When you focus on concerts, and have to take care of all the logistics on the way, then you don't have much time to think about creative things.

JT: Too much work...

CB: ... And too many distractions.

JT: Where did you play before you started playing concerts?

CB: Primarily for dances. In Waldhäusern oder Kulturhäusern. I studied in Dresden. You couldn't have called the place in Dresden a club; that was an English concept. But there were definitely hotels and youth hostels. They had dances there. In the villages around Dresden there were Gaststätten with dance halls in the back. And on weekends they had dances.

JT: When did you stop doing gigs of that sort and start doing concerts?

CB: Günter Sommer started playing jazz on an amateur basis. He played for dances and always traveled to Leipzig. In the '60s the only thing that remained there was a Dixieland scene. Modern jazz was kind of the forerunner of free music. The musicians really didn't have that much experience with modern harmony. They played relatively freely, at least the groups that there were at that time. Joachim Kühn was pretty important, but by '66 he was already in the West, I think.

In my case it was like this: I was a guitarist, a very good one I think, and a singer. When I played with Petrowsky, the bass guitarist sang and I then also played trombone, but more as I was trained to do in the music school, playing my solos by heart. At that time I would not have had the courage to play a concert. When Petrowsky got the offer from the Berlin Radio big band, I then followed him into that band as trombonist. That became the Modern Soul Band. It exists even today. That was the first band where I just played trombone. It went fairly quickly from there. For one thing, this band began to play concerts, and invited Petrowsky as guest artist. He was 10 years older and already had a name as a jazz musician. From that point on you can call them jazz concerts. Rock concerts weren't even allowed yet at that time.

JT: To what extent was Rock even allowed? I mean, that music was closely associated with England and the USA.

CB: It was probably allowed. The problem had to do with the originals. We played for dances, and people wanted to hear something from The Beach Boys or Cream or some other English band, and that became a problem, because in that case royalties then had to be paid to the songwriters in hard currency. The GDR did not have that. It was forbidden to play those songs, but not for ideological reasons. The GDR wouldn't have cared about that. But there were GEMA agents who frequented the dance halls and noted what Western songs were being played and then demanded royalties from the GDR. The analogous agency in the GDR was the AWA, which stands for Anstalt zur Währung der

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Aufführungsrechte. At that point it became a problem. The AWA had then to find the hard currency to pay the debt. So the State had to be very careful, so that very little forbidden material was played. It was forbidden because the state didn't have the hard currency to pay the royalties, not for ideological reasons. If you would have had lyrics critical of the regime, that might have been a different story, but that really wasn't the case. These were all love songs; that's what rock music was all about. So the GDR had to pay attention to all this. If somebody's here from the West, hears that and calls attention to it, then the royalties have to be paid in hard currency, and we don't have it.

JT: Could the GDR not just ignore the demands?

CB: Oh no. The GDR was very serious about such things.

JT: So everything had to be correct, legally speaking.

CB: Oh yes, you can't fault the GDR on that account. Naturally people wanted to hear us sing in English, when we were singing a Beatles song. And the State wouldn't have cared. But we could not broadcast anything like that. It was a state institution. We could broadcast in the radio or produce a record on VEB Deutsche Schallplatten, but that was only possible in English by the mid-'70s. Because people thought it totally ridiculous...

JT: ... to translate the Beatles' songs into German! (laughter)

CB: Long hair was a totally different matter. You could play a dance with long hair, but when we wanted to go on TV, the long hair had to go, because then all the party functionaries objected. They would say:

“we imagine socialism very differently.” So the long hair had to go.

JT: So you're saying that, when it came to the point of being a public representative of socialism, long hair was not allowed?

CB: Exactly. On television or in any other official capacity. There were trailblazers here in the rock and roll scene. Renft, for example, was a band that was later banned. They wore long hair, and became so famous that they were even allowed to appear on television. That was the first time, that a band with long hair was able to appear on TV. The functionary said, “What the heck, they're everywhere now and are so famous, we might as well let them appear that way on television.” At that point it was just time.

JT: What was the complete panoply of musical genres that were related to Jazz in the GDR? You played free music, Fusion or Jazz-Rock, didn't you?

CB: Yes, I played in the Modern Soul Band. There were maybe three or four horn bands. The rest was guitar music. Almost all the GDR free jazz musicians came out of the dance bands. It was different in England when we think about people like Paul Rutherford or others. They came to free jazz from classical music.

That wasn't the case here, but I think that the classical composers were very interested in our music. When we had those jam sessions in the Große Melodie on Monday evenings – that was in the old Friedrichstadtpalast before it was torn down – in the basement there was a bar that was open every night, except on

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Mondays. Klaus Lenz succeeded in persuading the manager to open it up on Monday nights so that we might be able to play jazz there. And the composer Georg Katzer sat there on Monday evenings watching and listening, and he got a lot of musical ideas from it. Paul-Heinz Dittrich, another composer, wrote a composition entitled "Begegnung." He was a classical musician from the Gruppe Neuer Musik Hanns Eisler from Leipzig. A few jazz musicians – Petrowsky, Klaus Koch, and I – were there. The classical musicians were much more interested in what we were doing than the people who, like us, had from dance music and were now doing more mainstream jazz. They hated free jazz and still do. So there was a big rift between the two groups.

In the '80s I had a big band that brought the two groups together with a rhythm section of Baby Sommer and Jay Oliver. Jay was a black bassist who has passed now, but at that time he lived in West Berlin. When at times the tempo would get really fast, the mainstream guys would just turn their heads and marvel at the rhythm section because their rhythm sections couldn't cook like that. There were astounded that that kind of intense playing was possible in free jazz too.

JT: This division between mainstream musicians and free jazz musicians is understandable enough. You even hear a great difference between the music played at the concert in 1965 with the GDR Jazz All-Stars and the wild things that Peter Brötzmann does.

CB: Of course. But that kind of playing was for us in 1965 still quite a way off. We had heard something of Brötzmann, but hardly ever on the radio, because it wasn't played in the East. Sometimes the TV cameras, for example at the Westberliner Jazztage, showed Brötzmann, Korwald, Benning. But in the '60s we really didn't have much exposure to that here in the East. And we didn't really understand it. There wasn't really a fertile ground here in the East for that kind of stuff. Joachim Kühn did very creative things musically, maybe not so much from the perspective of the instrument itself. But he couldn't stand it here and left early on, and the GDR leadership was totally fine with that. They said in the newspapers in 1966: "Our artists aren't yet politically mature...." After that, the doors to the West were closed for a while for the rest of us. They were glad that Joachim was gone. Friedhelm Schöpfung began then at some point toward the end of the '60s with his Trio, which consisted of Joachim Kühn's bassist Klaus Koch and with Baby Sommer. He began to play more freely but that had nothing whatever to do with Peter Brötzmann. Brötzmann's style wouldn't have worked in the social situation here. It was possible in the Wuppertal, but there was no place in the East where that would have worked.

JT: Because it was too openly revolutionary?

CB: Probably.

JT: He plays with such abandon and conviction.

CB: Oh yes, and continues to do so.

JT: So back to the various genres in the GDR. There was big band music. Klaus Lenz, was that rather Basie-oriented or what?

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CB: Klaus Lenz always had a dance band. I played with them for a short time in 1967. They played for dances, popular things like Herb Alpert for example, very tastefully, not exactly like Schlager but somewhat in that direction. The band had a very high level of professionalism. He was a very skillful businessman, and was always able to take care of his band. That was not always easy.

JT: Sort of like walking a tightrope.

CB: Yes. But he was able to get that done and, every couple of years, put together a big band and organized concerts for it. In that case, the big band didn't play for a dance audience. That was definitely concert music. Later the free jazz musicians had a different kind of encounter with dance as a form of artistic expression on the stage. But that came later at the end of the '70s or in the '80s.

JT: Hard bop was not played so often here, right?

CB: Not really. We played that early on in a dance kind of situation, for example when I played with SOK. They played that sometimes. But not in a concert situation. Even all the way up till the end there were not so many mainstream jazz groups. They weren't all that good either. When the free jazz musicians began playing in the West at the end of the '70s, the mainstream musicians of course wanted to do the same. But when one of those guys, say Axel Donner, wrote on his vita, that his influences were Keith Jarrett, McCoy Tyner, and Chick Corea or something like that – which is already kind of funny – they laughed about it in Amsterdam at the Bimhuis. They said, "What's this? Here comes this guy out of the GDR and he wants to play here?" So that was an obstacle for those musicians. For that reason, all of the people who might have had ambitions to perform in the West went in the direction of free jazz. That was something that we had that we knew could stand on its own. These musical fashions were of course all international. I don't actually know how free jazz came to the GDR. We were pretty disconnected from a lot of things in the world. I think it was also part of the Zeitgeist.

JT: So that kind of music connected to something in the way people felt here?

CB: Yes. There was definitely something of the Zeitgeist involved.

JT: I've never quite understood why Cuban music didn't influence jazz in the GDR. Cuba was ideologically close to the GDR, and people did go back and forth between both countries. For example, Baby Sommer actually traveled there.

CB: But not in a musical capacity.

JT: That's right. But he heard the music. He said, however, that there was no question of that music being an influence for him. I find it kind of puzzling that Cuban music didn't find more resonance here.

CB: Naturally there were also Cuban students here who played music.

There was one band in Weimar that always had a Cambodian and a Cuban

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percussionist. They had that kind of concept. There were a lot of students in Jena und Weimar of course.... As far as influences from abroad were concerned, sometimes we couldn't even distinguish whether something came from England or the USA. Here, the first Latin influences were Bossa Nova in the '60s and that came from Brazil. Then we found out that the musicians were living in New York but actually came from Brazil. But for other kinds of music we didn't know how it all hung together.... Radio International in Nalepa Street was of course a source of information. They had programs from all kinds of places, Africa and so on. But would they have had one especially for Cuban culture and music? It was hard to distinguish between that and other Latin American things.

JT: Oh, I see. Where there's confusion, it's hard to grasp hold of anything in particular.

CB: At the beginning, we had no idea that the Bee Gees came from Australia. Then we found out somehow from the radio. That was all for us in the East very far away. And I was at that time in Dresden. In Dresden, things were even further away. You couldn't get FM radio, you could only get medium wave radio with whistling interference and if you wanted any kind of information....

JT: There is this concept of the representative artist of the GDR, of artists that represented the country to other countries. Did you play that kind of a role, and if so, what was life like as a representative artist of the GDR?

CB: Well, those were two different lives. The one took place abroad, in the West, where we were always awaited with anticipation, despite the fact that people didn't know what we did (laughter), just because we came from the East. It was as if we were coming out of a zoo. "Let's have a look and see what they're doing." Then on the other side, we had developed a public following for our music. We always played to packed houses, and played a very important social role here. That sense of importance, this sense that a lot of people like our music – we took it with us into the West when we played there. But those were two different lives. I never thought of our playing in the West as being a state function, but rather as playing an important social role. Our art has a social function, not a political one. It was with that mindset that I went abroad. I brought with me that knowledge of what can happen when you play this music. In an interview with Bert Noglik, Fred van Hove called the GDR "the paradise of improvised music." It was also important for the Western musicians to be able to play free jazz for six to eight days straight in front of a packed house. That was a big deal: three to five hundred people listening to free jazz.

JT: They were enthusiastic about it.

CB Yeah, they were following intently. The Western listeners were just like our listeners here in the East.

JT: Then the Wende came. We already spoke a little bit about the Wendezeit. After that, you said, things changed. Then you found yourself on the world

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market as an artist, having to hawk your wares. Do you think that art is well promoted in this way? Is the atmosphere now in that sense a favorable one for art?

CB: Sure, without a doubt. There have been two important moments in my life. The one was playing for the first time in the West German town of Moers, in this tent where all the black musicians were around us, and played before and after us. One of them stood there and watched what the guys from the East were doing. Sure, I tried to play as fast as JJ Johnson and as aggressively as Roswell Rudd or someone like that, but the American musicians loved what I was doing, and they wished us well. Then it became clear to me that I've got to let all that stuff go. If I'm going to make a name for myself internationally, I've got to find my own thing. That was a really important moment. The second moment was the Wende. Then our protections were gone. There was definitely something protective about the GDR, even when you were traveling abroad. You knew you had a place to go back to. And you could rest a bit. You can't do that anymore.

JT: So your life as an artist has become more difficult since the Wende?

CB: Well, it's also been a kind of process. At the beginning we had a great deal of luck in that we were already known in the West. We just didn't need a passport anymore. We could simply get in the car and drive to France, Switzerland, or Munich and play. So at the beginning it just proceeded normally as it had done. And it went very well. But then in the mid-'90s, when the consequences of the Wende arrived in the West as well, and welfare funding dropped and arts budgets as well, then it got difficult. At the beginning we had our East German bonus and were often called to play at festivals and such things. Before the Wende, both a West German and an East German band were invited to the festival in Scandinavia, but after the Wende, only one German band was invited. That had an impact. And there was also a kind of fatigue here in the East. All the people who had fought to do concerts, finally they could also call musicians from the West, like Klaus Doldinger or Albert Mangelsdorff. As a result we weren't called as often. We noticed that and it was also understandable. At the Western festivals where we had previously played, we musicians had been able to see all the international acts, but the East German audiences back home couldn't. So it was definitely understandable that the promoters here developed a new concept. Add to that the fact that, instead of one GDR, there were all of a sudden five new individual federal states. The Jazz Club Leipzig suddenly had a different idea of what they wanted to do. They didn't want free jazz anymore, they invited Keith Jarrett instead. Even Bert Noglik, who had done so much for our music, asked himself, "What's going on?" So something had changed. This whole centralized aspect of music in the GDR was gone overnight. That was actually not a problem for us. The problems came in the second half of the '90s. That's when the Wende really

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happened for us.

JT: That's when the financial difficulties happened for you.

CB: The fact that the people who had been in the West for a long time had an advantage and then that the cultural budgets had been slashed. In France, the budgets lasted a bit longer and in Switzerland they are probably still there, although Switzerland is very careful that only Swiss musicians receive the benefit. A German musician like Nils Wogram, who is married and living in Zurich, has said that he has plenty of work with Swiss musicians, but if he wants to promote his own projects, he can't get them off the ground. So the Swiss are very careful that their money remains in Swiss hands. It's the same way in France as well. Germany's a bit different. In Germany the old adage that "no man is a prophet in his own land" really applies. Even in the classical music scene, where my brother Matthias is very active, German musicians play for very little money, including three weeks of rehearsal and a concert, but when there is real money to be had, they want to bring musicians from Japan and Korea, because it's something special. That is typically German. (Laughs)

JT: Do you find that the jazz scene in the GDR is given its due credit when people talk about it, or is that even an issue anymore?

CB: It's hardly an issue anymore for former GDR musicians. There are some that were against it all and remain so, thank God. And for others, for me for example, it is completely clear that I lived a period of time in my life that will never come again. It lasted a bit too long, maybe a few years too long, but it was important for me, and it was perhaps also an experiment, and I was there. And that's the way it is for many; that's how our life was. And we couldn't do anything about it. Ultimately, all of Germany has had to pay the price for WWII. It's for that reason that the GDR had to pay reparations to the East European countries for 40 years. Those payments were disguised as mutual economic help. GDR wharves were building ships for the Soviet Union up until the very end, and delivering them conscientiously on time for prices that had been contractually determined in the '60s. They were basically gifts to the Soviet Union. But when you look at it in all honesty, you know exactly why the State was the way it was and couldn't function differently. Everything was decided in Moscow, or here in Berlin in Karlshorst, where the Soviet embassy was. Of course, it's now often the case that one asks, why did people take the positions they took or behave the way they did?

JT: But it's not really an issue anymore....

CB: Not really. Only if someone is disliked here in the West, then they look to see if there is perhaps something in his Stasi file.

JT: Do you have a particular artistic ambition, that is, something that you really want to communicate as an artist?

CB: That's all related to my practicing. Of course I have a lot of things in my mind that I still would like to play, but they come from my practice sessions, when I come upon an idea that I've never heard. Then I have to work with it for

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a while and see what comes out of it. Above all, it's things with the trombone that nobody has done yet. And when you play those new things, the audience hears it and understands it. I've always noticed that people that heard me 30 years ago show up and say, "You always come up with something new." It's the most satisfying thing that people notice that you've put in the work. And then of course there is something that I'm after. The greatest feeling is when people are happy after a concert, look up to you and thank you. I'm glad that I have been able to contribute something new with my work. They come to the concert and are supposed to be able to take something home with them.

JT: What are your current projects?

CB: Well that's difficult. I'd like to do a lot more. At the moment my favorite thing is this classic trio of horn, bass, and drums, and my favorite musicians are Hamid Drake and William Parker, but to bring them here on tour is so difficult, because it's gotten very expensive to bring them here. You can't play with such great musicians and then give them 200 Euros after a concert, you just can't. I played with them and Peter Brötzmann 10 years ago. Brötzmann can do that. Everybody played just in order to play with Peter Brötzmann. Then you say afterward, "That wasn't very much money, was it?" But I don't want to do that. When I play with such great musicians they should also be paid properly. And it's difficult then to do a tour in Dresden or Munich, for two or three hundred dollars each. That's just difficult.

JT: Was that easier to do in the GDR time?

CB: Yes, but in the West with Western funding. That was definitely a different time. But it was also difficult in the West for us. I had somebody in West Berlin, a lady that coordinated or organized that for us, because the State artist agency of the GDR was unable to call promoters in the West. It was a State agency but somebody in the West had to do that. Even then, the pay was still not all that great. I don't know if Peter Brötzmann or other Western musicians previously had the possibility to play for a lot of money, I have no idea. Maybe Jan Garbarek or somebody like that. But with creative music like this, it's never been very easy.

JT: Do you have any favorite recordings from your production?

CB: I haven't really left a lot of documentation. I only know what my favorite recordings are not. Those are often recordings done at concerts where somebody said, "Such a great recording! Can we release that? – Sure. Why not?" But those are not always the best recordings. Just because the concert went well, it's not at all clear that the recording is also exciting. But I stand behind everything I have produced that I wanted to do. They are all solid things.

JT: Do you have any particularly bright moments in your career?

CB: Each concert is a great moment! (laughs) But there were naturally some special things. Things like the concert in 1988 at the memorial of the Battle of

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Leipzig. There were a thousand people there. It was my idea to do a concert at that memorial. No one had ever done a serious concert there. Sure, there's always been an amateur choir there and they sing there. I called the Leipzig Radio if they to see if they wanted to record the concert. The Radio staff was quite cooperative. Just a call sufficed. "Great! We'll be there!" Then a van from the studio came. Do you know the building? It's huge! You have to have seen it or have gone up in it. Anyway, they hung up microphones all over it and it was really great. And there were so many people there. That was a really great moment. There was always some kind of really nice event. On the other hand, from the stage it's hard to judge what's better or worse.

JT: Those were actually all my questions.

CB: They're also definitely very good questions. The GDR lasted for 40 years and a lot of things actually happened during that time. When I get a question that relates to the '80s then comes a question that really belongs to the '60s, it's not easy to answer. Here I was able to keep things pretty straight. I began making music fairly late in life. I was 18, self-taught on the guitar, lived in a small town, in Sonneberg, and there was a music teacher there. I tried all the instruments until I came upon this good trombone teacher. I went home and asked my parents, "Can't we get a trombone? There's a real good teacher..." My brother Johannes is 11 years younger and was nine at that time. My folks thought that it made sense and as a result Johannes also became a trombonist.

JT: (Laughs)

CB: ... And this trombone teacher prepared me for the conservatory. He taught me how to read music and music theory, enough so that I would be able to pass the entrance exam. And I came to the conservatory with quite a few hang-ups. There were quite a few students who had started playing the piano at the age of five and could easily play everything that was on the page, while I had trouble reading quickly and so I spent the rest of the '60s thinking I wasn't as good as other musicians. But I wanted to be better and always wanted to play jazz and I have always tried to do something. I've never had to organize gigs for myself. For example in the Modern Soul Band we played for dances. Some guys got together and asked each other if they wouldn't want to play free jazz in a low-pressure setting. I had a few people that I played with and we all said yes. And that's how it all happened. I never managed myself. My entire career in the GDR happened because of interested promoters that asked me to play. I never coordinated anything myself. And I really miss that today of course, because nowadays you have to do it all yourself.

JT: Unless you have someone to do it for you, like Ernie Watts who says, "I just play the saxophone."

CB: No, I do things myself, but that's very difficult because the promoters are naturally bombarded with 150 emails per day and calls from other managers or gifted musicians that really stay on task and don't give up until they've got

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something. Let's say we're playing with the Zentralquartett somewhere, and a promoter comes and says: "I would very much like to do a have you do a solo concert for us. Give me a call in two months. Here is my telephone number." Very nice and as polite as you please. Then you call. He's working another job, is currently at work, and asks: "What was it you wanted to play at our place? With whom?" I say, "Wait a second, you gave me your business card and asked me to call you. You wanted me to play a solo concert." Naturally I'm pretty disappointed and ask "What's the point in calling you?" "I understand, but we can't do that now. Call me again when fall comes around." Then I'm pretty depressed about it, so depressed that I can't practice for the rest of the day. I get depressive and think, "why did I even bother to call this guy?" And naturally you think he's just trying to get rid of you. That's really tough. So I really don't want to bother with that stuff. I just would rather work on my music. (Laughs)

JT: Do you give lessons?

CB: No. Now and then a workshop, but only when I'm asked. I've never really done that kind of a thing. That would have been a totally different career. In the mid-'90s, when things started to go south, somebody from the music conservatory in Weimar called and said, "I'm a professor here at the conservatory and I'm retiring. There are all sorts of teachers here from the West. Would you be interested in applying for the job? You're such a great player!" So I applied, got to the interview, began my solo audition, and I'm really getting into it. Then the leader of the interview committee starts leafing through his papers, and says, "I've not heard of you..." It dawns on me that they had already mapped the whole process out and actually knew already which trombonist they were going to pick. (Laughs) The people on the committee were all from the West. Maybe I went into it a bit half-heartedly too. I had to do a teaching demonstration, and you really have to work on that. Other people there had an idea of how to teach. I had prepared something and I executed it but I had never taught previously. There is something of a teacher mafia. These folks weren't so interested in whether a candidate was performing a lot, otherwise they would do that themselves. They want to remain in the conservatory. Baby Sommer has been pretty successful in this area, but he was also a local celebrity in Dresden. He is definitely very important for that conservatory and very good at what he does.

JT: Sure, teaching is its own discipline as well.

CB: Yes, and at the conservatory they've got to prepare very versatile musicians, and acquaint them with all the various ways you can earn money making music. After all, that's what that course of study is for. It is for professionals. And in that case you can't expect that all those people would necessarily be interested in free jazz or in my ideas on free melody-making.

JT: Free melody-making? What exactly do you mean by that?

CB: The first thing is that, when you are improvising freely, you can improvise any melody in any tonality, but you never know where it is going to go. A

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lot of people listen for a root and orient themselves on that, like a lot of jazz musicians or fusion musicians. That's not what I'm after. It's supposed to be free! You can land anywhere. There are few people with whom I can play like that. Barre Phillips, the bassist, is one of them. With him it works great. I can land anywhere and then, he plays a note to that that makes the sun come up! There are very few bassists like that. William Parker is not really like that. He always plays his own thing and it's also very beautiful. Everything works with him too. My own free melody-making extends far beyond playing scales and is always changing. I'm always working on something. At present I've got a system of practicing. If I say it here, maybe some folks will imitate it, but who cares? So here it is: when I change a note, I change the entire scale that it corresponds to. In this case, you are not allowed to play certain intervals. You can of course, because everything's allowed in music. But the idea is that you leave major seconds, major thirds and thirds in general out. The third is especially prevalent in jazz, blues, and bebop. And when you play a while without that, it gives your lines a different kind of color. And you can land anywhere and it sounds good. You emphasize more fourths and fifths. You can confirm the tonality with a fourth or a fifth and yet be in a completely different tonality.

JT: Makes me think of McCoy Tyner and his quartal voicings. The harmony becomes more open.

CB: I never really thought of it that way. But that's true: without the third, the harmony becomes much more open. I'm always thinking about music from the point of view of the melodic line. Previously, as a guitarist, I thought more in terms of chords or at least in a polyphonic way. I haven't done that for a long time though. So how that is for somebody who has so much at their disposal, like a pianist, I don't really know. They have a different process of discovery. But the guitar is not really so different from the trombone. The way you play scales is almost the same, with the positions. The lowest position is E on the trombone, and that's the open string on the guitar. It's very similar. Think about the frets of the guitar. Each fret position is a little bit narrower. The same thing is true of the positions on the trombone. The lower positions are longer and then they become shorter the higher you go. Albert Mangelsdorff also started out on the guitar. Anyway, that's the kind of thing I think about with respect to free melody-making.

JT: So you wouldn't want to hear a continuous drone as in Indian music?

CB: No, it's got to remain open. Especially when you play with other people. Sure, you can find a common bass note for a moment, but then it goes somewhere else. I always find in my music that I want to use a lot of material. I loved Coltrane's music in the '60s, the idea of staying on one idea for 15 minutes and longer. I found that wonderful for a while, but in improvised music I find it more exciting to use more material, it also serves the purpose of

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taking the public by the hand and leading them through various landscapes. That's not the only way to do it. There are so many possibilities in music and everything is permitted.

JT: *I have myself played with people in free situations where you have the feeling that they feel that it always has to sound dissonant, as if you're not allowed to play anything that reminds you of a normal chord or tonality. How do you see that?*

CB: There are of course puritanical types in free music. There's a certain kind of a class feeling in that. But take Peter Brötzmann for example: those are all melodies, wonderful melodies! Maybe they aren't always intonated cleanly; they don't have to be. Eric Dolphy, for example: that is genius music. In music you also have to play horrible things in order to show people when the next beautiful thing comes along precisely how beautiful it can be.

JT: *I see!*

CB: You've got to have contrast in music. Free jazz has certainly gone through further developments, but not always for the better. When I think of my first memories in the '70s with Peter Brötzmann, and not only with him, we played completely against each other, each going his own way, and when everybody is out of breath after 15 minutes or so, then it comes down slowly, and you find something very beautiful that you've never played before. Everybody finds themselves on something they've never done before and this is a very important process. The audience has to go through this as well, this playing against each other you, they've got to accept that as part of the bargain, but they have always understood that that is very important in order to find afterward something completely new and beautiful. Then you go on to another starting point, playing against each other, or however. I miss that nowadays. Nowadays people come to the B-Flat, good musicians. They begin to play, it sounds good, then after 45 minutes you have a break, the audience applauds, and then the second set goes the same way. There is no playing against each other anymore.

JT: *They play always with each other.*

CB: They play with each other. They have a way of playing where that works: the drummer doesn't go crazy, they play pleasantly. And no moment comes where you hear the music say: "I've got something to say here!" You don't find that anymore. I think that's a shame. Maybe it does exist and I'm just not around it. (Laughs) So that's a development that I don't really like so much.

JT: *That is very interesting, this idea that you've got to play against each other first so that you can understand really what it means to play with each other.*

CB: You've got to celebrate that! You've got to do that!

JT: *And then, when the playing with each other follows upon that, you hear its uniqueness.*

CB: Precisely. That is in my opinion also one of the essential points of free jazz.

JT: *Perhaps our music-making is altogether too governed by the beautiful. I'm sure that is true in my case. But this is a very important point. Perhaps this*

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comes also from your experience in the GER, where you have this need to make to play something explosive. What do you think?

CB: No, I don't think so. It was the same in the West. If you played with Alex Schlippenbach, the same kinds of things happened: when you got a bit out of breath, then everybody came back together, and then built something else. And I also find in this playing against each other there's naturally a kind of a cacophony pre-programmed into it. That's true, but it doesn't have to be that way. People can also just by chance play really wild on C minor because they just happen to be there.

JT: I think about the early recordings of Ornette Coleman, where it often sounds as if they're playing in a major key. But it was his way of playing free, it doesn't always have to sound so dissonant. Coleman's recordings often have a very humorous and joyous mood.

CB: There are these recordings of Günter Hampel in the '70s. They often play rather intensely against each other in those. There is often a rather intense antagonism in that music.

TALKING WITH DANNY HEALY

CAD: *Let's start right at the beginning, date and place of birth.*

DH: 2/4/1980 Born in Melbourne

CAD: *Did you come from a musical family, parents, siblings play an instrument?*

DH My family wasn't at all musical. A friend of the family took me in musically around the age of 12 and gave me my beginning in the musical world of performing.

CAD: *When do you first remember being influenced by music?*

DH: I remember watching an episode of Sesame Street when I was a child and they were at a saxophone factory, that resonated with me and when given the opportunity to play saxophone at school I pounced.

CAD: *Did you listen to Jazztrack on ABC radio or other radio programs, or start collecting recordings that interested you?*

DH: I didn't really get into jazz until I was around 15 when I left home to go to a music school (VCASS). So I guess I didn't start collecting until relatively late.

CAD: *First musician you were impressed by? In Australia? Overseas?*

DH: Going to a music school I was heavily influenced by some amazing teachers. I guess Charlie Parker was my first real musical love.

CAD: *First instrument? How did it come about? Tuition?*

DH: I started on alto saxophone. I was able to join the school music program when I was living in a small town in QLD at the age of 12. Lessons and band rehearsals used to be in the tractor shed up the back of the school. Pretty sure I lost some brain cells to diesel fumes. After that I moved to country Victoria and then had the opportunity to Audition for a music school at age 15. I left home and stayed at the same institution for my university years. I was there for almost a decade in total.

CAD: *Were you initially drawn to a particular area of jazz, you seem to have a wide appreciation of the genre.*

DH: I was drawn to modern jazz for the majority of my career. Coltrane, Brecker, Kenny Garrett all inspired my late teens and early 20's. I then started studying Third Stream Composition learning from a classical composer. In the last decade or so I've started playing a lot more Trad and Gypsy jazz also.

CAD: *First gigs – where and when.*

DH: I used to gig quite a bit when I was younger (12 and 13), I guess it was the cute factor and a friend of the family organised and played on the gigs. Not jazz really but a great experience.

CAD: *It used to be that musicians honed their craft by regular playing six nights a week in some cases in pit bands, dance bands etc. How does the lack of that affect the modern player's ability to think as a group, to be aware of the playing of the person sitting next to them or is this the reason so many*

Interview: Danny Healy

want to become soloists but because of their technique can sound so similar? Is that instant personal recognition of a person's style lost?

DH: That's such an interesting and complicated question. Jazz will never be what it was in its heyday, too much has changed and it's no longer a popular form of music. A combination of lack of popularity, change in economy, technology and the world in general has deeply affected both the mental state and perhaps even the love of the music for musicians. There are so many great players around now but the language has changed for the better or worse. The quest for wanting to be a soloist is possibly more to do with the economy (big bands mean big bucks) and ease of organisation for a lesser financial reward. Regular gigs really improve most musicians and the relative lack of in current society has to influence the music.

CAD: When did music as a full time occupation become apparent to you?

DH: I guess at about age 18 or 19 I was attempting to pay the bills with my craft. There have been many periods in my career that I haven't wanted to call myself a musician due to a relatively low gig income.

CAD: You have taught overseas in several areas, how did these come about?

DH: I've probably done more performing than teaching in my overseas nomadic journeys. Teaching music has only really happened mainly privately due to residing in a country. Pre COVID I was teaching at an International School full time that my wife was also teaching at for 6 months or so but the long hours made my practice routine difficult.

CAD: Students now seem to concentrate on technique and reach a very high level. Do you think there is too much emphasis on this and if so what do you think is missing?

DH: Another tricky question. I don't really teach many high end students at the moment so I'm probably not in a position to comment. I'm finding less of the younger generation focus on knowing jazz standards and I guess for me this is a big thing. Standards are your dictionary, your thesaurus, the bible and the karma sutra all tied into one. The language of jazz (to me) requires the common ground and storytelling ability that only really knowing tunes can give.

CAD: You recently undertook a very rigorous commission to present 100 compositions in 60 days for Tasmania's prestigious Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) Can you explain how this evolved and how you felt about the result?

DH: That contract has been extended and I'm currently (very lucky I know) still doing it. The project is called 'By Hand' and essentially I'm a composer and performer in residence. I go in at 10am, write most of the day and a band comes in and performs those pieces with me at 4pm. The initial contract was 10 weeks and I planned to compose at least 100 pieces, I well exceeded that. I'm currently about 5 months in and just passed 440 tunes. There are obviously limitations to what I can compose for a band that has to sight read the material. That being said I'm a fan of simpler compositions and they're merely vehicles to

Interview: Danny Healy

transport you somewhere. It'd be nice to have a Ferrari but a Toyota Corolla is better for the grocery shopping and everyday life...

CAD: Do you feel that jazz is promoted as the art form it is, or is it still underrated in most areas?

DH: Jazz lost its popularity and jazz musicians need to help to regain it. I don't think it's widely seen as an artform because it has mostly become for musicians only. In its heyday it was to dance to, to socialise or make love to. In my opinion it needs to steer back towards the general public in order to become widely accepted as an art. Obviously I think of jazz as an art form but I think jazz musicians (most, not all) need to change their approach to help jazz help them.

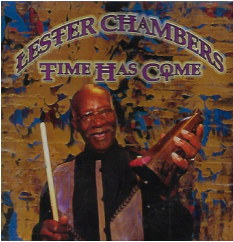
CAD: With recent world situations, a pandemic resulting in the closure of venues world wide, what is your opinion for the future of emerging musicians?

DH: We've been very, very lucky down here in Hobart, Tasmania so again I probably haven't earned the right to comment on this. Jazz has lived through this little social apocalypse but it has claimed many a career. Things are different and will most likely remain so. Those unfortunate enough to be born silly enough to be jazz musicians will become such. Every generation is different and everyone has to learn to roll with and adapt to the times.

CAD: Been nice talking with you Danny, thank you so much.

Alwyn Lewis
Hobart Tasmania
15/9/2022

Book Look



LESTER CHAMBERS
with T. WATTS,
TIME HAS COME:
Revelations of a
Mississippi Hippie,
SELF PUBLISHED
PAPERBACK.

The Chambers Brothers were never high on my listening list. As a working saxman I preferred horn bands like BS&T, Cold Blood, Chicago, Tower Of Power, etc. or combos that used horns like Sons Of Champlin, Sly & The Family Stone, EW& F, Luther Kent & Trick Bag, etc. back when R&B was heavily infused with Rhythm and tons of Blues and not so slick as nowadays. To my ears the strong point for the Chambers Brothers were their voices with ties to doo-wop and the Black Gospel. This volume came in the mail unsolicited, no request to review and no cover note so I naturally assumed it was fodder for Cadence coverage.

This autobiographical writing of slightly over 200 pages is chock full of black and white photos located in the mid-section as Chambers Family Archives and at the end of the book. After the Preface, Forward & Introduction are 13 Chapters relating the author's life story. Among them the Fourth one is loosely titled On and Off The Road and contains an unnumbered plethora of musician yarns, bandstand tales, performance anecdotes and interviews. There is rumored to be an album by the Brothers with cover artwork by Mati Klarwein (of Bitches Brew fame) but this writer was unable to find it. The writing style herein these memoirs is casual and conversational and at age 82 the subject's memory is marvelously intact. Still active and kicking out the jams today he can be easily found on his website. Although this work may only hold peripheral interest to some Cadence readers to those (like yours truly) who think the sixties were the golden age of music will find it an enjoyable read. Right on!

Larry Hollis

New Issues

BOBBY BROOM KEYED UP

STEELE RECORDS 002

HALLUCINATIONS (AKA BUDO) / SECOND THOUGHTS / HUMPTY DUMPTY . SOULFUL BILL / QUICKSILVER / MISTY / DRIFTIN' / BLUES ON THE CORNER (TAKE 2) / SCOOCHE / BLUES ON THE CORNER (TAKE 1) . 57:03.

Broom, g; Justin Dillard, p, org; Dennis Carrell, b/ Kobie Watkins, d. 8/31&9/3/2021/ Chicago, IL.

We all know a guitar has strings, not keys so why the title? Because as explained in the liner notes, this piano-themed album is a rarity in that the leader so seldom leaves the confines of the bass/drums trio format. Sure, there are those excellent works he made with The Deep Blue Organ Trio but those fall in the Soul Jazz genre while most of his other endeavors were mainstream offerings with Carrell and Watkins. Happily his more commercial titles were short-lived and appear to be out-of-print. After that flirtation he more than made up for it with his fruitful association with the much-missed Sonny Rollins. This most recent release serves to introduce Justin Dillard a most promising new talent on the keys. As related in his liner annotation his initial encounter with him was at an unidentified jam where the favorable impression was duly noted. From a suggestion from bassist Carrell it blossomed into a full-fledged salute encompassing compositions from the likes of not only Bud Powell but scripts by McCoy Tyner, Chick Corea, Erroll Garner, Horace Silver, Mulgrew Miller, James Williams and Herbie Hancock. There's also a tune from Booker Ervin "Scoochie" that featured Horace Parlan. Also titled "Budo" the leadoff number is something of a jazz standard as is Garner's signature and "Quicksilver" from an original Messenger named Horace. Throughout this mostly up-tempo program Broom navigates his Koentopp Chicagoan axe (devoid of electronic gadgets or gimmicks) over a firm rhythmic bed laid down by the section while Dillard comps intelligently and sometimes employs the portable Hammond SKX. In a 1986 Cadence interview with the late, great Barney Kessel we discussed the employment of two chordal instruments and came to the mutual conclusion that it all came down to the ability to listen to one another. Broom and Dillard do just that on this satisfying outing.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

STEVE TINTWEISS SPACELIGHT BAND

LIE AT NYU: 1980

INKY DOT MEDIA 007

The Theme – Man Alone / Spring Raga / Whistle stop Tour – I Lust You / Love's Fortune / Risk-o-Disc / Motion / Abandoned Dance / Knowledge Is Power / Flash! / Ash Dung Blues Bowl / Vermont Tune /

Do Not Look Back / closing remarks and credits. total time: 89:28

Steve Tintweiss – 5-string double bass; Charles Brackeen – ts, ss; Byard Lancaster – as, ss, flt, picc, b clt; Lou Grassi – d, perc; Genie Sherman – vcl, dramatic reading. 11/8/1980, New York City

ROBINSON-WHIECAGE-FILIANO-GRASSI

LIVE @ VISIONFEST 20

NOTTWO 1023-2

One For Roy / Dance Macabre / Glyphs. (40:58)

Perry Robinson – clt, ocarina, wooden flt; Mark Whitecage – as, half-horn, Native American wooden flt; Ken Filiano – b, electronics; Lou Grassi – d, perc

Bassist Steve Tintweiss is a bit of a shadowy figure in the history of free jazz... at least to this listener. He appeared on a number of ESP recordings from the late 1960s including those of Patti Waters, Burton Greene, Frank Wright and Marzette Watts. His highest profile work however was with one of the founding titans of "free jazz", Albert Ayler. He was the bassist on the saxophonist's last recordings done in France at Fondation Maeght in 1970. After that he vanished from the recording scene. Or so it seemed.

Apparently, he played around New York leading his own bands. But there wasn't much coverage outside New York. He surfaced on a couple of recordings with poet Amy Scheffer in the 1980's but very little else besides that. However, starting in 2019, he began releasing historic recordings from his archives on his label, Inky Dot Media. Live At NYU: 1980, a double disc, finds him leading an impressive group with two great reed/flute players Byard Lancaster and Charles Brackeen (regrettably both now deceased), drummer Lou Grassi and singer Genie Sherman. All compositions are by Tintweiss. The group assembled sounds like a seasoned ensemble, and they all appear to be on the same wavelength.

Singer Williams appears on about half the tracks and she's a solid improvising jazz singer. Whether singing lyrics or purely improvising, she is clearly a member of the ensemble, interacting with the other musicians, not merely an add on. Her discography is slim but around this same time she was working with trombonist Garret List. Apparently, she is still performing as Genie (Sherman) Walker.

Tintweiss picked two of the finest and under recorded reed players of the time: Charles Brackeen and Byard Lancaster. They were a good combination and play well off each other. Oddly, Lancaster delivers a particularly effective piccolo (not a favorite instrument) solo on "Risk-O-Disc". And Brackeen's tenor/soprano work is well-featured throughout. The rhythm team of Tintweiss and Lou Grassi also play wonderfully

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together. Grassi is an adaptable player, at this time playing in both free jazz and more traditional ensembles (preferring the former). By this point he had developed a technique of being both a color/ texturalist and a drummer who can move an ensemble ahead without overpowering the group's balance. This recording is worth hearing if only for hearing Grassi at this relatively early stage, when he wasn't getting many recording gigs. And it's also worth hearing if only to hear that Tintweiss had his own ideas of bass playing on his five-string acoustic bass as well as composition and group leading. He wasn't merely the last bass player for Ayler.

The link between Tintweiss' disc and the second is, of course, Grassi. He once mentioned that Tintweiss was one of the few players of the avant-garde who would give him gig back in that period. He also played with Borah Bergman in the late 1970s. But perhaps his highest profile gig at this time was with ragtime pianist Max Morath. I guess that's quite a range.

Live @ Vision Fest 20, recorded 35 years after the previous disc, is a good demonstration of how "free jazz" (for want of a better term) players of that early era have stayed true to their ideals and worked to develop their music without compromise. Clarinetist Perry Robinson and reed player Mark Whitecage have roots in the music extending back to the 1960s. Filiano, the youngest member of the band has been recording since the 1980s. This release was produced by Grassi and Filiano as a tribute to the two reed players, who recently passed away. (Robinson, d. 2018, Whitecage, d. 2021)

This was an impromptu ensemble, but all members had played with each other in various formations. So there's an ease and naturalness to the music. Which is not to say it's lacking in energy. That's here in spades. But it also has a confident forward momentum effortlessly slipping into various sections. Robinson and Whitecage play around each other spiraling in counterpoint, commenting on each other with little fillips and phrases. The first track, "One For Roy" (for trumpeter Roy Campbell, who played extensively with all of these musicians and died in 2014) is an epic 23 minutes and is a great demonstration of this group's interaction. Perhaps the most surprising interlude is an extended solo with Filiano augmenting his bass with electronics. The concluding "Glyphs" seems a fitting way to end this tribute. It opens with Robinson playing a lovely interlude on ocarina. Gradually Whitecage enters on a Native American wood flute and the two duet engage in a duet. Filiano (with electronics) and Grassi, (playing subtle shakers and scrapes) enter gradually. Robinson switches to clarinet then Whitecage to alto sax and the quartet takes the piece to a gentle conclusion. It's a masterful eight minutes and is the perfect way to conclude this disc, making it an excellent tribute to two departed masters.

Robert Iannapolo

New Issues

STEVE TINTWEISS SPACELIGHT BAND LIVE AT NYU: 1980

INKY DOT IDM CD 007

DISK 1: THE THEME/MAN ALONE / SPRING RAGA / WHISTLE STOP/I LUST YOU / LOVE'S FORTUNE / RISK-O-DISK / MARION / ABANDONED DANCE. DISK 2: KNOWLEDGE IS POWER / FLASH! / ASH DUNG BLUES BOWL / VERMONT TUNE / DO NOT LOOK BACK / CLOSING REMARKS AND CREDITS. 1:29:28.

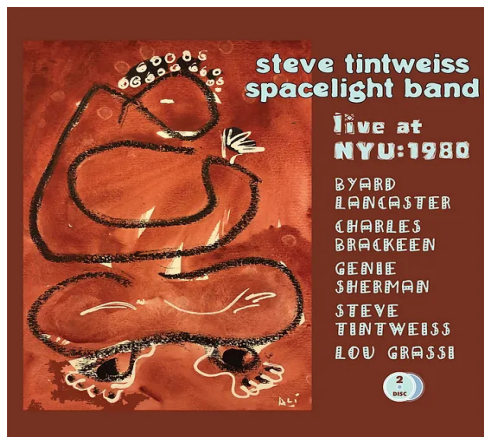
Tintweiss, b, melodica, voice; Charles Brackeen, ss, ts; Byard Lancaster, as, ss, flt, pic, b cl; Genie Sherman, vcl, dramatic reading; Lou Grassi, d, perc. 11/8/1980, New York, NY.

Live at NYU: 1980 is a significant documentation of either infrequently recorded free-jazz musicians or musicians who had moved away from free jazz for a while. For example, Lou Grassi moved on to ragtime and Dixieland opportunities as they arose, particularly with his Dixie Peppers band and with Max Morath. Charles Brackeen didn't record again until the end of the eighties. But the stars aligned in late autumn of 1980 when these singular and authoritative artists assembled to perform Steve Tintweiss's compositions in the Lubin Auditorium of New York University's Loeb Student Center. Tintweiss kept a recording of the concert for more than forty years. Now he has released it for renewed appreciation of his innovative Spacelight Band's powerful singularity. Though known most popularly as the last bassist to perform with Albert Ayler, Tintweiss also was the bassist in Burton Greene's trio that accompanied the inimitable vocalist, Patty Waters, on her classic interpretation of "Black Is the Color of My True Love's Hair," during the recording of which she beat furiously on the walls of the booth, as Tintweiss recalls. Like Waters and other uncompromising free-jazz vocalists such as Lisa Sokolov or Katie Bull—known for their original deconstructions of standards and unfettered expression of themes capturing their passionate interests—Genie Sherman provides wild on-pitch exclamations, squawks, plainsong-like sustains, cries, rasping, microtonal wavers, scatting, warbles, raga-inspired scalar sound shapes (as on "Spring Raga"), spoken word, and entrancing repetitions of phrases. Sherman's inclusion in the Spacelight Band, along with its explorative saxophonists, is consistent with Tintweiss's previous work. His throbbing vamp setting up the band's imagery, Tintweiss produces the portrayal of a snake-charmer on "Risk-O-Disk." Lancaster takes the lead on flute with overtones and sinuous modal phrasing over Grassi's peregrine-suggestive drum pattern. "Don't Look Back," its word/note motive stated again and again as three quarter notes (with a slight trill on the third), gradually breaks loose into fiery free improvisation when Brackeen's Texas tenor saxophone's deep tone starts the leap from the written notes into the frenzy. Brackeen establishes the mood of "Ash Dung Blues Bowl" as well. His mid- to low-register plaintive blues of sorrow and perseverance wails over Tintweiss's medium-tempo walking bass lines. Again, Tintweiss shapes the initial form of "Knowledge Is Power," its motivic lines rising and descending. Lancaster on

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bass clarinet provides the darker shades of the piece's palette with his haunting long tones. Brackeen's soprano sax flutters contrasts in the high end of the register with intermittent energetic warbles. In addition to Tintweiss's restatement of "Knowledge Is Power's" theme in solo between improvised choruses, Grassi magnifies the tension with dynamic drum intensity, so much so that the intensity seems to remain even during his rests. The clarity of the sound on the CD, impressive especially on "Knowledge Is Power" due to the clear sonic separation of the instruments, is a testament to the dedication of engineers Joe Lizzi and Ben Young, who digitized the recordings from analog tapes. "Whistle Stop Tour/I Lust You" establishes a lighter mood of blithe cheerfulness at a medium volume as Sherman hums and sings, with words and without, as if strolling along without worries as the saxophones provide background colors. Tintweiss repeats behind them the motive with resonant force. The entire group—including Sherman with her unpredictable sound shapes and unremitting fervor, not to mention with some repetitive words, too—is in the moment with expressive, sometimes scalar build-ups in minor-key eeriness on "Vermont Tune." She drenches "Flash!" with forlorn oooo's as the saxophones add to the mix the spirituality of the blues. The energetic freedom of "Abandoned Dance" emerges as a unison theme, after which Tintweiss's technical vigor illuminates an extended solo. Both the concert's 45-minute sets are included, one set on each disk, as they occurred before the university's audience during that evening in 1980.

Bill Donaldson



New Issues

J. A. DEANE & JASON KAO HWANG
UNCHARTED FAITH
TONE SCIENCE MUSIC TSM 00013

PARALLEL UNIVERSE / SINGULARITY / CROSSING THE HORIZON / SHAMANS OF LIGHT /
SPEAKING IN TONGUES / UNCHARTED FAITH. 48:39.

Deane, electronics; Hwang, elec. vln. 5/2021 & 7/2021. Cortez, CO & New York, NY.

Always interested in exploring the connections between musical tones and the vibrations inherent in the human condition, J.A. Deane and Jason Kao Hwang collaborated once again in 2021 (having performed in Butch Morris's groups in the 1980's). The exchange of their latest separate projects spurred an interest in a collaborative recording, though Deane was in Colorado and Hwang was in New York. Little did Hwang know at the inception of their project, *Uncharted Faith*, or throughout its production, that Deane had been diagnosed with stage 4 throat cancer. After the tracks were finished, Deane—employing the Internet's unique ability to connect people but at the same time to disguise from them in-person observations—told Hwang that "I didn't want the weight of this [cancer] to shade your performance, as you were coming from a place of such joy." Packets of audio files had zapped back and forth across the country at the speed of Mbps, if not MBps, during the COVID pandemic: Hwang's violin improvisations to Deane, Deane's processed sonic compositions back to Hwang, Hwang's overdubs back to Deane, Deane's unnamed finished pieces back to Hwang. Then Hwang named them. The results are transcendent, with atmospheric sonic washes, lush tones, and cinematic-like changes of fanciful frames of mind within individual tracks, as if the changes were parts of suites. Hwang's interest in the sonic possibilities suggested by movies' scenes (a study which he teaches now as a Sound Image course at New York University's Undergraduate Department of Film and Television), combined with Hwang's pioneering work with live electronics and live sampling, mesh throughout *Uncharted Faith* to suggest haunting imaginative images. Those images commence in "Parallel Universe" with Deane's undulating sonic waves, whose forces ominously, dramatically grow and diminish, as Hwang remains, until the quieting ending, in his instrument's upper register with voicing delays. The parallels consist of contrasts of pitch and timbre throughout the piece. The suggestions of voicing charged emotions continue on "Singularity." Hwang's bowed conversation simulates the human voice in its pacing of phrases, pauses, emphases of notes/words, cries, and whines, while Deane establishes the electronic environment for the dialogue. The upswells and buoyancy of "Crossing the Horizon" increase from the initial carefree jauntiness to groaning tension of growing sonic density, entangled increases of volume, and furious speed to the final plucked diminution. Each track of *Uncharted Faith* differs in emotional bearing, musical complexity, and technical design. "Shamans of Light" sets up uninhibited, seamless improvisational energy with no tonal center that, like the album's other pieces, surges in urgent vibrancy, as if the entire composition

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were a single four-minute wondrous crescendo. “Speaking in Tongues”—enhanced by Deane’s descending-missile-like whistles, resounding splashes, and the repetitive binging like a timer’s—includes brief reminders, amid the oscillating electronics, of Hwang’s classical and Asian music backgrounds when the processor simulates traditional stringed instruments. “Uncharted Faith,” after its beginning consisting of a pizzicato microtonal matrix of plucking and popping, washes into blasting reverberations like a storm’s crashes. As Deane moves into a single organ-like suspended tone in one movement of “Uncharted Faith,” along with additional clatter and shuffling and gonging that doesn’t decay with time, Hwang performs a solemn violin soliloquy of trembling lines, slurred descents, shimmying uplifts, and ceremonial harmonics. This title track, the longest on the album, features a series of moods until the energy weakens, percussive accents stopped, into a slightly wavering tone of diminishing volume. J. A. Deane passed away on July 23, 2021. He never heard the final album of *Uncharted Faith*.

Bill Donaldson

ACCORDO DEI CONTRARI DUDUKA DA FONSECA QUARTETO UNIVERSAL !!!YES!!!

SUNNYSIDE 1671

SAMBA NOVO / TRANSITION / LILIA / MONTREUX / BEBE / EXODO / VIVER DE AMOR / A CORRENTEZ / WEST 83RD STREET / DONA MARIA. 54:49/

Da Fonseca, d; Helio Alves, p; Vinicius Gomes, g; Gili Lopes, b. 4/25 & 26/2022. NYC.

At first glance one might tend to typecast this work as solely one of Latin American musics but that would be miles from the truth. Actually it is as much as a contemporary jazz album as anything else. While all four members are of Brazilian heritage they are equally grounded in our native art form. Keyboardist Alves has collaborated with the leader previously and is well-seasoned with over a half dozen releases under his name not to mention numerous side-gigs with well known names. He's extremely satisfying in both comping and solo roles. His rapport with Lopes, whose steady hands reminded this listener of Bob Cranshaw, is stronger than dirt as it is with Gomes guitar which echos the blue tinged tradition of previous celebrated pickers. There are no big surprises in the tune selection a thoughtful mix of the expected salsa inflections (Bonfa & Jobim/Dom Salvador/Nascimento, etc.) and a contribution from each of the players. Functioning as a unit since 2021 this intriguing blend of Brazilian and American jazz that forebodes a fascinating future.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

ALEXANDER MCCABE BODY AND SOUL SELF RELEASE

ELENA/ IF I SEE HER/ CHRISTI'S DAY/ BODY AND SOUL/ ANGELA/ COUNTDOWN
McCabe, as, sop; Paul Odeh, p; Ugonna Okegwo, bass; Craig Wuepper, d.
8/21 Yorktown Heights, NY.

NY saxophonist Alexander McCabe presents his latest CD "Body And Soul" with a superb quartet. The recording features four original compositions and the standards "Body And Soul" and Coltrane's "Countdown".

We get started with Alex's original "Elena", a sweet and appealing 6/8 romp with Alex on Soprano. The sound quality is outstanding and the melody is lyrical with a joyous undercurrent. Alex solos first with grace and ease, rising above the changes with streams of unconscious clarity. Pianist Paul Odeh delivers a strong and inventive solo with lots of rhythmic energy that's picked up and enhanced by the group. Bassist Ugonna Olegwo follows with a fine solo that's elevated to excellence with drummer Craig Wuepper's support. "If I See Her" is a ballad with hints of swing and a lush melody that's spaced out just right and strengthened by the group's rhythmic prowess. Again this tune brings superb solos all around. "Christi's Day" kicks up the tempo and swings hard! Alex's facility becomes even more evident with a fierce solo that puts him right inside the group's driving swing feel. "Body And Soul" lays down a relaxed two feel for a backdrop with lots of space and rhythmic divergence allowing Alex to surf freely above it all. More excellent writing with "Angela" as a sweet ostinato figure invites us to partake in what's to come. A delicious melody ensues only to be rounded out by Alex's horn soaring over the tunes sweet and lovely form. Coltrane's "Countdown" finishes the set. I personally find "Countdown" more challenging than Coltrane's "Giant Steps" and the tempo Alex chooses is simply breathtaking. I'd put it at about 320 beats per minute. Here we clearly witness what Alex is capable of as he flies through these daunting changes as if there are no changes at all.

So let me say that everyone on "Body And Soul" gives an incredible performance and the writing throughout is first rate. One thing for certain is next time I'm in NY I'll be looking to see where Alexander McCabe is playing.

Frank Kohl

Tomas Svoboda, composer, pianist, died on November 17, 2022. He was 82.

From Gordon Lee, pianist, composer, and former student of Tomas Svoboda

So, I'm in the classroom at Portland State, and there's a few minutes left before the class begins. I had a piano transcription of Wagner's prelude to *Tristan und Isolde*, which I think is one of the most beautiful pieces of music ever written, even though I detest Wagner as a human being. He was a racist, and I really cannot stand racism in any way. So it's a dilemma, but let's face it, there are many, many musicians who weren't great people, but were great artists. They were brilliant at communicating in their medium. Anyway, so I'm there playing on the piano, and it was actually part of, I think, a theory assignment from another class to analyze this piece: how the appoggiaturas and, you know, *échappées*, escape tones, and all this stuff, how it all works. So I was working on it, I was playing through the piece, and Svoboda heard me. So I said, "What is this? What is he doing here with this chord?" you know, "What do you call this?" He said, here, let me play it. So he sat down and he started playing. And he didn't even play through the whole thing, but many measures, I don't know, 30 or 40 measures of the piece. And at one point he sort of gets to a point and just stops. And I could feel that both he and I, coming from very different places — he's Czech, I'm American, he's 15 or 20 years older than me, so we have different perspectives — but we're both very moved by the music. At the same time, both he and I are very well aware who Wagner was, and he just sort of stops, looks down and sighs, and then looks at me sideways, and says, "You know, Wagner was a very egotistical man."

From David Haney, pianist, composer, and former student of Tomas Svoboda

I studied composition privately with Tomas on a weekly basis. for over five years, often over a plate of rice wine drenched, ginger, garlic, mushroom, jalapeno pepper, skewered together on a toothpick. The lessons were always in the family living room sometimes with his wife Jana in the kitchen, and children Martin and Lenka somewhere in the house.

Tom allowed me to study with him, but more so, he let me watch him compose, and explored music together with me. His mind was open. He was kind and instructed through analogies. Admonish the Wise with Parables (Chief Seattle). That was Tom. Using examples from the past, and critiquing your work through examples, he could show you how to animate your musical ideas: how to bring music to life.

I remember one time I asked Tom to help me with some rudiments of conducting as it had become part of my new job description at a church in the area. We went out back to the garden to be able to spread our arms. Afterwards, we were talking about the challenges of getting an orchestral work premiered. He pointed out that orchestras often have real money challenges and filling seats often requires a little less creative booking and little more predictable programs. New music premieres have been taken up by orchestras that specialize in new music. Either way, it is pretty tough to get your work performed sometimes and consequently it's hard to gauge your success by these external factors. Therefore, you should compose music to enhance the quality of your life.

Remebering Keiko Jones

Have just learned of the passing of Keiko Jones...legendary wife of the great Elvin Jones. It is something hard for one to believe and so I won't. As with her husband Elvin, the great energy is now dispersed more widely upon the earth and beyond. A scourge of a spirit racing around the planet, reinvigorated by the sun and laughing at the moon...telling all and sundry that if you have walked two miles, walk five...if you are wearying and want to rest, to get up and run...that if you are feeling even remotely lazy, to find that task that is impossible and finish it up in a minutes time. Granite honesty. Inexorable projection of absolute truth. Despite the rigorous journey and struggle she found time to hold Elvin's hand. Without her by his side our musical world would be quite different. With his work with John Coltrane and others, his legacy was there, but she helped to cement it for all time, no fading out in the garden. Those who would have been left only to imagine the power and shower of sparks he inspired were able to see him for decades to come all over the globe; with Keiko watching intently from the wings all the while. I only knew them for the last decade of Elvin's life. Was allowed to travel with them and be a part of their mission for a while. On my hardest days I can close my eyes and feel and remember the ferocity of that mission: The spreading of love and truth. They, unlike so many others, gave me a chance and called me one of their 'sons'. I will be forever grateful and know that whether through music or simple common everyday kindness, we keep their mission alive. R.I.P Keiko Jones.

Jimmy Bennington

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN CADENCE

acc: accordion
 as: alto sax
 bari s : baritone sax
 b: bass
 b cl: bass clarinet
 bs: bass sax
 bsn: bassoon
 cel: cello
 cl: clarinet
 cga: conga
 cnt: cornet
 d: drums
 el: electric
 elec: electronics
 Eng hn: English horn
 euph: euphonium
 flgh: flugelhorn
 flt: flute
 Fr hn: French horn
 g: guitar
 hca: harmonica
 kybd: keyboards
 ldr: leader
 ob: oboe
 org: organ
 perc: percussion
 p: piano
 pic: piccolo
 rds: reeds
 ss: soprano sax
 sop: soprano sax
 synth: synthesizer
 ts: tenor sax
 tbn: trombone
 tpt: trumpet
 tba: tuba
 v tbn: valve trombone
 vib: vibraphone
 vla: viola
 vln: violin
 vcl: vocal
 xyl: xylophone



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FRONT COVER Clockwise from upper left

Ed Schuller
 Lola Pedrini
 Kevin Reilly
 Eugene Wright
 Andrea Centazzo
 Lucky Thompson

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CADENCE MAGAZINE EDITORIAL POLICY

Established in January 1976, Cadence Magazine was a monthly publication through its first 381 issues (until September 2007). Beginning with the October 2007 issue, Cadence increased in number of pages, changed to perfect binding, and became a quarterly publication. On January 1, 2012 Cadence Magazine was transferred to Cadence Media L.L.C.

Cadence Magazine continues as an online publication and one print issue per year. Cadence Media, LLC, is proud to continue the policies that have distinguished Cadence as an important independent resource.

From its very first issue, Cadence has had a very open and inclusive editorial policy. This has allowed Cadence to publish extended feature interviews in which musicians, well known or otherwise, speak frankly about their experiences and perspectives on the music world; and to cover and review all genres of improvised music. We are reader supported.

Cadence essentially always has been and remains “the best independent magazine of Jazz, Blues, and Creative Improvised Music that money can’t buy.”

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Short Takes - Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA, PA: The Bad Plus at World Café Live on 12/10 brought its new lineup to town for the first time. Gone is Orrin Evans (still waiting to hear the real reason he left after two albums), replaced by reedist Chris Speed and guitarist Ben Monder. Their sound is very different now, it might be time to change their name. Reid Anderson and Dave King remain as a singular rhythm section and still write their tunes that bridge modern Jazz and Rock but there was a noted absence of the humor/playfulness that the original band made its rep on while churning out Rock covers. Of note, there were no cover songs this night. This is not to say that a band can't evolve, it's just that The Bad Plus have morphed away from what made them unique. There was a bit of Mahavishnu Orchestra at the start with "Motivations II" and "Anthem For The Earnest," a King tune from their Suspicious Activity? release, while "Stygian Pools" showcased the uncanny connection between Anderson and King, and their ability to stop-and-go. The quartet proved to be well rehearsed and really soared on King's composition "Sick Fire" which started with solo Rock-ish drum pummeling and soon all were flying along with a crush of wonderful sound and guitar noise – all done with a bright red backdrop of light and audience cheers. The encore piece – "The Dandy" – featured Speed on reedy clarinet and an ever-shifting downbeat that ended the set on a high note. Illy B – also known as Billy Martin opened the program with a solo set of percussion. He spent less time at his drum set to focus on his wide array of other sound making items such as small cymbals, two handfuls of shrubbery that he shook fervently for rustling sounds, and used a pair of corn whisk brooms as brushes. One section that really stood out was his sampling/ layering of various bird calls that he produced into a chorus of chirps. At the end he explained that, "Every time I play it's improvisational. Thanks for bringing that out in me!" ... Nasheet Waits (d)/Miles Okazaki (g)/Hannah Marks (b) at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 12/15 was made possible by New York City's The Jazz Gallery's Mentorship Program that pairs aspiring musicians with established Jazz artists in order to learn the music and business of Jazz. It seemed a daunting task at the onset to hang in there with gunslingers Waits and Okazaki but the young bassist held her own throughout the set of very interesting compositions. Waits' set list started with Sam Rivers' "Unity," Geri Allen's "No More Mr. Nice Guy," Monk's "Trinkle, Tinkle," and Okazaki's "Kudzu." Waits' hyperkinetic drumming on the Allen tune was a stunner and it was a treat to have him presenting in the leader role, spotlighting his playing. That's not to say that he overtook the music, it was well balanced, but it was a change to hear as the bandleader. Okazaki played enough rapid fire guitar to render images of the late Pat Martino... On 12/23 at Solar Myth, Ars Nova Workshop celebrated the release of Milford Graves: A Mind-Body Deal (Inventory Press), a new catalogue of the museum exhibition it organized in Philadelphia in 2020 to commemorate the life and work of the iconoclastic artist Milford Graves. Graves participated with the exhibition which subsequently ran in New York and will soon be in L.A. The catalogue features contributions from Fred Moten, William Parker, moor mother, and many others, along with documenting the exhibit. Multi-instrumentalist and longtime collaborator and friend of Prof. Graves, Shahzad Ismaily, played in duet with drummer Marlon Patton for the musical portion of the night.

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The Bad Plus at World Café Live on 12/10
Ben Monder - Reid Anderson - Chris Speed - Dave King



Nasheet Waits at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 12/15

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Billy Martin at World Cafe Live 12/10



Shahzad Ismaily at Solar Myth 12/23

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Bobby Zankel - Jaleel Shaw - Sumi Tonooka - Richard Hill - Pheeroan akLaff



Kalia Vandever Solar Mython 1/19

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Marc Ribot and the Jazz-Bins with Greg Lewis and Chad Taylor at Solar Myth on 2/23



Nduzuzo Makhathini - Hamilton De Holanda at City Winery on 2/27

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Ismaily at the start implored the audience not to clap until the end and, "If the music is unprovocative or just mediocre, don't applaud at all." Patton, best known for his association with the Lonnie Holley band, laid a groundwork of bubbling percussion as Ismaily spent time running through his array of instruments – drums, electric guitar, nylon string guitar, shakers, electric bass and droning Moog. Once the short set concluded, Ismaily sat at stage front and called on audience members to ask him questions about Milford or anything such as, "What I had for breakfast or why I'm wearing a jumpsuit." The young lady he called on first did indeed take him up on his offer to talk about his breakfast and it turned out he'd gone to a recording session and Mark Ribot came by with a bowl of oatmeal which he took half of. He was asked to sum up in 5 words what he learned from Graves and answered with, "Surfing the wave much easier." He said Graves was such a powerful player that you were compelled to meet him on "the wave" of what he was doing, "You have to be with him." Ismaily also learned from Graves that, "The voice is the closest you can get to vibrating the body so do everything from a singing voice [approach]." ...Bobby Zankel had not had a significant musical presentation since New Year's Eve 2019 so he made his 12/30 Painted Bride offering a night to remember with a stacked crew of Jaleel Shaw (as), Sumi Tonooka (p), Richard Hill (b), Pheeroan akLaff (d) and vocalist Ruth Naomi Floyd. Zankel has a new recording [Changing Destiny] coming out based on funding he received to create dance music inspired by looking into and talking about the practice of slavery in the first White House [which was in Philadelphia at 6th and Market St]. Some of the performers on the recording were different but Zankel was so excited by the music he wanted to perform it before an audience before the end of the year. After failing to hire an available tenor player (he prefers the sound of the alto anyway), Zankel got Shaw, a Philadelphia native Zankel's known since Shaw was 12, to come back home. Zankel always puts his heart and soul into his work and his compositions are continually a challenge to play, but the band, who performed a scaled-down version of the recording project, invested themselves in the engrossing music. The leader's sometimes astringent alto was a good fit with Shaw's warmer sounding approach. Tonooka, who had a number of her students in the audience, added her voice in a non-formulaic way with colorful additions while Floyd episodically sang short sections straight out of the church, before completing the night with a tearjerking rendition of "Come Sunday," the only non-original piece covered. akLaff, who couldn't remember the last time he played in town, "soloed" all night long, driving the music compellingly, taking the intensity up a notch on his solo and required a wardrobe change at intermission. That led to Zankel humbly saying the following day that akLaff, "Just stole the evening. He's just remarkably creative with a wide vocabulary musically and a wonderful guy." Zankel also said he's been a fan of akLaff's for a long time but this was the first time the two performed in public together and that he specifically needed him for this project because, "It's dealing with a lot of different kinds of music." A surprise bonus this night was the Spoken Word offerings from Sekai Afua Zankel, the leader's wife... Cyrus Chestnut at Chris' Jazz Café on 1/13 marked a

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rare Philadelphia appearance of the Baltimore-based piano virtuoso. Aided with his steady trio of bassist Eric Wheeler and drummer Chris Beck, he attracted a large audience to his second set. Touring in support of a new release dedicated to his father, a self-taught pianist and organist who played in church and the man who first taught him to play. His father passed in 2021. The trio opened with Duke Jordan's "No Problem," Rodgers and Hart's "Lover" in $\frac{3}{4}$ time before heading into the set's highlight - a version of Miles Davis' "Nardis," which featured Chestnut's most devastating solo of the performance. While still pinning together elements of Bluesy, spiritual playing, he expanded outside his envelope, perhaps funneled by thoughts of his father. At one point, he ran up and down the keyboards, evoking a breaking glass sound. A melancholy rendition of McCartney and Lennon's "Yesterday," and then a Bluesy "Gee, Baby, Ain't I Good to You?" followed. He finally did an original piece, "Epilogue," a recent composition "inspired by the last minutes of my father's life." Chestnut announced his father told him on his deathbed that he didn't leave him an inheritance but did give him the music and that was his gift to him... Young trombonist Kalia Vandever was attracted to trombone the very first time she heard one (Delfeayo Marsalis playing on a CD) and she's come a long way towards mastering the instrument herself since then. Touring in support of her second release, Vandever sold out Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 1/19 with an audience that seemed well aware of her work - (I have to admit she was a new name for me). No doubt appearing on Saturday Night Live with Demi Lovato, performing on Samantha Bee's Full Frontal with Lizzo, and her work with Harry Styles has helped solidify her reputation. Turns out, her youthful quartet was entrancingly modern yet rooted in the tradition. It's rare to have a female trombonist leader and doubly rare to have a group of emerging artists (who are looking to make a name for themselves) be so dedicated and invested in group play and not showy runs of virtuosic peacocking. Vandever's group included electric guitarist Lee Meadvin, whose playing included elements of Mary Halvorson, Miles Okazaki, and John McLaughlin ("Yes, I listen to all of them," he said), bassist Kanoa Mendenhall, who made her debut with the leader this night, and drummer Connor Parks. The soft spoken Vandever announced at the start, "We're gonna play music for you tonight," and they did - working their way down a setlist that mirrored the order of the recording. The music was filled with beauty, loss and regeneration, much of it riding on the back of Vandever's lovely legato playing. One composition to point out was "More of the Good Stuff Later," a touching piece inspired by one of the last conversations she had with her grandfather who struggled with Alzheimer's before passing away in 2019... Ars Nova Workshop had another sold-out gig the next night (as well as the following night) with an all-star band put together and led by local hero alto saxophonist Bobby Zankel. Bobby Zankel and the Wonderful Sound Time Travelers included Chicago's tenor sax colossus - Isaiah Collier (search the YouTube video with him and James Carter!), bassist supreme - William Parker, pianist, Sumi Tonooka, and drummer Pheeroan akLaff - who got the call the day before to fill in for the two scheduled percussionists who both got sick. No worries - if you need someone to fill in for two drummers - akLaff is your man - he drove the band all night long. Oddly enough, he

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played in thick, black gloves as his wife watched from the front row. The lengthy two sets of high octane fueled and spiritually uplifting music began with the youngest and least established of the quintet – Collier. Decked out in all black and shaded glasses, Collier presented a striking appearance – reed thin and tall (he wore thick soled boots which added even more height). It was a potent pairing to have him on stage next to Zankel, a man who spent many years with Cecil Taylor and has dedicated his life to pursuing music from the soul with the utmost integrity and honesty. Zankel remains all about the music and never about himself. It was heartwarming to watch Zankel tear it up on his solos while Collier watched from the side, beaming with appreciation/admiration. When Zankel and Collier played together with the ensemble, they performed as like-minded mystics, losing themselves in their calling. Sorry to heap on the superlatives here but, damn, this was special. At points, both saxophonists stood next to each other, arching their backs in unison, screaming beautifully from their horns, without an ounce of premeditated showmanship. William Parker was rock solid as always, smiling in the rear of the stage at times, he showed off some new fancy hand and wrist slaps on one of his solos. Tonooka added unique color statements to the mix but was hampered by the use of an electric keyboard that didn't seem to fit with the music as a whole. Most of the music was penned by the leader along with a piece by Collier and some of the music of John Coltrane – “Compassion” and “Venus.”... Kahil El'Zabar's Ethnic Heritage Ensemble has been invigorating audiences with February tours for 49 years with varying personnel. Trumpeter Corey Wilkes and baritone saxophonist Alex Harding have been helping out for a number of years now and have formed quite the connection with El'Zabar's vision of combining concepts of African American music-making with the roots of traditional African music to produce something that carried the music into the 21st century and beyond - spreading the precepts of the Association For The Advancement Of Creative Musicians based in Chicago. He formulated this desire after returning from his studies at the University of Ghana. Percussionist, composer, vocalist, and bandleader El'Zabar often establishes trancelike grooves within his music so each set intentionally becomes a healing session that includes a short talk on taking care of each other and the need to set good examples for the younger generation – many of whom he feels have lost their way. Switching between kalimba, cajón and a small traditional drum set, El'Zabar remained in constant motion – vocalizing/chanting and also often wearing tambourine attachments on his right foot. The set started with “Black is Back,” a very Bluesy, funky segment that led into a rousing rendition of Coltrane's “Resolution.” “Caravan” followed with muted trumpet, bubbling bari and El'Zabar beating an unusual path center stage on cajón. El'Zabar later returned to cajón to sit and mimic playing saxophone with his hands while scatting it for a portion that drew cheers. A late cover of “Freedom Jazz Dance” was full of Funk, groove, Jazz and African elements, further establishing Kahil El'Zabar's Ethnic Heritage Ensemble as a rare and passionate life force...Chris' Jazz Café presented their Second Annual Lee Morgan Tribute Weekend With The Orrin Evans Quintet across two nights featuring modern torchbearer Ravi

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Coltrane and post-modernist Nicholas Payton, along with bassist Luques Curtis and drummer Mark Whitfield, Jr. Their final set on 2/11 drew two songs from Morgan's *The Procrastinator* album - starting with Wayne Shorter's "Rio" and later the funky pleaser "Party Time." Morgan's classic "Ceora" was beautifully rendered by the accomplished horn section, both of whom had plenty of solo time during the night and short periods of shared playing. Evans called up locally-based drum veteran and Buddy Rich alum - Mike Boone - to man the bass on Evans' original tune, a real barnburner, "Don't Fall Off the Ledge." That was it for Curtis as another local bass star, Madison Rast, replaced Boone (one thing Evans has always done has been to support the local Jazz scene and help focus attention on his musical brethren - young and old). The night eventually ended with "The Theme," featuring floating heads played by each member. It was a fun set for all, especially enjoyed by a grinning Evans who was swaying and dancing on the piano bench at times and rising to his feet when so inspired. He announced he's already looking forward to the 3rd annual show in 2024. When asked how the lineups are picked (last year's tribute included Evans with Robin Eubanks, Sean Jones, Tim Warfield and Nasheet Waits), Evans said he brainstorms with Al McMahon, the venue's talent booker... Marc Ribot and the Jazz-Bins (Greg Lewis, org; Chad Taylor, d) at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 2/23 was a fast-paced Funk-Blues-Jazz romp covering a seamless array of mainly funkified Grant Green arrangements such as "Ain't it Funky," "After Shower Funk," and "Grant Stand." Ribot assumed his traditional seated, slumped over position with charts scattered every which way on the floor around his chair, only looking up to smile approvingly at Lewis's Hammond B3 searing work or to give directions as the infectious grooves took root. Ribot said these tours are set up a year and a half in advance and he had to come up with a group so he settled on organ, a nod to his early career in 1979 as a member of Captain Jack McDuff's Hammond B-3 combo for a few months. The drum chair in the trio was a rotating seat and Taylor was sublime in the role this night... South African pianist (and Blue Note recording artist) Nduduzo Makhathini joined forced with Brazilian 10-string mandolin (bandolim) player Hamilton De Holanda at City Winery on 2/27. The project was billed as *Routes of Discovery* - an exploration of the musical diaspora from the slave trade to the present day - a transcendent musical saga of the struggles and shared memories within their communities. The subject matter was quite heavy but the actual performance was filled with happiness and connectivity. Both musicians flashed easy smiles and joy while sharing original tunes with each other and both played numerous styles of music from their countries. It was clear to see why Wynton Marsalis thought to connect the two together, which was how they met. The set began with two De Holanda originals, including "A Portion of Happiness and Peace" which was composed only 5 days previously. Makhathini spoke at some length about creating songs and how he has failed in the past - "You've got to do something you know is impossible but you've got to do it anyway" and how he tries to "compose the self into the dimension of song - tries to go inside of song. Songs are memories and the futures that we tap into." A highlight came with a rendition of De Holanda's "Maxixe Samba Groove," the title track off his new release

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which just cornered a Latin Grammy for Best Instrumental Album. They took some solo space to represent their respective countries. Makhathini played Abdullah Ibrahim's "The Wedding Song," while De Holanda did Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Águas de Março" and "The Girl From Ipanema." ...At 98, Marshall Allen has made some concessions to age and plans to do less grinding travel, thus, he's more available to play in town. He loves to play and his burning desire to perform shows no signs of slowing down. Ars Nova Workshop arranged the latest "pop-up" hit for Allen on 2/28 at Solar Myth under the title of Marshall Allen's Ghost Horizons – which apparently is an ongoing series of quickly arranged gigs with revolving personnel. This rendition included William Parker (b), James Brandon Lewis (ts), Chad Taylor (d) and Arkestra bandmates – DM Hotep (g) and Tara Middleton (vcl). Parker said he got called for the performance one week in advance and didn't hesitate to play once again with the grand maestro, telling Cadence, "When I get the call, I answer." This marked the first time Lewis was to play with Allen and the young tenor rebooked a flight from Seattle earlier that morning to have the opportunity. Minutes before the gig, Lewis said, "Don't let my calm demeanor conceal my excitement." Once the set started, it was all that you'd expect – fiery playing and space exploration. It's not new that Allen has been spending less time on his alto – he also used EWI and a tiny Casio keyboard – as well as hand directing the group. Middleton started off singing, "Who are you to tell me space isn't real?," and bedazzled with her soft, pretty voice and striking blue lipstick, glittery oversized spectacles and tights. She followed by singing, "It's spring, spring time again," offset by alto blasts from Allen and then tenor exclamations by Lewis. Renditions of "Space is the Place" and "We Travel the Spaceways" followed but most of the night was spent on instrumental performances including a late jam supported with funky rhythms by Taylor, Lewis' percussive accompaniment and Parkers booming, grounding bass. The night ended with surprising song choices from Middleton – "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," and then – "I'd like to do one of my favorite soundcheck songs. Can I do that Marshall?" It was the theme from "The Love Boat" done with an echo effect... Tim Berne was celebrated with a two-night residency at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop) on 3/10-11. The first night featured his long running (13 years this year) Sun Of Goldfinger band with David Torn (g, elec) and Ches Smith (d, perc), joined by special guest New Orleans accordionist Aurora Nealand. I'd seen the core group perform 3 times previously and this night's quartet maintained the dynamic intensity and ebb and flow sense of danger present in the earlier performances but the addition of Nealand brought sonic creations up a notch. The set started with Torn's sparse guitar soon joined by Berne's pleasingly caustic alto and a slow group build to great dramatic peaks of sound that would sustain and then drop. Nealand began by sitting on the stage, handling electronic pedals before switching to clarinet and finally accordion, on which she shined and connected with her bandmates. Berne was especially sensitive to what Nealand was doing on accordion and often mirrored it. The long first piece was followed by a second shorter segment that began with Berne blowing air through his horn for a windy, gurgling effect that turned into high pitched overtones. Torn, always

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interesting to watch on stage with his shock of long white hair that illuminates with stage lighting and his in constant motion, playing guitar and manning his gaggle of electronic devices. He was on point, adding just the right amount of electric guitar soundscapes. Their music was loud and Torn could easily overwhelm the sound but he never did. Berne ran out a new quartet the next night called Bat Channel featuring guitarist Gregg Belisle-Chi, bassist Eivind Opsvik and drummer Jeff Davis. After Berne played some warmup on his alto he announced, "That wasn't music yet – I just wanted to let you know." He also said, tongue-in-cheek, after playing "Sludge," the first song – "I can't guarantee I'm gonna talk the rest of the night. I will if it's going well." This group was heavily into Berne's charts on stage as opposed to his band the previous night which relied on improvisation. His songs, often pulsatile, dense and angular, led by his stunning alto playing, paired well with Belisle-Chi's expansive guitar playing. It's notable that Belisle-Chi credits Berne as a big influence and has released a solo recording of Berne's music, as well as releasing a duo recording with him...The Dave Douglas (tp) and Elan Mehler (p) Sextet ended their American tour on 3/18 at Solar Myth (Ars Nova Workshop). This new project combines Jazz and poetry – more specifically - haiku within the context of improvising music with the help of vocalist Dominique Eade, John Gunther (ts, cl), Simón Willson (b) and Rudy Royston (d). Douglas explained that the music performed was from *If There Are Mountains*, a recording released on Mehler's high end LP label Newvelle Records and now available on CD, which was, "Based on haiku that are hundreds of years old with really beautiful images we were inspired to create to." The compositions were authored equally between Douglas and Mehler. Eade had her work cut out for her – these are tricky melodies to sing but she succeeded in doing them all so elegantly. On 17th-century poet Bashō's "Village of No Bells," she sang, "Village of no bells/ spring evenings/ what's to listen for?" On Japanese poet Santoka Taneda's title track haiku Eade sang, "If there are mountains, I look at the mountains. On rainy days, I listen to the rain... Spring, summer, autumn, winter/ tomorrow too will be good,/ tonight, too is good." Douglas humorously introduced "We Saw You Off" as a rather "grisly" title, something out of a horror movie but it had especially touching lyrics - "We saw you off/ And returning through the fields/ I thought, morning dew had wet my sleeves/ But it was tears." Douglas also displayed a sense of humor after announcing a run of tunes, he said, "What else can I say?" A voice from the rear of the space yelled, "Play!" To which the trumpeter answered, "Am I that captivating?" The talented band was heavily situated in the tradition more so than what Ars Nova typically presents but each artist had their time to push the envelope a bit. Douglas is always a standout performer who can seemingly do anything he wants on his instrument [which explains why a number of local trumpeters were in attendance including Bhub Rainey and Bart Miltenberger]. It's always nice to see the band having fun and that was especially true on the late set rendition of "Barn's Burnt Down" which featured Mehler's effectively raw barrelhouse piano and scream/singing the words to the haiku by Masahide - "Barn's burnt down now, I can see the moon!" while Douglas rushed over with a mic each time the singing started.

Concert Review

ESPERANZA SPALDING AND FRED HERSCH AT JAZZ ALLEY 1/25/23

Seattle, PA - It was no surprise when the Esperanza Spalding Fred Hersch two night engagement at Seattle's Jazz Alley was sold out and an additional late show had to be added. This allowed many more people to attend this thought provoking, explosively creative concert. Listener's were about to witness something uniquely different from the standard Jazz experience.

Fred Hersch is playing a strikingly in tune grand piano and Esperanza is on vocals. It was quite a surprise and even disappointing to discover she would not be playing Bass. That disappointment soon faded away when the music began and we experienced Esperanza's vocal abilities. Hersch would use his mastery of the Piano and all that is musical to enhance Esperanza's every vocal inflection. Working with her shifting time and sometimes spoken words the two of them became one and the time would become relative. This was a multi layered artistic event that encompassed the rhythm of poetry and storytelling with elements of humor, politics and being human. Esperanza conversed with the audience on a very personal and uplifting level but then there were also moments of satire, making us laugh at ourselves and our sometimes too serious take on life. With her clever wit and impeccable timing she captured the hearts of the audience with the music of be-bop as her backdrop.

We began with Charlie Parker's "Blue Suede Shoes" and it immediately became clear that this would not be your typical Jazz concert. Combining the rhythm of poetry and Be-Bop the piece moved at its own pace determined by Esperanza's spoken and vocalized elegance. Fred Hersch stayed right by her side and when there were spaces for him to let loose the finest notes and harmony would fly from his fingers. A rendition of Monk's tune "Evidence" was performed. Any Monk fan familiar with this tune knows how off beat and difficult it can be. Esperanza uses the tunes craziness to her advantage and tells a wild story about Monk using lots of humor and antidotes about him. The tune "Girl Talk" was a big success. Again Esperanza takes the lyrics out of tempo and makes the tune quite amusing as she creates a parody of some of the stereotypical roles of woman in our society. All along Fred Hersch flows right along with her showing off his technical abilities and keen sense of timing. Some heart felt, deeply moving ballads were performed like "Some Other Time", "Body And Soul", "Prelude To A Kiss". Each one of these ballads exceeded expectations and left the audience mesmerized in melancholy splendor. Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Inutil Paisagem" was another jaw dropping beauty. The original-"Loro" was a joyous treat full of impressive bird like gymnastics and humor. The entire evening was quite an uncommon event that entertained on many different levels. The creative abilities of both players was undeniable. Fred Hersch with his masterful command of the piano and sensitivity to his surroundings put him right up there with the icons of his instrument. The gifted Esperanza broke through to reveal another level of her talent. She once again becomes a beacon to aspiring young Jazz musicians and demonstrates the many paths available to them.

Frank Kohl

AND YOU'RE GONNA PAY MY TOLLS A PORTRAIT OF ED SCHULLER

BY JAMES BENNINGTON

We issued from his beloved brownstone in Brooklyn not without some difficulty. There were the personal bags of the three musicians, their equipment, and the matter of using the bathroom to prepare for the long journey. Despite the roominess of the place, Ed and his presence there made it seem like a shrouded and comfortable cubbyhole. Something a grumpy bear might like to hibernate in, winter or summer. Once on the road, we made our way to New Jersey to pick up Perry Robinson aka 'the summer of love'. With the Maestro in and his bags and licorice stick packed, we set off once again for the fringes of Upstate New York (read C.I.M.P.).

After the usual greetings and catching up, the talk of what we were to play, we withdrew into silence; each one engrossed in his own thoughts. A relative silence as Ed had the radio going, some Shakespearean Theater or something...but the signal cut in and out on the obscure station and made listening, let alone thinking, difficult. Perry tuned out in the back, in a seeming meditative trance, I looked out the window to the unfolding parts of New York I'd never seen, from the city to way on out in the country, Ed meanwhile would exclaim, grumble, and guffaw by turns at anything and everything... 'Gaah! You see? This guy over here doesn't know how drive, I mean...' or 'Auughh! This radio, come on! It's giving me an F-ing headache!'

When I suggested changing the station to one that came in better, he said, 'No... cuz then you gotta search all the stations and that takes all this time and probably you're gonna have the same problem, I mean come on!' and he waved a hand to indicate the vast wilderness we were entering of Upstate New York all around. We stopped at a remote service station where we used the facilities, got coffee, water, etc. and learned of a recently collapsed cattle car there in the parking lot...a double decker with the poor cows smashed under the 2nd tier. Gruesome. It was cold and brittle out, with twigs and leaves as dry as a bone. The wind dried you out and froze you at the same time. The Catskill Mountains provided an awesome background. When we got back in the car, Ed got in and fished for his keys, his hand unable to find and penetrate his jeans pocket. 'Why is everything so F-ing hard !?' he bellowed. He had begun to perspire. Once on the road again, the Shakespearean Theater cackling in and out like a strange message from outer space, I suggested to Ed that he maybe keep his keys somewhere else so that he could easily access them. 'You're sitting down after all and...' I said. But he had an answer for that, 'No, because you put the keys there and then you forget em'. Maybe on a chain somewhere then? 'No cuz then it's on your neck and it itches or it's jingling around making noise'

As we drove along Perry meditated in the backseat, occasionally exclaiming 'Beautiful Baby! Beautiful!' as was his wont. We checked in on him from time

Jazz Stories by James Bennington

to time as you would a quiet old grandfather. Ed drove with that detached automatic attitude of the master driver...putting up with this, with that, but self-assured all the same. At some point he began fiddling around with his nose and mustache, exclaiming 'Mwauugh' each time. After a while, as his nose became more and more red and irritated. I asked 'Ed, everything OK over there?' 'Aw yeah, its just my nose, I dunno what's up...God Damn!' I could see that one or two of his mustache hairs had wildly curled right into the side of his nose. I mentioned that trimming his mustache might fix things but, 'No, no! I mean you don't wanna be messin' with that stuff, I mean you get the scissors and...no no...that's not it, it's gotta be something else, I mean, who knows what it is?' and again he swept his free hand across the New York landscape while his other deftly clutched the wheel and guided us along.

After a long drive, the day spent together, with all the missteps, the time and the occurrences beyond our control, the stress of following the obscure directions, the New York sun going down on the cold day, we took a final hidden road, made one last hairpin turn, and there we were at 'the Compound'. The thought being to get our equipment and things in, refresh, and sit down to one of Susan Rusch's renowned spreads at the big table. Before the last bag was in I heard loud voices growing louder and sharper...what could it be I wondered? When I returned to the house with the last of my equipment Ed and the great Hemingway like Bob Rusch were at each other's throats...

"Set up your equipment and we'll get a soundcheck, Then we'll sit down and eat." Commanded Rusch.

Perry and I accepted this with quiet resolve...'What must be done must be done'...but not Ed.

"Hey", he called out, "I been drivin' on these roads for hours, I'm gonna rest first...and eat! Maybe we'll do the soundcheck or whatever it is you want tomorrow!"

"That's not how we do things here...I want tomorrow to go smoothly and the so the soundcheck happens tonight!" said Rusch, putting his foot down in words.

"Yeah well that's not...I mean... I've played in concert halls all over the world man. I do it the way I do it!"

Rusch: "Well that may be, but..."

And so on, while Perry and I quietly and tiredly set up and arranged our instruments. At one point, as the supposed leader, I said, "Hey guys, come on, I mean we just got here..."

Bob turned a deaf ear and showed us his back as he went into the kitchen. Ed, the seasoned veteran may have grumbled and cursed under his breath, but he heard the voice of reason in my words and despite his protests and annoyance, he began unpacking and setting up his bass.

The sound check that seemed destined not to be, continued on, with the tinkling of cymbals and the cracking of drums, Perry's clarinet swirled underneath, throaty, mysterious as the forests floor. Ed's bass took command the moment

Jazz Stories by James Bennington

his notes and runs boomed out...our rock and monolith from which we took the utmost heed. We played and the sheer joy of it swept our exhaustion away. Ed was trying very hard not to smile...he wanted to be 'oh so surly', but I saw his grin pop through more than a few times. Perry, the '100 year old baby boy', hovered and meditated near us, his clarinet by now red hot.

They had to tell us to stop, in fact. Dinner was served. Bob told the three of us where we would sit, with me at his side. When we had taken our seats, Ed was about to resume his gruff mood, maybe get in a last word. Rusch was on high alert. When we took our seats and invariable sighed, Ed and Bob looked at one another a moment, you could see the wariness, then both broke into bright grins, if not smiles, they became jocular and Ed said, "Yeah, OK, what's a guy gotta do to get that butter passed over here?"

Monolith, Station Master, Guide, our whip hand, driving the wagon, no load too great, bumps and jolts and grizzly bear days...sounding out to the universe....the man who 'Hears around corners'

Our music was played, a few days were spent at Cadence in the Netherlands of New York. Good solid meals for men with irregular lives...a family table and the shared love of an endeavor. As we packed the car that last late morning and said our 'goodbye's', Perry had misplaced his beret. He'd had it since the 70's he told Ed and I. The key was in the ignition, but we made our way back into the grand log cabin, the firewood stacked, the dogs and cats everywhere, and searched and retraced our steps (Perry's steps rather)...we searched everywhere with no luck. Susan offered to send it along in the mails if it turned up. Crestfallen, our Maestro Perry Robinson made his way quietly back to the car. He was resigned by the time he settled himself in the backseat. 'Well that's how it goes I guess Maestro...' He said to me. We waited a moment for Ed to detail the car before the long journey ahead of us. When he got in the drivers seat, and checked the rear view mirror, Ed broke out laughing and said, 'Aw Maest! Agh Maest!...it's on your head Maest! It's on yer head!' And it was.

...just some moments shared in our work and endeavors together. There are many such tales, some recounted, some not...just the picture, the portrait, the idea... not unlike an afternoon with a Picasso, a Lloyd Wright, a Celine. Whether in the studio or at a hot dog stand, you feel the presence of a timeless master; catsup or mustard notwithstanding. Having the chance to tour, record, and perform with this artist has been one of the thrills of my life; death bed stuff.

P.S. The last time I was with Ed, we were making a record with pianist Steve Cohn (New Jersey Freebie, SLAM). We were all ready for him, warmed up and looking forward to his arrival from Brooklyn. He and Steve hadn't met yet. Ed arrived, came in, set up, and before the greetings were gone from the air and the first note had been played, intoned "...and you're gonna pay my tolls!"

Ed Schuller; American National Treasure
Chicago
Feb., 2023

A CENTENNIAL SALUTE TO EUGENE WRIGHT MAY 29, 1923 – DECEMBER 30, 2020

BY PATRICK HINELY

Growing up in Chicago, Wright's first instrument was the cornet, but his first love was the bass. He was enamored of the playing of Walter Page, a progenitor of walking bass, and would follow him as Count Basie's bassist in the late 1940s, after leading his own 16-piece Dukes of Swing for several years earlier in that decade. Wright also played with, among others, Duke Ellington, Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday, Errol Garner, Sonny Stitt, Cal Tjader, Buddy DeFranco, Red Norvo, and Gene Ammons.

Wright is best known for his decade, 1958 - 1968, as a member of Dave Brubeck's quartet, in which he, along with drummer Joe Morello, provided the motor muscle propelling, supporting and further elevating the playing of the pianist and saxophonist Paul Desmond. During the earlier part of that tenure, before passage of the Civil Rights Act, touring in the southern states with a Black band member could prove problematic, but Brubeck solved that by simply refusing to play segregated gigs.

In the original 1960 edition of *The Encyclopedia of Jazz*, Leonard Feather's three adjectives for Wright were "serious, dependable and capable", with Wright naming Milt Hinton as his favorite. Somewhere along the line, he picked up the nickname "Senator". I'd go further: I'd add to that "The Honorable," just as I always addressed 'Judge' Hinton as "Your Honor"...

Wright was on board with Brubeck for more than 30 albums (plus a panoply of live recordings which, blessedly, continue to surface), including 1962's *The Real Ambassadors*, which adds Louis Armstrong, Carmen McRae and Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, singing Iola Brubeck's libretto, a swinging paean to civil, human and universal rights, a masterpiece of an album too often overlooked by critics who still can't figure out which single pigeonhole into which it can be crammed. 1962 also saw Wright's only studio recording as a bandleader, *The Wright Groove*, in New Zealand. The tunes were all his own, fleshed out from solos with the Brubeck band, decades before Eberhard Weber did something along similar lines with recordings of his solos while touring with Jan Garbarek's band. The baritone saxophonist on Wright's date was Laurie Lewis, who would later, with his wife Alwyn, long serve as the Australasian correspondents for this magazine's Short Takes section.

Following dissolution of the Brubeck quartet, Wright led his own group and worked for several years in Monty Alexander's band, as well as playing with, among others, Buddy Collette, Dorothy Donegan, Kenny Drew, Vince Guaraldi and Kai Winding. There exists a badly-recorded live album from North Hollywood's Money Tree Club in the mid-1980s, *African Breeze*, featuring a later incarnation of the Dukes of Swing, with guests such as Snooky Young and Buster Cooper. We can always hope it will eventually benefit from the efforts of a tape restoration wizard.

Later, Wright distinguished himself in the educational field, as head of the jazz program at the University of Cincinnati, and was a founding mover and shaker of the International Society of Bassists.

To borrow a saying from Wright's fellow bassist Steve Swallow: Senator Wright had a groove as deep and wide as the Grand Canyon.



Eugene Wright demonstrates walking bass technique, en route to the stage, where he would revel in a reunion with Dave Brubeck, at Magnolia Gardens, near Charleston SC, for Spoleto Festival USA in May, 1983.

Photo credit ©1983 by Patrick Hinely, Work/Play®

**HOW ONE RECORD LABEL SURVIVED THE PANDEMIC
INTERVIEW WITH RELATIVE PITCH CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE
PRODUCER KEVIN REILLY****By Ken Weiss**

Cadence: What is your musical background, your connection to music?

Kevin Reilly: I really have no musical background, I never played an instrument. I'm from a working class background. My parents were practical and thought that I should get a college degree. When I was 10, I got a stereo for my birthday. I think my first two albums were both by Elton John - Goodbye Yellow Brick Road and Captain Fantastic and the Brown Dirt Cowboy. This was 1975. I was really into Rock music mainly Bob Dylan into my 30s. Only a handful of classic Jazz records- Kind of Blue, A Love Supreme and The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady. I had a friend who would send me really out music which I tried to listen to but found unbearable. It was like nails across a chalkboard, I found it intolerable. But I kept trying because I knew I wasn't hearing it. Then after 9/11, it was like a switch went off in my head. Not only did I find I could hear this music but it was extremely cathartic. Ornette Coleman's The Shape of Jazz to Come was now full of beauty and Peter Brötzmann's Machine Gun was seriously swinging. I really owe it all to that one friend who never gave up on me and kept sending me challenging music. I started going to live shows and in particular, Cecil Taylor every time he played. I'm really a huge Cecil fan. The live shows were dramatically cathartic and they taught me how to be present. Made me a better person in all my relationships.

Cadence: What led up to you starting a record label?

Reilly: I met Mike Panico standing in line at Tonic and the Stone. The Stone was curated, you couldn't get a gig there unless you were asked. After Tonic closed we started talking about running a venue, we talked about that whenever we ran into each other, and that eventually morphed into starting a label. We knew most of the artists that played (in that scene) and we were naive enough to start a CD label just as CDs were dying as a medium. Sadly, Mike passed away in 2018. I kept as many of his commitments as I could and released several things that had been in the pipeline. It was a real shock to everyone that knew him - no one saw it coming.

Cadence: What's behind the name Relative Pitch?

Reilly: Mike came up with the name. I didn't care about the name or the logo or any of that stuff, the music was going to make the label. The first name he came up with was Subdominant Records but then he wasn't thrilled with the Google results. Then he came up with Relative Pitch, my friend made the logo and here we are. One thing Mike and I both agreed on early was the idea that our releases would be recognizable. We could easily locate the Impulse CDs and the Black Saint CDs on our shelves so we wanted something uniform that would stand out for our label so we made them with blue spines.

Cadence: How have you financed the label and what are the financial benefits of continuing it?

Reilly: Mike and I started the label with \$5000 each. I paid out of pocket for all the postage for the first 3 years. Eventually, it started paying for itself. Bandcamp was helpful. I have a storage unit that I pay \$350 a month for out of my pocket because for the first 6-7 years we pressed 1000 copies of every release. Now I'm pressing 500 or 350 and it's much more manageable.

Cadence: *What's your goal in running the label and how do you measure success?*

Reilly: The only goal is to get this music as far and wide out into the world as possible. I'm a fan and I join together with an artist to put this music out. Both the artist and the label have expenses and we both put it up on Bandcamp so that we both have revenue streams. Once the record is out, it is a success.

Cadence: *How have you decided what to release?*

Reilly: I'm a fan, first and foremost. The music has to resonate with me. Why would I put out something that I wasn't excited about? Right now I'm working almost two years ahead. The 2023 schedule has been full since May. I'm hoping to cut it back in 2024. I really poured myself into the label during the pandemic when there were no shows and 2023 still reflects those days. In 2019 the identity of the label took a sharper focus. I wanted to give some younger people opportunities and I wanted to commit to a few massively talented artists who I believed were criminally under-recognized. The label right now has three artists it will continue to release each year until I get hit by a bus. Susan Alcorn, Jessica Pavone, and Zeena Parkins. I hope to put out at least one record a year by each of them, that's the plan. So in 2027 if there are not 5 more releases from each of them then I will have failed.

Cadence: *How did you deal with the pandemic?*

Reilly: In early 2020, after live music shut down, the initial excitement over livestreams dissipated pretty quickly for me due to the fact that livestreams did not provide the catharsis of being at a live show with its intersubjective participation. So I really focused on the label and ended up doubling the number of releases that were scheduled for 2022-2023. I poured all my time and energy into the label. So 2022 had around 20 releases and 2023 will have closer to 30. I'm guessing I will cut back but it's a privilege to get these recordings out. It's not just that I had more time, the artists were also looking for outlets. Ironically the label has thrived through this pandemic. In March of 2020 with the help of Jessica Hallock I got the whole catalog up on Bandcamp. That was a boost. Since I was not going to shows, I spent a lot of time watching livestreams, listening to videos people sent me, and watching Instagram videos. Brandon Lopez sent me a clip of Amidea Clotet and I reached out. She sent me some solo stuff and over a year or so had a beautiful record. I first saw Signe Emmeluth at a festival put on by Ingebrigt Håker Flaten. I tuned in to watch Maja Ratkje and left the TV on and was just blown away by Signe's solo set. That performance is what we put out on the solo CD.

Cadence: *Were there any new difficulties the pandemic created such as cost or*

supply chain issues or anything that you had to negotiate with or deal with?

Reilly: I manufacture all the CDs in Poland with Monotype and they have been terrific. Apart from some very modest delays, the only real issue during the pandemic was that after the George Floyd murder, we did a blackout which altered the release schedule. I delayed releasing new material after the murder until October. I had one already in motion but everything else was put on hold. It didn't feel right to proceed business as usual after such a gross display of inhumanity. So, the label basically went silent for 3 months. Prices have increased for me but that doesn't get passed along to the people who buy CDs. We have to protect the people who support the music.

Cadence: How do you identify artists to record?

Reilly: Since the death of my label partner, all the releases are things that I like. I have broad taste, I like Free Jazz, Noise, some minimalism and some new music. All of these categories serve heuristic purposes, they don't really tell you much about what you are hearing. Early on, I struggled to move away from intellectualizing the music so I don't really ever ask why I like something, if it resonates I go with it. But the label is really about artist relationships. You and I briefly discussed our mutual admiration of Nick Cave but Nick Cave is not one thing, his early stuff is punkish and he evolved through many phases into the looping minimalist stage he's into now. That is how I see many of the label's artists. I like the first thing I hear and then I wonder where they will go. So, a lot of the artists have multiple releases with the label but the label has no proprietary claims. I am first and foremost a fan. People send me music and sometimes I suggest bigger European labels that have state funding and real budgets. I'm not supporting a release, I'm trying to support an artist over time with potential for multiple releases. And after they have some success hopefully they can move on to bigger and better funded labels

Cadence: You've lucked into discovering some artists by chance by combing the internet. Would you give some examples of that and the response of the artists when you offered them the opportunity to record?

Reilly: There are stories behind every release and ultimately a relationship. In 2020, the label released its first record by someone I had never met, Signe Emmeluth's Hi Hello, I'm Signe. I saw that performance on a livestream and that's what came out. It's a beautiful solo record. I love that record. 2020 also saw the release of Hermione Johnson's Tremble. Hermione is from New Zealand, an incredible pianist. Magda Mayas introduced us. Magda also introduced me to Christine Abdelnour. Christine turned me on to the amazing vocalist Agnes Hvizdalek. It's all connected. The first time I met gabby fluke-mogul was through their playing with Nava Dunkelman. I saw Nava play with William Winant at the old Stone more than ten years ago and I became an instant fan. Nava and gabby came to play in New York in September of 2019. I met gabby and they told me they were moving to New York. I gave them my number and they texted me the day they landed at JFK about a week

before the lockdown! Everything was canceled. So gabby and I went into the studio, masked, just gabby, me and Jason Rostkowski, the engineer. We did that four times, twice solo, once with Joanna Mattrey, which was just released in December, and once with Nava, which will be out in the spring. I've been looking at YouTube videos. I had a link to a YouTube video, I do not recall the specifics, I watched less than a minute and then clicked away and hopped in the shower. While I was in the shower, I had this scraping, textured inside piano playing in my head, but again, I forgot about it. Then when I got in bed late that night, I heard that piano playing again and had to reconstruct where I had heard that. I found the video in my YouTube watch history and within 48 hours was texting with Marta Warelis. That really is the norm - the music grabs me, something takes ahold.

Cadence: How active are you as the executive producer? Are you giving feedback to artists? Have you rejected projects and asked for something else? What's the extent of your involvement in the finished product including artwork?

Reilly: I do not like to be involved in artistic decisions. I am a fan. I have rejected things but mostly because they were too short or in some cases it did not resonate with me. I just was not hearing the music come together. My goal is to establish a relationship of trust with an artist. I'm going to continue releasing Jessica Pavone solo CDs until I am struck by lightning. And I know I will love what she does ahead of time. She's an artist, criminally under recognized, and she's two steps ahead always of what I'm even capable of imagining. Susan Alcorn just sent me a track from a project she is working on. She sent it to my phone. I spent hours listening in awe to this one piece. She has vision, she can see things I cannot. Zeena [Parkins] just sent me the new Glass Triangle recording. I was there in the studio when that was recorded. How that session became the masterpiece of the recording is beyond my grasp. It's an overused word but its genius. And I have the privilege of often being surrounded by it. When did Tim Berne's first record come out? 1978? 1979? I see Tim often. After 40+ years, he's lost none of his passion. He has this incredible body of work behind him and his music still has this searching edge. He's still playing with new people. In the movie Amadeus, Salieri curses God because God gave him the ability to recognize genius but not the ability to produce it. For me, it's a great thing to be able to recognize genius in others - it's a gift. That's all I have, my ears, and I've learned to trust them. So, I don't have to constantly see who is hot and try to finagle a recording. I couldn't do that.

Cadence: In our talks leading up to this you've made it clear that you are not driven by the thought of sales.

Reilly: At no stage in the process of releasing a CD do I ask myself if a particular release will sell. It's not on my radar at all. I am interested in supporting artists and their projects. And so far, so good. I love these releases, if someone else put them out, I would buy them.

Cadence: How do you publicize your label and your releases?

Reilly: I don't use a publicist, I can't afford one. Instead I've compiled a list of writers I send promos to and I'm trying to cultivate a group of writers who do not typically write about this music. I have been focusing on good writing more than pitching the music to them. It's a work in progress. I do think we need some fresh blood and more diversity among the writers.

Cadence: What's the future look like for Relative Pitch?

Reilly: The future is wide open. Right now I am very excited by the new Glass Triangle recording by Zeena Parkins, Mette Rasmussen and Ryan Sawyer. Just today I heard a track from a forthcoming Susan Alcorn release recorded in Chile and the level of the music is astounding. Working with these amazing artists is a constant source of inspiration. I'm so eager to help get this out into the world. There may be a few lifestyle changes going forward. If I go to a show in NY, just the gas and tolls round trip are now \$50. If I resume my pre-pandemic schedule and go out to see this music only 200 nights, that's \$10,000 just in gas and tolls. That's entirely out of pocket. I have never taken a cent from the label. I will need to seriously reconsider going that often to see live music. I'm wondering if I could get by with 100 nights out. Maybe I will go to see some European friends play. There are vibrant scenes in Buenos Aires and Mexico City that I might like to visit. One of the positive things I can say about the digital distribution of music is that it is global. The label received an average of 10 submissions a week, much of that from international artists. 2023 will see releases from artists in Uruguay, Peru, Argentina, as well as Spain, Italy and New Zealand. The medium may change but the art forms of improvised and avant-garde musics are thriving. We need to think outside the box about the best ways to support the artists.



Kevin Reilly - Photo credit
© Ken Weiss

The Jazz Angel of Seattle

By Bill Donaldson

I went to Seattle. I shopped at Bud's Jazz Records in Pioneer Square. I bought a Lucky Strikes CD. Bud Young, the owner, upsold me on some more CD's recorded by local jazz talent. After I demonstrated my jazz preference with the purchase of the Lucky Thompson recording, Mr. Young made conversation with the out-of-towner. He said, "Lucky lives here in town." "I know," I replied. "Where?" He confessed, "I don't know. You'd have to ask the Jazz Angel." Said I, "The Jazz Angel? Who's that?" "She's Lola Pedrini," Mr. Young revealed.

So I talked to the Jazz Angel of Seattle.

Ms. Pedrini approved a draft of this interview for accuracy before publication.

CADENCE: *Who gave you the nickname of "the Jazz Angel?"*

PEDRINI: That I don't know. It just developed over time. John Gilbreath [the executive director of Earshot Jazz Society of Seattle] and the Earshot people probably used it. But who actually began that name, I don't know. I've been called "the Jazz Mother" too—not "Mutha," but "Mother." [Laughs]

CADENCE: *If they call you the "Jazz Mother," do you mind if I ask how old you are?*

PEDRINI: I'm going to be 61 tomorrow.

CADENCE: *Happy birthday. Is anything planned for your birthday?*

PEDRINI: I have a Victory Music board meeting tomorrow night, and I'm president. So I have to be there. [Laughs] So that's my birthday.

CADENCE: *What's Victory Music?*

PEDRINI: Victory Music started out as a musicians' co-op almost thirty years ago in Tacoma. It's a folk and jazz organization. It progressed through many different venues. In the late seventies, I got involved with [Victory Music]. I should have been involved many years earlier. My best friend knew the man who started the organization years before, but she couldn't seem to get me involved. I was too busy raising kids and working. I got involved because of the jazz aspect of it. They had jazz two nights a week at a restaurant in Auburn. It's an all-volunteer organization. They do some wonderful things. First of all, they have a referral for musicians that is unique. The organization refers three or four names of musicians for gigs to anyone who calls. We figure we put at least \$250,000 worth of gigs through this organization to other people over the period of a year, and we're trying to get that up. Our goal is \$1 million. But it's primarily folk musicians—acoustic music. We don't do any rock. The only instrument that is not miked would be the bass. Everything else is all acoustic. That's the goal of this organization: to continue acoustic music.

CADENCE: *Are those jobs placed only in the Pacific Northwest?*

PEDRINI: Yes, just in the Pacific Northwest for the most part.

CADENCE: *Do you ever bring in outside people?*

PEDRINI: Not very often, no. We review CD's and videos that come through from nationally known musicians. But primarily the music we bring in is for

Northwest musicians.

CADENCE: *Do you have your own newsletter?*

PEDRINI: There's a 36-page newsletter that's involved with this.

CADENCE: *And you're involved with Jazz Alley in Seattle too.*

PEDRINI: It's because I like the music. I also run the condos. I'm the quote-unquote "caretaker" for the condos that the musicians stay in when they play at Jazz Alley.

CADENCE: *Does the owner of Jazz Alley own the condominiums too?*

PEDRINI: Yes.

CADENCE: *What does being the "caretaker" there involve?*

PEDRINI: It involves cleaning them up, setting them up, keeping the places running. When anything goes wrong, I'm there to turn the water off if the water heater breaks. I have to be there when they move in and to answer all of their questions and to try to keep them happy and content while they're here. Once they move in, the place is theirs. I do not become the chambermaid or anything like that. They have their own washers and dryers here. So they're on their own after they get here.

CADENCE: *Do you live near the condominiums?*

PEDRINI: I live in the building. On Monday nights, I work at Jazz Alley for Earshot. I started doing it because I wanted to keep Jazz Alley's costs down so that they would be able to keep the venue for us. It started on Sunday nights. And so if the costs were kept down, then John [Gilbreath] would feel that he could do it. [Jazz Alley] was dark one night a week anyway prior to that. And then we started doing really well on Sunday nights with it. So then the owner [John Dimitriou] changed us to Monday nights because that way he was able to keep some of the [nationally known] people if they had a full house on Saturday night. He could offer them that same gig on Sunday.

CADENCE: *Has anything interesting ever happened to you while you took care of the condominiums?*

PEDRINI: Oh, yes. Most of those things I don't retain because I don't like to go around and gossip about things. One time, though, [a musician] called me at the crack of dawn to tell me there was steam coming out of his kitchen cabinets. It turned out to be a blown hot water tank. The darnedest thing was that the apartment was next to mine, and I got the water. He didn't. The water came into my apartment. I had to go and turn the water off. As I ran out, I realized this had been going on for a while. When I ran out of my bedroom door barefooted, my carpet was wet. Obviously, the water goes downhill, and I'm at the lower end of the building or something. And then I had to keep calming him down because he was afraid to go to sleep. He was afraid the whole place was going to burn down.

CADENCE: *Did you have a place to move him to?*

PEDRINI: There was no problem in his apartment. He was just little afraid. I said, "No, the building isn't going to burn down. First of all, the water's turned off, and secondly, that's steam. That's just hot water, not smoke."

CADENCE: *Have the musicians sent you on any errands while they were there?*

PEDRINI: Well, actually, Phyllis Hyman was here, and two weeks later, she committed suicide. I got real close to them. They were neat people.

CADENCE: *Who was with her?*

PEDRINI: She had a lady here who took care of her and who actually shared the penthouse with her. The woman she had with her was really very supportive. Every day, we ran errands and bought groceries and bought clothing. It was a 2-1/2-hour stint every single day. I don't ordinarily do that. But I just connected with [Hyman]. I really liked her! I didn't realize she was in trouble until she left. She autographed a little book I have here for my daughter. In there, she wrote something and handed [the book] to me closed, and I didn't read it until after she left. Then I read it, and I realized that she was in trouble. I didn't know it prior to that. I didn't get that from her at all.

CADENCE: What did she write?

PEDRINI: Just simply how she should be respected. I'm looking for it, but I don't see it now. Here it is. "Your mom is the best. My mom is gone, and I will never get the opportunity to tell her I love her and will forever miss her." And she wrote: "Love her," meaning me. She said: "Love her, care for her, and remember that when she's gone, that's it. God bless you."

CADENCE: That must have been a shock when you read about the suicide.

PEDRINI: Yes. It was, and it wasn't. I immediately called her friend who was with her. She was in Chicago then. I talked to her for probably an hour and a half. She was there at the time [of the suicide]. Phyllis had sent her out on an errand that would take too long to save her. When she came back, [Hyman] was gone. [Hyman] had all the doors locked, and she didn't have any way of getting in. By the time she got in, [Hyman] was gone. That was the day they were having a tribute to her in New York. That was what was so ironic about that whole thing: She did it before the tribute.

CADENCE: Did she cause any problems for you in Seattle?

PEDRINI: No. Oh, she was such a professional! [Hyman] would go [to Jazz Alley] very early in the afternoon, like 4:30, and she would dress and greet the people. She would walk around the restaurant from table to table and introduce herself and talk to the people. She probably talked to maybe fifty tables. Then she'd go back into the dressing room, finish dressing for the show, and then go on stage. Most of the nights, she would be out there telling them "good bye" and "thank you" when they left. She was just such a gracious person. I've been told many times in the last few weeks especially that, "Yeah, Lola, So-and-So would do that just for show because they would know you'd tell everybody how they reacted. How they stood in line to pay a door fee at a benefit for another musician when he could have just as easily handed you the money from backstage." I've been told many times that I see things differently—that I pick up the cause and do things that will benefit them in the long run. So what they're telling me is that I'm seeing things through rose-colored glasses, I guess. I always thought I saw the glass half empty. I was forever sticking on things. You know, "It could have been this way or it should have been that way" instead of saying that "this is so great." I'm always picking on the things that didn't work and how we could have made them better. That's how I thought I perceived things. Maybe what we see of ourselves and what other people see are two different things.

CADENCE: I see that you're the treasurer of Earshot too.

PEDRINI: Yes, I didn't go to the last meeting—I was gone for a few days—and

they renamed me treasurer. They didn't ask me. They just did it. I was one of the original board members when Earshot was created.

CADENCE: *Who created it?*

PEDRINI: There were three people who actually started the publication: Paul de Barros, Gary Bannister and Allen Youngblood. They created the publication knowing that in the long term they wanted to become a non-profit organization. But the newsletter came first to promote the music and what was going on a little better. The newspapers weren't doing it. The Seattle Times just does not cover much jazz. One of the founders, Paul, writes for The Seattle Times. We have had two or three reviews in the Times. Paul decided the [jazz reviews] weren't getting out enough and that we needed another way of doing it. So when they first formed the board, Paul asked me if I would be on the board because he knew about my involvement with Victory Music. So I sat in with that first echelon of people who started [Earshot].

CADENCE: *Are you involved with the Earshot Jazz Festival too?*

PEDRINI: Yes. I've been quote-unquote "the box office." I have been doing the box office since it started. I sort of evolved and continued to do that. There's a story that goes with that one. Three years ago, I had an old '82 Toronado, and it needed gas a lot. I had always taken the box office home at night and justified it and rectified it and got all the numbers together and made up the new bank for the next night because we were doing two weeks in a row. I made out the bank deposit and everything. At that time, I wasn't living in the city, so my trunk looked like the KMart cart, you know. You open up the trunk, and the whole trunk is full of clothes and files. It was just full of everything. I went to get gas at a gas station on the way to the Earshot office, and I had the bank and all the money in the trunk of the car. I filled up the gas tank and walked over to pay for the gas. Meanwhile, a car got between me and my car. I went to pay for it, and the guy in front of me [in line] was having a difficult time with his credit card. So it took too long. I turned around and went back to my car and it was gone. Someone had stolen the car because the keys were in the ignition. It wasn't more than 25 feet away from me at most. So of course, I'm panicking and screaming in the middle of the parking lot. Everyone was looking at this fool in the parking lot. No one saw my car leave. It turned out that they found my car a day later not far from there behind some buildings. The windows were still open. My purse was still on the seat of the car. [The thief] had dumped it. A whole big coin purse of quarters was in there. He hadn't taken them. And the car keys were gone. The money was buried in the trunk. If you opened it, you would never have seen it. Nothing had been taken from the trunk of the car. There was well over \$1000 to \$1500 in cash there—credit cards, checks, whatever. Anyway, somebody was looking out for me, I'll tell you. The man had thrown the car keys in the weeds or something so that no one else could steal the car. It had a full tank of gas. It could have gone a long way. That's another reason they say that I'm an angel, as if somebody was looking out for me because I wasn't looking out for myself. [Laughs]

CADENCE: *Are you a native of Washington state?*

PEDRINI: I am a native of the area—moss behind my ears and web feet. I was born in Tacoma and was raised in the Green River Valley near Auburn. I lived

most of my life in Enumclaw near Mount Rainier.

CADENCE: *When did you develop your interest in music?*

PEDRINI: I've always liked jazz, but I never really cultivated it. I went to work when I was 21 years old for the Liquor Board and worked all my life and raised five kids. So pretty much, I worked and did PTA as everyone else did, and I became president of that. When arthritis got the best of me, I had to quit the job. I became very bored, having worked over twenty years. My son brought home a Victory Music newsletter, and it had a picture of Yvonne Griffin on the cover. He said, "Mom, I think you might be interested in this." At that time, the music was in Auburn, which was only about fifteen miles from my house. So I went there, and the man at the door, Chris Lunn—who started Victory Music and had kept it going all those years—was a very perceptive man. Immediately, I found me a seat, and we talked for a little bit and he told me to come back because So-and-So was going to be there the following week. He knew I would enjoy that. He got me involved doing little things at the restaurant itself. They did their newsletter there. Volunteers actually collated it and folded it when they had music scheduled. They got me involved as a volunteer, and that was the beginning of the end. [Laughs] I became a staunch volunteer for them. I did their trad jazz column for a little while. "Doctor Jazz," it was called. I can't write, and so I hemorrhaged from my fingernails every month trying to get this little column written. I did it for quite a while. I always had to go back and read my column. I was given the information, and then [Lunn] would add things to it. I always had to make sure I read my column to know what I had written. [Laughs] I became a Victory Music board member in the late '70's, and I've been a board member ever since. I went through a major accident. I was run over by my own motor home. The transmission slipped, and one wheel went across my face and my chest, and the other wheel went over my legs. I watched the other wheel go over my legs. I did not lose consciousness. I spent six weeks in [Harborview Medical Center] and a number of months recuperating. I got a leave of absence from the board. Rather than get rid of me, they put me on a leave.

CADENCE: *Did you ever play any instruments?*

PEDRINI: No. I never did. The phonograph and CD player are my speed.

CADENCE: *Bud said that Lucky Thompson lives in Seattle. Do you know him?*

PEDRINI: Oh, yes! I met him at Jazz Alley when Johnny Griffin was here. There was this Black man with hiking boots and a backpack sitting in a booth. Johnny Griffin was standing in front of the table with his horn around his neck. And the look on his face! I had never met Johnny Griffin before, but the admiration on his face! I mean, I saw this when I walked in. I said to the man who walked in with me, "Who is he talking to? Look at the admiration on his face! He's just glowing." He looked over and said, "Well, that looks like Lucky Thompson." So we sat down. The man I was with knew Johnny. Johnny said, "Look who's here." I sat down, and I talked to Lucky quite a bit that night. I found him to be such a charming man with this twist of something in talking to him. I couldn't quite get hold of it. I found out later that he was sick, and he had this concept of people and of.... Well, he's paranoid.

CADENCE: *Was it paranoia or cynicism?*

PEDRINI: I think it was a little bit of both.

CADENCE: *He doesn't like people?*

PEDRINI: He doesn't trust people. But he was talking to me about the earth and the sea and about how he would walk from place to place. He lived up on Beacon Hill at the time, but he would go all the way to West Seattle. He'd be down in Ballard, and he'd walk along the beaches. He'd go to Lake Washington. This is a long distance in Seattle, at least three miles. He may have walked ten to twelve miles in a day. He didn't bus. He just walked it. He's a very healthy man. I sensed this religious thing from him, but it didn't involve God. I had the funniest feeling. I didn't see him again for a while. And then because of Buddy Catlett, I became more and more involved with him. [Catlett] would say, "You should go see Lucky. You should see how he's doing. You should see what's happening with him." Buddy Catlett used to be a bass player with Count Basie and with Louis Armstrong until Pops died. He lives in Seattle. He was from Seattle, but he lived in Brooklyn for 25 or thirty years. He was with Chico Freeman, and he was on those Quincy Jones records that came out of Paris with Clark Terry. So [Catlett] knew him. He just didn't have the time [to help Thompson]. I started going out and visiting Lucky. He was up on Beacon Hill in a little shack. It didn't have running water. It didn't have electricity. But he loved to work in the yard and the garden.

CADENCE: *Did he own the property?*

PEDRINI: He didn't own it. There was a couple who were living here in the city who allowed him to live on the property. They met Lucky in a park. I don't think they knew who Lucky was at the time. I think they found out later. They offered Lucky this property so that he could stay there. Lucky maintained the property for a long time, but there was nothing there for him. It was just a shack. The yard was just beautiful. I mean, he had the yard all nice and cleaned up. He had taken the blackberries and woven them into this wonderful fence. It was about a foot high with all these old dead blackberries. [The property owners] finally had to put Lucky off the property. Lucky got a hose and turned the water on. The water pipes were all so corroded that the water was leaking from the pipes and going underneath the house and going down the hill below it. [The property owners] said that they got this water bill for this ungodly amount of money. Even though [Thompson] had his hose off, the water was running underground from all of those old pipes. Lucky kept saying, "I didn't have the water on. I didn't have the water on." But what he was saying was that "I didn't have the water running." Actually, he had turned it on at the meter out in the street. So consequently, it was running. He was fortunate that the people down below didn't lose the foundation to their house. Anyway, [the property owners] finally had to put him off that property.

CADENCE: *Where did he go?*

PEDRINI: Back to the street. That's where he was prior to moving onto that property. He was just living on the streets with a shopping cart with his things in it.

CADENCE: *Did anyone at that time know him?*

PEDRINI: A lot of people here knew him, but the street people didn't know who he was. And the people dealing out on the streets didn't know who he was. They left him alone. He didn't stay downtown that much. Beacon Hill is

south of town up on the hill. He was out away from people. He doesn't deal well with people. He ended up passing out, and the neighbors called 911. They took him to Harborview and treated his legs. His legs were full of sores. They treated him and put him back out on the street. They found him again and realized that time that there was something else wrong. On the second trip to Harborview, they threw him into the psych ward. I'm not sure how many months he was in there. There were daily visits on a monthly basis to try to get him out of there.

CADENCE: *How long ago was that?*

PEDRINI: Three years ago.

CADENCE: *Did they diagnose him this time, or did they just let him go without a diagnosis?*

PEDRINI: They diagnosed him as being paranoid.

CADENCE: *Schizophrenic too?*

PEDRINI: No. Just paranoid. Anyway, it was a long, tough stint to get him out of there.

CADENCE: *Usually, doctors try to release patients as soon as the patient has recovered instead of trying to keep them in hospitals.*

PEDRINI: The state institutions, yes. Harborview, no. That's Harborview. I don't know. Once you're admitted—it's a county hospital—they keep you for two weeks. Then you have to come back to be readmitted later. The doctor said that Lucky was ill and a detriment to himself. The doctor was in charge of that ward.

CADENCE: *Why did the doctor think that Lucky was a detriment to himself?*

PEDRINI: Well, Lucky wasn't taking care of himself. He was living on the street.

CADENCE: *But isn't that true of all street people? Hospitals don't have the capacity to admit every homeless person.*

PEDRINI: Thank you! That's what I thought too. It's been a long learning experience. I still don't understand why they insisted on keeping Lucky in the hospital. It's been the most frustrating two months of my whole life. Every day, there was another problem.

CADENCE: *Did Medicare pay for his hospitalization?*

PEDRINI: Yes. Every two weeks, [Medicare] had to review [his status].

CADENCE: *Did you have to contact attorneys to get him out?*

PEDRINI: Oh, God! It was terrible! I contacted a doctor that I know who's a teacher at the University of Washington—a saxophone player who idolizes Lucky. So he became quite involved at the time. And then I got a lawyer, who's also a saxophone player, to help me. All of this was done just out of love.

CADENCE: *Do you remember their names?*

PEDRINI: Yes. The doctor's name was Larry Halpern, and the attorney was Jay Krulewitch. Oh, here's Lucky's picture! Oh my God! I've got it all in front of me now. Anyway, getting him out of Harborview was a really tough situation. The doctor there was so adamant about the fact that [Thompson] should not be going anywhere. He thought he shouldn't be on the street and that he shouldn't be on his own. He thought [Thompson] might have a heart attack. And I said, "Then why aren't you treating him for his heart?" I thought, "OK. Fine. You

aren't doing anything about his heart." Anyway, I got in contact with Jay Krulewitsch, who at the time was a public defender for King County. He in fact helped me find this man, Henry Zimmerman, who actually works at finding people of [Thompson's] nature places to live. And he got the state to pay for his time. He put in a lot more time than he was paid for. He in turn found the living facility that Lucky's in now. He did all of this—went to trial, went to court, had a big hearing, and got him loose on a trial basis. Then in the process of waiting for them to sign these papers, the nurse who was on duty wanted to go home. So she took us across to the building early where the papers were to be signed so that she could hurry up the situation instead of keeping [Thompson] in his room. During that process, they found out that we were in the waiting room. The judge asked Lucky and me to come in. He asked Lucky if he was going to stick to the rules. He told him all these rules. And Lucky said, "No. There isn't anything wrong with me." And all those weeks of work were over within ten seconds! Within the hour, they had an ambulance there, and [Thompson] was on his way to Western State Hospital. I just stood there in the hallway sobbing. I could not believe all the agonizing hours of putting all these people together and getting all of this done would end with having it blown apart in ten seconds. In the end, it was a lot easier to get him out of Western State than Harborview. Meanwhile, [the hospital staff] had him so drugged up. When he came into Seattle for a hearing, I went to see him. I thought he had had a stroke. He could hardly walk.

CADENCE: *Do you know what medications were administered?*

PEDRINI: I'm not sure. Haldol® and a combination of many things. All he kept saying to me was [speaking very slowly and deeply], "Lola. I can't think. I can't walk." I was just devastated. But there was a lawyer who works through the state: Jack McNish. This man knew who Lucky was. My role in this whole thing, I felt, was to get the people who were caretaking him to know that this wasn't just a street person—a crazy man. He was a legend and a grand person. He's so very charming. So that was my goal in all these places: to get him better care by getting him some of the respect that the other quote-unquote "crazy people" weren't getting. I couldn't go to Tacoma [near the location of Western State Hospital in Lakewood] then as often as I did in Seattle [the location of Harborview Medical Center]. When I did [visit Thompson], he'd be angry at me for not seeing him as often. He liked it out there. Their grounds are beautiful at Western State. It's a beautiful place, except that [the patients] can go out on the grounds only in groups and they can only do it for an hour a day. They can't just roam around. He would have been willing just to roam around and come in and out every night. As far as I know, he hasn't slept in a bed for years. He sleeps in a chair now. Before that, he used to sleep on upside-down five-gallon buckets in a doorway when he lived in that shack on Beacon Hill. When [the property owners] put him off that place, he still went up there and was sitting in that doorway at night. Anyway, I'm digressing. Getting him out of [Western State Hospital] was a lot easier than it was for Harborview. Jack McNish worked hard to do it. Actually, that young man took Lucky home with him over the [Christmas] holidays, and he had two young children at home. That's how adamant this attorney was about getting Lucky out of the hospital. He said that Western State would dope [Lucky] up, and they did. [McNish's]

wife was religious, and his mother was religious, but he wasn't. But when he let Lucky stay with him that year, he ended up going to church with his wife and children and mother—and even his mother-in-law! That's the effect that Lucky's stay had on him. Working on getting Lucky's release was the most frustrating, ugly situation I've ever experienced. I was appalled and amazed! I had already found this [assisted living] facility to begin with because Henry Zimmerman was hired and because the woman who ran this facility was so gracious and wonderful. She loves the blues herself. She kept the room for [Thompson]. So when he was able to get out of Western State, she still was glad to have him come in. She has just been an absolute Godsend. I met with her once to make sure they would take him before he left Harborview and again when it was a done deal. She has kept him there ever since. When he first came out of [Western State Hospital], they cut down on his medications. He became a wonderful person, and we took him out to Jazz Alley a number of times. He was so gracious and so wonderful.

CADENCE: But he wouldn't play?

PEDRINI: Oh, no. He'll never play again. But that's when Stanley [Turrentine] and he got together. I brought him [to the condominium], and he and Stanley visited in the apartment for a long time. And then he went off the medications. He became the Lucky I knew before. He was a different person. Since then during this last summer, he has had another bout with his legs. We had to send him to the hospital. He gets sores on his legs. Also, when he went off the medications, he wouldn't use water. He ate all of his meals, but he wouldn't bathe. I think [lack of bathing] had something to do with his skin condition too. His circulation isn't very good in his legs, I believe. When they put him in the hospital, they put him back on the medications. The last I knew, he was still on the medications. The woman who runs the assisted living facility got him back out [of the hospital] again. She went to court for him and was able to bring him back to live there again. It's like a nursing home, but he can go in and out on his own. It's not very big. He doesn't leave his room much. He's doing a little more now that he's on the medications again.

CADENCE: What brought Lucky to Seattle?

PEDRINI: He came here from Denver. He was in Denver for a while, and then he was in California. Actually, before he came up here, he was going to live in Oregon. He went to Oregon, and the karma wasn't right. He ended up coming here. When he left the East Coast, he had a station wagon fully loaded. When he arrived here, he had lost most of his [possessions].

CADENCE: Did he sell the car?

PEDRINI: I don't know. I've never been able to get that answer.

CADENCE: He came to Seattle around ten years ago?

PEDRINI: Yes. I don't pry, though.

CADENCE: Does he ever see his children?

PEDRINI: His daughter was here a year or two ago. I understand that his son [Darryl] may come to see him this year. He's a guitar player in Chicago. Darryl sent him a flute. After [the property owners] put Lucky off that property, they found a paper bag out there, and they thought it was garbage. But inside of it was a plastic bag, and inside the plastic bag was a rusty flute that Darryl

had given him. We were actually looking for it because he had sent it to [the property owners], and they took it to Lucky.

CADENCE: *A lot of people have said that Lucky dropped out of music because producers took advantage of him. Do you think he dropped out because of a gradual health decline in addition to the fact that he had bad luck with the producers?*

PEDRINI: I think the producers and his own attitude with the people in charge were his demise. In talking to Bags and all the people who knew [Lucky] years ago.... I've talked to Frank Morgan a number of times, and he told me the same thing. He said [Lucky] had that problem thirty years ago, and he wasn't able to overcome it.

CADENCE: *James Moody referred to Lucky in a Down Beat "Blindfold Test." He said, "That sounds like Lucky Thompson. Lucky was bad. He could play some stuff, and that was a good while back. He didn't take anything from anybody from a standpoint of all he wanted was to be a man and play.... He's a bag person now in Seattle because he wouldn't take any crap from anybody."*¹

PEDRINI: He knew exactly what he was talking about when he mentioned Lucky's problems with producers. He knew about all the stories that people have said. There have been so many stories about Lucky since he came out here.

CADENCE: *There are a lot of rumors about Lucky on the Internet.*

PEDRINI: The Internet is one of the worst sources of gossip that I've ever seen.

CADENCE: *I've read messages on the Internet that Lucky is living on the streets or that he's playing sax again or that he's in the hospital or that he's near death.*

PEDRINI: Right. See, he was in the streets, and he was in the hospital. But nobody knows the real truth. There's a new CD out called Lord Lord I Wanna Know. Its producer [Alan Bates] called me. He must have made twenty telephone calls to Seattle—twenty, at least. He talked to different people who didn't know anything about Lucky's life here. Not one person knew anything about Lucky until he got ahold of Buddy Catlett. Not one person [except for Catlett] told him to call me. Not one person!

CADENCE: *I have an Internet message here that discussed Moody's comments in the "Blindfold Test." The person ends the message by writing, "Is there anyone out there in Seattle that can confirm or deny Moody's comment on Lucky as a bag person? Please say it isn't so." And then there was this response: "I live in Seattle and have numerous contacts in the jazz community. Upon very reliable information from these contacts, I can assure you that Mr. Thompson is not homeless. He is housed, fed, warm, and dry here. In fairness to Mr. Moody, his claim was possibly true a few years ago. We can be thankful that the situation has changed." It's signed by "Ernie S."*

PEDRINI: Yes, Ernie called me before he sent that message. If anyone would just call me, I'd tell them the truth. See, I found out later that someone went to Bud. Lucky was just hospitalized this spring. I called him before he went into the hospital, and I called him when he got out again. So this person went to Bud and told Bud that Lucky was in the hospital, that he was near death, that he was going to lose his legs, that they were going to send him back to the

state institution. I called the manager at the assisted living facility and asked, "What's going on?" I told her what happened. She said, "He didn't call me. He may have talked to one of the staff. But they're not supposed to be answering those questions. They would tell you because they know you. But they're not supposed to tell anyone else."

CADENCE: *I have a copy of Daniel Brecker's radio interview with Lucky in 1995. He interviewed Lucky for an hour and played some of his music. Lucky was talking about Miles and Dizzy and everyone else. He had good recollection, but he seemed to tie it in with something like the transcendence of music. Did the interview take place at the assisted living facility?*

PEDRINI: Yes.

CADENCE: *That's what I thought because I could hear voices and noise in the background.*

PEDRINI: Lucky said, "I may talk to [Brecker], but call me tomorrow and I'll see." Well, just like with the dentist, he changes his mind just about at the time it's supposed to happen. Lucky in his regular routine at the last minute decided that he didn't want to do the interview. Daniel showed up anyway.

CADENCE: *It was gracious of Lucky to go ahead with the interview.*

PEDRINI: Yes, he's a very gracious man. If you could talk to him, you would understand why he took so much of my life for a year. I can't tell you why I did it. He's an intelligent man who needed help. And at that particular time, I felt that that's why I was put in that position. That's why Jay Krulewitch stepped in front of me about two months prior to Lucky being put in a psychiatric ward. One night I stopped somewhere, and this man pulled up and introduced himself to me. He told me that he knew I knew Lucky and so forth and so on. Two months later, I needed this man very much. It wasn't like he came into the scene after Lucky was hospitalized. It was before. And so I just felt that these things were put there for a reason and that if I ignored those reasons, I'd be a fool. I felt that God has a way of doing things and that this was his way and that I was meant to do it.

CADENCE: *Do you think Lucky would be willing to be interviewed?*

PEDRINI: Oh no. He doesn't want to talk to people. And yet, once he gets started, he's fine sometimes. His answers may ramble. That's what happens. I think in talking to him, it would get worse. He starts from being very focused, and then the conversation starts deteriorating. The thing is, though, once you go to see him, you never get to leave. It would be a long stint before you could leave him. He just doesn't want anyone to leave. He tells me about how people were [sigh] monitoring us through the telephone lines and how he couldn't call me on the phone. So I had to go see him because he wouldn't call me. Bags wanted to see him when he was here, and [Lucky] said he would do it. It turned out that [Lucky] wouldn't meet him. I got him out [of the assisted living facility] after a period of time to go to Jazz Alley a few times. That's how he got the saxophone from Stanley [Turrentine]. Stanley gave him a balanced-action Selmer. He had just got it out of the shop. He just had it redone, and he sent it out here to me. I gave it to Lucky, and Lucky put the mouthpiece on it and fingered it. Then he gave it to me, and I put it in my car. That was it. He didn't want it. He said he would lose it if he took it back to where he was living. And he kept saying he couldn't play it because of his teeth.

CADENCE: *He has dental issues?*

PEDRINI: I guess so. I never have figured that one out. I meant to get his teeth fixed. I made an appointment for the day before Thanksgiving. Now this man has a memory like you cannot believe. The night before [the appointment], he called me and told me he couldn't make the appointment. [Laughs] I expected [the cancellation] to happen.

CADENCE: *Have you ever tried to drive him somewhere for his own good?*

PEDRINI: Oh, you don't force him. It's a whole process to get him to do anything to begin with. Once you do, you're never sure. To go see Lucky, you block out the whole day. If you get out of it in less than a day, then that's all icing on the cake and you can do what you want for the rest of the day.

CADENCE: *He talks the whole day?*

PEDRINI: Right. Yes.

CADENCE: *Have you helped anyone else in Seattle besides Lucky?*

PEDRINI: I helped Denney Goodhew get his new teeth. He's a saxophone player, and he had major major mouth problems. Sandra Burlingame decided that she was going to do a major fund raiser for him. We put that all together and got at least \$10,000 to \$12,000. That was three years ago.

CADENCE: *About the same time as Lucky's problems.*

PEDRINI: Real close! [Laughs] My kids kind of wondered what happened to their mother. They knew she was in the street somewhere; they just didn't know where.

CADENCE: *Is there anything else that you think is significant about the Seattle jazz community for the interview?*

PEDRINI: I work with Earshot, and two or three times now they have put music in the schools through a state arts commission grant. I can't tell you which grant it is right now. We've been using the 493, which is the old Black union and which is now amalgamated and is called the 76/493 Union. This went on for two weeks...two gigs a day, three days a week. So I worked to coordinate and keep it going and get the people there. I became the "den mother." I went with a Seattle band to Europe a couple of years ago. I bought my own ticket and was going to become a tourist. It turned out that the airport in Vancouver had changed. The international flights were on a different floor from the rest of them. I ended up with all the band's gear in two East Indian cab drivers' vehicles. One spoke English and one didn't. The band was in another rig. I ended up getting all the stuff on the airplane without the musicians. I held the plane for a half hour because I couldn't find the musicians. It turned out that they were in the United Airlines terminal on the ground level while I was in International. After that little stint of having the plane held and getting the musicians back together again and on the plane, I became their road manager. When we got to Europe, I got an eight-o'clock-in-the-morning phone call from the Elmer Gill, the band leader. He asked me if he could hire me as the road manager, seeing as how I could get them out of the country.

CADENCE: *It seems that what I've heard from you exemplifies the modest generosity of the jazz community.*

PEDRINI: That's the whole thing. You find this in the jazz community, but you find it in other music communities...maybe in the folk community too. Jazz

brings a different heart and a different soul to it than you get in any other kind of music. It comes from a different walk of life. I met Benny Carter when he was here in town. Of course, that was a few years ago. I thought, "I wish I had known him fifty years ago." He is such a beautiful human being, and he'll tell you the way it is. He won't put you down if you're wrong, but he'll tell you in a very nice manner that that wasn't right and that this is the way it is. And he won't cut you by doing it. Every once in a while, the phone will ring, and he'll say, "This is Benny Carter." I get tears in my eyes just to hear him call or have him visit. I try to ask him how he is, and he says, "No. I called you. I want to know how you are and what you're doing and what's going on." I try to turn it around, and he says, "Lola...." And I think, "Yes, sir!" And it's things like that that make jazz so special—that make this whole thing so special.

Interviewed in July, 1997
Lucky Thompson died on July 30, 2005.

1 "Blindfold Test," *Down Beat*, January 1997, p. 70.



Lola Pedrini with Earshot Managing Director Karen Caropepe and Executive Director John Gilbreath, 2014

A BIRD OUT OF A CAGE-UNCHAINED

BY KEN WEISS

Andrea Centazzo [“on-DRAY-uh chen-TOTZ-oh”] (b. 3/23/1948, Udine, Italy) has been called Italy’s best percussionist and has excelled as a drummer, gong master, composer, author, multimedia artist, filmmaker, conductor, teacher and inventor. He first came to prominence as a member of esteemed Italian pianist Giorgio Gaslini’s quartet while still a student. But looking for more than the pianist’s structured music reached out saxophonist Steve Lacy, with whom he recorded and toured. From there, his career reads like a Hollywood script. He visited New York City and connected with the burgeoning Free Jazz scene – working with John Zorn, Tom Cora, and Eugene Chadbourne - helping to found the New York Downtown Music Scene. In Italy, Centazzo offered his services to UFIP an Italian gong and cymbal company and invented numerous very popular metal instruments. He was the first percussionist to integrate a full set of gongs into his setup. He was an early endorser of the Minimoog, started his own record label – Ictus, became deeply involved in producing multimedia projects, as well as operas and symphonies, and wrote 2 drum methods books and 4 musicology books. He moved to Los Angeles in 1991 to pursue film scoring but found out that he was too far ahead of the times. He’s led a number of his own bands and played with Don Cherry, Derek Bailey, Albert Mangelsdorff, Evan Parker, Alvin Curran, Fred Frith, Gianluigi Trovesi, Giancarlo Schiaffini, Don Preston, Elliott Sharp, Pierre Favre, Henry Kaiser, Gino Robair, Barry Altschul and Andrew Cyrille. The first half of this interview was done in person at the home of drummer Scott Verrastro while Centazzo was in Philadelphia for a 10/5/22 solo performance and then completed by way of the internet when he was back home in L.A. on 12/26/22. Centazzo’s passion and humor comes through in the interview.

Cadence: *Do you have a middle name?*

Andrea Centazzo: I don’t have one. It’s not so common in Italy to have a middle name.

Cadence: *Would you say something about your recent tour on the East Coast?*

Centazzo: Besides coming to Philadelphia and doing my solo project, I went to New York for a 3 day Ictus Records celebration that followed the big festival we had in Milan, Italy last July. That festival was really successful and we are waiting for the release of a boxset in 2023 from the festival as well as putting out a movie. They shot the entire festival with those great musicians from all over Europe, as well as Elliott Sharp and Steve Swell. And in New York we duplicated that, thanks to Chris Cochrane, Elliott Sharp and especially David Watson, who has this space called The Shift in Brooklyn. It’s a small space but it was very interesting. We did the same thing as in Milan with combinations of several musicians. It was fantastic – 3 nights of brother and sisterhood. The day after those 3 gigs, I got COVID. [Laughs] I was really in bad shape and I didn’t know I had COVID. I was coughing like a cow, saying, ‘What’s going on?’ So, I did a 4th gig with Eric Mingus, Steve Swell and Elliott Sharp, and during the gig I could not breathe. It was painful but I managed to do the entire concert. At the end of the gig, Elliott told me, “But you did test for COVID?” I said, ‘No, I’m fully vaccinated and had 3 boosters.’ I went back to Steve Swell’s place,

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did the test positive. Good God, so I had to call Chicago and cancel all the gigs there. I had very interesting gigs planned there but I had to go back home. Next March I will be 75 so Chris [Cochrane] is trying to set up a celebration in New York, so we'll see.

Cadence: *You had a most improbable start to a career in music being born and raised in Udine, a little town in Northeast Italy that had almost no music scene. You've said in the past that you "suffered for your first 20 years."*

Centazzo: Unfortunately, as charming as this little town was in the '60s and '70s, on the border with, at that time, Yugoslavia, and now it's Slovenia and Austria, it was completely without a real music scene. We didn't have a public music school just a private institute. There were also some private teachers and we had a limited concert series with just very bad Classical music mostly played by amateurs. There were some secondhand opera companies touring that came but there was no Jazz scene. There were a few Jazz fans and some good amateur players but there was no way to make a living playing music in Udine in the '60s. There was a circle of friends who got together to play Jazz. They were much older than me but that's how I was introduced to this kind of music. I was 13 when somebody gave me an EP of Bix Beiderbecke. I remember that I was kind of shocked. I was used to Italian, melodic, popular songs and the Bix EP was another world. So I became immediately interested in that kind of different sound and feeling. I started to order records by mail and there were also a couple of record stores where you could randomly find some things. I found *Birth of the Cool* by Miles Davis and I found a record for me that was seminal – *Saxophone Colossus* by Sonny Rollins with Max Roach. That was during The Beatles era which arrived all over including the small town like Udine, which had about 50,000 people. In high school, one day a few schoolmates approached me and said, "Hey, we should put together a band so we can get chicks." I said, "Yeah, that's a good idea!" A guy said he played some keyboard, and one said he was starting guitar, and another said he was playing guitar but could play bass. They asked me what I played and I said, "I don't play anything." They said, "Oh, you can play drums." [Laughs] And that was the beginning. So, I got a very old, dilapidated drum set which, thinking about it now, if I would still have it, since it was really a vintage drum set with a big bass drum, it could be really valuable, but I sold it immediately when I had the possibility to buy a Ringo Starr kind of drum set. So, I started to play by ear, and I've been playing by ear for all my high school years and part of the university. When I was 18-20, I started gigging around in nightclubs and private parties, making a little bit of money. At that point, I understood I could not go on just by ear playing, especially because I had this interest in playing Jazz. I started roaming around for teachers here and there, but I never had a real training like going to Juilliard or Berklee. I've mostly done it by myself. By 1970, I was fed up playing in low class clubs and I suddenly saw an ad in the only Jazz magazine we had in Italy at the time – *Musica Jazz* – and it announced a summer Jazz clinic in Wengen [Switzerland]. I made a call and got admitted, and when I went there, my world changed because I met Pierre Favre, Stu Martin, Peter Giger teaching drums. Even Johnny Griffin was there playing with Slide Hampton. For me,

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Andrea Centazzo
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

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coming from a little town with no live jazz music, was like being in heaven.

Cadence: *In high school you traveled 8 hours by train to Milan to see Duke Ellington with Ella Fitzgerald.*

Centazzo: One of the guys in the circle of Jazz friends, who was an attorney and about 25 years older than me, told us about this concert at Teatro Lirico in Milan and that we had to go. I was 16-17 and got the okay to go from my parents because I was going with older reputable people. Getting to Milan from Udine was a nightmare. We arrived just before the concert: at that time there was no direct train line. We had to stop in Venice, and then Verona to change trains. Udine was so isolated for many reasons. One of the main reasons was with the Iron Curtain because from Udine, it was just 10 miles to the border of Yugoslavia.

Cadence: *Were you impressed with Ellington's performance?*

Centazzo: I've got to say I was kind of disappointed. At the end of the concert I said to my friends, 'Is that how it should be?' They said, "No, they came from Germany at the last minute and they were tired and didn't play as they should have." So, I was already capable of understanding a good performance from a bad performance. [Laughs] That was the first time I experienced Jazz live on stage.

Cadence: *You were born into a family of attorneys with the expectation that you would be an attorney.*

Centazzo: When I went back to Udine from Wengen I was already into law school: my destiny because my family was a family of attorneys for three generations. My father was expecting me to be working in the office with him, But when back I said, 'Look, let's have a deal. I promise you that I finish the university and get the degree but you're gonna help me and let me go to Switzerland for one year to study with Pierre Favre.' That was the beginning of the story because with Pierre Favre at the Swiss Jazz School in Bern, I got such a stimulus, not only technically, but especially philosophically, that I decided that that was to be my career. When I went back, and that's the funny part of the story, the day I discussed my final dissertation in front to the full faculty group of law professors, my father was there, and when I got approved with a nice evaluation, my father said, "Finally, no more fancy music and Jazz. Finally, you got the degree, you come to work with me." And I said, 'Hey, we had a deal but the deal was that I was getting a degree, not that I was coming to work with you.' He got really pissed and for two he almost didn't talk to me. At that point, I moved out in a farm in the country by myself and started to practice every day to get things going.

Cadence: *What type of law did you study?*

Centazzo: Funny enough, I chose bankruptcy law, probably sensing that bankruptcy would be the destiny of my musician career. Just kidding! As matter of fact, I chose that because it was the easiest and the shortest [path]. At that point, frankly, the only thing I had in mind was to be free to go back to play music!

Cadence: *What type of law did your family do?*

Centazzo: My father was a criminal attorney and my grandfather was a civil attorney who dealt with property issues. At the end, my father had a huge

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business with a few insurance companies that gave him all the accidents and he was making money with that. I hated that kind of work. While I was at the university he took me a few times into court to see how it worked. I sat with him and I hated it. I still hate it and could not do it. I was told that I could have been a good attorney because I'm really polemic and I'm always finding solutions for problems. It's in the DNA, but the entire legal world doesn't appeal to me.

Cadence: *You started on drums, why did you move on to play guitar and then clarinet in school?*

Centazzo: I played drums by ear and I thought I should study a real instrument [Laughs] because at that time, you know, to play drums – boom-boom-boom- was kind of considered to be just banging and not “playing” a real instrument. So, I went to a guitar teacher and he stressed me so much with the position of fingers on the neck making me play that Spanish kind of guitar music that I said, “I don't want to do this”. And then somebody told me if I applied to this private music school, they had an opening for a clarinet student. I said, ‘Why not,’ and I got a clarinet and started to play it but I have these two upper front teeth that are overlapping, and with the pressure of the reed on my lips, I was bleeding. I did that for about one year until I said, ‘Forget it, let me bang the drums and I will study drumming seriously,’ because at that point, I understood it was really something that I loved to do.

Cadence: *Who were your primary early influences?*

Centazzo: I would say Saxophone Colossus is the album that blew me away, especially “St. Thomas.” I remember a ferocious discuss with my father. He said, “What is this chaos?” I said, “That is the creativity.” He felt the improvisation was ruining the song. My father's concept was – “The world is divided into two – people who work and musicians. [Laughs] That was his concept! You can imagine how things went for me. Anyway, I remember putting the needle on that groove of the LP to the extent that I ruined the album. I'd listen to “St. Thomas,” the first part of Calypso and then the transition to the Swing part over and over again. Later, in 1976, I had the chance to meet Max Roach. It was like walking in the street and meeting a God. And he was so nice, such a gentleman, such a great man. I had really a great relationship with him later. That was my first influence, and, of course, at the same time I was banging like Ringo Starr with my school, buddies, because at that time, The Beatles were the popular Rock group and all kids were trying to imitate them. They were huge and I still think they changed the conception of the music. Poor Ringo, at that time, to me, he was sounding very simple, and then later, I understood that there was some substance there. No other than Ringo could have given to the group that sound. Ringo Starr is another one who didn't know anything about music, and he was lucky because he was left handed and he had a right handed drum set so he had to invent kind of different patterns to adapt. But when I started to get serious about drumming, Max Roach was my first influence, and then I met Pierre Favre and he became my mentor.

Cadence: *Somehow, even though you grew up in a virtual musical vacuum, you knew early on who you were. You've always thought of yourself as a composer*

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who plays percussion.

Centazzo: Yes, at a certain point when I started to play professionally, I found myself improvising but thinking of the improvisation as an instant assembling of something that I composed in my mind before. I was like preparing little fragments on the drum set or on the gongs, and then when I was performing live, I was just fishing in the bag for those fragments and putting them together. That's how I started my composing career. And then I started to write, almost unconsciously, little pieces of music. One day a theme, another day, maybe something for two voices, and from there I started to compose music for orchestra.

Cadence: *You create large multimedia musical productions and you can personally use over 200 instruments at times. Have you always imagined music in such an expansive way? Have you always heard music in your head that way?*

Centazzo: That is something that is still to this day, I don't understand how it works. In 1983, there was a celebration of the millennium of my town Udine and I presented a project for the Mitteleuropa Orchestra that I had since 1978 with the top European improvisors. The Udine people said they wanted a kind of Classical composition. So, I added to our 14 pieces ensemble a string section with 12 players plus 4 additional percussionists, so the total was a 30 piece orchestra with also marimba, vibraphone, tympani and gongs. To start composing it, one day I took a little Casio keyboard and a bunch of sheets of music into a remote place in the mountain and I started playing little melodies on the keyboard, writing them down, and I don't know how, but at the end I composed an entire concert for orchestra!! Even on this days 40 years later, I don't know how it could have been possible doing that without a proper composer training but the concert came out well and was performed in Udine and Vienna (Austria) where was also broadcasted by the ORF, the Austrian national public broadcaster. I kept composing for that ensemble of 14 musicians and it's always been kind of trance composing. What I mean is that I had no experience of orchestration. I never studied [how to do it] until a couple of years later. Probably some of the mistakes I was making writing the music, [before I learned more of the conventional rules], made the music interesting. Later, I had the opportunity to study with a couple of great Italian composers - Armando Gentilucci and Sylvano Bussotti. They gave me, like Pierre Favre, not only technical knowledge, but a broader philosophical view. Bussotti told me around 1984, "When you write a piece of music, the important thing is that you write a good beginning and a good end. What's in the middle doesn't matter." [Laughs] He said, "Think about Beethoven's Fifth, people know the opening 'Bah-bah-bah-baah' who knows the rest?" It was, of course, an extreme hyperbolic way to say it, but, in the end, those kind of suggestions gave me a lot of new creative ideas.

Cadence: *What are your thoughts on being limited to playing a standard drum set and when was the last time you did that?*

Centazzo: I think the last time I played a drum set was when I was playing in clubs. Once I went to the Swiss Jazz School for the Summer Jazz Clinic in 1970 and I saw Pierre Favre with all those gongs and cymbals, I started to add stuff. The first professional job that I had, the very important job that launched me as

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a professional musician, was with Giorgio Gaslini – the top Italian piano player at the time. I think I got the job not for my playing but for the fact that when I went to the audition, I set up this castle of gongs and drums, which at the time was probably a tenth of what I had later. He had me set up and said he'd come by later to do a little improvisation with me and when he entered in the room and saw my setup, he said, "Oh my God!" [Laughs] We played ten minutes and then he took out his calendar and said, "Okay, you are in and we have the debut of this group at La Scala in Milano in November." That's how the instruments were part of my beginning.

Cadence: *Once you started composing, your works displayed spiritual and mystical elements. Can you speak a bit on the major factors you see as influencing that and how would you describe your spiritual life today?*

Centazzo: I'm coming from an Illuminism philosophical background. I've not been religious at all. I've had a lot to complain with Catholic, Islam, with all kinds of religion, except Buddhist which is somehow a philosophy more than a religion. It's a way to live and understand. But I've been spiritually always thinking about the need of a balance between nature and man, between inner creativity and the external world. As a matter of fact, somehow, one of my major works in percussion is the Indian Tapes box set I made in 1980, a triple LP set, based on the Native American Indian's philosophy and I've been much more fascinated about that than all the other religions, and that is still where I am today.

Cadence: *You've said in the past that karma has led the flow of your life. You didn't plan anything. Is that true?*

Centazzo: Absolutely, you can call it karma or you can call it a stroke of luck or, in many of my cases, bad luck, but the fact is that I never planned from the beginning to do this or that, like to go to live in Los Angeles, for instance. Everything happened because it should have happened. The only thing that I was sure about inside of me, I didn't want to be a fucking lawyer. [Laughs] That's it! All the rest, I accepted every aspect of my destiny. Even composing for film came out of something else, I never planned for that. The multimedia? I had this percussion music that I thought could be a great soundtrack and I was looking for somebody who could put the music in a film but nobody cared about it so I did it myself.

Cadence: *You hold a PhD in Ancient Music from the University of Bologna. That's not a common area of interest for most musicians. What attracted you to that study and how has that helped in the development of your work?*

Centazzo: That's another karmic thing. When I got the degree in law I was kind of frustrated because it wasn't what I was dreaming of. I was dreaming of studying music in an academic way and I was looking around for music schools and the only one possible was this one in Bologna. If I were to attend there, they would accept 10 of the courses that I did in law school for credits. I never understood how that could have been possible. In law school, I studied Roman law and the history of law, and they got me that as music courses. Another karmic thing happened my first day at the music school. I was attending a lesson of this professor talking about the Middle Age music and I was quite bored until I looked down near him on the floor and saw a bag with a John Coltrane record on the top. After class I asked the professor what he had

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in the bag and he had a full collection of John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman and Albert Ayler albums!. That for me was [breathhtaking] and I said, 'I'm a Jazz player,' and we became very good friends. He was academically exceptional in Classical and Ancient music but was also in love with Jazz and Avant-Garde. At the end, I did my dissertation on percussion instruments in Edgar Varese's music instead of Ancient music because that professor allowed me to do it. So it's really been a series of karmic coincidences.

Cadence: *Ethnic music has been a source of major interest of yours. You've studied and worked extensively with Balinese Gamelan music, as well as investigated traditional Japanese, Indian, and even Australian Aboriginal music. Talk about your attraction to that music.*

Centazzo: This is another karmic experience. The first time I went to New York in 1976, I went to a Greenwich Village record store. At that time, it was a happy time where you'd go in the record store and you looked through the albums – it's all a dream now. I was looking through a section of what was World music and I saw this record called Morning in Bali and I was very curious. I bought it and it blew me away because of the sound of the gongs and the minimalistic approach of the music. That was absolutely an influence on me for when I started to work with the UFIP cymbal factory in Pistoia making prototypes. I've been trying to copy the Balinese gong in making a series of gongs and since, I was very fascinated by the gong universe. Then in 2000, by way of my girlfriend, I met at UCLA, where she was working, her cousin who was director of the World Music faculty there. The daughter of her cousin was married to a Balinese Gamelan player. I said to her: "Listen, I've been dreaming to play with Balinese musicians all my life". So, she put me in touch with her son-in-law, I went to Bali, and finally I had the opportunity to do a project with a Balinese Gamelan working with Balinese musicians. Much before that In 1978, when I did my first American tour, I went to see Indian reservations and it was really too much to see how they were forced to live. And I had this idea about the Indian Tapes triple album from the Indian music I heard there – the chanting, the drumming. So, I've been picking cherries here and there, and I'm still doing it. You never stop learning. Every day I discover something new and that is the beauty of the music and the beauty in this era to have the possibility to go online and find out all you want. I always tell to people who ask me for suggestions, never think that you know enough. You never know enough, there is always something that you don't know. And you can learn from any kind of situation – even a band of kids playing in the street. They could have something that is -poof!!- interesting and you steal that little detail and you put it in your music. That is the process. [Scott Verrastro's cat suddenly jumps up on the nearby windowsill] It's nice to have a cat jumping during [the] interview!

Cadence: *You were one of the first Jazz musicians to be drawn to the gongs in the '70s.*

Centazzo: There was a guy in US at the beginning of the '70s named Christopher Tree who was the first to popularize the gong as a solo percussion instrument. He was part of the hippie movement. He wasn't playing real music, he was more playing sounds that later became the so called gong meditation music with the New Age. And in Europe, certainly, Pierre Favre

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was being the first to use extensively tuned gongs. And then I started to make those prototypes and create my own series and create my own music on those gongs and Indian Tapes in 1980 was the result of 3-4 years of composing for gongs and percussion. During that period I also started to use electronics.

Cadence: It was your attraction to the unusual sounds of ethnic music that led you to want to reproduce those sounds with the help of gongs and cymbals. How did you come to start producing your own series of gongs and cymbals, first with the UFIP company and later with Paiste?

Centazzo: I was kind of lucky because I went to this Swiss Jazz School in Bern (Switzerland) and I met again Pierre Favre, who at the time was the artist relationship manager with Paiste, the Swiss company making gongs and cymbals. He had an astonishing collection for free of those instruments. When I went back to Udine in 1971, I thought, "Well, there is a company in Pistoia producing cymbals, UFIP, an Italian company: let see if I can duplicate what Pierre did with Paiste" And as matter of fact, I did it. UFIP history is very interesting. They were originally making bronze bells for churches and then around 1930, somebody from Turkey brought over a couple of cymbals (that was the moment where all the dancing bands started to use drum sets) and the company started to produce cymbals and became very good at that. So I approached them and said, "Hey, I have a mind to make gong, bells and several other prototypes" and they hooked up with the idea. So, I started to make and subsequently get the instruments for free and that's why I had a huge collection. In 1984, Paiste approached me because they knew I was the creator for UFIP and they wanted to take me away from UFIP, their competitor. And they were so generous giving me all kind of gongs and cymbals. Generally speaking, I have to say that if in my career I bought 10% of the instruments I owned, that was a lot. I had always this cunning attorney mind to go around to people, [Laughs] getting the way to get free instruments and endorsing them! Around 2012, I had almost 2500 instruments. I had a barn in Bologna where I was living with this huge collection, and at a certain point, I learned that one of the owner of UFIP, Luigi Tronci, a great guy, was creating a percussion museum in Pistoia and I said, 'Look, I give you everything because it makes no sense for me to keep all this for myself. You can put it in the museum and have children play them and have people come see them.'

Cadence: What do you see to be the spiritual and therapeutic properties of gongs?

Centazzo: There are a lot of fake gong players around. Too many. There's people that buy a gong, bang it, and think that is gonna heal the universe. That's not true. Back in the '70s or '80s, they were experimenting playing Mozart's music to the cows and the cows were producing more milk. [Laughs] So, music, of course, has a mental influence on our minds and the vibrations a physical effect on our bodies and music has always been a way to communicate and used to heal. From the beginning, music has been used for healing from the shamans of 3000 years ago to today we know that repeating a sound, having a special vibration with a certain kind of note you could hit your body in a way that could heal and it could get you better. But, I always said you have to believe because if you don't believe, it doesn't happen. It's like hypnosis.

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In the '70s, I had a serious problem with a shoulder that never resolved and the doctor was trying to hypnotize me and he couldn't because I was resisting. So, the same is with the healing sounds. If you resist to the sound, the sound doesn't affect you – except make you deaf if you bang too strongly. [Laughs] Certainly, there is some vibration that goes directly to the body, that's for sure, it's scientifically proven. But beyond that, there's this enormous movement of healers using gongs or bells or crystal bowls. I mean, there is a lot of faking. Most of those guys are there just for the money and they sell very well their merchandise, but it doesn't affect the people attending their sessions. There are some acoustic principles that really are effective but then you need to know how to apply them and most of the people don't know how.

Cadence: *You wrote a book on gongs in 1976. Are you surprised that the gong has not become more popular in Western music?*

Centazzo: Actually it did become very, very popular! Right now, it's the top instrument for yoga sessions and meditation, and as I was saying, it's been used in a way that's not even conceivable for me. As a concert instrument, it's a little bit more popular than in the '70s but not that much. It became more popular because of being commercially promoted by Paiste, the main gong maker in Switzerland and Germany. The Chinese gong makers who had a millenary tradition on gongs, now along with the traditional Chinese gongs, started to produce a lot of different new kinds of gongs. On the top now we have a lot of small companies and individuals making great gongs.

Cadence: *That's a good lead-in to ask you about all the unique cymbals and percussion instruments you designed such as the IceBell, Ogororo, Tampang, Sheng, Lokole and the Square Bell.*

Centazzo: Talking about this is like you hitting me with a hammer on my forehead because I never made a cent out of those instruments! Those guys at UFIP who were producing the instruments, they didn't want to spend money in patenting, which at that time in Italy was very expensive. To make a long story short, the IceBell, which is the main creation of mine and the most popular small cymbal ever, sold millions but with no patent... no money! Immediately after I made the first prototype, in 1976 I went to New Jersey to the Latin Percussion Factory because they were interested to distribute it. They said, "Oh, we can pay 2 dollars for each piece." I said, 'You are just nuts! It cost us 5 dollars. It's bronze, it's not aluminum.' And the boss said, "Well let me have the prototype and we'll decide later." The next NAMM, which is the big instrument show, you see the IceBell by Latin Percussion made in brass. After that, Sabian made it, Zildjian made it, all the producers in the world, including the Chinese, made that IceBell [claps hands] and I never saw a single cent out of it. It has been really frustrating, every time I'm talking about it. I'm proud that I did it but nobody knows that I did it because nobody said, "Designed by Andrea." And I never made money, which is not my main target in life, but still, a million dollars would be nice. [Laughs]

Cadence: *In the past you performed with a full setup of gongs, drums, and perhaps 200 percussion instruments. At one point, you were hauling around 300 pounds of gear and needed 4 hours for soundcheck and setup time. How grueling*

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was that and what were the novel ways you dealt with that issue?

Centazzo: Well, I was young, I was enthusiastic. I had a nice wife that was helping me and I had pleasure in assembling all those instruments and playing them. And now, getting older, everything became more heavy. Right now, I'm traveling with a MIDI percussion keyboard, the Kat mallet (shaped like a marimba) and ten years ago that 10 pound keyboard on my back was like a feather. Now to come off the train to the station or walk in the airport, it's like having a mountain on my back. Getting old, I had to cut and reduce the set. Also, a lot of reducing the set was because I changed the way I played. I concentrated much more on the keyboard than on the gongs and drums. I still have too much gear but in that era, I was just crazy. I was traveling with 4 cases full of pieces of bronze and iron. I cannot even imagine that today. My entire set right now fits in two pieces of luggage weighting 40 pounds. That's all, that's a tenth or less of what I was used to carrying around.

Cadence: What's the most unusual thing you've used to make music?

Centazzo: Something that I have had since 1974 is a plastic/foam filled little keyboard with a kind of little reeds on the top and when you press it, it makes bird-like sounds. It's a children's toy that I discovered playing very lightly with the mallets on the top of a drum, it makes very peculiar sounds. I've been using all kinds of objects. My principle is that you can get a good sound from anything. If you remember in some performances Han Bennink is playing the floor and all he can reach, and that's the way it should be. Of course, everybody loves to have great instruments, but right now, I don't have drums, I have frame drums because frame drums are the lightest drums you can get and I adapted my playing to those. And also, like the cymbals, they fit in the other so you can carry 10 of those in a bag where you can fit just a regular drum.

Cadence: What are some of the latest electronic advancements and "toys" that you've been using or seeking to get?

Centazzo: The newest is the Mallet KAT which they started to produce in the '80s. And then there is a new keyboard from Pearl called Mallet Station both configured like a vibraphone. The Mallet Station is very similar to the MalletKAT but the keys are made by silicon and it uses the USB. That's the latest electronic that I'm using. I also have vintage stuff that I keep using.

Cadence: You mentioned earlier that during your time studying law at the University of Trieste, you attended the Wengen Jazz Clinic in Switzerland where you met Pierre Favre. You also got to play with Johnny Griffin at Wengen. How was that experience?

Centazzo: I'm still ashamed. I was so scared that I could not even play regularly the time. I was slowing down and speeding up and the bass player with Johnny Griffin was looking at me, saying, "Hey man, speed up! Speed up," and I was speeding up, "No! Too much!" I wasn't the only one [having a hard time] at this jam session. The point of the entire clinic was to make the students play with professionals. After 5 minutes I said, 'Okay, I give up.' I was trembling. You cannot imagine coming from a small town, having no experience and just getting in front of those guys. It was shocking. It was exciting but at the same time I felt kind of stupid [Laughs] but that was my first

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experience.

Cadence: *What type of career in music were you envisioning while studying music at the university?*

Centazzo: I was envisioning exactly what I did. [Laughs] As soon as I escaped from my father, I went to live by myself in the country with one of those buddies who was playing with me in those night clubs - a good organ player. We decided to do a duo and we played a kind of improvised experimental music. I would say a mixture between Soft Machine and Jean-Michel Jarre. We did a first album called Ictus and that later became the name of my label. That's how I got started; that came at the same time as my start with Gaslini.

Cadence: *How did you end up in Giorgio Gaslini's ensemble [1973-76] while you were still a student and how was that experience playing his structured music?*

Centazzo: It was a great school but it was pretty difficult. Basically, I escaped my father and I went to play with Gaslini. We had 25-30 years difference and he kind of adopted me like a son. He was saying stuff like, "Hey, put your jacket on, it's cold outside," or, "Tonight, put your black shirt on." He would say that and I hated it because it recreated some kind of father-son relationship. That was the difficult part playing with Giorgio but he was a great master. That discipline that I learned from him was absolutely fundamental in learning how you can escape from structure or when you need to stay in structure. His music was composed with some part of improvisation. He had a spot for everybody so you never were a sideman: you had your spot, you had your solo, you had your duo with the bass. His music really was structured and it was great music. From my point of view, if Gaslini would have had the guts to leave Italy and go to New York at the end of the '60s when he started to write his music, he could have been like Lalo Schifrin or Gunther Schuller. He would have been up there with those guys that made the Third Stream Jazz because he was the first to use dodecaphonic series in Jazz. He was a Classically trained composer with a gigantic knowledge. Giorgio had a composer's mentality and he did it scientifically, similarly to [the others I mentioned]. He made a different world of sounds in music. It was an absolutely interesting vision but as a band leader, he was kind of oppressive for me because I was the youngest. The others in the band were older and more established.

Cadence: *It was a shoulder injury in 1975 and a 1976 earthquake that transformed things for you.*

Centazzo: The shoulder started much before when I was playing volleyball at school. I stretched a tendon and I never recovered. At the end of '75, I went to Paris to treat this with a doctor who was very famous, the top in Europe. He could only fix me a little bit and still today I have problems from time to time. While in Paris, I bought a newspaper and saw Gaslini was presenting his new quartet. He fired me without telling me. That was really hard, that was a really hard experience. But as far as my shoulder, I always say that somehow the problem with my shoulder is also responsible for my style of playing because I could not be a regular Jazz player playing the ride cymbals and keeping up-tempo. I had to share between my two hands and feet the timing and the

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improvising. It's been a damnation because it's painful sometimes and I have to take painkillers but at the same time, it has also changed my life. The [other transformative event was the] earthquake destroyed the farm where I was living with my wife so we moved to Pistoia for two years, thanks to those guys at the UFIP cymbal factory and then I moved to Bologna where I lived until I moved to L.A.

Cadence: *Why did you target Steve Lacy to connect with?*

Centazzo: That's another great karmic story. Steve was really productive and by '76 he had already many albums. He was recording with everybody and I had a full collection of his works. I was in love with the sound of soprano saxophone. When I was in Paris, I wrote a letter to him saying, 'I'm a drummer from Italy, I'm in Paris and I would like to meet you.' He sent me his telephone number and I called him and went to his home. I told him I would like to play his kind of music and he invited me and my wife for lunch. It was a nice encounter. I had already a couple of albums done and he said he loved them. After I returned to Italy, I started looking for gigs and I wrote him that we could have the chance to do a few gigs if he agreed and he said yes. So he came to Italy and we did 7 gigs. That was another key time of my life. The first time I met Steve Lacy, I was again in the Johnny Griffin mood – I was shaking while playing with Steve Lacy. He had already played in Italy with Gaslini and other famous musicians, and here I was playing a duo with him. At the start of the first rehearsal, sitting in my cage of drums and gongs, I said, 'Steve, what you want me to play?' And he looked at me and said, "Hey, play what you feel," and that has been the key to a new music concept for me because coming from Gaslini, where everything was structured, suddenly I felt like a bird out of a cage. After the first 2 gigs, I was still a little bit stiff, but by the 3rd gig, which became the recording Clangs, we clicked and it was just phenomenal. I completely unchained myself and Steve was very happy. He wanted to do more with me and we did a trio tour with bassist Kent Carter and some other gigs as a duo. This came during a short period of time - from '76 to around '79 - but it was very intense, very inspiring.

Cadence: *Would you share some Steve Lacy memories?*

Centazzo: I had just gotten an album of a Harry Partch opera based on the [Great Depression era] hobos wall writing and I first listened to it together with Steve. It was very weird stuff, most of it I didn't understand because it was microtonal music with lyrics in English slang. Lacy was translating it to me. He was speaking very well Italian and French, too. That's a memory I have of an afternoon spent laughing together. I also have a fond memory of his philosophy. We were driving in my Mini Cooper a lot of times. If you can imagine – me, Steve Lacy, the saxophone, and all my stuff in the back of the Mini Cooper. It was a miracle drive!. I remember we went to play in this big festival and it was pouring rain. We were sitting in the car, waiting, and I was totally embarrassed with Steve. We had driven him 200 miles from Milan to play this gig. I said, 'Steve, I'm so sorry.' He said, "This is life, man. It should be like this. We'll go back and eat something. Don't worry." That was really calming. It was very philosophically posed.

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Cadence: *Why were you so embarrassed?*

Centazzo: I was embarrassed because while I was in the car I was thinking, 'What happens now? They're not going to pay us because we're not going to play and I promised Steve to be paid.' So, I went outside and found the organizer and told him I am waiting in the car with Steve Lacy and asked what was gonna happen. He said there was no concert that night due to the rain. I said, 'What about the money?' He said, "Oh, the money is here," [Laughs] and he gave me cash and I went back to the car and said, 'Life is good, Steve. Here's the cash.' And he said, "Hmm, nice gig." [Laughs]

Cadence: *How did you end up in New York City playing with Free Jazz leaders such as John Zorn, Tom Cora, and Eugene Chadbourne helping to found the New York Downtown Music Scene?*

Centazzo: I cannot remember exactly how but Eugene Chadbourne wrote me a letter in '78 because of the Ictus label which by then was already well-known. He wrote that he was coming to Europe and he was interested to do some duo gigs together and I said yes. So, he came and we did 5 duo gigs and I told him I would love to come to the States. He said okay and he did put together the tour. When I arrived in New York, I found all the gang with one of those Volkswagen vans from the '60s. John Zorn and Tom Cora, everybody was there, welcoming me like the great European improviser. As a matter of fact, the Environment for Sextet LP was my group with my compositions, if you can call them compositions being like graphic drawings and instructions. John Zorn [at that time] wasn't the big star that he became later. That's the way it started, and John Zorn even designed a poster for me for my solo gig. Eugene had organized a tour for me nationwide so I went down to Alabama to play with David Williams and LaDonna Smith, who were the only improvisers in Alabama, and then I flew to California to play with Henry Kaiser and the Rova Saxophone Quartet. I also went to L.A. to play with John Carter, Vinny Golia and Alex Cline. That was all done just by word of mouth between musicians. That was absolutely one of the greatest times of my life.

Cadence: *This was your second time in New York?*

Centazzo: Yes, I had come for the Chicago NAMM show in 1976 because the Italian Office for Foreign Commerce was financing all the Italian music instrument makers to go to the NAMM and we had a free ticket from the government, so I went to Chicago as the sole representative for UFIP. From Chicago, I flew to New York and I met Andrew Cyrille who gave me few fundamental drumming lessons, Gunter Hampel who later was interested playing with me and a lot of other musicians. The next year, the NAMM was in Atlanta so I went to Atlanta and there I met Peter Erskine, who was playing with the Maynard Ferguson Big Band. And then in 1978, Eugene organized the tour. I went back in 1979 and 1980 again, playing with Eugene, going down again to Alabama, and then I didn't come back to the States for 10 years. When I came back in 1990, it was to move to L.A.

Cadence: *It was the refusal from a recording company to publish Clangs, your duo record with Steve Lacy, that led you and your wife at the time, Carla Lugli, to found Ictus Records in 1976, becoming the first independent Italian*

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label of creative music operated by musicians and one of the first independent labels of New music on the world market along with Incus in Great Britain, FMP in Germany, and ICP in Holland. Talk about that process.

Centazzo: It's very simple. I had this contract with a company and they produced my duo Soft Machine-like Ictus recording and then they produced another album of mine – a solo that they hated. When I went there with a third project, a duo with Lacy, they said, "No, this kind of music cannot sell. We don't want it. We barely made the first one because it was a little bit more trendy, a little bit more Rock, but your solo, we didn't sell a copy. Now we don't want anything." I went to another label and they said no. So, by that point, I already had in mind to do it by myself and I started shopping around for the cheapest way to print LPs. I did the cover by myself, very simple, and that was the beginning. We printed, I think the minimum at that time was 1000 copies, and when I went on tour for the second time with Steve, we were selling them like peanuts. We were selling like 40 pieces per night. At that time, my wife started to work for Ictus only and she phoned 3-4 distributors and they were happy to distribute the label. With the money we made from the first sales, we produced the second album with Derek Bailey and then we kept on that way, never making real money but being able to carry on the dream. I can sincerely say that the business was always at the survival level but we still could put out a lot of albums, making music and making the musicians happy because everybody was paid. That was the beginning of Ictus. In '84, I divorced my wife and I could not carry on by myself because at that point, the business needed someone taking care of it. I had no money to hire somebody to do it for me, and at the same time, I was already thinking about video and all kinds of other artistic experiences, so the label died in '84. Then later I produced 3-4 other recordings – New Age kind of stuff – on a new label named Index and then in 2004, I started again my label in L.A. and began the digital distribution of the old catalogue. That year I had happened to meet the old manager I had in the '90s who was supposed to make me a very famous soundtrack composer and instead he made me nothing. I met him and he said, "Hey, I have a new business. I'm distributing digitally labels and I remember that you had a Jazz label. We can do business together." So I gave him the catalogue, I think 20 titles, and in the beginning I was making 700 dollars a year and it was a good business because I had to do nothing. And then he introduced me to the head of Polish Jazz label in the USA and the guy said, "Oh, my God, the Ictus catalogue, I have all the original pieces. I'm a fan of yours, why we don't start it again?" He put the money up and we started it. He produced this box set of 12 CDs and from there I started producing again from time to time.

Cadence: There's a report online that the label was revived in 1995 to gather funds for Bosnian refugees. Is that accurate?

Centazzo: Not really: as I said the label started again in 2004. That's a requiem for orchestra – A Bosnian Requiem first released by Warner Chappell on their own label and just later reprinted on ICTUS. I wrote it between 1993 and 1994. It was a commission from the Bologna Youth Symphonic Orchestra. I wrote that for 3 sopranos, narrator and full symphonic orchestra. That has been the biggest symphonic work that I wrote. Later I composed and conducted all my operas

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but with smaller orchestras.

Cadence: *Are you a very political person?*

Centazzo: If you mean a political person hating liars like Donald Trump, yes, I am, [Laughs] but I've never subscribed to any party in Italy. Here I'm registered as a Democrat, which means nothing because it's such a broad spectrum.

Cadence: *Why did you pick the name Ictus? The dictionary lists it as a medical term for a sudden stroke.*

Centazzo: No, that's always what people say – Stroke! NO! In Latin, ictus means downbeat. It's a musical term. I got that from studying antique music at the university. Studying Middle Age music, you have the downbeat and it's called ictus and I thought it was kind of a nice name and then I found out it was a mistake using it [Laughs] because of the fact that it's also a medical term.

Cadence: *You're credited with introducing in the early '70s a new concept of percussion playing that moved away from Free Jazz to a new form of improvised music. Drum Magazine named you as a game changer in a 2013 article for presenting your early solo percussion concerts. Talk about your concept change.*

Centazzo: We were a group of European percussion players, some older than me, who were very inspired by the Free Jazz drummers like Andrew Cyrille with Cecil Taylor. That's one of my main influences in Free Jazz. Also Sunny Murray and Paul Motian, all those drummers playing out of the time, just making colors, making atmospheres. But they were really always based on the drum set as an instrument. They never escaped the concept of 2 or 3 cymbals, the hi-hat, the 3 drums and the snare drums. Instead in Europe, we were trying to enlarge and expand the drum set, adding sounds, especially spurious sounds like putting a cymbal on the drum or putting some tape on the gong and making the gong sound like a lid of a pan or playing the lid of a pan instead of the gong. We were much more into creating new combinations of sounds. Of course, having the privilege to make my own instruments with this company, I was really fortunate to have enough instruments, enough different kinds of metals to experiment with. Others, for instance like Paul Lovens, Paul Lytton or Tony Oxley, they were using Chinese drums, self-made cow bells or broken cymbals. We were unlimited in the concept. Basically, the drumming technique has always been the same in the sense that you play a single stroke, a double stroke, a paradiddle, but when you play those on a drum set it creates a certain kind of sound, a perfect sound that is traditional for the drum set, even if you play free. When you start to play that, dividing the patterns between a bell and a piece of wood and a drum with a piece of tape on the top, it creates a completely other soundscape, and that's what in Europe we were trying to do. And I was one of those experimenting, mostly with the gongs and the cymbals, because I had access to an endless quantity of them. That was the change of the game and it was mostly a European invention that they started to follow in the States.

Cadence: *Throughout most of the '70s you refused structure in music but reportedly, it was working with a large group of Free Jazz musicians in New York that led you to seek organized music. Talk about that transition.*

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Centazzo: The truth is, as I said before, when we did the Environment for Sextet recording with John Zorn, Eugene Chadbourne, Tom Cora, Toshinori Kondo and Polly Bradfield, I had already in mind to play music that was improvised but inside a structure. That's probably my Gaslini influence. I have to say Steve Lacy somehow also had this kind of cage because Steve Lacy music is a theme, improvisation and a theme. It's still very Traditional Jazz, even if it's played very freely. The music of Steve is very peculiar for that reason. I had the same kind of pattern, the same kind of idea. Let's do a structure, let's do an improvisation inside the structure, playing little connecting parts together or as duos or trios. So, that's why I am always saying that more than improviser, I think to be a composer, because even in the improvisation, I've been trying to find a cage to put everything inside. That happened in '78 when we started to play together. By the way, Tom Cora was the producer of the recording because I didn't have the money at the time and Tom said, "I have a 1000 dollars. I'll give you that and when you produce the record, you give me the money back."

Cadence: So the reason that you changed your thinking to play structured music was to organize unorganized music?

Centazzo: Yes and no, because even when I did my first recording Ictus, that was already organized music. I never played completely improvised music until Derek Bailey, but even with Derek Bailey the music was somehow organized. Drops my duo with Derek Bailey is considered one of the best Derek Bailey duo albums. But why? The story goes like this: we started improvising, we didn't find each other, it was hell and we went into a depression. He had come from London to my place in the country and we had to do the record. I finally said, "Let's do something more conceptual, more structured. Let's do a first piece where you play very fast acoustic guitar and I play wood blocks. Then we do one where you play electric guitar very slow, long notes, and I play gongs." Basically, that is the way to compose/organize improvised music. We did that and it clarified everything, and in the end, the album was great because we had some point where to start from. So, I would say I never played completely free, although lately I'm playing more improvised music like I will do in New York on this tour. I don't even know on which instruments those guys are playing.

Cadence: The Moog synthesizer came out in 1970 and through your work with UFIP and the connections made at the NAMM shows, your albums made their way to Bob Moog and you became an endorser of a Minimoog. How did that change things for you?

Centazzo: it changed a lot because expanded my sonic possibilities. Until then you could not sustain a sound with percussion except making a roll. You couldn't sustain a note like you could on the violin or the cello. And with the Moog, I had a percussion controller that was basically a trigger to the main synthesizer and I could play a drone and then improvise on top of the drone. At that time, there were no loops, no sequences yet, but you could play a "sample and hold" sequence, programming the notes, so hitting the drum and having the drum going crazy up and down. You could play on the top of that.

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So, it became multi-voicing instead of just being one sound out of percussion. And also the quality of the sound, the electronic sound, the filter, the so celebrated Moog filter, that was a really big change in the music.

Cadence: *How difficult has it been to integrate electronics and acoustic instruments in a musically meaningful way?*

Centazzo: I had two speakers and the Minimoog on the side of the drum set and on the other side I had the bells, cowbells and gongs, and I experimented with how to connect the acoustic with the electronic sound. I experimented one day, two days, three days, and on the fourth day, something good came out. It's been a continuous researching process of experimenting day after day. As a matter of fact, this Indian Tapes triple album I made has loops that I made with a Minimoog and I played percussion over the top.

Cadence: *Some labeled your early electronic music as "Cosmic Rock," and consider it to be an ancestor of Techno music. How successful were you with that music and is that work still popular?*

Centazzo: Successful zero. [Laughs] This LP that is titled Elektrihtus (the Electric Ictus) comes out from experimenting with Minimoog and a very cheap Italian kind of keyboard treated with some tape delay. I was working hours and hours in the studio making those experiments. In the end, I found myself with a lot of material that was more towards Rock and New Age sound than the experimental side or Jazz. I decided to put all those together in an album. The producer who was producing my Jazz albums was also at that time importing into Italy the Krautrock, the cosmic German Rock with bands like Tangerine Dream and Popul Vuh. He thought what I had made were sounds that fit perfectly in that kind of series and he wanted to release it. I said, 'Why not? Give me some money and I give you the tape.' So, he released that album. The record sold minimally because it was one of the catalogue of more famous Cosmic Rock bands so the distributors were only buying a few copies. It sold a little bit and then disappeared. In the year 2000 or so, I started to see on the internet blogs talk about who was behind this album because it was completely anonymous in the beginning – it was just Elektrihtus: Electronic Mind Waves. And they started to say this was the precursor of Techno music because there are pieces like Techno but pretty much primitive. Consequently, it started to be a cult kind of album. Finally a few years later, I was approached by a label that wanted to re-release this album. I accepted and they produced the CD. It ended up selling in Japan very well. I was then approached by a Spanish label asking to produce 500 copies of the album as LP. I agreed and they also sold out. And now there is a third label that wants to reprint it, and of course, I will say once again yes.

Cadence: *What was going on in the '80s for you up until the time you turned your focus towards multimedia projects?*

Centazzo: The '80s was a confused period because until '84, I was married to Carla Lugli and I was doing mostly composing for Mitteleuropa Orchestra, playing with improvisers like Gianluigi Trovesi, Lol Coxhill, Don Cherry Franz Koglmann and others. Also I was into art, painting visual scores and making exhibition of that material. Then we divorced and I started making soundtracks first, and since I didn't find anybody to do soundtracks for, because nobody accepted my percussion music for soundtracks, I decided to make a film

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myself! The video film did very well, it won all the prizes, so I started to make videos leaving music on side. And then I got a bit of attention from producers and started composing for films and especially for theatrical productions, which was a major business because in Italy, if you write a soundtrack for theater, you get a portion of the ticket. That was absolutely amazing, especially because I was writing music for the top Italian plays. In the theater, usually you write a short beginning and some other short sections, nothing substantial like a soundtrack for a movie. With 20 minutes of music I was making what I could have made playing 10 concerts. So, I did that for a period while keeping up playing solos and duos with Italian musicians or occasionally with Don Cherry, Franz Koglmann or Lol Coxhill.

Cadence: You moved to Hollywood in 1991 to devote yourself to scoring film soundtracks. Talk about making that move.

Centazzo: That is a long story but to make it short, two years before the move I signed a contract of exclusivity to be a composer with publisher Warner Chappell Music in Italy. They were paying me a fortune just to get my name on their roster, and it was through them that I ended up in L.A. because they contacted Warner Chappell in L.A. to let them know I was interested in scoring for films and Warner Chappell there said, "Yeah, send your Italian composer here. We can help him to get into the business." Because Warner Chappell Italy controlled the whole Mediterranean sector of publishing and was making gazillions, they were very important to Warner Chappell USA, but when I arrived here, I was one of the thousand composers in the Warner Chappell catalogue. It was frustrating because I had a contract with them so I could not write music for anybody else but Warner and they were paying me every month a salary to do nothing. But there was a catch. I had to give them, as usual, 50 percent of the publishing portion of the royalties. Things were different in Europe. There it works that you are an exclusive composer for a publisher, the publisher pays for the recording and all the expenses to release the soundtrack. The producer doesn't pay for that. Here, it's the opposite. The producer is paying for the recording and then keeps 50 percent of the royalties. So, every time I was going to talk to somebody about making a soundtrack, most of the time they said, "Well, what about us? Why should we give you a soundtrack gig if then the 50 percent of the publishing goes to Warner? No, that doesn't work for us." Even the music director for soundtracks at Warner said, "Yeah, your music is beautiful, but you know what? We have 500 composers on the roster and you are number 501." I stayed there for 3-4 years and then I said, 'Enough,' and I ended the contract. I wrote a few soundtracks for independent movie makers and stuff like that, trying to make my own music, because the big business in Hollywood is very formularized. If you make a romantic comedy, you have to write for violins. If you have an action movie, you have the trumpets and the trombones. It's really difficult to be creative unless you are already Philip Glass where when they call you, you tell them to take your music from one of your recordings and to pay you a half a million dollars. When you have a name, everything changes, but if you are a coming up composer, you have to do what they want.

Cadence: You had the idea for featuring percussion to make soundtracks but

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Hollywood wasn't ready for that. What did you hear back from the producers when you pitched that idea?

Centazzo: I was going to producers saying, 'I have this idea, we can do percussion,' and they would say, "Oh, no, no, no, no!" [Laughs] "You must be kidding. Here we need something like Star Wars with brass, here we need violins." Nobody wanted to exit from the formula so I got increasingly frustrated, frustrated, frustrated, and at a certain point, I decided to go back to playing, and that has been the end of my Hollywood experience. I did some movies and I've done music for little shorts for people who ask, but basically the idea to be just a soundtrack composer didn't work. Maybe with my personality - I'm kind of tied to my principles. I want to do things a certain way and Hollywood doesn't work in that way. You need to be their slave for years before you can be your own boss. Unfortunately, my mentality wasn't there.

Cadence: What was your reaction to the widespread acclaim that film director Alejandro González Iñárritu received for using Antonio Sánchez' relentless drumming as the soundtrack for his Grammy-winning Birdman in 2014? The critics applauded that as a major innovation.

Centazzo: Yeah! [Laughs] I, unfortunately, in the '90s I was too early. That could have been me doing that. I can tell you that I was really mad and frustrated when this movie came out. When I proposed that, it wasn't the right time. It's my specialty to be at the wrong place, with the wrong idea, at the wrong time. I had many episodes like that in my life but this one was something really egregious. It's all about timing in this job. You need to be at the right time with the right idea at the right location and I didn't have this luck. I thought the soundtrack worked for this movie but what I had in mind at the time I [proposed this] was something more wide with the sounds. I had in mind to use gongs, not just drums and percussion. I had a more expanded idea to use marimbas and make the percussion melodic.

Cadence: So you didn't watch Birdman and think that that was your idea first?

Centazzo: Yes, that's basically the reaction. Actually, the reaction was a little bit more violent - 'WTF!! THAT'S MY IDEA! OH, TWENTY YEARS AGO!' [Laughs]

Cadence: Okay, that's what I thought. You were being too nice with your first answer. Since Hollywood wasn't ready to accept percussion soundtracks when you proposed them, and things didn't work out with Warner-Chappell, you went back to working on your own and started doing your longtime work in multimedia projects.

Centazzo: I decided to go back to writing music for myself and eventually to play again. Fortunately, I had some good commissions for writing operas, a symphonic requiem and several more orchestral works. I've been surviving until 2000 with that, plus doing a little bit of soundtracks here and there. But then in 1999, an old student of mine in Italy said, "Hey, we would like to have you back here." I told him that I didn't play anymore. That was reality when I saw that nobody was interested in percussion in the soundtrack field. I decided that I wouldn't play anymore, I would just write music. But then this guy convinced me and I went back to playing percussion. At the same

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time, the technology had evolved and I could play my percussion music with background videos that I could make. So, 'To the hell the movie industry,' I said. 'I will do all this myself.' That was the beginning of the multimedia projects that I've been doing since.

Cadence: *Have you gotten into acting?*

Centazzo: Twice. I made a soundtrack for an independent movie about 6 years ago and they asked me to do a little cameo part and also in the '80s I also did a cameo in a theatrical production on video. But you know, I am acting every day in normal life! [Laughs]

Cadence: [Laughs] *Yeah, but you're not getting paid for that.*

Centazzo: Right.

Cadence: *You've been prolifically creative with numerous multimedia works and large projects including 3 operas, 2 symphonies, award winning video films, over 500 compositions for ensembles and 8 musicology books. That's certainly quite a legacy to leave behind. What inspires you to have done all that and where do you get your inspirations?*

Centazzo: Ever since I was a kid, I've always been creative. I've always had this urgency to create something. When I was a child, I was creating with Legos and also with the similar British made Meccano construction sets. After that I got into doing experiments with chemical elements but I had to stop because once I was almost burning the house to the ground. [Laughs] My parents were very upset. And then later, when I was in high school, I started directing little plays, doing the lighting, choosing music of the plays and so on. I was always doing something creative. And then I started to play – we had a Beatles cover band as students just for fun. Even there, I was the only one thinking of being a professional. I found the gigs, I set up the PA system, I signed the contracts. At that time, I was also very much into photography. I shot photos and developed them in my dark room. Everything I could possibly do, I did. So, in the end, when I started to be a pro, all those experiences went together and that's why I've been working on several fields in parallel. Earlier in the '70s, when I was in Italy, I observed that we didn't have percussion literature in Italian and just few in English and German and French. There were no books, no schools, just a few things. We had an Italian translation of the Gene Krupa drum method book but nothing really exciting. So, I committed myself to write books about percussion. At that time you had to work hard to find out about things. Now with the internet, you just type on the keyboard something and anything you want pops up. At that time, there was nothing, so in order to learn and to see an instrument, I had to travel all over Europe. I remember a trip to Brussels in Belgium to visit the Music Instrument Museum where I saw for the first time in my life a Balinese Gamelan. I saw the African kalimbas, log drum and so on. It was really difficult but I managed to make this Guide to Percussion Instruments and their Techniques and then from there I became kind of an authority in the field in Italy and I started to write other books. I wrote a book that became very popular The Drum Set History, starting from Congo Square in New Orleans and going forward. That was in the '80s. Somebody is trying now to republish all those but I have to say they have the stain of the time so I'm not sure that

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I want those books out. There was a period between when I was 28 through 40 where I was really working, working, working all day long – practicing, writing, performing. It was a great period, those were great years. You had maximal possibilities in the '70s, especially for the kind of music I was playing then.

Cadence: How difficult has it been to get your large works presented?

Centazzo: Until 2002, 2003, I got commissions so people were asking and paying upfront. Now it's a different world because I have to do the projects myself, produce them myself, and then if I'm lucky, I get invited somewhere to perform it. Back in the days I was in Italy, you could present a project to the city. You told them you had an idea about a project, about Leonardo da Vinci for instance, and they would approve it, put the money up front, and you were done. You could work and get the project done. Not anymore, that's the story.

Cadence: You did a 2003 performance at the Literature Festival in Rome in front of the Colosseum with an audience of 2,700 people. That had to be a special moment for you.

Centazzo: That wasn't unusual in those years. I did solo performances all over Europe and the audiences but I remember that because it was a very peculiar situation playing while Jeffrey Kent Eugenides, the famous author of *The Middlesex* was reading excerpts from the book. But before then all the festivals and concerts I did in Europe had huge audiences especially in the DDR, the communist East Germany in the '80s: it was all amazing. You had an audience of 2,000 people who were completely ecstatic to listen to improvised music. I spoke to people in the audience and they said, "For us, basically prisoners in our own country, this is the sound of freedom." I did a lot of big festivals. I did a concert with my Mitteleuropa Orchestra, the group with top European improvisers, for instance, with Chick Corea and Gary Burton. They were playing duo. I wouldn't say the people came for us but they were there – 3,000-4,000 people – and we played and people liked it. The situation was so different and that's why all the American musicians since the '40s wanted to play Europe. The audiences are much more receptive there. Here, except for a few occasions in the past, there is no audience for this kind of music unless you play very Traditional Jazz or Jazz Rock. If you are Weather Report you can go to the Hollywood Bowl and get 4,000 people but certainly not if you're playing the music I'm playing.

Cadence: You played behind the Berlin Wall, as did a number of Jazz artists. Why did the communist German government allow for that?

Centazzo: [That's a] mystery. There was a promoter setting this up in East Germany. I don't know how he managed to organize those big festivals but over there in the 80s you could have found fall kinds of European and American musicians. The funny thing was that they were playing in East German marks that basically was useless paper. You had these millions of East German marks and there was nothing to buy and no place to go, we were secluded in the dedicated hotels for foreigners. Also, you could not exchange the money. It was just surreal but everybody was happy to go because that was absolutely one of the most satisfying experiences, from the point of view of

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the audience. People were there because you were representing freedom, it was something very deep. I remember a funny episode on that. The only thing they had was a good brand of camera Praktika (if I remember correctly) and Zeiss lenses which were very well known. On one of those tours, where I was playing in duo with the great unique trombonist Albert Mangelsdorff, I had so much money I decided to buy a camera with a set of lenses. I paid a fortune, I would say the equivalent of 3,000 dollars, but that was the only thing I could do with the money. I had a Nikon back home so I thought to sell this new camera when back in Italy and make some money. So, I bought this big set and then I went to this top photography store in Bologna where I was living and told them I just bought it brand new in East Germany and wanted to sell it. They said, "Oh yeah, this is a good camera, good lenses. The current price here for everything [you have] is 700 dollars." It was a FOURTH of what I paid! That was because the East German government was keeping the prices up for the people to discourage people from buying. It was against their culture. The East Germans told me that for them to buy a car, it was at least a 5-6 year wait, and the only car you could get was a horrible, cheap car called a Trabant [also known as "a spark plug with a roof"]. It was quite an experience touring there.

Cadence: Your last multimedia work Einstein's Cosmic Messengers / Tides of Gravity is especially interesting. It's a collaboration with NASA astrophysicist Michele Vallisneri and based on Gravitational Waves which represent measurable disturbances in the universe as predicted by Einstein 100 years ago.

Centazzo: Einstein's Cosmic Messengers is the first version of what later became Tides of Gravity. The first was a promotional show that I did with this astrophysicist under the supervision of one of the Einstein students who later became a Nobel Prize winner for physics in 2017 - Kip Thorne. I did a lot of performances around the country at universities between 2006 and 2011. The show was organized with a lecture about gravitational waves before the concert and a Q & A after. I shot all the sequences for the background film and I also went to the Gravitational Wave Observatory [LIGO] in Louisiana to get shot of this incredible laser observatory. I did this multimedia concert for a few years. Einstein predicted these waves but they were never detected, they were only theoretical then. Basically, gravitational waves are ripples in the texture of time and space. So the space is delaying and shrinking and time is not what we perceive. It's very complicated. It took me years to understand. [Laughs] Unfortunately, the gravitational waves could not be detected because every single earthquake on the planet creates waves and so the scientists could not understand if they were coming from space or were just products of earthquakes. Around 2016, they upgraded the observatories and their lasers and were able to prove Einstein's theory correct. At that point, they asked me to do a new show and I went again to Louisiana and I shot again videos. NASA gave me more animation sequences and we put together another show in 2016 and the title was Tides of Gravity. Kip Thorne presented it and we did the premiere at Caltech. Two thousand people came, they came not for me, [Laughs] they came for Kip Thorne. I did other shows of it in Scotland and Milan and a few other places before it faded out as many of my projects [do]. There was initial excitement over this discovery and every newspaper was talking about it so

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people were inviting me and then, as usual, people forgot about it.

Cadence: *How did you first get involved with this scientific based project? Are you connected to the scientific community?*

Centazzo: That is another amazing one of my stories. I was looking for an agent in Europe and a producer in Germany told me he could give me some gigs but first there was a very good Italian cello player who wanted to connect with me. So, I met with the cello player, a young kid, very talented, and he introduced me to his piano player. We talked and decided to meet again. After 15 days, I got an email from the piano player informing me that a former musician friend of his was now an astrophysicist at NASA and he wanted to meet me. I said, 'Why not?' and I went to meet this guy who said, "I've been thinking for years about a project combining science and art. Are you interested?" I said, 'Let me think – yes!' [Laughs] That started it and I went to Germany, Italy and back to L.A. It's a very weird story. I presented this program at Northwestern University in Chicago and the astrophysicist there who organized the event and did the lecture before the gig, invited that night her friend from the Adler Planetarium, which is the biggest planetarium in the USA. After the show, her friend came up and said she loved it and asked if I would be interested in doing a soundtrack for a multimedia show at the Adler? I said again, 'Hmm, let me think. Yes!' [Laughs] I got an absolutely huge and wonderful gig there. I did a project called *The Searcher* at the planetarium. They had this incredible system projecting on the dome with 12 projectors. Sitting in the audience, you had the feeling of moving around space. It was really impressive. And more impressive is the fact that the soundtrack that I did, which was for full orchestra, was mixed there on 12 channels. It was so fun. I did this project in 2011.

Cadence: *You've made over 190 recordings under your own name with many prominent musicians. You've not worked as a sideman. Why has working only as the leader been so important to you?*

Centazzo: I don't know but it's been like that. I started my career as a Jazz drummer with this very, very famous and very creative, a genius I think, piano player from Milano – Gaslini – playing for almost 4 years and then I met Steve Lacy, and from there it's been natural going on doing my own projects or collaborations. Sometimes people call me to play in their projects like Henry Kaiser or Elliott Sharp but generally, I'm always doing my own music and projects.

Cadence: *But why is that? Why are you always the leader?*

Centazzo: First of all, because nobody calls me. [Laughs] That's the real explanation. I played with Elliott Sharp in his trio with Brad Jones, a very good bass player now living in Europe. We did this great gig in Slovenia but we haven't done more. That's why I have to do my own stuff.

Cadence: *Let's touch on some of your recorded work. One of the earliest Ictus recordings was Drops [1977], your freely improvised duet with Derek Bailey. That came very early on in your career. Bailey doesn't play any recognizable scales, how was it to play with Derek Bailey in that way?*

Centazzo: I wrote to Derek and I told him I had the possibility to get a few gigs if he was interested and he said yes. At that time he knew about me through Steve Lacy. He came and met me for the first time in Milan and we did our

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first gig there but it wasn't good. Derek was basically playing by himself, he wasn't really listening or interacting. We were both not really satisfied. We played another couple of gigs and we got a little bit better but not, from my point of view, enough. Then we went to the studio to do the recording and the beginning of that wasn't good. At a certain point I had to say, 'Look, do you want to do this recording? I do. If you want, we have to get organized. Let's not just improvise, let's decide what to do.' And he said, "Yeah," but he wasn't totally convinced. I said, 'This piece you play acoustic and I'll play just wood blocks and we play a metronomic time. Let's try.' We did it and it was good. 'Okay, next I will play gongs and you play electric, very long sounds.' And we did it this way for the whole session – each track had a different instrumentation, a different timing, a different approach, decided before, so it was a kind of composed improvisation. When it was released, the LP was praised as one of the best Derek Bailey duo recordings. It was very difficult but very rewarding in the end. I had no problem to play with somebody using the guitar like a percussion instrument or like experimental electronics. I've had much worse experiences with musicians just making noises.

Cadence: *Do you have a Derek Bailey memory to share?*

Centazzo: He was really British and a very private person. We didn't get much along like I did with Evan Parker, for instance, another British guy but with a sense of humor and very sympathetic. Derek was more – "Okay, let's do it. Yeah, it's okay. Thank you, goodbye." I don't really have big memories to share from that period.

Cadence: Shock!!, your 1984 duet with Gianluigi Trovesi, is considered to be one of the most important Italian Jazz albums.

Centazzo: Gianluigi is one of the top reed players in Europe, I have to say, although he's not well-known here. And he's such a great human being, kind, generous and humorous. I invited him in the 1980s to join the Mitteleuropa Orchestra and he came and always did a really wonderful job with alto saxophone and bass clarinet. And then he proposed me to do a duo album which we did combining my compositions with a few open improvisations and then he did a couple of his own more folk/popular music oriented compositions. It came out very well – we had very, very special chemistry. We did a lot of gigs during those years. This brings me to talk about Don Cherry and what is one of the regrets of my life. We did a concert with Don Cherry in a small Italian town called Iesi. I played the first set with Gianluigi Trovesi, 40 minutes, and then Don was to follow. Suddenly, Don came to me and said, "Hey, do you want to play with me?" I said, 'Let me think [Laughs]... Of course I want to play with you! You are one of my idols.' He said he'd call me and [he took the stage] for a 30 minute solo, one of those mystic solos. He was completely gone – high with marijuana hash, I cannot remember, completely stoned, playing weird bamboo flutes, the tanpura, and percussion with just a bit of pocket trumpet. Then he had me join him for a fantastic 30 minute pocket trumpet and traditional drum set duet, as much of a traditional set as could be my drum set. I was playing in an Ed Blackwell kind of style because Don was playing really Free Jazz as the Don Cherry from the '60s. I know the concert was recorded from the PA and I've been looking for this recording for years. That's one of my regrets- not only because, for me, it was very important to play with

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one of the creators of Free Jazz, but because it was a really good duo. I've never found the guy who recorded it. Last year, I was playing a tribute to Steve Lacy with this great Italian saxophone player, Roberto Ottaviano, who was a student of Steve's for a period, and a guy came up to me before the gig and said, "Do you remember me?" Of course, after 40 years, I did not. He said, "I am Carlo, the photographer. I took all the pictures of you and Don Cherry." I said, "Oh, my God! Don't tell me!" He said, "Yeah, look at this," and he took out a picture of myself and a picture of Don Cherry – not a picture of us together! I mean... I could kill him! I said, "What about a picture of us together?" He said, "Oh, I was on the back of the stage, I could not take one of both of you. I took first of him and then of you." So, I have not even a picture of that gig! [Laughs]

Cadence: *Why is Shock!! Considered to be one of the most important Italian Jazz albums?*

Centazzo: You should ask the guy who said that. [Laughs] It's just a great album and we play some of the tunes in a really Jazzy way. It's very swinging but the language is really new. It goes from some very rhythmic places to open abstract situations. If I can recall correctly, on the first track I play a pattern that could remind one of Max Roach patterns, who was one of my inspirations as a drummer, and from there we go to open melodies with gongs and then some Folk inspired music. The critics and the audience liked it and said it's a great record and I say, "Thank you. Thank you very much."

Cadence: *You've made a number of recordings with your Mitteleuropa Orchestra. What's been your vision for how to make use of that large ensemble?*

Centazzo: Let's go back a few months before I started the orchestra when I was in New York and I did the Environment for Sextet recording. What I was writing at the time was kind of scenarios with interpretation notes. They were really instructions on how to play, how to interact, and then putting in some logical sequences like now the sextet plays, and when I give a cue, it stops and then John Zorn plays a solo, and then I add other people, and then when we are getting high in the music, we stop and Chadbourne and Kondo play another duet, and so on. I was writing that kind of structure. I moved to Bologna in '78, just a little before this big first US tour of '78. I moved there because they gave me the position of Artistic Director of the Center for Improvised Music and New Dance of the Town of Bologna. I had a lot of advanced students there and I decided to translate the ideas that I had in New York to this group of young players. I started to write little melodies, a little orchestration, and at a certain point, I realized that I had a hardcore group of young players and figured why don't I call top players into it. So I called Franz Koglmann from Austria, Carlos Zingaro from Portugal, Gianluigi Trovesi from Milan, and I built up this group that has been working more or less since 1986. And more and more and more, I've been writing and shrinking the improvised parts. At a certain point, in 1983 when I wrote Cjant, that was a concert for celebrating the millennial of my home town, I also had a string section added to the group and still we had a lot of improvised parts, but in '85, I wrote the Second Concert For Small Orchestra and that was the end of the improvised group – it was more straight Contemporary music. That has been the evolution and how Mitteleuropa worked.

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Cadence: *Escape from 2012 is a 2011 duo recording you made with former Frank Zappa pianist Don Preston. How did that pairing come about and why?*

Centazzo: Don is the sweetest guy you could meet. I don't know [how it started] but I think a sound engineer talked to him about me and he called me and said, "I heard about you. I'm interested to do something with you." Can you believe it? Don Preston. Not only the Mothers of Invention original member, but a great piano player and a creative electronic music guru, so I said, 'Yes!' So we did this concert in Pasadena and immediately we clicked. It was absolutely an incredible night but on top of that, he just blew me up because he came with a double bass and I asked why he had it. He said, "Oh, in the old days, I was playing the double bass, too." And then I found out that he'd been playing bass with the Paul Bley trio! Amazing! Nobody knows about that. He played a tune with double bass with me, this being twenty years later [than his time with Bley], and of course, he wasn't technically a virtuoso, but the ideas, man, this guy was really powerful. After that, we did a few more gigs, one of which was also recorded and is newly out on Ictus but I cannot remember the title [Escape from 202021]. I'm making too many recordings! [Laughs] I loved to play with Don Preston. It's too bad we met so late in our lives because it would have been great to put together a group and to have toured but at a certain point, things change. Don, a couple of years ago, posted on Facebook, "Please help me to find an apartment that I can afford." He's living on Social Security like me, with his wife. Finally, a fan found an apartment for him somewhere. You know, creative music is really difficult to live from but at the time we played together, he was the one getting good paying gigs, which is very rare in L.A. where mostly you play for the door.

Cadence: *Although you've actively worked with gongs since 1970, Sacred Gong Dive [2017] is your first recording totally based on gongs. Why did it take you 47 years to release a gong project?*

Centazzo: The gongs have been always present in my music, even if you listen to the Steve Lacy early recordings, even before the Gaslini recordings, it has always been there from my days starting in '75 working my side job as a metal percussion designer. This [public] gong mania started around 2010, around 2015 I started to do gong meditations in yoga places, mostly because that's where you mainly do that kind of stuff. So, eventually I had enough material to release an album and also I had a market. I don't know how many CDs of solo percussion I have released with Ictus but they may sell 1 copy every 7 months!! Unless you are a percussion player, you are not buying percussion records. That's the reality. Instead, a gong CD with the meditation in mind, has been one of the most successful CDs I've released in the last few years.

Cadence: *Okay, I was going to ask you why you made the distinction on the label that Sacred Gong Dive was "gong music for meditation, yoga and rituals" but you obviously are targeting a direct market.*

Centazzo: There you go, [Laughs] because that is the market for that. I've got to say it's been more than that, people started to buy it even if it wasn't for meditation.

Cadence: *Dark Noise, the 2019 duo performance you did with Italian trombone maestro Giancarlo Schiaffini, is a fun and freely improvised session that heavily features electronics. It concludes with a ninth piece that surprisingly*

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includes identifiable portions of “Caravan.” Why did a standard tune suddenly pop up in your music? I’m not aware of you covering other standard works.

Centazzo: No, it started like a joke, I’ve got to say. I went on tour with Giancarlo in Mexico and Guatemala and we needed a hook because we didn’t know exactly what kind of audience we would find there. That was another incredible gig – it was at the Mexico City School of Art during the EuroJazz Festival. They invited many players from Europe and there were 2,000 people there for our gig. It was amazing, 2,000 people sitting there listening to improvised music. But we had to start somehow in a friendly way so “Caravan” was the idea. You know the song was composed by [Hispanic] trombone player Juan Tizol for Duke Ellington, but, of course, what we did is not the regular “Caravan.” The “Caravan” that we played I arranged with loops with a bass playing a pattern and I was playing drums and Giancarlo was playing just a part of the theme, and then the improvisation went completely Free – nothing to do with the original “Caravan,” but the idea was there. That hooked the audience and it was very successful. We had fun.

Cadence: What artistic projects are you currently working on?

Centazzo: Now I have a huge project that came up suddenly a month ago. Around that time, I was desperate. In May, my mom died so before I was there few months taking care of her in her final days; after I had to do a lot of things in Italy for her and it’s been a difficult period. When I came back after the summer tour I got into a car accident and destroyed my car. I said, ‘Gosh, has it ended?’ NO – in September, my girlfriend slipped in front of the house and badly broke her ankle so I had to be there 24/7 as a caregiver. Then I finally got some gigs, went to New York and I got COVID. By November I was out of my mind so I posted on Facebook that I needed help, I could not manage everything. Many very nice people wrote me saying they could manage my Facebook and Instagram, relieving me of work I don’t like. There was also an Australian saxophone/clarinet player, Richard Savery, who in 2015 helped me a lot in producing the West Coast Chamber Jazz Trio. He’s an expert on the software I use for mixing and recording. He moved from L.A. to Atlanta as a professor and I had lost contact with him until he wrote me saying he read my post and he’s there if I needed his help. He is now back home in Sydney, Australia as an electronic music professor at Macquarie University. He asked about the West Coast Chamber Jazz Trio and I told him I was thinking of expanding it and he offered me remote access to his university’s recording studio, with all the musicians that I need. So the West Coast Chamber Jazz Trio became the West Coast Art Ensemble and I’m writing music for 8-10 players, including the original 3 players who will record here and the orchestral part will be recorded in Sydney. That’s the new project. I’m writing music like a fool these days and I want to put the project out mid next year.

Cadence: You mentioned the West Coast Chamber Jazz Trio [Ellen Burr, flt; Jeff Schwartz, b]. That’s been your primary working group that you founded in Los Angeles purportedly to reflect on your attraction to the 1960’s West Coast American Jazz scene.

Centazzo: That’s a little bit of a tale. Of course, I love Shelly Mann and those guys but the truth is that I needed a hook to find a way to promote this group that basically plays my old and new tunes. There’s a lot of material that I

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recycled and arranged for this trio, along with new things written. I needed a hook so I thought to an album titled L.A. Strictly Confidential could remind people of the title for the movie L.A. Confidential. The West Coast Chamber Jazz Trio is a real Chamber Jazz trio and the fact that I put West Coast on the front of that made it more appealing. It's been quite successful. It's not that we play that many gigs, because I refuse to play for free. In L.A. you can go to bars, clubs, play for free and get the door, get 20 bucks, but I try to select gigs. The last project I did with the trio has been playing Steve Lacy music rearranged for the trio. The trio is the only group I have here and the only steady collaboration. Occasionally, I'm going to Europe and I play with European musicians.

Cadence: *Ictus Records celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2012 at John Zorn's New York City space The Stone for which you curated a 12 night/24 concert festival with top Italian and American improvisors. Talk about that event.*

Centazzo: That was nice of John to invite me. I invited the improvisers from Italy that had been playing with Mitteleuropa Orchestra - Giancarlo Schiaffini, Roberto Ottaviano, Carlo Actis Dato, and I invited Henry Kaiser, Elliott Sharp, John himself, and we created different groups with different combinations. I ended with a final big band two set gig. It was a very interesting experience that was recorded and I released a few CDs from it. It was great to meet old friends and do this kind of music.

Cadence: *What is the status of Ictus Records today? How many recordings have you released and how much of the catalogue is currently available?*

Centazzo: That is really a painful question. Ictus is really a one-man business. I have to do everything from playing the music, mixing, producing, doing the physical CDs, sending the masters. I do all my own covers. It became too much and lately I stopped and I just release digitally. There's no more market [for CDs] and it makes no sense to print 200 copies when you sell 50. And the distributor that I had in San Francisco just sent me back 2,000 CDs that he had on consignment. What I'm trying to do is sell the label, but even selling the label is not easy because of the weird market. The only thing that really works now is vinyl LPs, which have come back in a way I cannot believe it. We're reprinting the original ICTUS LPs from the original reel tapes as LPs in collaboration with Holidays Records and also we'll release some newer albums from my archive, such the duo with Evan Parker and the unreleased second album of Elektriktus. Amazingly they sell very well. I don't get much money but at least the music is circulating. The frustration has been producing CDs that nobody buys. I've done a sale of \$1.50 for each CD, and at that price, people are buying but I'm obviously losing money. I'm just creating a little bit of room in my living room which is stuffed with CDs.

Cadence: *You gained American citizenship in 2000. From an Italian standpoint, what has struck you as being most unusual about American customs and society?*

Centazzo: That really opens the lid of a Pandora vase as we say, I could talk for hours. I'm not enthusiastic about the American way of life, especially after 4 years of Trump. The thing that really hits me is the health care system, which is a total rotten failure. My girlfriend has been the head of UCLA Library for 40 years, paying tons of money into insurance and never used the insurance until

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now, and she cannot get a caregiver or transportation to physical therapy. It's a rotten system and in this country, if you are not rich, you die. Why the most powerful country in the world has a system that doesn't work and is so greedy and just exploits people?? WHY? In name of freedom?? Freedom of my ass!! And then, if you want to talk about guns... The love of art and music, culturally speaking, is different in Europe where you start from elementary school to appreciate music, art and literature. It's not like here where you have to find it yourself. There, it's like an obligation. We have art history in the middle school. We have Latin, Greek, Ancient Greek, and that's in public school. It's different. I'm enthusiastic about the great museums in this country but things are more limited here. Every country has its own problems. The only thing that I can say is that I love the weather in L.A., and the beach. That's the only reason, beside my girlfriend, that I'm here in L.A. It was a culture shock to come here after living in Milan and Bologna. The first thing that struck me when I arrived in L.A. is that there is no downtown. Each surrounding area – Santa Monica, Long Beach- each have their own downtowns. And, I have to say, this is not the best place for what I'm doing because I came here to be the next John Williams and instead I just failed. Thinking of playing this kind of music here is just absolutely insane unless you aren't in an academic close circle. All the other musicians here that play this kind of music, they all have day jobs. Nobody lives like me, just playing music. For me, it's much harder here, but I love the weather and I'm living just a block from the beach. As soon as we finish today, I'm going to run on the beach and I'll feel happy.

Cadence: *What are your interests outside of music?*

Centazzo: That's a good question because music would be probably 95 percent of my life. [Laughs] For the rest, I enjoy cooking, running on the beach. I'm an avid reader – always reading. When I left my house in Bologna, I had a library of 6,000 books that I donated to the town and all the art and music books plus all my works became part of the Archives Andrea Centazzo at the University of Bologna where also they have all my compositions, all my scores and visual works. But to simply reply to the question: reading is my next passion.

Cadence: *What do you read?*

Centazzo: Omnivore – anything that could interest me – I read it. If I want to distract myself – mysteries. I like Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers and Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe [series]. That's when I have 5 minutes that I just want to relax, I read one of those novels and I fall to sleep, [Laughs] finally. After 5 pages now. [makes snoring noise] I'm interested in art exhibitions. I'm also a good cook. My specialty, of course, is pasta. I do spaghetti in at least 40 different ways. I also do seafood and vegetables because I'm not eating meat.

Cadence: *Do you have any unusual special talents?*

Centazzo: No, I have nothing unusual. I'm a very ordinary guy.

Cadence: *The final questions have been given to me by other artists to ask you: Gianluigi Trovesi (reads) said: "It is with great joy that I greet one of the most sympathetic and brilliant artists I have known. My first question is how are you? With a huge hug."*

Centazzo: [Laughs] I'm doing okay, it's not the best period of my life but I'm still alive and kicking.

Gianluigi Trovesi also said: *"Before we get to my other question - I wanted*

Interview: Andrea Centazzo

to tell you that I consider our project in duo - Shock!! - a small masterpiece. I also collaborated in other projects of yours. In one of them, the staff also included strings and was directed by you. It was the first time I saw you in that capacity, in that role as conductor with a regular podium, baton, etc., as in use in symphony orchestras. My second question to you is has direction become a constant in your projects?"

Centazzo: I've got to say, for extended projects, yes, I mostly need to conduct the musicians. I even conduct symphonic orchestras and I'm not a conductor, so I don't have a technique. It's very spontaneous. Basically, what I'm doing, since my music is also related to minimalism, I just keep the tempos and I count for the orchestra the repetitions, because that's the main problem when you play minimal music. You have the same pattern repeated a hundred times – if somebody misses one of those, when you go into the next section, there's gonna be trouble. It's a very simple way to conduct but I've conducted 3 operas with the orchestra, choir, and 5 singers. I've conducted a symphonic requiem and all the improvising/composing groups. I'm pretty happy about that and if I have to do it, I do it.

Gino Robair (multi-instrument) asked: "The question I have is about your work as a composer. Have you written any pieces for percussion ensemble? I know you've written books about percussion (in Italian), but I'm curious if you have any scores for an ensemble of these instruments."

Centazzo: Yes, I have an entire collection published by Warner Chappell Music for percussion quartet, percussion sextet, solo percussion, solo timpani, and there's percussion trio. There's a lot of material that I wrote for percussion.

Happy to send a copy to you!

Henry Kaiser (guitar) said: "I have been fortunate to play with many of my favorite drummers and Centazzo belongs in the same camp as those greats. He is a TRULY GREAT DRUMMER and is not properly recognized as such. My question is who were the most important improvisers who believed in you at the start of your recording career?"

Centazzo: Steve Lacy, absolutely. I spoke earlier about the first time we met. I was coming from the Gaslini Quartet where the music was partly improvised but a lot of the music was written down. Meeting with Steve that first time, asking him what he wanted me to play, and him telling me to, "Play what you feel," that was really the beginning of a different kind of thinking. That made me more sure of myself. I consider him my mentor and my main inspiration, certainly. An inspiration on the side of percussion has been Pierre Favre, who encouraged me to work on my technique because he saw that I had the inspiration and the creativity to be a musician.

Henry Kaiser also asked: "What did you learn from working with "Derek Bailey?"

Centazzo: Not much, [Laughs] I've got to say. I know that Henry is absolutely a fan of Derek, as a guitar player. With Derek, it was more about exploring the total improvisation. Steve Lacy had a foot in Jazz and a foot in improvisation- it was in the middle. Steve never played a duo concert where he didn't play his own themes and from the theme you get inspiration for Free improvisation. Derek just threw me into completely Free improvisation.

Interview: Andrea Centazzo

“Evan Parker?”

Centazzo: I had a lot of chemistry with Evan. He was friendly and there was a lot of humor and more interacting. We had a dialogue and we really enjoyed being together.

Henry Kaiser also asked: “What other drummers do you enjoy listening to nowadays?”

Centazzo: That’s a very difficult question. Henry just called me. He spoke with Bob Moses and Bob wants to do a duo with me. I will probably go to Memphis soon to do that. I would say Bob is one of my inspirations. These days, I’m not listening too much to drummers. There are a few new kids on the block that are pretty creative but I find most of the guys now, young kids playing this kind of music, they are more or less, reproducing things that we already did in the ‘70s. Nothing new under the sun, I could say. I don’t see something that can make me scream, ‘Oh, that’s great!’ There’s a lot of good drummers but I can’t say that I’m really a fan of the new generation drummers. I still click more with the old guys.

Elliott Sharp (g) – Sharp has collaborated with you a number of times and I asked him about how it was to play with you and he said, “Our playing together is a conversation, which is a good thing. The first time we played, nothing was spoken of, we just set up and played.” Would you talk about playing with new musicians and artists from all over the world, from all different cultures and backgrounds and how you go about creating/improvising cohesive music?

Centazzo: Like Elliott said, if you feel something with a musician you are improvising with, you don’t need to talk – the music speaks for itself.

Andrew Cyrille (d) asked: “My regards to you. Do you remember the New York City street and address where you took a couple of drum lessons with me way back when?”

Centazzo: Wow, it’s nice to hear from Andrew. That was 1976, I cannot remember, come on. I remember that I went there as a young kid from this little Italian town. I had been listening to Cecil Taylor records with Andrew Cyrille, loving them, and I went to Andrew all enthusiastic and I said, ‘Oh, I wanted that you explain me,’ and he took out a regular drum book and he said, “Could you play this?” And I was like, ‘Aghhh.’ He said, “At first you learn to play regularly the drums and then you come back and we can talk about Free music.” I remember that and that was the right thing to say to me at that point of my career. And, as a matter of fact, I started to study from those books that he gave me and I improved my technique and finally, I could play much better. Then, the great joy for me came in 2012, when we did the Stone festival, playing with him and Barry Altschul. We had this trio. I mean, Andrew and Barry were my main sources of inspiration in the ‘70s. And still, if I think of the Cecil Taylor group with Andrew or Circle with Braxton, Chick Corea, Dave Holland and Barry, I mean, those are still great unique interpretations of the freedom in music.

Cadence: How long of an interval was it between the first meeting with Cyrille to the time that he agreed to teach you?

Centazzo: No, no, I never went back. I just went home and I did by myself. He gave me the name of the books and I immediately went and bought the

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books and when I went back to Italy, I started to study those books. No, we got together a couple of times and when he said, "You have to study," I said, 'Okay, thank you. Goodbye. I saw him a few years later because he came to Europe and he recorded for Ictus, the album entitled *The Loop*. He was [grilling] me, "How many copies sold?" And I said, 'Look, I am not a businessman. I give you back the master, you do what you like,' and I think he got the master released by someone else. We met again in '77, and then I didn't meet him again until 2012.

Cadence: *I asked Andrew what he recalled of you as a student and he said, "Andrea knew where he wanted to go with his music. He listened to me during lessons and at concerts. He is gifted and professional."*

Centazzo: Well, [Laughs] So kind of him!! I'm pleased about this because, myself, I felt like a stupid kid in front of a great authority on percussion. So, really, thanks a lot. His statement is partly right because I knew exactly what I wanted already. I wanted to be an original percussion player, I wanted to be a leader of a group. I wanted everything already when I went to see him, but technically speaking, I was a disaster. No, I'm exaggerating because I was already playing with Gaslini so I could not have been a total disaster, but I was, let's say, primitive – not technically refined and not completely into improvising.

Andrew Cyrille also asked: *"Do you still have most of those percussion instruments from when I recorded *The Loop* in your studio in Italy many years ago?"*

Centazzo: No, unfortunately, I gave everything to the guy who owns UFIP because he had the project to do a percussion museum. As a matter of fact, he started the project and then he lost the support of the city, but he still has all the instruments but there's not the museum that I've been dreaming of.

Alvin Curran (composer, performer) said: "What is the future of free improvisation? Will it simply die a natural death, become a ubiquitous app, or will it become a major form of composition in the near future?"

Centazzo: This is a question that probably requires another couple hours of time. [Laughs] I would say that most of the Free improvisation right now has become a bit of cliché. As I said before when I was talking about percussion players, it seems to me, today, the young players tend to reproduce what has already been done, probably even us, when we started the movement in the '70s, we were probably borrowing from some other musicians who previously did something similar. Now, I think Free improvisation is a bit of cliché. I don't know if it's gonna die of a natural death, but certainly I don't think it's in good health, artistically speaking.

Cadence: *Anything you'd like to add?*

Centazzo: No, thank you so much. This has been like a surgery! [Laughs] You have eviscerated everything!

New Issues

SCENES - VARIABLE CLOUDS - ORIGIN RECORDS 82862

TILBURY HILL/ TRUDGE/ WHEN JASPER GROWS UP/ COMPANIONS/ LONELY BLUE ANGEL/
VARIABLE CLOUDS/ IT'S EASY TO REMEMBER/ STUDIO CITY/ WITCHI TAI 67:36

Rick Mandyck, ts; John Stowell, g; Jeff Johnson, bass; John Bishop, d 10/29/21 Seattle, Wa

The Northwest based group "Scenes" has partnered with Seattle's Earshot Jazz Festival and the result is a memorable live recording "Variable Clouds". Recorded at Seattle's Town Hall this recording offers exceptional sound quality and the playing throughout is all that most Jazz listeners could hope for. As a trio consisting of Guitar Bass and Drums "Scenes" has been at the top of their game when it comes to progressive interplay for many years. With the addition of Rick Mandyck on Tenor Sax we experience some truly fine moments and witness a group that's tuned into each others every subtle musical nuance. The music can range from delicate to intense with lots of spontaneous rhythmic, harmonic and lyrical exchanges.

We get started with Rick Mandyck's "Tilbury Hill", a rich, meditative piece in three with a deep and pensive melody. Rick's tone is finely crafted with long rich phrases, he takes his time and brings great substance to every note. John Stowell's chordal coloring is vast giving a one of a kind beauty to the music. His soloing combines chords and single notes, unique and unobstructed, possessing a vast vocabulary of color that rivals the role of any great pianist. Rick Mandyck's tune "Trudge" is up next. A short, intense, swinger with a pedal tone intro leaving John Bishop lots of room to give this piece its ferocity. We are shown here how great drumming can take this music to a whole nother level. Not surprisingly Jeff Johnson delivers an outstanding solo along with his psychic ability to direct and anticipate the group's direction. John Stowell's "When Jasper Grows Up" cools things down a bit and puts us back in 3/4 as a ballad like tempo drives this gentle, beautifully written tune. Jeff Johnson shows off his outstanding compositional skills with "Companions". With its strong lyrical melody and harmony to match "Companions" becomes a perfect vehicle for all to let loose and explore. "Lonely Blue Angel", a John Stowell original is an exceptional composition with different sections and time signatures. A very contemporary work that highlights the groups ability to play outside the box and over the bar line. The end result being a fantastic voyage for us listeners. The title track "Variable Clouds" is a Rick Mandyck original and delivers in a big way. Dark and mysterious and out of tempo with John and Rick embracing the melody and Jeff bowing freely. John Bishops loose and free highlighting enhances this piece even further. Some long and powerful expression flows unshackled from Rick Mandyck's horn throughout and then it's followed by John Stowell's masterful command of uniqueness. Two standards are performed on this recording, the first being Rodgers and Hart's "It's Easy To Remember". On this breathtaking ballad Rick plays the melody with some five star beauty and clarity. The listener can feel the quartet breathe as one unit with Rick taking the only solo. The group's accompaniment to Rick is so creatively satisfying that there's really no need for more then one solo. The second is James Gilbert Pepper's "Witchi Tai" also a ballad of great expression with more of a

New Issues

pop flavor expressed through the lens of these contemporary players. Outstanding drum work and two memorable solos by John and Rick gives this number a peaceful, stellar performance. Jeff Johnson plays melody on his composition "Studio City" with soulful vigor and then takes the first solo. Jeff then hands it off to John Stowell as they hold back on the driving swing feel that's about to come. When that swing feel finally does come John Bishop lights the fire and off they go. Rick's up next and the fire burns even hotter. John Bishops drumming takes off and then he hands it back to Jeff for another melody statement. John then wraps up with a blistering drum solo accompanied by the group's enticing background figure.

I'll simply say that "Variable Clouds" is presented by four of the most forward thinking, accomplished musicians on the scene today. They're using their lifelong commitment to the music we love to push creativity even further into the future. The playing writing and sound quality on "Variable Clouds" makes this recording one of my all time favorites.

Frank Kohl

DAVE STRYKER TRIO PRIME

STRIKEZONE RECORDS 8823

PRIME / LOCKDOWN / CAPTAIN JACK / HOPE / AS WE WERE / MAC / I SHOULD CARE / DEEP / DUDE'S LOUNGE 57:57

Stryker, g; Jared Gold, org; McClenty Hunter, d. 10/23/2020. Paramus, NJ.

As a follow-up to his much acclaimed *As We Are* (SZ-8822) the gifted guitarist does a 360 turn back to the organ trio format. Actually this could legally be considered a reissue in that, as Stryker explains in his brief liners, it was originally streamed due to pandemic restrictions. All first takes and no gadget sweetening this is the debut disc from the original threesome. So maybe technically this could be termed a reissue the sounds heard here are all new to us that didn't get to hear the venue tape. The WWII ditty "I Should Care" is the lone non-Stryker composition present among the other eight titles listed. While none are destined to become standards of that stature they certainly should not be considered throwaways. A few are dedications to fellow players; "Mac" is a feature for long-time trapster Hunter who along with Willie Jones III is one to keep an eye on and a pair of scripts for former employer Brother Jack McDuff in "Captain Jack" and the concluding track "Dude's Lounge" an exciting shuffle that encourages one to hit the repeat button. Two hold-overs from his last release, "Hope" & "As We Were" are done in shorter versions. The kinetic interplay among this threesome is something to behold with a shared connection that is never wavering. A more apt title could be no more appropriate, this state-of-the-art organ trio is truly prime.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

JOE MAGNARELLI NEW YORK OSAKA JUNCTION

STEEPLECHASE 31939

NEW YORK OSAKA JUNCTION / LAMENT FOR LORRAINE / WHAT'S NEW / COUSIN JOANNE / THESE FOOLISH THINGS / REVEREND TSURUGA / EMILY / THE WEDDING / THE END OF A LOVE AFFAIR. 63:15.

Magnarelli, tpt, flgh; Gary Smulyan, bars; Akiko Tsuruga, org; Rudy Royston, d. No date/location.

There are scads of excellent trumpet players out there who have never gotten the perks commensurate with their respective talents. A few examples would be Tim Hagens, Jim Rotondi, Eddie Henderson, Brian Lynch, Giveton Gelin, Bobby Shew, Jason Palmer & others. One may add Joe Magnarelli to that list. For his second outing for the Danish Steeplechase outfit Mags (as he is known) takes the road less traveled in a slightly unusual quartet session peopled by his spouse, the esteemed B-3 lady from Osaka, Japan (hence the title) supplying not only tasteful comping and arresting solos but a throbbing bass line for top-shelf timekeeper Royston to ride. Topping things off is the boss of the bary Gary Smulyan to make for a very fine foursome. Five leader writings are scattered around four tried and true standards to make for a ear-catching setlist. As Neil Tesser says in his liners "The image of a well-oiled roadster comes to mind, sleek and exhilarating, as the music heard here." Gentlemen, start your engines.

Larry Hollis

THE SOCIETY FOR ELECTRO-ACOUSTIC MUSIC IN THE UNITED STATES - MUSIC FROM SEAMUS VOL 21

NEW FOCUS RECORDINGS EAM 2012

RADIANCE/ SCAPE 11/ COMLINKS/ INANNA'S DESCENT/ BLUE TRACES/ WELCOME TO MEDICARE!/ NOSTALGIC VISIONS 73:58

Arthur Campbell, cl; Robert Seaback, g/ Scott A. Wyatt, elec; Maja Cerar vln; Kati Gleiser, p; Mark Wingate, elec; Keith Kirchoff, p no recording information

Here we have seven very different pieces all featuring a different acoustic instrument with electronics. A combination I have always liked. Indeed, I perform in a mixed acoustic electronic group. Com Links also includes voices trying to communicate over electronics. And there is even the sound of a telephone ringing. In all cases the acoustic instruments work well with the electronics. Blue Traces, while not blues, does create a bluish mood. Welcome to Medicare introduces us to the problems of accessing an agency through an automated telephone system, while Nostalgic visions presents a nice melodic piano with electronic interruptions. A very interesting recording indeed.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

JOHN BAILEY TIME BANDITS

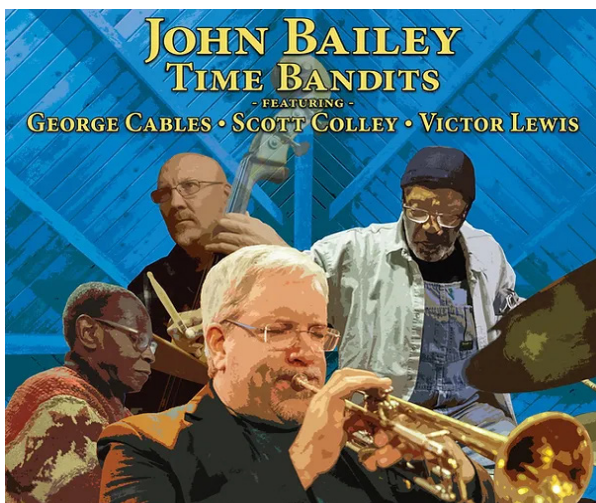
FTRRD0M ROAD RECORDS 002

TIME BANDITS / VARIOUS NEFARIOUS / LONG AGO AND FAR AWAY / ODE TO THADDEUS / OH MAN, PLEASE GET ME OUT OF HERE! / SHE'S LEAVING HOME / ROSE / HOW DO YOU KNOW? / LULLABY / GROOVE SAMBA. 53.01.

Bailey, tpt, flgh; George Cables, p; Scott Colley, b; Victor Lewis, d. 1/16&17/2/12/2022.
Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

If you are into brass instruments you need to check out this seasoned horn man. A veteran of various large groups {Ray Charles, Buddy Rich} across most genres This is only the third album under his command. His first in 2018 (Real Time) made my Cadence best of list and his sophomore date {Can You Imagine?} was almost as good. For this edition he has enlisted the services of a crack trio with the great George Cables, solid Scott Colley and regular drummer Victor Lewis. These guys could make even Herb Alpert swing. Essaying a tune list of five Bailey originals, the Kern ballad "Long Ago And Far Away", a Beatles staple, and a number each from Cables, Lewis and pianist Gary Dial all laid down in the hallowed confines of the Rudy Van Gelder studio with Maureen Sickler behind the board. All of the selections are within the four-to-six minute range so there is no coasting to be heard. John Bailey is a total brassero master; his trumpet lines are crisp and clean (think Conte Condoli) while his buttery flugelhorn playing is in the manner of Art Farmer. The other major soloist, George Cables has always displayed a special affinity for horn musicians and his comping on Rudy's Steinway is nothing short of riveting. There is an almost six minute video available of the combo performing a selection from the album on YouTube@freedomroadrecords. Check it out.

Larry Hollis



New Issues

JESSE DAVIS - LIVE AT SMALLS JAZZ CLUB

CELLAR CMSLF005

GINGERBREAD BOY / CEORA / CUP BEARERS / THESE FOOLISH THINGS / JUICY LUCY / RHYTHM-A-NING / STREET OF DREAMS / LOVE FOR SALE. 68:05.

Davis, as; Spike Wilner, p; Peter Washington, b; Kenny Washington, d. 2/17/2022, NYC.

ED CHERRY - ARE WE THERE YET?

CELLAR MUSIC CMRO61622.

JEAN/PAULINE / DING DONG / GREEN JEANS / HOLY LAND / JAPANESE FOLK SONG (KOJO NO TASUKI) / ARE WE THERE YET? / SPRING IS HERE / MR. WALKER / LAWNS / TRES PALABRAS. 61:33.

Cherry, g; Monte, Croft, vb; Kyle Koehler, org; Bryon "Wookie" Landham, d. 6/16/2022/ NYC.

Like myself, many admirers of Jesse Davis have wondered about the disappearance of the gifted altoist for around two decades. Those circumstances are explained in Spike Wilner's notes where he explains the move to Italy, a marriage and family with only sporadic visits stateside. Whatever else the facts this live recording from last year he certainly hasn't diminished his chops instrumentally. Employing a pick-up rhythmic component he sail through eight selections with the fluid grace previously displayed on several led-albums for the Concord label. Kicking off with the popular Jimmy Heath tune the backing threesome of club-honcho Wilner, rock solid up-right ace Washington and Farnsworth on the kit sets the tone for the remainder which holds four other jazz staples from Lee Morgan, Tom McIntosh, Horace Silver and Thelonious Monk listed respectively. Of these the lovely "Ceora" and funky "Juicy Lucy" are special standouts. The other three titles are all established members of the Great American Songbook. Let us hope this is not the last we shall hear from Jesse Davis.

Appearing on the same label is another quartet commanded by a seasoned survivor of the jazz trenches. First noticed during his decade and one-half tenure with Dizzy he's since worked with organists Dr. Lonnie Smith, Jared Gold, John Patton, Brian Charette & Ben Patterson on a variety of labels. This time out he hired freelancer Kyle Koehler who has been largely ignored and is way overdue for his own leadership session. Another organ vet is timekeeper Landham but the real ringer here is vibraphonist Monte Croft who adds extra timbral freshness to the date. A true graybeard he helmed two Columbia works in 1989/90. His presence reminded this scribe of the late Johnny Lytle a lightning-fast vibest that cut dozens of albums (many with organ) for mostly companies. Croft lays out on some tracks but, on the ones he's on he provides a welcome kick. A pair of originals, the title tune and "Jean/Pauline" named for relatives, spring from the leader with the remainder from outside sources; from fellow jazzers Grant Green, Big John Patton, Wes Montgomery, Carla Bley and Cedar Walton with the sole brushed ballad being "Spring Is Here" from the Richard Rodgers songbook. Another difference from the Cellar Music norm is where the bulk of their titles are produced by Cory Weeds the producer credits list trumpeter Jeremy Pelt who also contributes an annotation paragraph. Those hip to Cherry's fretwork are aware of his sense of economy opting to utilize held tones and space to endless 32 note runs. This one is a keeper for sure.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

DAVE STRYKER PRIME

STRIKEZONE RECORDS 8823

PRIME/ LOCKDOWN/ CAPTAIN JACK/ HOPE/ AS WE WERE/ MAC/ I SHOULD CARE/ DEEP/
DUDE'S LOUNGE. 57:55

Stryker, g; Jared Gold, Organ; McClenty, d. 10/23/20 Paramus, NJ.

A crisp, hard driving opener gets us off in the right direction on Dave Stryker's latest- "Prime". This live, untampered-with studio recording is an exquisite demonstration of what's possible when the organ trio is put in the right hands. The CD is presented by Dave and his working trio comprised of organist Jared Gold and drummer McClenty Hunter. We're treated to eight of Stryker's originals and the standard "I Should Care". The title track "Prime" is up first as a up tempo powerhouse of a tune. The melody lays atop a strong written out background figure and then breaks loose into some freewheeling hardcore swing. Stryker's voice is immediately recognized with his keen sense of phrasing and ability to put his notes in just the right place. Jared Gold pushes hard as his hands and feet work together to deliver support and a blistering solo. McClenty Hunter is right there lighting the fire with splendor and precision. When he solos I become frozen in the spell he casts with all his technique and creativity. "Lockdown" brings a big fat serving of soulfulness and attitude. I'm definitely feeling some of the angst of the lockdown. This also has another killer written out background figure and some unison melody with Jared. The piece has a super cool almost hypnotic quality to it as the players relish in soloing over the written figure with an ardent scene of abandonment. More soulful swing with "Captain Jack" written for Dave's old boss organist Jack McDuff. "Hope" is a bright and optimistic tune with brushes on the snare drum pushing a sixteenth note pulse. "As We Were" is from Dave's previous cd "As We Are" with an apt adjustment to the title. The organ starts us out with a warm introduction that brings us to a beautiful guitar melody reading of this sultry ballad. "Mac" is another Jack McDuff tribute that's funky and driven by some fine muscular drumming. The arrangement on this one is especially well done. "I Should Care" is done with a 6/8 feel that gives this standard a fresh and interesting presence. The solos are outstanding with some beautiful octave work by Dave. "Dudes Lounge" is a blues that starts with some super tasty solo guitar work that shows Dave's gift to go it alone and keep our ears wide open. The band then enters with a shuffle feel and it's off we go. Throughout "Prime" I'm impressed with everyone's playing but also with the variety of feels and the creativity of the arrangements.

I've always been a fan of the guitar, organ, drums trio, starting with Jimmy and Wes. The passing of Dr. Lonnie Smith and Joey DeFrancesco was deeply upsetting to me. I was concerned about the future of this unique musical combo. Thanks to Dave Stryker and others I'm feeling that the organ trio is alive and flourishing and here to stay.

Frank Kohl

New Issues

DAVID HANEY, JULIAN PRIESTER, ADAM LANE, MICHAEL BISIO LIVE AT THE DEEP LISTENING INSTITUTE

CMR 019

TRACK ONE/ TRACK TWO/ TRACK THREE/ TRACK FOUR/ TRACK FIVE/ 48:26

David Haney, p; Julian Priester tbn; Adam Lane, bass; Michael Bisio, bass. Kingston, NY July 23, 2006

While this was recorded back in 2006, it was just released last year. A long time to wait, but the wait was worth it. I am familiar with all the players here except Bisio, who is also a bassist.

As expected, this record consists largely of great interactions among the players.

Priester's playing here is a bit different from what one normally would expect from him, but he rises to the occasion. Haney is always inventive and Lane provides both great support as well as great solo work. I am assuming that the bowed bass is Bisio, who provides great contrast to Lane's pizzicato work.

Track two provides some great interaction between everyone with some very dense chords from Haney and great arco playing from Bisio. And great interplay between the two bassists. Track three slows things down a bit with some really nice work from Priester. Track four features both bassists in a great conversation. And track five features everyone.

In short a very enjoyable recording. Will gets lots of listening time.

Bernie Koenig

new vanguard series
7-23-'06



LIVE AT THE DEEP LISTENING INSTITUTE David Haney

Julian Priester KINGSTON, NEW YORK

LIVE AT THE DEEP LISTENING INSTITUTE Adam Lane

Michael Bisio KINGSTON, NEW YORK

New Issues

GUY BARASH KILLDEER

NEW FOCUS RECORDINGS 355

THE SPACE BETWEEN SILENCE AND ENOUGH/ CONFESSIONAL/ TATTOO/ JESUS KNEW/
SAINT AUGUSTINE/ THE KING OF FIRE/ PARROT/ KILLDEER/ POEM TO BE WHISPERED BY THE
BEDSIDE OF A SLEEPING CHILD/ I WILL DESTROY YOU/ PIED PIPER 39:03

Guy Barash, elec; Nick Flynn spoken word; Frank London, Tpt; Eyal Maoz, g; Kathleen Supove, p
New York. May 10, 2022

Poetry and music. Looking forward to this. I always liked the idea, going all the way back to the Beats, and to the Charles Mingus Scenes in the City from the 1950s. Here we have a more contemporary classical setting, with some good jazz improvisation. The notes call it “structured improvisation.”

The recording begins with an instrumental piece featuring electronics and some nice trumpet playing from London. And goes right into the second track of spoken word. Tattoo begins with some interesting piano work before the poetry begins. Both are accompanied by electronics, and contributions from the other musicians. The poetry covers a wide variety of subjects from a clearly personal viewpoint. Some I found very interesting, others not so much. But perhaps more than music, poetry is very subjective. Some subjects are interesting to me, others not. So I will stick to talking about the music and how it accompanies the poetry.

And the music does a great job of capturing the moods of the poems, and much of the soloing stands well on its own, especially the playing of London and Supove. Barash’s electronics also work effectively. Maoz’ guitar is occasionally audible but stays mainly in support. I actually own a recording of Supove doing contemporary classical pieces. As the album progressed I found I really enjoyed her playing. The highlight for me is the multiple track with Parrot, Killdeer and Poem to be Whispered by the Bedside of a Sleeping Child. The poetry flows nicely and the musical accompaniment is really great, from Supove’s piano to Barash’s electronics to London’s trumpet. The piece ends with the line “this isn’t even a poem.”

A very interesting and enjoyable recording. I will listen again to get more of the poetry, which is interesting. The musical accompaniment is excellent.

Bernie Koenig

RICHARD BEAUDOIN DIGITAL MEMORY AND THE ARCHIVE

NEW FOCUS RECORDINGS 358

REPRODUCCIO (AFTER CASALS/BACH)/ UNIKAT (AFTER ARGERICH/CHOPIN)/ BACCHANTE
(AFTER DEBUSSY/DEBUSSY)/ NACHZEICHNEN/TRACING (AFTER GOULD/SCHOENBERG)
/ YOU KNOW I’M YOURS AFTER MONK / LES DEUX LAURIERS (AFTER TEYTE/CORTOT/
DEBUSSY) / ‘LA CHEVELURE’ FROM TROIS CHANSONS DE BILITIS 44:48

Neil Heyde, cel; Rohan de Saram, cel; Maggie Teyte, vcl; Alfred Cortot, p no recording
information

New Issues

This is basically a classical record where a composer takes a performance of an existing work and writes his version of the piece. Beaudoin wrote these pieces specifically for the performers on this recording. Since I am familiar with five of the seven pieces here I am really looking forward to how Beaudoin interprets these performance pieces.

What Beaudoin does is to take aspects of the performance and minimize it. We get snippets—something like minimalist interpretations of the pieces, which makes Beaudoin's works sound like original compositions.

The other interesting aspect of this recording is that Beaudoin changes most of the original instruments— usually piano—to cello.

Since I am huge fan of the cello I loved the idea.

I think this recording will appeal to cello fans and fans of minimalist composition.

Bernie Koenig

STEPHANIE LAMPREA

14 RECITATIONS

NEW FOCUS RECORDINGS

RECITATION 1/ RECITATION 2/ RECITATION 3/ RECITATION 4/ RECITATION 5/ RECITATION 6/
RECITATION 7/ RECITATION 8/ RECITATION 9 RECITATION 10/ RECITATION 11/ RECITATION 12/
RECITATION 13/ RECITATION 14 53:48

Stephanie Lamprea vcl Glasgow Scotland Dec 2021-May 2022

This is a recital of fourteen recitations composed by Georges Aperghis in 1977-1978 for solo voice.

The recitations are a combination of song, spoken word and vocal sounds. At times I am reminded of Cathy Berberian. I found myself not listening to words, which are in a language I do not speak, but just to vocal sounds. After all the voice is an instrument, so I was listening to that instrument.

As an instrumentalist Lamprea is quite versatile. She goes easily from high volume to very soft. She articulates strange sounds very nicely. Knowing that is composed rather than improvised adds to my admiration of her abilities. It is one thing to improvise all kinds of sounds but to accurately produce what is in a score, which is clearly complex writing, is difficult indeed.

In many ways these recitations blend into one long piece, which some interesting variations. Recitation seven stands out for me due some real vocal pyrotechnics. And Recitation ten really shows her dynamic range. But listening to the record as whole works well for me.

A record for anyone who loves listening to the human voice.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

THE HEAVY HITTERS

CELLAR MUSIC

CLEV70122

HUB / NEW DAY / SILVERDUST / UN DIA ES UN DIA / BIG RICHARD(+) / CHAINSAW(*)/ THIS IS SOMETHING NEW / CEDAR LAND / BLUESIT. 61:20. Eric Alexander, ts,as(+); Mike LeDonne, p; Jereny Pelt, tpt; Vincent Herring, as; Peter Washington, b; Kenny Washington, d; Rale Micic, g (*). 5/8&9/2022. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Generally recognized as one of the finest editions of Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers the sextet comprising Freddie Hubbard, Wayne Shorter and Curtis Fuller in the front line was brought to mind here with the alto sax substituted for the slide trombone. The de facto co-leaders here are Alexander and LeDonne who are responsible for all of the charts, three from the former and six from the latter. The others should all be familiar to regular readers of these pages. All have extensive gig time with each other so this is an extremely comfortable assemblage in the hallowed confines of the famed RVG studio. Many of LeDonne's compositions are dedications to jazz heroes; the opener for Old Mother Hubbard's son Freddie, the funky waltz "Silverdust" for who else?, and "Cedar Land" built off the changes of Mr. Walton's unforgettable "Holy Land". Where the organ playing of LeDonne is out of the Mighty Burner bag this writer discerns some McCoy Tynerism in his piano solos. As for Alexander's writings=his "Chainsaw" is a moderato vamp written in long form with guest guitarist Micic taking first solo honors while the follow-up number has best alto spot from Herring and impressive block-chording from the pianist. Certainly a highlight is Eric's "Big Richard" with the composer switching to alto for an exquisite reading. The sextet takes things out with a tune that is exactly what it says it is, a bluesy shuffle with some serious preaching from all three horns. On the last two titles the upright and drums finally get to stretch their wares. In my music library is a Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis lp from 1979 on the much-missed Muse label entitled The Heavy Hitter. It's a real winner even though singular but the same can be said six-fold for this winner.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

CHET BAKER - BLUE ROOM

JAZZ DETECTIVE 008

DISC ONE: BEAUTIFUL BLACK EYES / OH, YOU CRAZY MOON(*) / THE BEST THING FOR YOU / BLUE ROOM / DOWN. 49:07. DISC TWO: BLUE GILLES / NARDIS / CANDY(+*) / LUSCIOUS LOU(+)/ MY IDEAL(+*) / OLD DEVIL MOON(+)/ 43:03. 4/10/1979 & 11/9/1979(+). Hilversum, Netherland Baker tpt, vcl(*); Phil Markowitz, p; Jean-Louis Rassinfosse, b; Charles Rice, d; Frans Elsem,p; (+) / Victor Kaihatu, b;(+) Eric Ineke, d(+).

Subtitled The 1979 Vara Studio sessions in Holland this is the second release from Zac Feldman's new label Jazz Detective featuring heretofore unissued recordings. As a followup to the two twin packs of Ahmad Jamal Emerald City live dates it is a pair of disks from the same year & same studio in the Netherlands. The first two tunes on the second disc are from the month that produced the five on disk one while the remaining four titles see Baker backed by a different rhythm unit some seven months later. Both keyboardists had been thoroughly initiated in Baker bands and can be viewed in dvds currently available. Markowitz and trapster Rice are Americans amid Europeans some of whom have gigged with Baker previously. From Belgium bassman Rassinfosse recalls a 1976 to 1985 while drummer Eric Ineke remembers the second gathering both included in the twenty-three page booklet. The first platter contains rendering of three standards and two items from Wayne Shorter and Miles Davis. Written by Johnny & Jimmy (Burke/Van Heusen) "Oh, You Crazy Moon" is vocalized with mellifluous scat, the opener is taken as a samba and the Miles 24 bar line from 1951 the most jazzy. There are two more selections from the initial session on the second disc before the four that made up the November date which was more problematic according to statements from the participants booklet reports. The two earlier tracks are another Miles take, the well known "Nardis" originally penned for Cannonball Adderley and , somewhat a rarity, a Baker composition "Blue Gilles" which first appeared around a year earlier on the Broken Wing record for Emarcy also with Markowitz. The protagonist stretches out impressively on both moderate titles. The four tune final session holds two vocals, a sung and scatted "Candy" and the standard "My Ideal" is taken as a ballad featuring Chet's mentholated voice. The concluding song "Old Devil Moon" is presto with trumpet head, two brass solos sandwiching a piano spot and an unfortunate fade. The double dig i-pack is top shelf with the aforementioned booklet, containing recollections/appreciations from Randy Brecker, Enrico Rava, Phil Markowitz & surviving members of both combos, Enrico Pieranunzi and others on the production side. A most worthwhile addition to Chet Baker's massive discography. An ending anecdote: Back in 1991 yours truly had the pleasure to write the liners for the unfortunately out-of-print OUT OF NOWHERE (Milestone 9191) which featured Chet on an eight tune program in Tulsa, Oklahoma with a band of local musicians. The band's leader worked at a music store there in town and when the trumpeter told him he had a mouthpiece but no horn he borrowed a Conn Consolation from the store for the gig. To make a long story short, he never got it back. Say Goodnight, Chet.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

JAY MIGLIORI EQUINOX

OMNIVORE 523

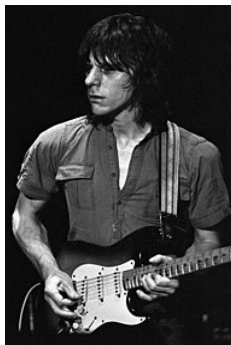
EQUINOX / FOUR BROTHERS / YA KNOW / BLUE JAY / LUNAREY / DAVANA / ASK ME NOW / YA KNOW (TAKE 1) / EQUINOX (TAKE 3) / FOUR BROTHERS (TAKE 4). 52:53.

Migliori, ts; Conte Candoli, tpt; Joe Letteri, p; Jim Crutcher, b; Chiz Harris, d. 9/17,18,19/84. LA.

Although this session is from many moons ago it is not a reissue but a long lost historical document of one of the forgotten west coast tenorists. One may think they have never heard of him but he was a session player right up there with Plas Johnson, David "Fathead" Newman or Tom Scott just to name a few. With a resume of over several hundred studio dates my introduction to his work came via the vaunted multi-horn combo Supersax on their 1973 debut disc *Plays Bird*. But with as much ubiquitous session employment his leadership album output was less than a mere handful. Backing Migliori (born Getulio Salvatore) is the same foursome that was on his 1982 *Ip The Courage for Discovery*. The trumpeter was an old friend from the Supersax days and others were well versed in the tenorman's musical manner from local gigs around the LA area. Straight out of the gate is a spirited rendition of the Coltrane title tune, one of four not composed by the leader. The other non-originals are Monk's much-covered "Ask Me Now", "Four Brothers" which is Jimmy Giuffre's second most popular number (after "The Train & The River") and west coast pianist Lou Levy's "Davana". The remainder is credited to Joe Letteri yet "Lunarcy" is from a 1992 album of the same name by Levy as is "Ya Know" and attributed to a certain Joe Emley. Throughout this disc the solo highlights are mostly from Migliori's crisp tenor but pianist Joe Letteri has his moments also. There are a couple of nice bass spots here and there and trapster Harris is confined to mostly trades with the sax. Three cuts (#4/6/9) sound like the leader on soprano and there is a definite baritone saxophone on the second take of "Four Brothers". Except for maybe the ensemble sections of that title these ears didn't discern any contributions from the younger Candoli brother who is MIA on what is a mostly quartet outing. Nevertheless, a blast from the past and one hell of a find.

Larry Hollis

Obituaries



Jeff Beck



Madosini



Renee Geyer



Tony Ortega



Wayne Shorter

ALAN BATES, jazz producer, died on Jan. 30, 2023. He was 97.

CAROL SLOANE, singer, died on Jan. 23, 2023. She was 85.

CHRISTIANE UFHOLZ, singer, died on Jan. 1, 2023. He was 75.

DENNIS BUDIMIR, guitar, died on Jan. 10, 2023. He was 83.

DON COFFMAN, bass, died on Dec. 11, 2022. He was 83.

FIONNA DUNCAN, vocals, died on Dec. 6, 2022. She was 86.

HERB SNITZER, photographer, died on Dec. 31, 2022. He was 90.

JEFF BECK, guitar, died on Jan. 10, 2023. He was 78.

LATOZI "MADOSINI" MPAHLENI Xhosa music artist, died on Dec. 23, 2022. She was 79.

LÁZARO VALDÉS, piano died on Jan. 1, 2023. He was 83.

MACK GOLDSBURY, saxophone, died on Dec. 26, 2022. He was 75.

MARCEL ZANINI, saxophonist/clarinetist/singer, died on Jan. 18, 2023. He was 99.

MARTIN ZIELINSKI JR. trumpet, died on Dec. 24, 2022. He was 92.

MICHAEL SNOW, filmmaker, died on Jan. 5, 2023. He was 94.

RENÉE GEYER, singer, died on Jan. 17, 2023. She was 69

RICHARD OESTERREICHER, big band leader, died on Jan. 17, 2023. He was 90.

UDO MOLL, trumpet, died on Jan. 14, 2023. He was 56.

TONY ORTEGA, saxophone, died on Oct. 30, 2022. He was 94.

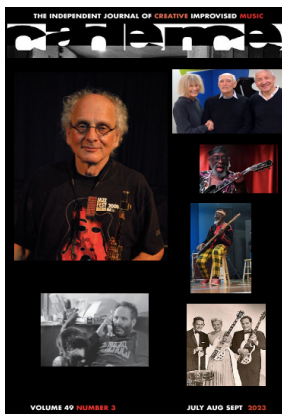
WALTER "WOLFMAN" WASHINGTON, guitar, died on Dec. 22, 2022). He was 79

RASUL SIDDIK, trumpet, died on Jan. 16, 2023. He was 73.

WAYNE SHORTER, saxophone, composer, died on March 2, 2023 .He was.89.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN CADENCE

acc: accordion
 as: alto sax
 bari s : baritone sax
 b: bass
 b cl: bass clarinet
 bs: bass sax
 bsn: bassoon
 cel: cello
 cl: clarinet
 cga: conga
 cnt: cornet
 d: drums
 el: electric
 elec: electronics
 Eng hn: English horn
 euph: euphonium
 flgh: flugelhorn
 flt: flute
 Fr hn: French horn
 g: guitar
 hca: harmonica
 kybd: keyboards
 ldr: leader
 ob: oboe
 org: organ
 perc: percussion
 p: piano
 pic: piccolo
 rds: reeds
 ss: soprano sax
 sop: soprano sax
 synth: synthesizer
 ts: tenor sax
 tbn: trombone
 tpt: trumpet
 tba: tuba
 v tbn: valve trombone
 vib: vibraphone
 vla: viola
 vln: violin
 vcl: vocal
 xyl: xylophone



July Aug Sept 2023

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FRONT COVER Clockwise from upper left

Trevor Watts
 Carla Bley
 Steve Swallow
 Andy Shepherd
 James "Blood" Ulmer
 Jamaaladeen Tacuma
 Mary Ford
 Les Paul
 Gene Paul
 Pete Brown

Inside This Issue

CADENCE MAGAZINE EDITORIAL POLICY

Established in January 1976, Cadence Magazine was a monthly publication through its first 381 issues (until September 2007). Beginning with the October 2007 issue, Cadence increased in number of pages, changed to perfect binding, and became a quarterly publication. On January 1, 2012 Cadence Magazine was transferred to Cadence Media L.L.C.

Cadence Magazine continues as an online publication and one print issue per year. Cadence Media, LLC, is proud to continue the policies that have distinguished Cadence as an important independent resource.

From its very first issue, Cadence has had a very open and inclusive editorial policy. This has allowed Cadence to publish extended feature interviews in which musicians, well known or otherwise, speak frankly about their experiences and perspectives on the music world; and to cover and review all genres of improvised music. We are reader supported.

Cadence essentially always has been and remains "the best independent magazine of Jazz, Blues, and Creative Improvised Music that money can't buy."

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4/1 Honoring Joey DeFrancesco - Lucas Brown Jerry Weldon Terell Stafford
Photo credit © Ken Weiss



3/26 Shane Parrish - Ava Mendoza - Wendy Eisenberg - Bill Orcutt
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Short Takes Photos - Philadelphia



4/21 - Plunky & Oneness of Juju



4/14 - James "Blood" Ulmer
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Pianist Veryan Weston on Trevor Watts

Taken by Ken Weiss

Back in early-to-mid-1960s, when my sister Armorel was doing a fringe theatre gig with the Scaffold [a comedy, poetry and music trio from Liverpool, England, consisting of musical performer Mike McGear (real name Peter Michael McCartney, the brother of Paul McCartney), poet Roger McGough and comic entertainer John Gorman] up in a place called the Little Theatre Club. She was also crooning in a casino in Soho (Charlie Chester's club), and the band would get there early so they could get the nuts off the tables which were supposed to be for the customers later. The drummer in that band was John Stevens. He mentioned to her that he had just finished serving time as a musician in the RAF with some friends (two being Paul Rutherford and Trevor) and they were looking for a place to develop the music. She said she was doing a gig with the Scaffold called How to Pass Your Sperm Test up in a place called the Little Theatre Club. So she asked Jean, who was the owner, if John and Trevor (and others) could have a regular night there and Jean was ok about it. I was still in a horrible boarding school and I worshipped Armorel (still do) and remember her taking me to the Little Theatre Club a few times. I was listening to musicians like Mose Allison and Otis Spann at that time and couldn't make heads or tails of what was going on there. I remember seeing these guys playing something and one of them had a radio on at the same time as they were all playing (so that must have been AMM). It was at this time that John was working with Trevor and developing the music of the SME. I met Trevor a bit later when I failed my music exams and decided to go and live in London with my wife - Jill and our son. We lived in Brixton in the early '70s first and we'd go down to the Plough in Stockwell nearby and listen to a house rhythm section consisting of John Stevens, Stan Tracey and a Scottish bass player called Lindsay Cooper. They'd have a horn player guest each week like Harry Becket, Don Weller, Lol Coxhill and Trevor. The music was often great but the landlord still didn't like the fact that, in spite of the place being frequently packed, the clientele was more interested in listening to the music than drinking his beer. The Little Theatre Club was still in existence at this time and John Stevens gave me some chances to play there. It was at this time that I think I first played with Trevor. I also met Martin Davidson, who was also keen on the SME and other experimental music projects and started releasing recordings of these on his own label EMANEM. It was much later on that Trevor and I made some recordings for him. After moving out of London, I got an artists' residency and started working more regularly with other musicians, one of whom was Lol Coxhill. There were some local young guys who played and we formed a band and got nominated 'Young Jazz Musicians of the Year' by the Greater London Arts Association. It was around this time (1979) that I remember visiting Trevor's house in North Finchley as I felt we shared similar

Jazz Stories by Veryan Weston

musical interests. He was working on music with Amalgam. I think I was a bit cocky then but somehow Trevor was able to deal with this. It was around this time that Trevor also moved away from London as well. Soon after this I was invited to be part of a new project of his called Moiré Music. It was always an extra bonus to be by the seaside when we did rehearsals, even though the music had very specific demands. This was a big learning experience which required developing listening skills as melodies and chords functioned as being part of a rhythmic cycle and these had to fit in a certain way with everybody else's rhythmic cycles before they could work, and often that 'certain way' didn't feel like it was the easiest place to put your part in relation to what everyone else was doing. I found ways of using my feet so I could keep track of what part of the bar we were all in and then I began to see some of the other musicians in the band looking at my feet and I figured that they also got lost sometimes just like me. Even Trevor got lost, so we were all sharing these challenges. It was a great band with some wonderful musicians. After this period Trevor worked on his drum orchestra projects and quite a lot later we got together again as a duo and just improvised. We called this project 'Dialogues' and somehow all the previous work we had done together informed our musical relationship as improvisors. Being open and free meant to us that we also could play the things we liked and that included melodic, harmonic and rhythmic ideas but explored spontaneously. At my request and suggestion, we are now working again on Trevor's music in a band we call Eternal Triangle which includes percussionist - Jamie Harris. Considering Trevor is 84, the music he's working on is still both demanding and challenging, but Jamie and I really love this. The rehearsing, the traveling, the waiting around, the conversations, the meals, and the gigs themselves, are all a vital strand to my life. These experiences with Trevor consist of some vivid moments but are just personal glimpses as opposed to anything particularly profound. Trevor has talked to me about his grandson George and he is very positive and enthusiastic about George's ability to work on ideas and activities by himself, a number of which are quite unusual for children his age. That to me says a lot about Trevor as well.

ESCALATOR OVER THE HILL: Now over 50 - but not yet anywhere near over the hill...

©Patrick Hinely 3/28/23

It all started with this: A Facebook post by Gaspare Di Lieto, 2/10/23, on his Rare Jazz Photos page, accompanying this (unattributed) picture of Carla Bley, as a child, at the piano, smiling in the direction of the camera, something it took me 35 years to get her to do.

My comment, since edited, posted later the same day, in response to the comment that Escalator Over the Hill was 51 years old:



In 1972, no American record company was interested in taking a chance on a 3-LP album such as *Escalator Over the Hill*, so Carla and her then-husband Michael Mantler put it out on their own JCOA (Jazz Composers Orchestra Association) label, while also founding the New Music Distribution Service, which handled hundreds of small labels, and was the first US distributor for ECM. With time, the JCOA label was folded into Bley and Mantler's newer entity, the WATT family of labels, and ECM became WATT's distributor. Carla now records for ECM. She often gets short shrift among critics, but that comes with the territory of being free enough of trends to set your own rather than following one. What I find most grating is her name being left out of too many rosters of pioneering women who have helped level the playing field in a part of the music world so long dominated by men. We are fortunate that from the beginning, Carla Bley has always followed her own muse. She is a force of nature.



An Auspicious Debut

Robert Palmer was the canary in my coal mine. His glowing review of Escalator Over the Hill in Rolling Stone arrived in August of 1972, while that publication's imprimatur still carried more weight than fluff. It was the first I'd heard of this album – or of Carla Bley - and this was the next 3-LP box set to garner such notice since George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh a few months before.

Palmer's review made it an enticing prospect, tempting enough to inspire my investment of a mail order fortune. I can't remember whether its \$12 price tag included shipping, but at that point in my life, monthly rent was \$25...

Primarily, I bought it because it featured John McLaughlin. The original Mahavishnu Orchestra was hot at the time (though by then, I was also discovering McLaughlin's solo debut from across the pond, Extrapolation, which sounded equally uplifting, more inviting, and less noisy). I also knew of Jack Bruce, from Cream, but had yet to discover Songs for a Tailor or, especially, Harmony Row, so this was my introduction to him doing much of anything besides backing Eric Clapton. And of course everyone knew who Linda Ronstadt was.

Little did I know how many mind- and ear-expanding surprises awaited me. EOTH was my introduction to so many amazing musicians, including the composer Herself. Its overall roster comprises a veritable Who's Who of the jazz avant garde, an aesthetically far-flung legion spanning the interfaces between structure and chaos, at a time when adventurous ensemble exploration of the unknown was embraced.

To create EOTH, Carla Bley organically organized this unruly, lovingly creative lot, session after session, with an ever-changing cast, during the years 1968 to 1971. The sum of this endeavor adds up to more than its parts, most any of which can sturdily stand unto themselves as shorter pieces.

The 3-LP set was packaged in a hefty, classical-looking gold-foil topped box, with a libretto book – not a booklet, a book – of Canadian poet Paul Haines' lyrics for this de facto jazz opera. This publication remains a paragon. It was re-published at full LP dimensions for the CD edition, which was housed in a gold-foil topped box identical to the original LP issue.

I like to think the booklet for Bley's 2002 big band album, Looking for America, which, like the EOTH book, was photo-edited and designed by Bley herself, this time with my own rehearsal and session photos, followed nicely in a similar vein, even though the CD format is physically smaller. While it won't be engraved on my headstone, it will always warm my heart that I was the first photographer allowed, some 30 years later, to follow in the footsteps of Gary Winogrand, Tod Papageorge and Paul McDonough, documenting Carla Bley in the recording studio with an ensemble. Now it can be told: I'd have done it for free, but it was nice to not only be invited, but also respected, and decently paid.

Over the years, I've ended up spending a good bit of time with the Escalator libretto book as well as the music itself. My affection for its pages stems from its embodying many of the same design elements as the now-obscure art form I came up in: the school yearbook, an activity I began in junior high, and for which I served as editor-in-chief in both high school and college. I've seen a lot of music packaging, and have had my work included in or on about 300 albums, but EOTH's book has seldom been equaled and never surpassed.

Comprehending the scope of the music was another matter. I'd heard a bit of Satie and Weill, but not yet so much Monk or Ornette, much less Ives or Ellington. As

a recovering rocker southern white boy in my early 20s, sitting still long enough to attentively listen to all 6 LP sides in uninterrupted sequence would have been unlikely. Then there was the matter of my cluelessness due to not having lived long enough, much less heard enough other music which would prepare me for this eccentric extravaganza. So, though I didn't listen to Bley's music as I was coming of age, her music helped me grow up (as much as I have, anyway).

I glommed onto bits and pieces here and there. There was no shortage of portals into this sprawling work. Gato Barbieri's impassioned tenor wailings throughout, or Ronstadt's mellifluous vocals on Haines' surreal lyrics for "Why" (with Charlie Haden singing harmony, and that snaky lick McLaughlin dashes off at the end) or Don Cherry's hypnotically mystical auras in "A.I.R.", leading seductively into the shredding of Jack's Traveling Band = McLaughlin, Bruce, Paul Motian and Bley herself = on "Rawalpindi Blues" were the first to catch my attention, and the first I played on my college's radio station, at a time when the Eagles debut album topped the playlist. An added benefit of playing it on air was to give me another chance to try to make sense of how so much different music could come out of the same box.

It would take another five years until I could do more than occasionally cusp on comprehension for the span of the entire work, as Bley calls it, a chronotransduction, much less perceive as a single opus, one about as magnum as an opus can get. The power of it all was, unexpectedly, first fully revealed to me while I was driving my Volkswagen bus around Jacksonville, Florida, my old home town, delivering flowers for holidays. I'd recorded all 6 sides, about 105 minutes' worth, of EOTH onto one of those nice BASF chromium dioxide 120-minute cassettes – the only variety of 120s which didn't stretch or break if you so much as looked at them wrong – and I listened to it while running roses, etc., all over town.

Though my listening wasn't uninterrupted, it was in sequential order, start-to-finish, somewhat like watching a movie on commercial television, except that my interruptions weren't for advertisements, rather for stepping out to ring doorbells and hand over the goods at many a home or business. I began to have favorite passages which I looked forward to hearing, but instead of forwarding or rewinding the tape to repeat-play those, I only listened in full sequence, acquiring, if not new favorites, at least new curiosities to be examined further, on most every pass, which also revealed more of the contextual nuances of Bley's larger musical architecture. Many a mile driven in that burgeoning multi-county spread of suburbs, exurbs and ruburbs was made far more enjoyable with this infinitely intriguing soundtrack. Hearing it twice through in a day gave me an ever-deepening perception for its overarching structure, its labyrinthine narrative arcs and recurring motifs, of the work as a whole.

I can still be amazed by the breadth and depth of the scope of Bley's musical vision. Even if logic says it shouldn't all fit together, it does.

With the years, I have also grown quite fond of Carla's sign-off on the inside back cover of the libretto book: "Anything not told, wasn't yet known."



Carla Bley, Steve Swallow and Andy Sheppard at their rehearsal for the Big Ears Festival in Knoxville, Tennessee, March 21, 2017. Photo credit ©2017 by Patrick Hinely, Work/Play®

An Interview with Gene Paul

By Bill Donaldson

Producer Joel Dorn wrote in the liner notes positive comments about the quality of the sound from a tape recording (“on a \$1.98 cassette”) of a live Ray Bryant concert. I thought that sound engineer Gene Paul’s comments may be of interest. This is what he said. Mr. (Gene) Paul engineered Grammy-winning recordings by Aretha Franklin, Roberta Flack, Nora Jones, and Maria Schneider.

CADENCE: *You’ve worked with Joel Dorn for a long time.*

Gene Paul: Yes, I’ve done work for Joel for years. Wherever he goes, I’m there. I first worked with him in the sixties and seventies at Atlantic Records. Even the owner of DB Digital Plus [a mastering studio], Joel Kerr, is from Atlantic. Sometimes Joel does recording dates on the outside, and when he does that, I work with him on those projects too. I work with him exclusively on the mastering. In the eighties, Joel [Kerr] and I started re-mastering live concerts. Part of the problem in dealing with board tapes—tapes that people had just put into the machines to record things—is that a certain amount of equipment is needed to handle them. We use two pieces of equipment for that purpose. One is the Atari 5050 two-track, which handles the quarter-inch tape. In other words, it’s the home consumer’s best professional deck for handling that type of tape. The other unit we use is a Nakamichi Dragon, a cassette unit with an automatic seeking azimuth. That means that the heads are on a motor. The Dragon says, “Feed me any tape, and I will align the heads to fit that tape automatically.” That provides the best resolution of the sound that you can get from a cassette. We’ve had several collections that consist of thousands of cassettes. The Dragon is exquisite for getting the music off the tapes with the best fidelity. Ray Bryant’s album, “Somewhere in France”¹, fell into that category of audiocassette. Somebody had just slipped the tape in a deck and recorded it. Working on that recording was a delightful experience. Normally, when a person says, “I have a pillowcase full of tapes,” I immediately think, “Is it good? Bad? Ugly?” But Ray’s tape was a special find. If the listener didn’t know that it was recorded on audiocassette, he would think, “Wow! What sound truck did they use?” The audience was phenomenal. Ray played as if he were in Avery Fisher Hall. His speaking on the tape was just perfect. At the end of the concert, the technician must have said, “Hey, Ray. Before you leave, take these.” Ray basically came home, threw the tapes in a drawer, and never listened to them. Initially, Joel [Dorn] had said to Ray, “You don’t have to listen to your tapes. Many people just collect them and don’t want to be bothered. We’ll take care of it.” Ray said, “No, I’ll listen to them.” Ray was astonished when he finally heard them. He called Joel a couple days later and said, “The find was incredible.” When Joel and I heard the tape in the studio, we both fell over. Technically speaking, that tape was one of those we’re-never-going-to-find-another-one-like-that.

Cadence: How is the quality of the tapes from the Left Jazz Bank Society?

Gene Paul: Those are rough. One problem is that the performances were recorded on a seven-inch reel-to-reel Mylar tape. When you stretch Mylar tape, it becomes a rubber band. There's no bringing it back after it's stretched. Also, Mylar is half mil, which means it's extremely thin. When acetate tape breaks, you can pick up the pieces and put it back together. But the minute that Mylar tape stretches, it has to be cut because it's gone. So, a half-mil tape means that more tape can be put on a reel and therefore record for a longer length of time. Also, Mylar tape is quarter-track, which means that it goes stereo in one direction and, when the tape is turned over, it goes stereo in the other direction. To boot, the Mylar tape is at three-and-three-quarter and seven-and-a-half RPM—very slow speeds for music. The Left Bank Jazz Society put the band on one side and the featured horn on the other side. That means that, for all intents and purposes, they created a big mono. For someone who thinks "I happen to love Getz," the Left Bank Jazz Society's tape makes it a privilege to be able to revisit that night he played there. The listener of the CD² can sit there and say, "Wow. That's spectacular." But when we sent the original rough, which was a copy of the original tape, for the Getz estate to hear, they said, "Can you fix any of this?" They were stunned at how bad the tape sounded. But Joel wanted to hear if the estate was interested in going to the next phase so that we could present an improved tape to them. They did notice that Getz was playing incredibly, but they were concerned about the quality of the sound. The tape did need some tender loving care. If I went into a club and sat at a table that didn't quite give me a great balance, and if Getz were playing the way he did on the Left Bank Jazz Society tape, I wouldn't get up and leave! Great musicians are great musicians. We make the recordings as good as they can be, considering the environment where the tapes were recorded. It's wonderful to hear that people enjoyed the recordings after they were enhanced. The environment in the studio is very controlled, even during a free-spirited jam session. The spirit in a club became, "Oh, there's no producer. Oh, I don't have to sell this. People only have to hear it once." But when the audience goes crazy during a performance, it's like a bookmark. There's a flag that something exciting is happening, and we should stay with the music. The audience's reaction energizes the artist to go to a higher place. A live performance rises to a level that's just marvelous. If I were a student of saxophone, I would love to have access to Getz's performance since I wouldn't be able to go to a club to see him. Those Left Bank Jazz Society recordings become a learning tool and an important part of history.

Cadence: The Cedar Walton recording³ sounds rougher than Getz's.

Gene Paul: Absolutely. His piano was a little out of tune. Getz shined on his CD because when he performed, the horn was on one side and the band was on the other. So we could play with the tape. But we struggled to improve the recording of Cedar's tape because it didn't have that separation of sound.

Pianos are never miked as well as horns are. Recordings of pianos are driven by questions like “Is it a good piano? Is it tuned well? Is it miked well?” So, some of these tapes are very rough. However, our technical equipment and our involvement in reissuing old tapes for twenty years help us. With the Coltrane box set⁴, Joel included the outtakes that led up to the final recordings. When you listen to the recorded progression, you can actually hear the tunes being developed.

Cadence: What is your role in the process?

Gene Paul: I do the hands-on work. When the process gets to particulars like no-noising or some type of polished editing, I supervise the work. If the work is just a matter of EQ [equalization] and taking top end off, then we keep the work simple. In most cases, the work is simpler than one would think. For example, you could take noise out and divide Basie’s band if you want to. But there’s a level where noise and music share the same ground. When the noise is removed to the extent that the sound is too clean, we lose what music—to me—is expressing. The sound of music is best when one note bleeds into the next one after it is struck. They share the same territory. When too much noise is removed, it spoils what the musicians try to do. In my mind, music is sacrificed to achieve no-noise. Therefore, I would rather hear a little noise so that the music is performed correctly. A lot of the old tapes that I’ve enhanced have a certain expression to them as if a person sat down in a club. Sometimes the air conditioning, the bottles clicking, or the people talking can be heard. Those sounds should never be removed completely because they are as much a part of the event as the smoke in the room. Joel has said many times that truly the most important thing is what you don’t do that makes a recording work. We have the ability today to do too much. You could put a divider between each musician in Basie’s band and totally clean up the recording so that you can hear every player. But Basie’s band was never thought of that way. It was a unit. Years ago, I was fortunate to hear Wes Montgomery and Jimmy Smith in a club in Harlem. The room was dark and foggy. But the music just melded together. There was no division. Hearing the pedal of the organ hit the floor did something to the audience. When you remove that feeling to make a quote-unquote “clean” record, you lose the basis for the music. So technically, while we have the ability to make performances “perfect,” I choose to stay with the raw sense of the music. Joel spent a good part of his life in clubs, and sometimes he asks me, “Why is the recording so clean? It doesn’t sound like a club.” Sometimes we say, “Wow. We feel like we’re in the environment.” If the music doesn’t make the listener feel as if he were in the club, then we’re doing something wrong. From an engineering perspective, jazz is no different than classical music. If you had thirty-five or forty musicians playing a symphony, would you put a mic on everybody? No. It’s the same situation with jazz, except that putting the mic on every musician in a band is possible. Therefore, it’s done. To me, jazz consists of notes bleeding together. The minute they separate, it’s not the same.

In the middle eighties, engineers crossed over to become the artists. That was a major mistake. It resulted from the fact that albums could be made from four bars. It resulted from the thought that “if the technology is doable, why don’t we do it?” The minute they did it, it changed music. It’s not that I don’t like the [electronically enhanced music]. It’s that when Aretha Franklin and people of her stature record an album with musicians, it’s one thing. The minute that the music is overdubbed and sampled, you lose that connection to the human element in the music. If you could take an old vinyl record and compare it to what’s happening today, the same magic isn’t there. I remember that when I worked at Atlantic Records, the engineer became someone who captured something. Ray Charles was not made by Tommy Dowd. Tommy Dowd captured Ray Charles.

Cadence: Do you think that the engineers have too much control today?

Gene Paul: Yes, way too much control. I remember working on a Mongo Santamaria album⁵ that consisted of twenty-eight musicians in a single room. That’s devastating for an engineer. I remember that, after everything became stable, the producer hit the key and said, “Let’s run this tune down.” After it was performed, he said, “That’s a take. We’re done.” The ability to hear a finished record while it was being performed was marvelous. That process started to become obsolete when I began my career in the late sixties. But having experienced a couple dozen sessions of that type, I found that process to be one that shouldn’t have been allowed to die. Today, an engineer plugs a unit into the wall, and fifteen things play. No human being has any input or changes the process to accommodate the artist. The same music comes out of the processor every time. The more that engineers keep going in that direction, the more I’m hearing a coldness in the music. The result is so perfect that no human being could play like that in real life. I’ve heard mistakes that lead to a wonderful take. When I started at Atlantic, it was so hard to me. I was brought up on the belief that, “Oh, we’ll punch that in. We’ll fix that.” But at Atlantic, it was, “No! That’s an honest mistake. That’s the take!” Today, if a musician begins to think about a mistake, the engineer corrects it. That kind of correcting has nothing to do with the human connection. We have the ability to do a lot of things. It’s up to us to say if we want them or not. Or whether we use them intelligently. Over a long period of time, if the public is fed enhanced music, they will become more aware that they’re listening to it. For example, we mastered Otis Redding’s Dock of the Bay⁶. I tell you, that album could be a learning tool for anyone who records. When they made the album, the engineers had nothing but door springs and cheap mic’s. Everything was wrong. Yet, it’s the most balanced, well-done, phenomenal album ever made. All of today’s technology couldn’t have produced an album like that. The producers needed the ability to deal with what they had on hand, and they pulled it off. On Sexual Healing⁷, Marvin Gaye combined technology with raw music, and the listener could accept the combination because the human

element was involved. Today, I think the public realizes that the human element has to be involved in creating the music. The minute that people are returned to the equation, human feeling will override synthetic enhancement every time.

Cadence: *Earlier, you said that you were brought up to make recordings perfect until you joined Atlantic. Why did you think that recordings had to be perfect until then?*

Gene Paul: Well, I was working with my dad in his studio. His work involved perfection. Today, there are microphones that are awesome. But when I was a kid, I asked my dad, "What kind of a mic would you use on a trumpet?" And he asked, "What's the frequency range of the trumpet?" Then he said, "This is the mic I would use." When he showed it to me, I asked, "Why wouldn't you use a mic with a wider range?" And he answered, "There's no reason to. The frequencies aren't there. It becomes annoying. You want the essence of the instrument." He proved that to me, and that's how I was educated. Today's studios use microphones that have a frequency response with nothing in common with the instrument. That's why you hear cymbals four octaves higher when you listen to a recording of a drum. Then you think, "Gee, when a drummer hits a cymbal like that in a club, the sound is different." Because the engineer is in control, the sounds become strange. Also, I don't know what's happening in the community of mastering, but levels keep getting louder. There's no reason for it. Years ago, there used to be a slight reason because the vinyl rumble and hiss were annoying. A louder record diverted the listener's attention from that noise. But digital technology eliminates the reason for loudness, even as the music keeps getting louder. To make the music louder, the music must be squeezed. Instead of letting a vocal express itself and breathe, it must be condensed to the point where it stands still. The result is a different kind of music. When the music leaves the studio, it's right. It's when the music goes to the mastering house that it changes. When you listen to the two versions, the studio mixes breathe. But the final product is squeezed so hard that the finesse of the performance sounds different.

Cadence: *Have you always been involved in sound engineering, or have you had other types of jobs?*

Gene Paul: I played drums with my dad when I was a kid. I went on the road with him for six to eight years. It was just wonderful. I wasn't great at playing drums, but I was good enough that I could fit into the band. Actually, that's where I got my "college education."

Cadence: *Who else was in the band?*

Gene Paul: It was just my dad, Mary [Ford] and myself. They utilized whatever band happened to be in the city where we played. Without even knowing it, I was being taught about presenting music, which was a great experience. I worked on putting the shows together with Dad. I watched him record his own music as well as groups'. If he said, "Do you want to know about this?" I'd say, "Yes." And I'd go set up a mic. By the time I grew up, I knew how to record.

Cadence: Whom did your father record?

Gene Paul: In the early days, out on the West Coast, Bing Crosby came over to the house to be recorded. Sometimes they tried out ideas on a project they were interested in. If their work turned out good enough, sometimes Bing said, "Let me use this." Dad's development of the multi-track recorder came out of that period. Oddly enough, he never made one hit record on the multi-track. His recordings were all done on a mono tape machine with a fourth head. That means he played his part, recorded it, played it back and recorded the new part. The older I became, the more I appreciated what Dad did. He used to record the sixth vocal part first. Mary used to sing the fifth, the fourth and the third parts. The last vocal part he recorded was the lead. He completed the recording with the bass. He did the same thing with the guitar parts: He recorded all the parts and then the lead. He had the ability to hear pitch and to project what the finished recording would sound like as he worked on the twelve parts. That was overwhelming. And then he did it on a mono tape machine.

Cadence: Did he do that all in his head, or did he write it?

Gene Paul: No, he can't read a note. But that was how he made the hit records. After I learned how he recorded those kinds of records, I used to think, "Everybody records like this." Later, I went into the studio and heard Aretha Franklin, Cissy Houston and Roberta Flack sing over back-up parts. Then I thought to myself, "My gosh! Mary used to sing the six parts herself."

Cadence: So you realized how much work that was.

Gene Paul: Not only how much work it was, but also how good you had to be. Mary's pitch had to be perfect on the first recording. Otherwise, it would throw off all the other recordings on top of it. If that happened, those recordings would have had to be done all over again!

Cadence: That technique was your father's idea, but what did Mary think of it?

Gene Paul: It was a lot of work, but she had perfect pitch. If Dad could so much as hear a glass clink, she could hit the note. He knew which note it was before he picked up the guitar. After I worked in this industry for thirty years, I thought to myself, "My gosh! Dad really had to be on the button with that technique." Then he went on to create the solid-body guitar and the multi-track. Thirty years ago, when my dad had invented the multi-track, not one multi-track hit was made. All of Dad's records were done in his head before he recorded. I remember my dad's stories about how he and Mary toured. They played in the club at night. Then at three o'clock in the morning, she would be singing under a blanket while he played guitar. That's how they made their records. The level of my dad's playing is what made his music so great. That's the same level of excellence that Otis Redding had and which made his music exciting. When an artist reaches a certain point, something more happens than just clean sound. In my opinion, that's the element that's missing in today's music.

Cadence: How did you get your job at Atlantic?

Gene Paul: Dad knew the studio manager there, Phil Lehle. Dad sat down with me and said, "I can get you in, but you're on your own." I worked there for three or four years before I was given any real opportunities. By working with Tommy Dowd, the Erteguns, Jerry Wexler and Joel Dorn, of course, I soaked up the experience. Also, I worked in many of the outside sessions for people like Diana Ross and Gladys Knight. One day, we would be working with Aretha, and the next day we would be working with the Rolling Stones. I would have paid to work there! It was like being in a dream.

Cadence: Which record was the first one you were responsible for?

Gene Paul: I forget the name of the record, but it was for Wilson Pickett. He got mad at me. He said the record sounded like a 78. I spent a lot of time with Tom Dowd to grow with the craft and do as well as I could. That was a wonderful period of time in the recording business. There were so many brilliant musicians then. I remember that I had to make a mic change for Mingus once. When I walked up to Mingus, I said, "Mingus, that sounds great." After I went into the control room and turned up the mic, I could hear [snoring sound]. Joel's love for music is so strong. He's finding so much music that's wonderful because he didn't go with a major label. It's good that he didn't do that. If he had, he would be reissuing that type of music, instead of finding older tapes to release for the first time. There was a certain affinity between Joel and Rahsaan that's still there. Joel was amazed by what he heard Rahsaan play. I mean, if he finds a tape that Rahsaan recorded, Joel puts it away. For the most part, we released Rahsaan tapes that someone found somewhere. We had a collection of four hundred of Rahsaan Roland Kirk's cassettes. By the time we were done listening to the cassettes, we "knew what this guy eats every day." We could come out with some delightful results that include a pristine sound, or we could get all kinds of variations from that. It's no different than hunting for treasure under the water. We have to keep looking. Some of these people are one-of-a-kind. Rahsaan definitely fits into that category. I must have worked on fifteen albums with him. It's remarkable that he can play so far out and still stay inside. I was amazed at how he could create so much music with all his horns. Rahsaan used to play hoses, gongs and anything else. Joel would tell him, "Go ahead and do it." Rahsaan was a marvel, but he used to be upset that people didn't take his music seriously. He led a short life for a guy who contributed so much.

Cadence: What type of music do you prefer?

Gene Paul: I like anything, although classical music gets a little bit away from me. Jazz in the far-out sense gets me a little nervous, but I enjoy jazz in the commercial sense. Rahsaan is as crazy as you can get, and he'll really leave the planet. Yet, he'll come back to visit enough that he won't lose you. Any of Rahsaan's albums are collectibles. But good music is good music, whether it's banjo, saxophone, or spoons. We're working on a Buddy Rich album⁸ now. Buddy has to be one of the top three drummers, if not the greatest. Buddy

Rich's music wasn't exactly warm and soothing. But when I listen to his music, I think, "My God! He was so accurate, and his sound was so big." When I played drums as a kid, the two drummers my old man took me to see were Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich. We listened to them play, and Dad said, "They're what a drummer's about."

Cadence: Did you father ever perform with them?

Gene Paul: I don't think so. Dad wasn't a jazz guy. He was more commercial. Plus, he didn't like a drum. The drum got in his way. Back then, the drum was a silent partner. Sometimes people speak of jazz as if it's a dirty word. Some of jazz was self-indulgent, and the public wasn't involved in it. I remember that Dad took me to see jazz at The Village Gate. I said, "Who's this?" And he said, "Billie Holiday. She's good." I was a young kid, and I didn't know anything. And I said, "Gee, Dad. Why is her back toward us? Shouldn't she turn around?" And he said, "Just listen to her!" I'll never forget that. So even though she didn't face the audience, she still connected with it.

Cadence: What is your goal in remastering?

Gene Paul: If enough people say they like the recordings, I'm happy—especially if they think the recordings came out well. And if I can make the listener and the artist satisfied, to me that's fulfillment. Sometimes, Joel gets on the Internet and fishes for comments about the CD's he produces. Then he tells me, "A lot of people this week say that the music sounds like vinyl." And I say, "That's good." We have the same ideas about the sound. Perfection is for somebody else. All that we want is to make sure that people can enjoy the music. It's wonderful when people like you hear some of our recordings and say, "Hey, this sounds good."

New York, NY

December 1, 2000

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¹ Somewhere in France by Ray Bryant. Label M 5701.

² My Foolish Heart: "Live" at the Left Bank by Stan Getz. Label M 5702.

³ Three Sundays in the Seventies: "Live" at the Left Bank by Cedar Walton. Label M 5711.

⁴ The Heavyweight Champion – The Complete Atlantic Recordings by John Coltrane. Atlantic 8122 79642 7.

⁵ Up from the Roots by Mongo Santamaria. Rhino 8122737112.

⁶ The Dock of the Bay by Otis Redding. Volt/Atco 7567-80254-2.

⁷ Sexual Healing by Marvin Gaye. Columbia 13-03585.

⁸ Wham! by the Buddy Rich Big Band. Label M 495717.

Trevor Watts Interview

English Royalty

By Ken Weiss

Alsofamous saxophonist Trevor Watts (b. February 26, 1939, York, England) is part of a small group of English musicians who turned their back on American jazz in the mid-70s and developed their own language of improvisation based on vocal texture and rhythmic complexity rather than staying reliant on melody and rhythmic regularity. Largely self-taught, Watts co-founded, along with drummer John Stevens and trombonist Paul Rutherford, the Spontaneous Music Ensemble, the influential band that was one of the first Free jazz improvisatory groups in England. Watts split away temporarily about a year later to form Amalgam in 1967, a band that included bassist Barry Guy and trombonist Paul Rutherford (and later Keith Tippett, USA bassist Eric Carter and Keith Rowe) and focused on not just Free Jazz but also Blues, Folk and Rock elements. Never one to settle down, when they are apart for too long, including the occasional lulls of Free improvisation, Watts moved on to his African music inspired Akri Music projects starting in the early 80s. Elsewhere he was not not really influenced by the numerous expatriate South African musicians in London at the time, Watts was drawn to utilizing composition and arranging, which he showcased in his many versions of his Akri Music ensembles, as well as his Drive Orchestra. Watts continued to work many other ensembles, creating his music with like-minded artists around the globe. Some of the other musicians Watts has played with include Steve Lacy, Don Cherry, Bobby Bradford, Evan Dyring, Derek Bailey, Evan Parker, Kenny Wheeler, Archie Shepp, Jayne Carter, Louis Malhotra, Vayyan Wesleya, Harry Miller, Peter Knight and Mark Sanders. This interview took place between mid-2022/early-2023 by way of the internet. Be on the lookout for Watts touring through parts of the USA in 2023 with his duo partner Jamie Harris on percussion.

Colman: How have you spent these past few years with the COVID-19 pandemic affecting performances?

Trevor Watts: It's been a tough time with Covid and lockdown, etc. Very few opportunities to play. Jamie Harris and I did a duo at the Pettit Festival near Berlin and we did a few Etnomul Triangle concerts which were also interesting again. It's beginning to feel a bit more normal. I also did some trio concerts in Norway with John Schweda on bass and a Norwegian drummer called Tollef Ostvang. It was trilled by Tollef out of the blue, so to speak. I have managed to keep in touch with my sax playing and some writing, but it has been strange.

Colman: What groups are you actively performing?

TW: Currently I am playing with these combinations:

Etnomul Triangle- Trevor Watts (composition, sa, ss), Vayyan Wesleya (lybd), Jamie Harris (perc)

Trevor Watts (saxes), Jamie Harris (perc) duo

Tollef Ostvang (dr) Norway, John Schweda (b) UK, Trevor Watts (saxes) UK

Interview: Trevor Watts



Trevor Watts
Photo credit © Ken Weiss



Trevor Watts
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Interview: Trevor Watts



Trevor Watts
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Interview: Trevor Watts



Trevor Watts
Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Interview: Trevor Watts

Contact: Your 50th birthday went in 2019 and was celebrated a year later with the release of *A World View* – a 5 CD limited edition box set with never-before-released music drawn from the wider space of your career. How was it to help organize the project and to look back on your career which has been so constant flow?

TW: My 50th came and went almost unnoticed. In fact, it was pianist Varyan Weston who organized a celebration for me in a small London club called the 100 Years Gallery. He reintroduced me to playing with Jamie Hatton again, and amongst the people who helped me celebrate. It was of course my family, but players like Phil Minton, Varyan Weston, Hiroshi Mizuhata, Alison Hunt, etc. These would be no based not without it being the idea to do it by Matej Kachurak in Poland. So, that was great. All I had to do was select a bunch of performances from my archives, which is where they all come from. That's how it was done. I could have selected many different things, but it wasn't a collection that I necessarily thought was the most representative of my life, just unexplored groups, I guess. It all never felt particularly like a special occasion, although it was in reality with family. And big thanks must go to Varyan because without his input I would have done nothing.

Contact: It must have been a bit stressful for you to re-assess your work as you've always been a fervent thinking artist.

TW: Generally, I don't think about the past. I have always lived for the future as it felt more optimistic. Whereas, I notice a lot of people want to relive the past, certainly on social media. I tend to find that a bit depressing. To me, it's like living it all over again. Jack in Berlin, for instance, is mainly releasing recordings from musicians' archives and focusing on the same from the past from the ones who received more exposure at the time. But they are doing some other things too which are still from the past but never got as much exposure at that time. This includes quite a lot of my things from my own archives that were mainly all recorded by me such as *The Art* in the Rhythm CD from 1979 JIB-88-B-CD of the duo of Liane Gerdeley (drums) and Trevor Watts (sax). That is on the JIB label which they have organized. It's a limited CD and download as are most of the things that JIB do. I felt that was a very important and transformative duo at that time. There's now also a double CD of my Original Trevor Watts Drum Orchestra to be issued soon that was also recorded in 1989.

Contact: You are out of a small group of British innovators who developed a new concept of improvisation in the '60s. Are you satisfied with how that musical form evolved over the years?

TW: It's not for me to judge whether the concept we introduced in the '60s has developed into something that I feel it should have done. I only had a part in what we thought was a good idea to move the music on for ourselves and to hopefully inspire many other players. The truth is that it is now a valid and established musical form. And I can hear clearly the influences

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from groups like BME (Spontaneous Music Ensemble) and AMM in a lot of the way the music is still played now. A younger player told me, and this was unqualified, "It's not all about history you know" Well, I never said it was. But there always seemed to be resentment from a lot of players who followed on, but nevertheless, unwittingly we were using musical devices that simply didn't exist before we took them seriously enough and brought them into the world. History is an important thing to anything, even if only to stop the same mistakes being made again. Anyway, John Stevens's book *Sketch and Reflect* is now in most music colleges in the country, something we could never have imagined whilst playing that Little Theatre Club in St Martin's Lane in London all those years ago. Going up those flights of narrow stairs and performing week after week for the sake of the development of the music and ourselves within it, of course. It was a special time. I have no doubt about that, even with all the difficulties and disagreements about where it all should go to next. Or whether someone was keeping some money back for themselves - all the basic human problems.

Carlson: Which would be your favourite jazz record?

TW: To be honest, I don't take a great deal of interest in listening to anyone on that score. My main interest for a long time now has been rhythm. When I was playing what is now known as *Impassioned* music, it was something I was doing for myself and my own development.

Carlson: *Jazzwise* lists *Impassioned* for Herold's work under on the British Jazz starting in the 50s. He was considered at the time but he's now recognized as a pioneer of Free-Jazz. How aware of his work were you at the time? Did you like what he was doing?

TW: The local scene at the time Joe Herold was around did not interest me at all. I had been listening to the truly great USA artists for a long time and my attention was on them. You know, pretty obvious stuff, well, for me anyway - Charlie Parker, Sonny Rollins, Coltrane, I loved Albert Ayler, and so on. So Herold's playing had no influence on me as I was more into Eric Dolphy and Cecil [Colman] and Cannonball Adderley on that. My first influence would be Noot Henry who died at 55 and played hard like with Dizzy Gillespie's big band. I never saw Herold as a pioneer, to be honest. History is always a made up thing anyway. Things remembered are never the same as in real time, especially when it's written by people who were not even there. Modern TV and films always get every thing wrong about an era. When you get to my age, or I should say when I got to my current age, you just notice how wrong people are in lots of ways in terms of historical events. So, it's all a bit of a mug's game.

Carlson: As your career progressed and your interests changed, you largely set-aside the "World music" phenomena with your *Amalgam* and *World Music Project* in the 70s which added elements of Africa/World music to your repertoire. Why don't you like the term "World music" being attached

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to your work?

TW: For me, how I progressed was always something that felt natural. Or if it was an idea, it stemmed from something much more subjective than objective. When I left school at just 15, I wanted to do something exciting like play jazz or sing or whatever. Just something. I didn't want to work in a factory or bakery, which was my first job as my dad was a furniture maker. He'd lived in Canada and visited the USA frequently, so he brought his love of jazz, and a lot of recordings back to the UK where he met Max and they got mixed. That's where my love of the music came from. Dad particularly liked Black Jazz and on did I. It became important, as I went on, that I found some African musicians who lived in the UK to play with. But I wanted traditional African musicians because I thought that that would be a better, more fruitful and less tumbled path. In play freely, but with all that rhythm, that was the appeal. I guess the record on CD is the Live in Latin America Vol. 1, by the Mestré Music Deans Orchestra ARC CD006 and reissued on FMR in the UK. I recorded all the tracks live in Mexico, Venezuela, Canada and the USA during a tour in 1990 and released on our own ARC label. I don't mind at all the label "World music," it's others who seem to mind. I don't like the label Minimalism as the music was based on rhythmic patterns and cycles and in-betweenness. Minimalism was never in my mind, African rhythms were and I think that's where the mix up comes with some writers.

Comment: *A guiding light that shines through your work is the love and attitude of inclusivity. Max'or has a strong advocate for communal and community music making. Why has that been so important to you?*

TW: Yes, it was my idea to call the Equinox' relation on the Jazz in Britain label inclusivity as that was what it really was. Bringing together older musicians and younger generation ones together to basically have a jam. This goes back to the time the first Musicians' Cooperative was formed and the split that happened between mainly John Stevens and I who were on the one side and some newer musicians on the other. We wanted that cooperative to include ALL players of whatever persuasion who simply were not working enough but others at the meeting wanted the group to become something that only supported the avant-garde and that's what kind of won out in the end. I felt we were steered up the wrong path by the Arts Council without saying that they would only meet us all again if we got ourselves a committee. However, I felt it was working perfectly fine before that. Once we had the committee then we were divided. It's the old game of divide and rule. Suddenly one realized that those on the committee seemed to be working a bit more often than others not on it, and so on. It was John Stevens who really was the driving force behind the establishment of Community Music and his bank of methods to help teach a way of involvement within improvisation. We had been friends and playing occasionally since our first meeting in 1969. I was there in a more supportive role, as the musician that helped him secure those ideas by being the first

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person to try them out with him together, usually in the form, mainly at the Little Theatre Club but also at his house on occasions. We also did record "Five" the very first A Records release on vinyl called BMR for CND for Peter for You to Blame which is made up of 5 previously organized exercises or pieces that John and I had worked on. All the proceeds from that recording went to the CND which was the main Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament group in the U.K. For You to Blame was recorded at Intrepid Records Studio called The Crypt in Littlemore Grove, London on May 20th, 1970. "Pink Flare" was performed and recorded exclusively in more of a "jam for all" in Boston Square in London May 9th, 1970. The pieces included non-musicians and bachelors and all kinds of different participants were welcomed whether they had an instrument or not and John and I played a drum within it all. John was particularly thrilled by a girl with a speech impediment repeating the given material of "If you want to see a victim" at the very end of the gig, all on her own, whereas at the beginning of the piece, she could barely bring herself to even talk. I think he believed in some kind of healing process through repetition. John seemed to me to be a bit quasi-religious about a lot of things. Later, well known recording engineer Eddie Offord maintained the recordings. Around that time, we had won what was called a Thames TV scholarship that allowed the two of us to work at a school in a rough part of London at that time called Blagney. The school was called John Cass and the teacher who backed us was also a writer and an unpublished human being named Chris Gedge. He eventually got the sack from the school for publishing a book of the kid's poems, some of whom expressed the conditions they were living in. It was in all the newspapers of the time. Our residency at the school lasted a month and my observation was that the lower the kids were ranked at school, the better they participated in the pieces. A central group, whatever the music is, works best when everyone supports each other within the music, and that's always been my philosophy. Also, though, not to say that it's wrong to be leading within it when the time is right, but music, after all, is made up of people joining together somehow and, in some way, with all their different "needs" to eventually try to make some sort of cohesive statement, and that being it: it's very best.

Contact: *Bombardier Paul Rothford, your frequent past subject, identified as a Communist (his 1970 intro, Dora 1985, was named in tribute to the Lenin-managed revolutionary newspaper). Other on the British activist music scene, such as Keith Rowst, had similar ideas. Did that point of view also resonate with you?*

TW: No, that point of view never resonated with me. I had met Paul's dad at a bar in Blackheath. He was what we called a "died to the word" Communist party member and I always felt that Paul went down that path as some kind of support for his dad by way of an influence or admiration, in some way. His dad liked drinking beer a lot and an old Paul, which in the end was a contributory factor to his earlier than expected death. Although we all had

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a link in that direction (at say, Karl Marx's ideas or whatever) and John, Paul and I certainly went to a Workers Revolutionary Party meeting at the Archway Tavern in London to Baden and take a look. People in the forefront of that included Vincent Redgrave, who John also had the "haha" for. Nothing unusual there. There was also Lynn Redgrave, who was being beaten as hell, and I was reminded recently that we also played some improvisational music. That would have been Paul Rutherford (unclear), John Stevens (possibly correct) and me. But I have very little recall on that except the meeting was upstairs in the Archway Tavern. It's always helpful to have your meetings in a pub. It was a strange accident for me because they were talking about things as if we were living in conditions exactly the same now as in 1917 so it all felt a bit hollow. I felt Paul had become a kind of parody of himself by the end. If that's not too unkind to say. I really couldn't take Keith seriously when he started to talk about things related to those ideas. They never resonated with me at all. Though coming out of a very working-class environment and being there through the Second World War with the rationing of food, and etc., even into the 60s, put me on the side of the Labor argument for some. But things now simply are not like that anymore, not for me anyway.

Comment: Your 2005 World Beats album was your first totally solo recording. Up until that time, had it been unappealing to produce yourself alone?

TW: Yes, you could say that it was unappealing to both play alone and to present that to others. Baden sax can be pretty boring to my way of thinking, so I left that well alone until I was asked enough times, and then gave in to the pressure, however slight. When I made World Beats HUAHEADROO HIRKED OIA at the behest of Nick Dine owner of the company, it made me want to make a different statement that included rhythmic ideas within it and distraction of the pure sax sound. It's all like sax but somehow a lot of it sounds like soprano. It's a bit odd to me to have an instrument and then try to make it sound like something else. I am not against that, but not really for it either. However, I have made a couple of solo CDs subsequently, like The Lockdown Sax on HUAHEADROO HIRKED OIA in 2020 or Versatility PWR CDE77 in June 2014. It's not been something that has frustrated me enough to want to proceed continuously with any development of that. When I made Lockdown Baden, well, it was as it says in Lockdown, and so logical that I should do it then, if at all. Mostly, I really love the interaction with other musicians by far the most. That's what gets me excited.

Comment: Talk about your experience with Don Cherry.

TW: Don Cherry was invited to the Baden Baden Free Jazz Meeting (1970), at the same time I was. The musicians were all selected to be there in that radio studio in Germany for a few days with the idea that we all play and record the music we created together in various combinations. The recordings were then transmitted later on an early broadcast. Joachim Ernst Berendt was the programmer for these events. The Melody Maker music paper in the UK

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even featured a two-page spread complete with photos taken at the time. I still have the cuttings. The magazine probably wrote about "Pop" music, so it was somewhat of a scoop at the time. There were players such as Steve Lacy, John Stevens, Dave Holland, and on on. I remember Don had a piece of music that he put together that was based on what I had first heard Indian musicians play in terms of the raga scale. I liked that a lot, but it's such a long time ago now that most of it fades into oblivion. What I always remember though was that Don, whenever we met at a festival somewhere later on, would always come over and say, "Hey Trev, how's it going?" He was always positive and friendly. Of course, Don was part of the movement that influenced us, along with Ornette. And we met and got to know Ornette too, who also seemed such a lovely honest being.

Carlson: *Ornette was a very spiritual person and that comes through in his music. That element is also evident in your playing. At that point, you were into organic and formless funk. Talk about your spiritual side.*

TW: What one calls spirituality is something that comes through the intensity of trying to make every moment count. I did do yoga for quite some time. I read many a book about Indian philosophy and I loved what was called Spiritual music—music from Niyogi spirituals to John Coltrane's music or Indian music, etc. Or if I hear the classical piece by the UK composer Vaughan Williams called *Lark Ascending* or LEA composer Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, they give me that same wonderful feeling. Doesn't matter what it is or where it comes from. Oh, at an early age, I identified with that as being something "spiritual" in the sense of how I understood it. However, as time goes by, I have come out of that stage of believing in one's own spirituality, as being just that and possibly connected to some more powerful being, to the realization that it's all in the chemistry of the mind and body, which are the same thing. I prefer it also as a more realistic concept. Love, peace, compassion and more rest in me. I feel free in thinking of having a feeling of knowing that a God does not exist, that we are all a part of the same universe and that when we die, we go back to the earth where we came from.

Carlson: *Do you have superstitions or the hope that your music will change history?*

TW: No. It had when it came through, and it is a positive thing that people come up and tell me about, then of course I fully appreciate and respect that, but am also rarely always surprised. But you know that this is really tied up with the last question and the difference in people's minds and different perceptions about different things. Someone wrote on a YouTube track regarding my playing with the Motus Music Drum Orchestra—“This guy doesn't know what he's going to play next.” I think that was an attempt at a put down but, for me, it was a compliment. When expressing one's self within a piece of music, I find it's best to try to be in that moment. It always surprised me when I heard a player, say at a recording session, practicing something that was to be part of their

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them solo later on. Yes, it kind of works, but I think that with the other way, the music does take on a feeling more akin to what may be called "Ephemerality" having a certain location within it.

Context: *You're known for playing alto and soprano saxophones but you've also played piano, bass clarinet, alto, flute and oboe. What else do you play?*

TW: Percussion has been the main "other thing" I play. This mainly came about through a workshop I held here in Hastings in around the year 2000. Jamie Hirst came along to it, and at that stage he was mainly playing guitar and singing. I said to him at the workshop that I didn't have anything for voice at the moment but handed him a drum (tatibuki) and I then I played him a rhythm, which he quickly picked up and had the feel for it. So I said to him, "You are a natural drummer," and he was and is. From that workshop I began writing music again for what became the Trevor Watts Celebration Band on ABC CDUK (2001) and Jamie played percussion within that. A little later on, Jamie Hirst and I started to play duo, this was at my instigation. We used to meet no less than three times a week around my house and I'd be coming up with stuff on the drums to have everything into something good. You could say I recruited Jamie for about 8 years. It was great for me too because I had to work at rhythmic ideas on a tatibuki also. With some of the pieces we play drums together before I move over to sax. *Trevor Watts/Jamie Hirst Live in San Francisco, Bestal* now is also a CD on HHCD UK(2006) and is from the SFJAZZ festival in San Francisco, Bestal in 2006 where we played two consecutive nights to a full house on both occasions. The second night, the audience joined in with some of the vocal stuff that Jamie was doing and thoroughly enjoyed the music. We also toured in other parts of Bestal and the Dominican Republic. The people loved the music there very much and related to the rhythmic aspect of it. So this was a great success, and all that work seemed to have paid off. It's now contained in the latest group (2022) we call *Heximal Triangle*. This group features my compositions and six playing with Jamie on percussion and Vercia Weston on the Nord keyboard. Vercia had expressed an interest in playing with Jamie and I and using some of my compositions. How could I refuse that? I know you asked about the instruments I play but it's difficult for me to stick to that question in a simplistic way because what happened with Jamie is the reason why I started to play tatibuki. It's so simple as that. I think one usually hits a reason for playing instruments. I mean when I played oboe, flute, bass clarinet, etc, it overlapped with the BME period of "seeing sounds and hearing colors." I even had a C melody sax and an old Boucher stick that I had forgotten about.

Context: *During the '60s and '70s, many American jazz vocalists fell into the trap of using drugs as a means to increase creativity. Was the same issue happening on the British jazz scene at that time?*

TW: Yes, a lot of the players at that time got hooked on heroin and to me

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ways it almost missed every one of them up. John Stevens and I had to have a laugh at the fact that Stan Tracey remembered in an interview on TV that he did do heroin but never admitted he played with John Stevens and Trevor Watts. You, Tubbs and Elton and many others, but not Kenny Wheeler, though. In fact, our very best drummer was Phil Bristow but he could never go to the States because of his habit. He died quite young, which was a shame. He influenced Ginger Baker, amongst many others. In the playing I mean.

Context: *You were born in Berk, England but your family moved to Halifax in Yorkshire when you were 8-months-old. Talk about your parents and your childhood. You've indicated that money wasn't an issue growing up.*

TW: We never felt the lack of money as kids but we lived in a small, modest house, apart from a small coal fire, and that was it. Dad could always get stuff from the bakery, and sometimes, even during the war, he would bring home bread to get things such as pepper. The house was a rented house until shortly before Dad died at 55-years-of-age. They had signed on for an insurance policy that then gave the house to Mum when he died around 1961, I think. I was in the RAF Musician Services in Germany at the time when the news was broken to me by an officer in his office at RAF Bückeburg near Cologne. I went to school at 4-years-old, so we are talking 1948 now. We tank gas tanks, I still have mine. Halifax was a lucky place to be in at the time as it was fairly untouched by the war. A couple of bombs and a visit to the shelter, but that was about it. We later on saw what we called the 'doodlebugs' going over the house towards Liverpool or Manchester. These would be the V1 or V2 rockets. We had family from London staying with us for a while to give them respite from the Blitz. My brother and I slept in the same bed and when family came to stay from London, our uncle cousin was in a upper single bed in the room with my brother and me. One night, it started to thunder and lightning and he got very frightened and ran downstairs to his parents. We thought he was scared of the storm but years later I realized that he thought it could be bombs. We'd never have any idea as to what it was like living in London at that time. One nice memory was receiving stuff like chocolate powder and cocoa sent by our Canadian friends at school. I then proceeded to eat it all on my walk home from school, finishing it all off even before arriving home. It just felt like the natural thing to do at the time.

Context: *You started to love jazz from listening to your father's record collection but didn't have contact with anyone else who knew about or liked jazz. You've described feeling isolated in your youth.*

TW: I'd been listening to mainly Black American jazz since the '40s vinyl 78's that my father had brought back from the States in the late '20s-early '30s. We had all these recordings in the house like Duke Ellington, Ella Walker, Nette Lutzner, Tex Beneke, and so on. I was listening to that music practically from the day I was born. My father loved that music, and particularly the Black art

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form. There was no, or very little, music where we lived at the time. I didn't particularly feel isolated, only in a momental sense, as we played lots of music up games with lots of other kids all the time. There was a lot of what we called spare time to play on. So, in a way, the fact that I loved jazz, and others loved other things, didn't have much of an effect [on me]. It just seemed that that was normal. So, I don't want to give you the idea that I felt isolated - that would be the wrong emphasis. I also loved sports and played tennis, football, rugby and rowing in the mid-50s. There was no jazz scene here of any kind so there was no discussion about any of it at that time. We were too busy just getting on with our lives, and like most kids, what you grow up with you kind of take for granted. It wasn't until much later you appreciated the exposure to something that your parents did for you, unwittingly most of the time. In my case, it was a love of jazz, and also for my brother, but he had more choices because he went to grammar school and then university. That led him down the road of a career path as a teacher, and a good one at that. For me, I left school at 16, and that was that. My brother's daughter Helen called her children Ella and Louis, so you can see how the influences were handed down.

Comment: *What was the first significant live jazz performance you witnessed?*

TW: I travelled over to Bedford to see the Court Yard Big Band. That was around 1956. I still have the program somewhere. That was a wonderful experience at the time.

Comment: *How did you go about teaching yourself to play and read music?*

TW: It was a labor of self-taught love to learn to play the sax. That was the cheapest thing in the shop that my parents could afford to buy for me when I was around 16. I'd listen a bit of music, then transport, before sax. My first sax was a silver Buescher underlining, and I wanted to play something akin to what I was hearing in those days, but how? That was always the question. I tried to copy things I was listening to, and then I thought it would be a good thing to learn to read music so I got a book and taught myself. Before that, if I was all listening by ear as much as possible. My first observation was that it seemed harder to pick things up by ear once the reading stage led to play. Much later in life, I was touring in Africa with my Miles Davis Dixie Orchestra and Niels Larsen was showing by playing some West African (Ghanaian) types of drumming in a Berkowitz College. While there, he announced, "If anyone wants to know how to write these down, Trevor can show you," which was actually sprung on me at the time. Everyone put their hand up, which was a great surprise to me. So I got on the blackboard and interpreted what was being played as closely as I could.

Comment: *You left high school after failing the required test needed to move forward to college?*

TW: I never went to a high school. It was a very low school in the Industrial North of England - Halifax in the West Riding of Yorkshire. I left at just 16, as my birthday is in February - so that would be 1954.

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Context: *As a young man growing up in a working-class area of Halifax, a factory job was inevitable. Music became your out. Did you choose music voluntarily as a way to avoid working as a labourer or was it partly out of love for creating music?*

TW: I could honestly say it was both. It's very difficult to answer a question like this as that part of the country was full of workers in factories. That is usually where one would go to work. My father at school for business, worked as a loan taker. As it implies, it was a job making sure the loans worked perfectly in order to make the outputs and payments with absolute certainty and good quality. If this had been a coal mining town then that would have been the job for those that didn't get qualifications. For me, I was quite rebellious in that respect. It was the period of James Dean in film and we, as teenagers, rebelled against the status quo. I heard Bill Haley's "Rock Around the Clock" and it blew my socks off, as they say. I remember that occasion clearly. At that time, I was 15, working in the bakery, and there was a radio in the corner that was always covered in flour with this music blasting out of it. Talking around 1954 now. You see, I guess I loved MUSIC not just jazz, and we didn't place the different music in different spaces, it just came if you found wherever. Dance halls were popular then, and dancing was one of the things to go out and do. We listened to lots of big band music at the time. In other words, we had no real tradition of a certain type of music. It was all up for grabs if you wanted it. That's how it felt, no baggage really in that respect. It's like years later with Bobby Bradford saying to us, "Most players in the Sixties were listening to the same phonographs as you." Implying that it wasn't that unusual to be somewhere where that was the only thing possible at the time. Nevertheless, I thought it was a generous thing for him to say.

Context: *You shared an old black and white photo with me of Halifax as you remembered it with its numerous factories obscured by the smoke belching out of chimneys. It's a heavy vision out of an Liza Soderstrom novel. How was it growing up in that environment watching the limited future available to you?*

TW: It was quite frustrating in some ways because having failed official examinations at school while my brother, who is older, succeeded in the hopefully anticipated way, it left me feeling inferior for a while. This was no fault of my parents in any way, they treated us even-handedly. It is just the way I think it when faced with perceived failure, and also being the younger sibling. It added to that. I read a lot of the time and became quite philosophical in many ways. Eventually, I found that I could hold my own in a conversation with my older brother and others who had gotten a better official education. I guess the feeling of inadequacy can stay with you in some ways but it made me doubly sure that I would succeed in another way. It wasn't ever to be by accident. I chose music as something where I felt that I could express myself and find a way out of, what, for many young people like me in those days (we're talking

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early 60s now) was a [parenthetical] failure upon leaving school. I had this dream of being, primarily, a jazz musician, and so I started then on the path that I have subsequently always been on until now, and as far as I can see into the future, will be that of striving to be as good and as creative as I can be within the music I have chosen to take part in. I have always maintained an interest in trying to develop new things within this music, things that are sustainable, and will leave its mark in some way. There are many ways of educating oneself. It requires some kind of discipline, organization and optimism to keep it all going but it definitely can be done for sure.

Carlson: *What did you do between the time you left school and the time you joined the Royal Air Force (RAF)?*

TW: I worked in a bakery between the years 1954 to 1959 as my father knew people who could give me a job. The main thing I wanted to do was to be a musician and to be able to play jazz.

Carlson: *You fulfilled your military obligation by serving in the RAF (1959-61) which helped propel your career.*

TW: I was called up - not of the draft actually - in 1959, when I met Paul Rothfield and John Stevens at the RAF School of Music in Ordslogge, London. They both were from the London area while I was 200 miles away in the north. This was after basic training, (all that over the wall and under the barbed wire sort of stuff.) It was day one for all of us at the music school and I was billeted with John and Paul. However, people like me from the north, in those days, were kind of treated a bit like aliens, and so they asked if I wouldn't mind leaving their recently designated room, letting another London person in, and me going somewhere else. I said, 'Okay, as long as you help me with my gear,' and so they did. To be treated to be in the RAF band, the military wanted something back, so I had to sign on for another 8 years - making 5 years in all. John and Paul were a bit younger than I and they had to sign on for the full 5 years as they did not really have to go at all. In those days, that was one way of entering music as there were no music schools for the likes of us.

Carlson: *What do you mean when you say people like you were treated like aliens?*

TW: When you come from a region in the UK that had a strong local dialect, like Yorkshire in the North of the country, and then you moved to London, it was a giveaway that you came from the north. I am sure it was much like that in the USA too regarding the South.

Carlson: *How did you overcome Rochester and Stratford that you were a worthy kindred spirit?*

TW: Nobody had to convince anyone else about being a worthy kindred spirit as we all seemed to be into the same things almost right from the start. In any case, being all in the same "boat," so to speak, it became quite easy to find each other. It quickly became apparent through being together every day in the band

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room or music room or the NAAFI bar or billet, always chatting thoughts and ideas. You soon realized that the differences are a lot less than what you have in common. My atmosphere tutor in the RAF School of Music used to do his shopping on Saturday mornings when he was supposed to be instructing me. He realized there was nothing he could teach me about jazz. When I got posted to the 2nd Tactical Air Force Band in Germany my second year at the RAF School of Music, John and Paul asked for the same posting so that we could be together as good friends and keep working on the music that we had started to hear and shape. That was around 1961. We had a posting there in Germany that lasted for about three-and-one-half-years together. With military band practice being about 1 hour a day, it meant that we could spend the rest of the time practicing together, if we wished, or in between hanging out in bars in Cologne and other such things, which is what we did. As I said, there were no music schools for beginners and self-taught players like us at that time. I think all of us being self-taught led to the need to develop something of our own, and at the very beginning too, it was jazz that was the main liberating force. I don't think people are aware that we worked on the music and lived together for most of the time before BRM was formed in 1966. We did that for about 6 years. That's very different from just meeting a player and joining together to make music. A LOT of commitment went into the music together and friendship was important - this is never spoken of or hardly written about. What do people think we were discussing all that time?

Colman: Considering that you had never found others who shared your musical interests, how difficult was it to merge your playing with the newly discovered progressive-minded musicians?

TW: Well, I guess we all had our challenges. For me, I had some strong opinions from Downbeat magazine by Micky Pithie and we tried running through those but John was such a hard and raw drummer he practically destroyed everything in a very noisy band scene. However, I think the thing that pulled us all together was our enthusiasm for jazz in the main and also a general love of music of all kinds. We were all similar in that respect and you soon learned to put those certainties that one had built up in isolation behind, and to try other things that came up independently or together. And we were all into finding a way that eventually was OUR way, obviously based on everything that had come before.

Colman: You've spent your career working to bring people together and building bridges across communities and countries. Did you run into any rough patches while serving in the military and dealing with the inherent military mindset?

TW: In no honest, not really, as it was, what we call, a bit of a 'cuddler' most times. As I have previously said, we had the one hour band practice and the rest of the time was ours. We always tried to "back" the system if we could. For

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instance, the like player next to me in the band was a junior technician so he got paid more, and theoretically was supposed to be a better player. But I was the player always chosen to do the more officers mess duties, i.e. playing before or during the various dinners or celebrations that they had, usually behind closed doors. Yes, they closed the doors so they wouldn't have to look at us, which also meant we didn't have to look at them! We'd play all kinds of things like show tunes and Classical pieces adapted for military bands, and so on. I was also in the dinner band and played in officers' messes for dancing. Anyway, there was an Irish sergeant major called Paddy Blood, and he sometimes would conduct the band (or try to). It was always a bit difficult for him, that was plain for all to see, and on this occasion it was for an officer's mess dinner, and there was a long extended like atmosphere without aim to play in one of the pieces. I tried to pretend I couldn't play it in order to get off duty. Paddy eventually called the commanding officer in to listen to my "struggles." He said to the officer, "Listen to this," and proceeded to conduct me in. I was on the spot, and as I tried to get through this one by keeping on pretending it was too difficult to play. The officer in the end took me into the office and said, "Now look here Watts, what's going on?" I told him all the stuff about not being able to play it, but it made no difference, I had to do the extra duties. This sometimes meant travelling to somewhere like Mönchengladbach at night, and on this occasion it was in a modified crew coach. These were only supposed to take crews in their places sitting out on the runways, not to have for miles on major roads full of conscripts and band equipment, so they were high sided vehicles and very unstable in any wind. You sat back-to-back, down the centre of the coach, facing the windows on either side. The driver eventually had only just come from England, and we drove on the left. He didn't even know whether to turn right or left outside the main gates. On the way back home he hit a lamp post, the bus overturned across the road and eventually turned over in a ditch. I had the foresight to hang on. My friend next to me didn't and ended up in the hospital. The most acute moment was when the coach had stopped and you could smell petrol. That was a great incentive for us to get out as quickly as we could. Another dangerous journey was taking off in a plane in thick fog when nothing should have been moving. It was a bit of an old plane with no pressurized cabin so when we came down, I had a splitting headache.

Context: After leaving the RAF, you worked in a number of musical settings including Jazz, Blues, R & B, and Rock. What stands out from that time?

TW: Around 1964 in London, when I got out of the RAF, I found some work with Long John Baldry, who was a Rhythm & Blues player. We were called Long John Baldry and the Honorable Cochise Men. We played regularly at one of London's major clubs called the Marquee Club on Whitecourt Street in Soho, as well as around the country. I particularly remember this night playing with Sonny Boy Williamson, who was on tour. I remember that he never struck

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initially to a 12 bar or 16 bar pattern but came out of the "two second" where it felt right to him, at any given time. When it came to my solo, I remember saying to myself, "I am free," as I'd been following all the developments in jazz since the early days, while trying to also develop my own thing, and to play the turnaround where you felt it, seemed a good thing to do. So, in some small way, it was an affirmation of this way of playing and something that stayed with me. By the way, I have nothing against the usual way of doing it. I just remember Sonny Boy looking over quizzically at me. At least that's what it seemed like at the time.

Context: What do you recall from playing with Rod Stewart when he passed through town during your time at the Marquee Club?

TW: Rod was part of what was called the "Blastin' Packet," which included Julie Driscoll with Brian Auger and the Trinity at the Marquee Club. They played often at the club and sometimes did other gigs as that package too. Long John Baldry and the Honolulu Combsie Men (the group I was in) played opposite them on a few occasions. We also had a Jewish tenor player in the band called Al Guye. Rod just seemed a very nice and cordial kind of guy at the time, easy to talk and relate to. Not nearly like John Lennon, which is the way he came across when I met him in 1969. Rod seemed to have a very natural demeanor, and I liked him for that. I never spoke with Julie. It never entered my mind that we would be playing together later on in life within the BMR, of all things, as she was definitely a top Pop star of that time.

Context: During the '60s, you worked as a proofreader at Boonay & Hawkes, the British Classical music publisher. Also working in the building were John Stevens in the live library, Peter Knight, of Sunday Express fame, setting windows, and Chris Squire, who would go on to work with HQ, working instruments. That's a lot of talent in one spot.

TW: Yes, musicians who were applying to do something, trying to create something new, in whatever genre, they had to find something that could support them until they'd got to a point where they could earn enough through the playing. Boonay & Hawkes was at least in the musical sphere, I guess that was the attraction. I used to also deliver music in the Royal Opera House, Glyndebourne, and the Royal Festival Hall, and I could watch all the concerts for free. So, for me, it also was a very educational time. I witnessed musicians refusing to blow their horns into the pit as a rebuff to a Xenakis premier of a new piece which featured that as part of the piece at the time. It made sense to me as the pianist was holding down chords and the trombone players were given ornate complimentary notes to play. I found that interesting. Or I would see and hear the great Russian bass virtuoso string Boris Christov at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden in London. I saw Rudolph Nureyev dancing with Margot Fonteyn at the Royal Ballet there too, and on on. In fact, I had been offered the music editor's job at Boonay & Hawkes at the time I decided to

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leave in 1965. Partly because I was offered that job and to avoid getting stuck, therefore making my commitment to playing the music I loved much stronger. That was the last time I had a 'proper' job, as we called it. Rowsey's at that time was the biggest music publishing company in the world, located in Upper Regent Street in London near the BBC's Broadcasting House. If I had taken that job I probably would have earned more in a day than I did playing a year's worth of music at that time, but we were playing the music for ITB over milk.

Context: How did your contact to reconnect with John Stevens and Paul Rutherford in London?

TW: I never lost contact with Paul as he lived in Blackheath in South London at the family home and I lived quite near in Lewisham at the time. We started on working together and kept on trying to develop new things. Also sometimes with John, but he had broken into the more straight-ahead scene and played with people like Tubby Hayes at Ronnie Scott's club. It wasn't until John came to check out what Paul and I were playing at a London club run by Mike Osborne, the third, on Liverpool Street called the Proteus Club. That convinced him to want to get back into it more seriously with us. That led to trying to find a home for our music. So John, being much more gregarious than either Paul or I, talked to a stranger he knew at that time called Annabel Weston. She just happened to be the older sister of pianist Vezina Weston who I have been playing with for many years in the various Miles Music groups, as a duo and recently in Special Triangle. Annabel knew a woman called Joan who owned a place called The Little Theatre Club in London's St Martin's Lane which was where actors would go to relax a little after hours and have a drink after performing in various plays or shows. So John went along to meet and talk with Joan to see if we could use the club for the music. She said yes and suggested we start after the plays had finished, around 10:00 each night. We also got to play inside entry a theatre not that was left there after the night's performance.

Context: You founded the Spontaneous Music Ensemble (SME) with John Stevens/ Paul Rutherford in 1965 after leaving that venue, the Little Theatre Club near Trafalgar Square, which offered you a practice and performing space. Talk about the early days of the SME at the LTC, the early thought process and the jazz-based music making up until the day the group's music process changed.

TW: The opening night at the Little Theatre Club in early 1966 also featured AMM as well as BME. It was the classic AMM of Keith Rowe, Cornelius Cardew, Liza Allie, Eddie Prevost, as I remember. On that occasion, they were wearing long white coats like doctors was (music doctors?) and they played rattle, as well as electronics, mixed with milk. They were testing the rattle. As they went along with the performance, that was all part of it. I remember a question mark appearing in my head with regards to Eddie coming off the stand and proudly saying, "And we didn't play any jazz." Obviously, our music

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at that time was assigned in jazz. In fact, jazz created the torch for improvisation for a long time. I frankly thought, and I felt that we should never forget that, no matter where we ended up. There was a lot of betting on the European scene about Dutch or German music, but all those guys were influenced by jazz in some way or other. I see more than one [Peter] Beitzman without Albert [Ayler] and I always thought it okay to acknowledge that. One of the most difficult things I found to do was to be able to freely make up a solo. It seemed a mystery at first without the shared language. On a personal level, Gertrude was important in that respect, and you could say Don [Cherry] also served as teachers for me at the beginning. We could play at that club every week, and at first John was trying to run it seven nights a week but that quickly became two or three nights. He was, after all, trying to hold his family together too. John organized a kind of annual festival each year with more consecutive days of playing and more groups. Again, it was the regularity of it all and the willingness and the space to perform in that really helped the music go through the various stages of development quite quickly. We could try anything we wanted and we certainly did that. At the same time, encouraging the next generation of players to take up the baton, and that they did very well, but not without some reaction against the first generation of players, I observed. Maybe though that's how it always is? I think it's fair to say though that the music played today still has all the echoes of what the AMM and SMC did, and not only in England.

Context: Eventually, that night John Stevens announced to the other musicians that the music to be played by the SMC moving forward was not going to be the typical jazz and blues music of the time. Talk about that change and what that something you had discussed with him previously?

TW: We were not actually playing a typical jazz and blues thing of that time. We were playing our version of music that would be influenced primarily from people like Ornette Coleman, [John] Dulphy and Trane. All the obvious influences were there from where we'd come from, certainly through the process of listening and listening to everything, soaking it all up. Nothing had ever previously been discussed with anyone else regarding what John had in his mind when he came into the club and announced to us in, "Forget all that shit and let's do something else." Not to my knowledge anyway. The "shit" was arrangements that we wrote and were playing and had worked on. Suddenly the music became what we called the "Brill" music, as it brought to the genre of improvised music a very intellectual, academic approach which had never been done like that before until the day John came into the Little Theatre Club and said what he said and got us to start playing in that nonlinear way. I felt he suggested it this way because it solved the dream, and he was a dreamer. The rules were quite tight at first but I always thought that that was the best way to develop something anyway, and then you loosen the strings as you

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go along after you have defined some sort of parameters, as in "Click Place" which started out as a duo piece with John and me. The spacing of the first two clicks indicated the tempo. I could go onto his click and he could go onto mine. We'd feel the silent click until someone changed, or on occasion you changed together. The development of that was to feel the clicks but not play them. We listened to improvise in the space in between. That was great in terms of giving you a sense of feeling of the space and everything became a rhythm in its own way. I am guessing that that retained an element of jazz, in that respect. That given you an idea of the type of things we were doing up at the club. John had been in Denmark in 1967 and had heard a musical saw player that had really turned him on. I never found out who or what it was about but that was the beginning of the new music we played. For me, I think a recording like *Dynasties of the Improvisation*, now on the CD label **EMERGED 661-0918** in the UK but originally released in the USA on Mike Kharury's Entropy label with Derek Bailey, John Stevens and I, truly encapsulates what that music was all about when we regularly played together at the Little Theatre Club. Derek Bailey would play solo, John and I some duo music, and then the three of us would also play a set together. In fact, writer John Corbett from Chicago, said that this recording was amongst the finest examples of that music ever documented. I think the duo double CD on ECM called *Steve Swallow* is also up there in that category as some great representational examples of that way of playing. On a more personal level, I also recorded all of those duo examples on a Yamaha stereo cassette player with two AKG mics. The duo being John Stevens (small kit and pocket trumpet) and myself on soprano sax. Martin Davidson recorded the trio examples appearing in the *Dynasties* CD but decided not to issue them on the ECM label and he gave me the tapes. Years later he asked me if I still had them.

Comment: *This new music established a new style, a distinctly British style of Free Improvisation in the mid-70s that went beyond American Free Jazz (which still retained some elements of composition, pulse and melody). You drew more from European and Middle Eastern sources to focus on textures and sounds.*

TW: I guess you are right in some way of saying that the new music we developed established a distinctly British style of Free Improvisation, but nothing is developed in isolation. Many influences are within my style of musical form, even from the very start. Gagaku music of Japan or Archa Webern's style of writing all took their place within the general set of influences that made for a quite distinctive flavour. But as I have said before in this interview, jazz was also in that, and a very important part of it too. And as I also said before, it ceased the flag regarding improvisation for a long time. This cannot be ignored.

Comment: *Was this new free music an institutional rebuff of American music? Was there a political statement, a rejection of American values, being made at the time?*

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TW: For some players it was an intentional rebuff and rejection of American culture but also I thought, within it a kind of love/hate thing going on. In my case, I never ever rejected the influences that drove me on and inspired me to help develop new ways of talking jazz in music practice, and for that, I shall be eternally grateful. I am guessing that players who came after us didn't have the same set of problems that we had in inventing new ways of playing. It was quite tough at times, and we faced some strong objections that simply don't appear to be there now in such a physical and intense way as they were at that time. Improvisation as a music form in its many ways is now an accepted reality. ECM, maybe small in relation to some other types of music, but it now has its place as a validated form of music, and in spite of some people's denial of this, I think it's here to stay as an expressive form.

Colman: The words seem to be favored "jazzed improvisation" by some critics because it tended to be very quiet at times, intimate, avyrbhatic, and by and large, actual. Did you find that term offensive?

TW: I found the term funny more than offensive. Little story: a guy came up at the break in a gig and said to me, "I really left but I stayed because I thought you got better as you went along." In his case and eyes, he was convinced he was right. He never thought for one minute that possibly he could be gradually getting used to the form and starting to listen to it on his own terms. That was something I could work out as soon as it came out of his mouth. Be, you see, comments like the one you quote, or sentences like the trilliest at the gig I just spoke of, do not infuriate. It can only be irritating if you cannot find an alternative reason for someone saying something that could be perceived as negative, and even that is down to the individual character of a person, i.e., how you view it. In the answer is NO.

Colman: The British Free Improvisation/Experimental music collective AMM with Keith Rowe and Eddie Prévost also formed in 1965. How much contact and interaction was there between the SME and the AMM?

TW: It seemed like none at all. The first performance at the Little Theatre Club was the only time I remember that we took the stage together. Two different worlds, to quote the name of the song.

Colman: The new music the SME was making was not an immediate hit with Holman - it was challenging music. Did you have concerns about finding an audience and serving a living through your music?

TW: Not really, as it was then as it is now, to do with primarily the development of the music. Except today with Edward Treggle, I am developing music that has all the elements of the music I was inspired by, and more. So naturally, because it has rhythmic and melodic developments within it, and because I love those too, I am sure more people can relate to it. Of course, it also has the opposite effect for some but I have always played and developed the music mostly for the sake and because different things engage me more at

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different times. It's not that I have missed nothing drastically, but problems really do need to know what you represent, to a certain extent, so that they can sell it. So, at this stage of the proceedings, I am sure a lot of people will enjoy the music of Historical Triangle but selling it is another thing. I am certain when people get to hear and know what we are doing now they will love it.

Context: *The SMEP was specifically meant to include "outsiders" to the title to reflect the attempt that any social group should represent the local, which changed in that and pervaded regularly. That also proved to be the case for your own future groups. Why was that an important attempt?*

TW: The nature of the SMEP was supposed to reflect how the music was played – a group music played by musicians who equally took part in it. This was invented before Jerusalem decided to attack the name John Stevens in front of it, which eventually he would do also. John always professed that the nature of this music was to do with being a collective, and to start with, that's what it was. Personally, I have no qualms about having my name in front of Miles Music or Analogue or the Miles Music Drama Orchestra or the Collaboration Band, as I invented all of those and committed a lot of time and invented money in each project, money I eventually got back, but I took the risk, to be clear, up fronting things like six faces, as well as working on tours around the world, and taking for no money for myself in return. But even so, if not musical ideas, combinations of players that would not otherwise ever have played together. But the names of Trevor Watts and Vessyn Weston or Trevor Watts and Jamie Harris or Trevor Watts and Liza Greenlock, those were the main ones and were always advertised as that.

Context: *Emmett Kenny Wheeler was an early member of the SMEP.*

TW: Kenny Wheeler was from an older generation of musicians than I. Every decade or so throws up a movement that wants to take the place of whatever is already there. That's why personally I liked Funk when it came out as it broke down the more popular scene that had become quite slick with the Funk Rock stuff. You kind of got the feeling that they were all a little too pleased with themselves. In that I think you eventually lose the raw edge which depletes a little the emotional quality of the music. Like in Billie Holiday, she had a great emotional quality to what she did all the time. There were players I guess who wouldn't or didn't want to play their instruments "properly," as Kenny put it. They made music in another way that took a different set of involvement and ideas. I think it's our place as musicians to give it all a chance and to see what comes out of it sometimes. I have no problem with that. I remember Kenny had said to someone, and it got back to me, that he, "Couldn't tell whether Trevor was playing free or playing in time." I, on a personal level, always tried to incorporate everything I did into my playing of the instrument, whatever it was. With someone like drummer John Stevens, he was able to separate his mindset when he was playing jazz and when he was playing

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improvised music. He treated them quite differently. I was trying to play myself within whatever I did and could never quite understand why anyone would want to split the difference. It didn't make sense to me. In me, Kenny always sounded like a jazz trumpet player in whatever he did - improv or jazz. Maybe I sound like something in between in most people but who really cares?

Context: *To fully realize our's potential it helps to establish strength and direction.*

TW: I read that Art Tatum would stop outside a bar and listen to whoever was playing the piano and people with him wondered why? I'll tell you why, because he hated something in what was being played, or how it was being played, that he could listen from, as much as anything else. That was CURIOSITY! There's also the example of Duke Ellington saying, "It's a good job when we didn't know what we were doing." I understood that straight away as a young man. Of course he didn't mean that literally, he meant that they didn't know what was about to come up next but that they solved the problem, if there were any "on the hoof," so to speak. Thereby illustrating that "moment of suspense" complete with strong emotional quality that you get playing within the moment. That's what it's really all about. That's why Mingus shuffled the parts around and so on - to keep it all fresh. Peter Knight, the violinist, had a humorous kind of self-defeating saying. He'd say, "Come up fresh every time." I can tell you for sure that John Stevens and I used to practice rhythms and phrases together on drums and atmospheres for hours - playing "on beat" phrases off the beat, and vice versa. This was to train the ear, and also as a not to fall into the hole that Kenny described Joe Harriott fell into with Phil Seaman. I can imagine that Phil got a great deal of pleasure out of that. Also, I don't agree with Kenny's assumption that everyone would own the beat if that happened, as you are only talking about familiarity and the fact that jazz players often don't put that kind of work into familiarizing themselves with how things can work differently rhythmically. That's why when I got to play with African musicians, I already had a good idea of where the rhythmic areas were in a piece. In fact, John spent a lot of time on the stand, sometimes in more conventional jazz gigs, and I know that a lot of players felt he'd owned the beat when he deliberately changed stuff around. So conventions should in all kinds of music and get overthrown. I felt and thought it was part of our own personal growth to always challenge assumptions and because my involvement with jazz went back as far into the '40s, I grew up with the idea that jazz was always progressing and changing.

Context: *Derek Bailey was someone who you often played with who became widely known in the UK.*

TW: The psychodrama system has never put Bailey at the top, with anyone else potentially at that time slightly below, certainly here. But I am an unbeliever as far as that system goes.

Context: *You left the GAME after two years to form Awalgang, although you*

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SOON afterwards. Do you have any regrets about missing out on being a part of SME's landmark 1968 *Karyobin* recording?

TW: I have no regrets about not being part of SME's, what you call, "landmark" recording. As by then, in any case, I had become a bit estranged at that point with the music and with John. But if you look at the history, you will see that I wasn't the only one that that happened to, by any means. It just seemed like it was my turn. In any case, I objected quite strongly at times about the amount of control John started to exert. (Don't forget that he and I went back quite a bit longer than anyone else in that group that made the *Karyobin* recording, so we had a lot of history together already). Prior to this recording we had a trio - Evan Parker, John Stevens and me. Gradually over time, in a personal way, I felt that the objections and suggestions from John Stevens about the way we should go about this was a device to get us all to copy the drums, and, of course, John was a drummer. Both practically and rhythmically. One objection was a suggestion from him that we should play (or maybe just to me?) in a way whereby there'd be no linear playing. I think this is the way some things were at that time in order to establish a certain principle or new set of rules. A lot of it was about not what you put in, but what you left out, I think. John wanted me to play more like the shit Evan had got together in order to play with John on the drums. But I have my own way, too bad if it didn't fit the way John wanted it. There was no way I was going to change my name. Then, while playing a gig at Enrico Scott's old place, John said to me at the interval, "Why don't you play more like Evan?" which to me was a very nice remark. I replied, "You have one already, why do you need two?" So I left the group there and then. Of course, it pissed me off at the time but I guess he wanted to record the music with what he felt were the best people for it, and that's what he did. You'll notice that later on with the So What do you call "landmark" recording that it was Evan who was not there. But the, what you call "landmark" recording, had been achieved. And you only need read my response (on the sleeve of that So What recording), which was the answer to the telephone call John made to everyone in which he described the project and asked the participants if they were interested. He said, "So what do you think?" and the answers became the very first musical statement. The words transferred to notes and phrasing. You can tell by my answer that my response is a cautious one. However, I created the first *Amalgam* together with Paul Rutherford and Birey Gay around that time, and it was Paul who actually thought of the name for the group *Amalgam*. So what it did, in terms of doing us a favor, was to help us workman up the determination to develop the music and our own playing in our own way. For me, there'd be no interesting and often magical music coming today like the *Amalgam* group made, for instance, that featured Keith Rowe or the Miles Music Drum Orchestra or *Musé Music II* and *14* piece groups, which, of course, leads up to the present day music with *Small Triangle*. As far as my own skill in playing the music that certainly John suggested, I think the examples

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from the Little Theatre Club with Derek Bailey, John and I as a trio on EMI called *Dynamics of the Impromptu or Basic Essentials on Bassoon* which are the discs with John and I added up to nothing. There's also the quartet with Julie Tippett on the two *Quintessence* CD's on EMI, one in which I take part in a way which has more of myself within it than I can now would have happened had I been in the Karyobin controlled environment. After all, it was freedom that we were looking for in the first place, and by taking the stance I did, I thereby gained more of it.

Context: *Analogue (1967-70) further added to the radically changing face of a European-style jazz and improvised music that employed mixtures of jazz, improvised music, folk and traditional western, R&B, and Fusion. Talk about your concept for Analogue.*

TW: The trio that began the original Analogue did not last very long. I think we all had a slightly differing idea of what we wanted from the situation and eventually went our separate ways. We'd all come out of the EMI and had started in an improvising trio. Barry and I played more than performances and sometimes even played opposite the duo of John and Evan. I guess that was when I really started to formulate a more personal path through the music. That would be around 1974 when I met the Irish drummer Liam Genovese. Meeting him was a breath of fresh air for me, a totally different type of drummer. Basically a good Rock drummer but who had a fascination and curiosity about playing other things, and so I could play with Liam and enjoy it because he was a great rhythmic player. I had been playing rhythm for many years and studying it alongside improvisation, of course, and we found that in our duo playing we were able to pick up a rhythm together very quickly and our improvisation came together intuitively. I think jazz in Britain has released a recording of the duo called *The Art is in the Rhythm Vol 1*. A lot of what I did was never recorded officially for established record companies apart from *Play for Peace (1969)* with Analogue (John Stevens, Jeff Clyne (b) and myself playing all my compositions, and Barry Guy also being on one of the tracks). This recording has become highly cited by many influential critics and also has influenced a lot of musicians.

Context: *Keith Rowe was a fascinating, uncompromising artist who wasn't interested in being a follower. How did things work out with him being part of Analogue?*

TW: I can tell you that he would give you a very different and more considered view on his involvement with Analogue in the late-70s, or I should really say, a reconsidered view. He has said these days that within the group playing we did together, he was working against what we were doing. But right from the start, that is why I asked him in - that's exactly the reason. That was the true intelligence of the matter. He kept his disagreement well hidden then. That's all I have to say about that. Apart from personally, I got a lot of pleasure out of it all at the time. Before Keith joined, we had a trio with Liam Genovese,

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Colin McKenzie (b.g) and me on some steel compositions. It was the first group I had that didn't include John Stevens. Before that, we had American guitarist Steve Hillyon in the group. It was he that introduced me to Litter. Steve was living in the UK, like a lot of Americans were, in order not to have to go to Vietnam, which now looks like it was the right thing to do.

Colman: How did American's music and concept change over time?

TW: Well, it was always changing right from the start - from the original trio of Henry Guy, Paul Butterfield and me, to the Prayer for Peace album with John Stevens and Jeff Clyne in 1969 (also released on No Business in Lithuania years later) in the classic 1979 quartet of Keith Rowe, Colin McKenzie and Litter Geneskey. This was recorded on our steel issued as a boxed set of LPs an Imperia called Wipe Out, and recently was called a landmark in Newport Jazz. It is still in the FMR catalogue for those wanting to buy it. I recently heard some jazz from the USA about 2022 that had a lot of similarities to this music, five some, many years later. When we started playing this music, I had heard nothing else like it, mainly through the sound of the punkish guitar and use of second textures from that same guitar, with rhythms and melodies, steel an obvious jazz idiom. This period also saw a two drum team within Analogue of John Stevens and Litter Geneskey. Both interesting drummers in their own right. And we performed a piece of mine called "Kachibio Balle" for a BBC broadcast. Completing that group was again Keith Rowe and Colin McKenzie, as well as myself of course. HMV had Records in the UK has issued that as a download and I think they intend to press some hard copy CDs with a great sleeve pin.

Colman: American and the SME were crucial to the development of European improvisational music. Do you feel those groups affected American music as well?

TW: I am sure that SME did influence improvisational music all over the world as what we developed was certainly a part of the language of that music that is still played. It is still in the mix of the players that devote their time to improvisation. In fact, just recently Wire magazine has been holding 40th Anniversary events at the Cafe Oto in London and one of the events was the continuing influence of SME and AMM in today's music. Also John's book of methods regarding taking part in collective improvisation is now in all the music colleges here in the UK and several other countries. Regarding Analogue? That is more difficult for me to say. Except for most of my playing life, I have been trying to push the envelope with groups like Analogue and also Mike's Music and the Mike's Music Drum Orchestra, which also included the Tatra Negro Balletoria (Venezuela) collaboration with that last named group.

Colman: One of the recordings you made after returning to the SME was a duo album with John Stevens called Fact to Fact (1978) with the concept being that the two of you played facing each other. How did that idea develop and how did it change the music?

TW: We'd been developing what were basically John's ideas about how to

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take part in collective improvisation and all these experiments we took on the road on tour. But of course, we developed them a little more freely than at the beginning of what was done at the Little Theatre Circle in London. This was the home of free and radical experiments in music making in that city. It focused the music using rhythmic space in many ways. We had always been involved with rhythm within a jazz form so it seemed a natural development. I did a lot of recording at the time. A good example of the more rhythm orientated, and in a jazz way but not tied to it, is a recording I did out of the studios - Liam Genockey and I playing a 1969 live duo set called *The Art is in the Rhythm* [Jazz in Helsinki]. And I am pretty sure that these were not that many examples of the type of thing we were doing. Liam and I had a good conversation at the time and could make up some very interesting rhythmic improvisations because we both had a similar imagination for taking the music to unexpected places. That was in the within the way we held things together so I am pleased that this is coming out.

Context: *The SME's 1971 appearance at the Palmaro Pop Festival featured singer Julie Tippett and turned out to be quite a colorful experience.*

TW: When Julie Tippett came off the Pop scene in the 1970's (her name then was Julie DeLorell, which is her proper maiden name), she'd been quite a Pop star with "Wheels on Fire." John Stevens trashed her down, and I am pretty sure in staying, found that she hadn't worked in some time. He managed to talk her into coming out to play with the SME with Ron Hazen on bass and me on soprano sax - my favorite SME. She still had her manager in tow, George Genockey, who used his influence to get us a recording for BYG in Paris called *Birds of a Feather*. It was a nice studio with a swimming pool, etc. The trouble was, the plastic was mixed wrongly on that one, which meant there were loads of cracks on the vinyl. Unfortunately, it never got modified. Anyway, George got us into the Palmaro Pop Festival in Bello. This took place in a football stadium. Whilst we were playing, some of the audience [expressed their dislike by] throwing mud from the pitch wrapped in newspaper and directed it at us on the stand. We were all sitting down at the time except Ron on bass. As the minutes went over, we moved back a little so mud would fall about of actually hitting us and we carried on with the performance. The other half of the audience were shouting Julie's name in support of us. We just carried on until the end. It was all pretty chaotic but exciting to look back on now. When we left the stage the next band came on and counted in 1, 2, 3, and suddenly, a hail of newspapers and shit hit the stage. They just couldn't contain. It's the only time we've been locked in a dressing room - certainly for our own safety, I guess.

Context: *Do you recall any other musical encounters with SME performances?*

TW: Yes, the SME had been invited to the San Sebastian Festival in the Basque region of Spain. Our performance took place shortly after an American Gospel

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group had finished their set – not the best programming situation we'd been faced with. Anyway, we started to play the music and at one point, John Stevens started to play a pocket trumpet that he fitted himself on, as a change from drums. Suddenly, a guy got up from the audience and came into the playing area with his own trumpet and he started playing. He and John were blowing face to face at each other, as loud and as abstractly as they could. It wasn't a friendly situation and the rest of the band did away to the dressing room to let them get on with it. That went on until it was broken up finally by society.

Context: *You mentioned John Tippitts, the widespread use of female vocalists was a characteristic feature of British Free jazz. Not what else in the world was the female voice potential in Free jazz as rich as it was in England (including Tippitts, Maggie Nichols, Norma Winstone and Christian Jeffrey). What's your take on that?*

TW: To be honest, it's not something I even thought about. I would imagine that there would have been a huge amount of potential if you are including the whole world but what it needed, certainly here at the time, was encouragement. John Stevens believed in the freedom of the voice of female singers although they were generally on a very different path (more conventional). They were encouraged, mainly by him, to try out improvisation as a main means of expression which was very challenging for them at the time. I played more of a supporting role in that context. The ones I am alluding to within your question are Maggie, Julie and Norma, but there were also others like Sarah Africana singer Phloa Bial who I had in my larger Metrol Music group. She was outstanding.

Context: *You worked in a number of groups with pianist Stan Tracey.*

TW: John Stevens and I were asked by Stan Tracey if we would like to join him in a group that became known as Stan Tracey's Open Circle. The other player was Harold Thompson, a really fine jazz player who eventually made his name more on the folk scene. Stan had been for many years the house pianist at Ronnie Scott's club, the premier club for jazz in London and one of the best of that type of clubs in Europe. Stan had accompanied a lot of the guests in jazz, including Sonny Rollins and loads of other Americans visiting cities of the time. So he was well established as a knowledgeable musician within the music and could do a great job in that respect. He'd had some success with a [1965] recording called *Under Milk Wood*: jazz balls he did using Welsh writer Dylan Thomas' work as an inspiration. Bobby Watson, a very original and accomplished tenor sax player, played on that. Stan also had taken an interest in the free end of playing and that's how we got involved. John and I were in his Tentacles big band and he was sometimes in my Ansalgim group. There was also Balthus, an experimental group using the younger players of the early 70s with John, me and Jeff Clyne with the older more established players like Kenny Wheeler on saxophone and trumpet, Tubby Hayes on piano and flute, drummer Phil Bristow and Stan himself on piano. It was very much an

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engagement in playing freely together

Context: *Since Davey had established many good connections which led to performance opportunities for Open Circle.*

TW: It was 1978 and Open Circle were given a week at Ronnie Scott's club playing opposite Art Blakey's band. We'd always do sets 1 and 5. On the first night, I arrived with my then girlfriend. The introductory thing that Ronnie Scott said to me was, "Are you going to just fuck about or come and play?" He, of course I got my toes in the dressing room. During that week, when I came off the stand after playing a set, Art Blakey said to me, "Trevor, I love you!" Which, of course, was unexpected, but a very warm and encouraging gesture. Members of the two groups always sat around and talked and relaxed after the evening had finished. Sometimes I had that great big, but lovable hulk [Art Blakey] on my knee as well, using me as a sofa. Anyway, another night Art said, "Would you like to play the second set with us?" but I saw that also Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis was on the stand, getting ready to sit in too. I decided the offer as I just didn't feel ready enough to get into that Chicago-based music after playing jazz freely, as well as the more pure "Tempo" music that the SMK is known for.

Context: *I'd like to go over some playing situations you had before discussing your later groups. Looking up to the interviews you mentioned a gig you did at Cambridge University to SMK that included Yoko Ono and John Lennon.*

TW: When we first met Yoko, she was still with her second husband [American film-maker Tony Cox]. They lived with their daughter Kyoko in a house opposite the Regatta Park Mosque. I remember going to their house at the time and absolutely everything inside was painted white. She also did some performances with the SMK at that time in London. We had previously afforded a concert at the Royal Albert Hall where she was the guest singer with Cootie Starkie and his group. The special event, which was called "National Music" took place inside Cambridge University's Lady Mitchell Hall in 1969 [and was the first time ever that Ono and Lennon performed together in public]. It was supposed to be a collective performance where we strolled around or sat somewhere in the hall and played at a time and with whoever we felt like. John Lennon and Yoko Ono were invited to take part in the event. This was put together by poet and percussionist Anthony Strout who was resident manager at a book shop in Tottenham Court Road in London called Better Books. He hosted performances in the basement of that shop and SMK played there on quite a few occasions. The musicians in the Cambridge event included John Tchicai, John Stevens, Margaret Peet, Chris McGregor and me, amongst many others. The way John and Yoko took part in this event was, to me, completely outside of the intended spirit of that event. The other musicians, or most of them, must have agreed to the provision laid down by John and Yoko that we stop playing and then could join in after 20 minutes or so.

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Lawson and Don had brought lights and recording equipment and I felt they totally used the situation for their own benefit. John sat on the floor of the stage and played a guitar. Yoko smashed her head off using a mallet while straddling up. The event ended with John Lawson walking through the dressing room on his way out of the building and saying to those who were there, "See you on Top o' the Pops, lads" [the British music chat television program]. Nothing—we had no chance, of course, to join him on the show. Not that any of us ever had the desire to be on that TV show. The piece was recorded and released later in the year as "Cambridge 1969" on Unfinished Music No. 2: Life with the Lions. My other connection with Lawson was that I was employed at Apple [Corpus] on Savile Row transcribing Beatles' songs.

Context: What was your experience playing with trumpeter Bobby Bradford?

TW: It was writer Richard Williams who was writing for the Melody Maker at the time who suggested to Bobby that he look up John and I to do some playing together as we would have the best idea of how to take part. Bobby had gone into the MM office and asked around about who would be good for him to play with. I am sure Bobby placed John Stevens. But to answer your question, it was a wholly positive experience, and especially playing with the fantastic bassist Kent Carter too, which John Stevens and I were already doing. That was our suggestion. I had absorbed a lot of what Ornette was about, and so I had a good idea of how to take part, as the music was very much abstracted in that direction. I had been listening to jazz since the '40s and was always interested in the development of the music. I had realized that whilst it was good to study all these players, eventually the goal was to find one's own voice. Bobby has subsequently told an interviewer on a radio station in New Mexico that I was the only player who could get the right feel on a tune of his. The radio promoter told me that himself. For me, it was a verification of all the listening and work done to deconstruct that way of playing because at first, there was a big question mark until I started putting it all together. Of course, that was being done before I met Bobby because I had known Ornette's music since 1961. Bobby was totally encouraging to all of us, and open to whichever way we chose to play a piece of his. This group started around 1973 and a good example of the way we played the music is on *Love's Dream* by the Bobby Bradford Quartet on *Intuition*. Idiosyncrasy enough, and as a side name, Bobby sent me some Christmas greetings last Christmas [2021] out of the blue. I hadn't heard from him for years.

Context: You played a gig with Archie Shepp that didn't end well.

TW: There was a promoter who lived in Tilburg in Southern Holland who also was a journalist and worked for the radio. He liked the music of Armstrong a lot and often organized various tours for that kind in Holland. This was in the '70s and the group at that time was Liten Geroecky, Colin McFadden and me. Sometimes he booked Dutch musicians he knew to play with us or me with them. It was quite an ongoing situation and we'd often do a couple of

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weeks or so in Holland. I used to stay with him at his house there. I knew that he loved Archie Shepp and he liked my playing too so he asked if I would like to do a concert with Archie along with a Dutch pianist (to which he booked week for. I have to be honest here and say that I was never a fan of Archie Shepp. I could appreciate some of his things but I wasn't the style or sound I was looking for. He was slightly more retro than what I was involved with. However, this promoter really liked both of us so I started to listen to and learn the tunes [that were to be covered]. At some point, something dawned on me. On the recordings the promoter was listening to, it seemed like Archie usually had a trumpeter who ALWAYS seemed to play a sharpish solo first and then Archie would strale on for about 50 minutes or more. So I thought he would definitely say to me, "You take the first." Before the concert, which took place at the Tilburg Town Hall, Archie was scheduled to come in on the city of the concert, but where? -airport or train station? Whatever, it would be from Pitzla. The promoter went to both, running around after his "hero" and eventually found him. I think it was at the rail station. He'd arrived with a lady friend on his arm, officially about 5 minutes before we were all ready to start. The promoter was carrying all the luggage. No apologies, no nothing. We met in the dressing room which was okay by me. Sure enough, I'd worked out tune number 1 and YESSSSSSSS, he said, "You take the first." So we played the tune and I took the first. Archie then started to solo, which went on for what felt like forever. You see, when doing a gig, I always wanted to be 100% engaged in some way, so I steady took gigs like this. I started to play behind Archie and we played together a bit before getting to the ending. He came up behind me on stage and said, "By the way, I don't like anyone playing with me when I play!" So, although finding it strange, I said, "Okay," but by time there I'd started to find the whole thing a bit tedious. By the 4th tune, when Archie was soloing, I picked up both horns, with some degree of anger I have to say, and blasted them together as hard as I could behind the solo. I gave it everything. After that, the gig went on and we played together a lot of the time, as well as solo with no discussion or comment at all. Afterwards in the dressing room, all seemed amicable, Archie was certainly fine to me. I ended up going to the pub with the Dutch guys and afterwards I went back to the promoter's house I was staying in. As I approached the door of the house I heard my name being discussed. It turned out that they said I had been "disrespectful" to Archie, as if there were a set of rules. Maybe if you are a psychiatrist, but I wasn't. There was nothing mentioned of Archie's possible disrespect towards me. But I simply don't think like that. I just said to the promoter and his friends, "Fuck it then. I am going if that's what you think," and I went back to the UK. I couldn't possibly have stayed and been accused that way longer. I didn't feel anything had towards Archie if all and he seemed okay about me. This was part of the rough and tumble sometimes you come across in the field of music. Of course, I never

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played for that particular night – not on any kind of regular basis. I am not particularly proud of what I did, it was done in the moment and with some anger attached to it. It just happened to be the way I reacted. I was brought up on jazz since the 1940s so I never had this idea that it was someone else's music. I thought of it as a shared experience and the main thing for me for all my playing has been what else I give to the music? The experience didn't particularly end badly in terms of my own perspective on it all, it just ended because it was time for it to end. You see, if that's the way people thought, then I wouldn't want to be around that anyway, at least not for too long.

Context: Talk about playing with Jayne Cortez and Donato Coleman.

TW: I was booked to play with Jayne Cortez and Donato Coleman for an evening of music and poetry at the 7 Dials club in London in the early '80s. The event was organized by a group called Broken and Laiden with poetry being one of the main things. I suggested adding Christian percussionist Nana Isibon to make it a quartet. The group was put together to accompany Jayne's poetry which was spoken by her in what seemed like a very focused and intense way, and quite rhythmically intensified as I remember. We ran through some of it to try to get a "feel" together, but ultimately it was left to how we improvised together around the spoken word. We also did a couple of pieces without voice. Not too many suggestions were made beforehand as we were trusted to negotiate the concert together in each moment. I remember the occasion being very open and inclusive. I felt that the evening was very successful and an enjoyable thing to be part of. Jayne's poetry had so much in it and she delivered it in such a good way. It was very inspirational. I loved playing with Donato too, as he was so open to each moment and obviously knew his friend's poetry well. There's a sequel to this – many years later, Jayne was in Canada at the Ganagh Jazz Festival and came in check out my show concert with Vicky Weston. We spoke to her later on after we'd finished and she very kindly expressed how much she had enjoyed it. We also spoke about maybe doing something else together in the future but unfortunately, Jayne passed away not too long after that. The recording of the Ganagh concert is on Nick Diaz's H4H record and is part of a double album called Dialogues in Two Places. It was such a feeling of disappointment for me that we couldn't have done more because that could have been so lovely.

Context: What happened at the concert you did with John Stevens at a Berlin park with a group that included Sunny Sherrard and Linda Sherrard?

TW: John Stevens and I were booked to play as a duo in Berlin at an event in a major park as part of the very first improvised music festival that Jon Gibson of RMP fame organized. And that being the only one [of his events] I EVER did except for one with the London Jazz Composers Orchestra. The one I took part in was opposite Sunny and Linda Sherrard. They played first, John and I followed, and finally we all played together. I remember watching them and

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thinking how loud they played. John and I were concentrating on what we called the "small" music at the time which was almost exactly the opposite of what Barry and Linda Ellsworth did. But of course, we could crank it up when we needed to. I remember nothing at all of the playing together except that it was a loud music and we did it.

Context: You toured with South African drummer Louis Moholo and his group that included American Free Jazz saxist Frank Wright.

TW: I always wanted to play with African musicians as I have been into rhythm in a big way for many years. By that I meant, I wanted to meet and to play with traditional African musicians, not the ones such as from Charles McGehee's Blue Notes, when they first came to London, sounded as if they were trying to play bebop to me. That felt of no use to me as I'd studied Charlie Parker at a much earlier stage in my life, before the '60s. Like Bobby Bechford used to say to me, "Most players these days have studied the same phonograph recordings in the USA, as well as everywhere else." But also my time in improvisation music helped me in that respect in an unexpected way. I first met Nana Ekwe, a great percussionist from Ghana at South African drummer Louis Moholo's house in London. He lived there with his wife Mpanza, who was a lovely person. Louis had called a rehearsal for a band that was to do a tour with American tenorist Frank Wright. It included South African tenorist Henry Miller, Nana Ekwe on African percussion, me on alto and soprano sax, Louis Moholo on drums and Frank Wright on tenor sax and vocals. There's also a BBC recording of this group from that time in the late 1970s, I think. I remember the rehearsal well because Louis, Nana and Henry went upstairs. Louis had given me the task of teaching Frank a little introductory phrase which Frank had great difficulty in making. I am sure it wasn't his thing at all. Whilst, of course, upstairs they were working a bit of the "Wacky Boney." I knew what was going on but I treated everything equally. In that I'd agreed to teach Frank this item and wasn't into the music myself anyway. Two more things I remember from that tour. One was a gig at the 100 Club in the center of London, a English venue on Oxford Street. Everything was on loud, I had flames in each ear to give my hearing, which, in fact, allowed for hearing the music much more clearly as it seemed to block out the high frequencies. I remember at one point being so inspired by the playing that I was soloing on my knees for, perhaps the one and only time in my life. On marching, and after the solo, Louis tapped me on the shoulder and pointed to Frank and said, "He's supposed to be the site!" Meanwhile, Frank was just being Frank, and that was fine. In any case, I didn't let it speak me in any way. I could do that because I wasn't a playing musician - I played with whom [I wanted to play with] and did what I loved, certainly, for most of the time. I have always been into the music for its own sake. The other thing I remember from my meeting with Nana was that we liked a lot of the same things. I spoke to him about seeing the Matrix Musician of Jajouka at the then Commonwealth Institute in London. Happily anyone knew them at that time

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in the early 70s. It was the only concert that actually made me cry. I think part of that was the unity of the music and musicians which to me, felt like an extended family. There was a young boy at the front of the stage dancing in this very sexual way. Not a sign of the macho male stuff at all and that impressed me. One other thing that got me was the rhythm. I'd logged that they put an off just before the one (or what I call the one) so the off was the last beat of a triplet, not like the usual jazz hit hit thing. This gave the music a certain kick that appealed to me. I even showed Liam Genockey, the drummer, what was, for me, a little discovery, and I made a tune out of it with that rhythm. I called the tune "Jamaica Feel." Nana had also expressed a great liking for that music and we eventually started to play together. I asked him to play in both Miles' bands and my early Original Deans Orchestra around 1982. Before that, we'd played together with Leroy Quinn a few times doing things like benefits for South Africa related to anti-apartheid matters. I'll say one thing about my involvement with improvisation in the way we did it. It taught me how to listen, and everything we did had some kind of rhythmic quality to it. When I first played with Nana at Liam Genockey's house, which was a couple of doors away from me, I think it must have been with another Gibraltar musician Nana Aspinall, and Nana played a little drum signal to quote the end was coming up. I heard what he played, it was a signal that I had never heard before in a playing situation, but somehow I knew from the way it was played that something was about to happen. That made me super alert at the time, and we stopped together, all of us. Nana said, "It's good to play with people that listen." That was the beginning of a very long association, mainly within Motus Music and the Motus Music Drum Orchestra.

Context: You were a founding member of Barry Guy's London Jazz Composers Orchestra, beginning in 1972 and continuing on until the mid-'90s. Talk about playing with that orchestra and what makes it special? How is it to be associated with a group for that long and to take direction from a leader?

TW: It was trumpeter Paul Rutherford who discovered Barry Guy around 1967. He had gone to a concert at Goldsmith's College and both Paul and Barry lived in Blackheath, which wasn't that far away from the college in New Cross in South London. Paul came back and told us about this bass player he'd seen who seemed to have a lot of potential and that maybe we should ask him into the BMB to see how he got on. The Australian bassist / composer Bruce Cale had just left for home and at that time we were looking for a bass player. The concert at Goldsmith's was of The London Music Trust which I believed Barry had transcribed. We invited him to have a play with us within the BMB at the Little Theatre Club one night. We then thought it was a good idea for him to be involved as a member of the group. Later, we also played as a duo for a while and he was a member of the very first Analogue with Paul Rutherford and me. I think being surrounded by the musicians he enjoyed playing with

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made it possible for Barry to quickly form a large ensemble which he called the London Jazz Composers Orchestra. There were contributions regarding compositions by others in that band but Barry wrote the bulk of the work. To be in a large ensemble and be conducted by a conductor, was nothing new to me, as I had done a lot of that within the RAF 2nd Tactical Air Force Band which was based at RAF Hahnweidenhof near Cologne (Köln) in Germany. In fact, it was mainly during that sort of thing which was outside of what John, Paul and I were gradually putting together from our involvement with jazz music. The length of time within that band did not feel that long actually as it never worked consistently and there were longer and longer gaps between concerts. Goodness knows how it would have continued without the help of people like Patrick Lusselt of Trüchli Records in Zurich, Switzerland. He was very much supportive of Barry's way of making music and helped hugely to keep it all afloat.

Cadence: Talk about Barry Guy. His approach to writing recordings but we don't see him often in the States.

TW: Barry's a pretty accessible person and can be quite outgoing but when he improvises on his horn, he becomes very concentrated and completely involved and always gives it his all with integrity and intensity. I particularly became attached to his sax playing, and when I wrote the tune "Prayer for Peter" which appears on the album of that name by Amalgam it was only Barry that I wanted to have improvising on that piece, which he did beautifully. Besides Jeff Clyne also played beautifully on the rest of that album. I felt Jeff was more a pianist and jazz oriented player at the time. That evening has been hugely appreciated over the years and was responsible for influencing quite a number of players like Mike Gustafson, for instance. For me though, at the time I was very unsure and uncertain as to whether it was good enough to issue as a statement. But that was just in the way of wanting it to be up there with the very best at the time. The later tale with John Stevens and Barry was quite an intense period, I felt, when we made those Spotlight Recordings. Barry had to be an ace diplomat to keep the LJC going with all these individual interests involved in it. He took a lot on the chin and held it together with Maya's help eventually, but it was not at all easy though, I would think. I actually was asked to be in the first incarnation of The Barry Guy New Orchestra, but before we even played a concert, Barry came back very apologetically to ask me if I wouldn't mind dropping out (that's before dropping in even) as they needed to get another Steve Mackin in there to get the funding. It made no sense to say you had to cancel at the time. There's a few straws in my story.

Cadence: Life changed for you in 1980 when you left London, after 20 years, for Hastings, a seaside town on the south coast of England, so that your family had a healthier environment to live in. That's when you started working on composition as a primary focus. After concentrating on Free Improvisation,

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why did composition become important to you at that time?

TW: We decided to leave London after living for a number of years there on a very busy major road with all the traffic and health hazards that that entailed. It was also at a junction whereby cars backed up at the traffic lights every morning, so the air was quite polluted. We were flat dwellers and also had two young children whilst living at El Gwent North Road near East Finchley. We had the top flat there and never had any intention of leaving to go elsewhere but the owners were able to offer a good deal for us to buy the flat, or failing that, we simply had to find somewhere else to move to as the main owner had died. A council house in Tottenham was wanted. We chose to get a mortgage and to buy, and that then meant we had to record everything that needed to be recorded and painted, etc. We then intended to sell the flat and move to somewhere less polluted. That was the idea and boy did it take a lot of work! Eventually we were looking in other parts of London to see if we could find a suitable place but that was very difficult to do so the estate agent suggested looking in Hittinga on the U.K. Channel Coast, right by the sea. We had been to Hittinga in 1978 to make a recording for Ogan called *Close to You* so we knew the town to a certain extent. Property was much cheaper there and not many people wanted to move out of London at that time. In 1982, so we had a really great choice of large houses, which seemed so homelike after the four of us had been living in a small flat. I had started to compose seriously and more often, and also wrote much more music at the time of living in London, although I never left improvisation to solely concentrate on composition. There was always room for these two things. Some musicians find that difficult because they see never more which version they will get, so they end up hunking nothing. But on moving to Hittinga, which is about 70 miles away, it seemed even more important to compose because I had cut myself off from the regular local London scene. And then I could respond with a music that seemed to have been waiting to come out. Also with a very interesting and writing line up. Peter Knight, the vibralist at that time, was a member of the Folk/Rock group *Sirens Eye* and he also lived in Hittinga. I had known him from at least 1968 so we both worked for Boney and Hawken music publishers in London. I worked hard at pulling out all the ideas I had accumulated over so many years. I was always juggling down ideas every time I practiced, mostly every time I picked the horn up something would come almost immediately to me which I mostly always wrote down with the idea of future use. Once it came to it though, and with that first *Mask Music* group, I simply started with a blank slate and then the music seemed to almost write itself. Most of those other accumulated little ideas stayed on paper and were put into a filing cabinet. The house we moved to in Hittinga needed a lot of work and seeing out, particularly in the first winter. We were very cold but I still started on though, inevitably writing the music for what eventually became the first

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festival concert opportunities with Miles Music at the Roundhouse in London and then shortly after, the Hatchwell Jazz Festival. It was a tremendous hit at the time, and many people have spoken to me about the impact that music had in a way, I'd been wanting this up for many years and it all came bursting out in the middle of the concert, I felt quite emotional about it all. I had no idea that it would have that effect on people, that of genuine joy and excitement. In that ensemble I had managed to assemble a group of really good musicians from different disciplines, which was always a dream of mine. I then decided to follow my own muse within the writing. Members included Benji Africain, bassist Bruce Mather, Felix Knight, Niles Inkson, as well as Miriam Karasik from Elmer Lane, who was a different kind of African drummer using bells and other percussion instruments. Itoh drummer Lina Gennatoy, who now is a permanent member of Blueys Spain, was the kit drummer for that band. We had an amazing support and it was a very rhythm based music but spontaneous and sensitive. It became almost like we knew what the other person was about to play but in actual fact, we didn't. It was all improvised. Sounds so fresh today as when it was recorded at a live concert all these years ago. For the Miles Music group I had many varied and original ideas about how to put rhythmic and melodic pieces together in my own way, having studied how things work for many a year. So it was fortunate that I was given that opportunity by John Cummings of Blueys Productions to write some music for this new, at the time, 10-piece group. And to play not only at the Hatchwell Jazz Festival, but a previous show at the Roundhouse which was a major venue in London. In the early life it had been a location for steam engines as it was a big multi-level round building in which it had been built for the specific reason of housing the steam engines around to face the way they'd originally come from. That recording was our first on our own ABC Records label and we simply called it Miles Music. I recorded that on our myself. The cover design for that first CD and also the company logo was designed by my partner Margaret Richards, who subsequently designed other covers for the label like for the later Miles Music ARC CD called With One Voice, which featured the singer/keyboardist Lina Gennatoy. I "discovered" her after hearing her sing and play in a pub in Hastings and asked her to join the band. She still lives here with her partner bassist Roger Croy who has become the regular bassist with Blueys Spain but also played in my Celebration Band of the early 2000's. I had been looking after the ABC Records label for John Stevens and I, but after parting company with him, I decided to form what became ARC Records and to also officially register that name.

Comment: When you attempt a piece, how much is actually written out and how much is left open for improvisation?

TW: It depends on the group of musicians I've chosen in a way as to how much improvisation there is and how much writing. But within the first larger Miles Music groups, I had done a LOT of writing as I wanted that to dictate,

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to a certain extent, the direction, but also much improvisation was allowed too. That's why I write the pieces with each section ending with a "change bar," that's where we want to when it felt like those to move on. These were usually some kind of musical signal to indicate that change. I was never one for writing my arms around and wanted everyone to stay engaged, an musical signals were the norm. Sometimes it was quite chaotic to a certain extent, but certainly discipline for these musicians was important within the letting go, so it never got to the anarchic stage. It's keeping both sides open whilst playing what you want at the same time. The point was to not get too much into what you wanted to do and be able to respond at any given moment. So we all had to remain alert. I have no complaints, everyone's involvement seemed to be right on within each moment. The parties for this though was that we rehearsed the written parts so that we knew them very well. That's one of the keys to it all and where the discipline from outside comes.

Comment: How do you view Free improvisation in comparison to structured work at this point in your career?

TW: I don't usually compare one with the other. I just approach them in different ways when I play either "Free." In the end, if it's recorded Free improv, then the very nature of it is that it becomes composition, as every time you listen to it, it stays the same. When I PLAY Free improv, then I'll leave it completely open and respond to whatever comes up in the way that I do in that moment and work together collectively within that. If it's written pieces, as in the current Ethical Triangle band then we play the composition, but quite tight and know at the same time and leave spaces for the improvisation to take place differently each night. It's more based on the composition that we happen to be playing. These compositions also go through quite a lot of changes in themselves so the improvisational side has much to draw on for inspiration. Improvisation and our knowledge of how it works, this after many years of playing within that form, will shape the composition differently each night and we find that process very exciting and it holds our interest.

Comment: The first of your writing's Afrobeat Music groups formed in 1982 as the 10-piece Afrobeat Ensemble. Talk about your Afrobeat groups which ranged from a 14-piece band to a three Octetists to a trio.

TW: The Afrobeat Music Drum Orchestra has many stories. The Inner White Octetist Drum Orchestra began in early 1982 with a line-up of Trevor Watts, Lisa Gunnock, Ernest Mathis (b), Nana Tellez and Micaela Kanara (Afrobeat percussion), with folk musician Peter Knight on viola. This version of the group that featured Afrobeat drumming was much more improvisational and was organised that way intentionally. Until now, the only music available of this group on CD is from a Hillhead release called *Drum Energy!* – an all "live" recording, and the same for Hummel Monday on the EMI label. But this year a double CD will be released on the Jazz in Britain label called *The Art is in the Rhythm Vol 2*, another set of "live" performances which sounds really great. I

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am thankful to be given the opportunity to release music from the archive as it still sounds as fresh as the day it was first played. The Art is in the Rhythm Vol 1 is the very first available CD and download of the class of Trevor Watts and Lita Gottoley from 1989. It was recently released (Dec 2022) by the Jazz in Britain label. Lita and I first met around 1967 and we had very similar feelings regarding the rhythmic aspects of the playing. This was something in a generic representation of how we manipulated rhythm together as one, to make it sound like it's always been like that, but in fact it is all played completely spontaneously. I also put together a 10-piece group to feature the compositional aspects of my ongoing work. That allowed me to utilize the brilliant talents we had in the band within the compositions I'd written. I called this group *Mixed Music*. The line-up was Trevor Watts, Keith Seal (sax, m), Lou Coshill (m), Larry Stubbins (tr, m), Bruce Mather from S. Africa on bass, Nigel Lubbock and Miriam Katz on African perc, Lita Gottoley on drums, Peter Knight and Steve Donohoe on Violin and Wayne Weston (p). The *Mixed Music* group was formed originally for the Beckford Jazz Festival outside of London which took place in the summer of 1992. It was a lovely festival, and we would camp there with our families in what seemed like a very safe environment. It was a truly international festival. The band was a sensation at that fest, and it quite took me back a bit emotionally as I had not particularly expected the response we got. Many years later, Pat Thomas, now a well-known pianist on the scene in Europe, told me that the performance had a big effect on him and others - something like saying to everyone that you can do what you want - but just do it! Something I never realized. I had just been working away at home on the compositions and following my nose, so I never knew what to expect. I had started these groups on leaving London in 1982 to live in the much smaller seaside resort of Hastings on the English Channel coast. The first night of festival I went into the Blindfold Pub and who should be there but Peter Knight with his dad, who also played violin and always had a little Yorkshire Tenor tucked down his coat. Peter said to his dad, "I want to know what he knows," and I said to Peter, "What do I know?" and he said, "Improvisation." So, we got together in Peter's house the next day, played together for about 5 minutes, and he said, "LREWDOU! Let's have a cup of tea." He had found the experience very stimulating. You see, I already knew Peter from the late '60s as he worked at Boosey & Hawkes Music publishers in London's Regent Street selling violins upstairs in the shop. One of the main clubs for jazz in London was called the Phoenix in Cavendish Square and was just around the corner from Boosey's, and one night in '67, John Stevens and I happened to be performing. Peter decided to come along and check us out but at that time he thought what we played was a kind of self-indulgent old rubbish. How things can change.

Comment: Would you share some memories from the road with *Mixed Music*?

TW: On May 30, 1992, the Trevor Watts' *Mixed Music* Decca Orchestra was scheduled to play the Danga Gallas Festival in Ljubljana, Slovenia, shortly

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after the communist regime had collapsed. We had a longish break after schoolwork and decided to walk around together and find some food. The band consisted of 5 Christians and two LIK members at that time. Basically, we were confronted by a bunch of skinheads with baseball bats in their hands, threatening us in a very unpleasant manner. It was a racist thing, obviously, but we managed to stand our ground and saw them off. They eventually came back again, and we had to make sure that we didn't get attacked badly. We stood together and gradually were left alone. We had some big guys with us, we stood our ground, and the situation eventually gave up.

We toured all around the world with our version or another of Motus Music. There was a 1997 tour of Bolivia and Ecuador in 1997 with the Motus Music group of Trevor Watts, Colin McKenna (b.g.), Ali Isaacson (Moroconita Peru), Niara Tolson, and Mike Parnell (d), whose dad had a big band called the Jack Parnell Orchestra which did the music for the famous London Palladium. Val Parnell was the impresario that put on all the acts at the Palladium. We had travelled by air to Ecuador via Holland and then Cristina in the same concert, and finally on to Bolivia for more concerts. It was whilst in La Paz that we were invited to go to a foundation entirely for the preservation of indigenous Indian musical culture. They performed for us and we for them, and then all of us together. They also played a more contemporary adapted version of their music as well as the traditional one. Later that day, we were assigned to do a workshop at their music Bolivian Academy of Music, but it became apparent that there was no sign of any indigenous culture - it was all Euro music. They mainly taught European Classical music and playing. There was a workshop going on at the time that an English guy was conducting. No one seemed that interested in it as far as the participants were concerned. It was low key and a bit tongue-in-cheek. The man doing the workshop said, "I used to go to the Little Theatre Club in London in the early days and I am teaching these pupils what I learned there," which to me seemed like not the same thing. We did our workshop after he had finished. Immediately as we started to play these rhythms, especially with the help of Niara Tolson, we got the workshop people to join in and the whole place came alive. A precursor to this visit was that we had to fly from Amsterdam airport to Ecuador on KLM. It was one of those McDermott Douglas aeroplanes with one engine in the tail and one more at each side. They'd already had to change the plane at the gate because of a toilet not operating. We eventually took off and as we were increasing altitude, one guy opposite me reported that the engine was on fire on his side of the plane. And sure enough, an engine was slight. Rightfully so, no one panicked even though we felt a bit like it. The crew eventually managed to douse the fire and we limped toward the North Sea for about 1 hour dumping all the fuel in the sea. Then we eventually landed on the remaining two engines. As we stopped on the tarmac, they announced that dinner would be served (that's if anyone felt like eating, of course) whilst they sorted hotels out for the night. Then we

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had to go through the process the next night too, meaning that we'd lost a day. Then, because Kennerly is at altitude, we had no chance to acclimatise before the gig. This meant that we had to do a concert after a few hours of heading there, and that's what we did. Somehow I managed to get through the concert. La Paz is even higher altitude and that was an even more difficult performance. Personally, I think a lot of the local crowd test as I found that very helpful for getting around.

Comment: Talk about touring the world in the 1980s with the 85-piece collaboration between the Trevor Watts' Mixed Music Drum Orchestra and the Teatro Negro de Bariloche (Argentina)

TW: It was 1990 when the Mixed Music Drum Orchestra did its first tour for the British Council.

The British Council is an offshoot of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which sends musicians, painters, teachers, etc., around the world to represent British culture. Eventually, my Mixed Music Drum Orchestra, in particular, was regularly employed by them to play their music in other countries around the world. We were on our very first tour for the BC, which was 2 weeks in Canada, 2 weeks in Mexico, mainly as part of the OaxacaFest Festival, and ending up as 2 weeks in Venezuela. The collaboration came about by following a suggestion by the then British Council Arts Officer in Caracas. She also had set up a concert at the Academia Bolívar in Caracas alongside the Teatro Negro de Bariloche Group. We both played our music and then it was suggested why not try to play together? So, for the second half of the concert, that's what we did. It turned out to be great fun and something worthwhile doing. Also, at that time I felt they had very little sway over anything politically happening in their country and perhaps something like this would increase their profile. When I got back to England, I wasted my brain trying to think of how we could do it again. I then approached the Visiting Arts team at the British Council and spoke with a charming lady called Hannah Howarth who was very much into the idea. We also had a meeting with John Cummings of Broken Productions to set the whole thing up. Which involved some concerts in Europe. Hannah suggested I go on a research trip for two weeks to the Bariloche Foundation which preserved their culture from the days when they became freed slaves. To me, this was an honour to be involved with and fitted in with my philosophy that to help mend the differences and injustices that had occurred in the past, the best way was to DO something together, or at least try to. The first thing they did when Nana and I arrived at the village was to take us all in a catch down to the sea at night and perform a vodou ceremony for us. It was amazing that they would catch out that strongly, and of course we were there for the best of reasons. I suggested that they would be able to do the ceremony without the Drum Orchestra being involved to show people how what they did at home. Then we all did the "joining in" as part of the concert. It felt great to be able to accomplish this small thing. It was a 85-piece group

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that we eventually performed with in Europe. The next year (1991) we went to Venezuela (all of us) and worked on the music together to play concerts in Venezuela. We started recording in London, but it never got finished but John Conway managed to get the recordings to me on tape tapes before he unfortunately died. Our group was multicultural and represented many of the rhythms of different peoples that live in the UK. The percussionists were mostly from West Africa - Nana Isah, Nana Appiah, John Yelen, Neo Daku Paktin, Kofi Adu and Papa Mousath were all from Ghana. Michael Kacitra from Elmer Loure on percussion and Bruce Mofolo on lute from South Africa.

Comment: You had a close call in Buenos Aires.

TW: We toured many times around the world with the Trevor Watts Miles Music Drum Orchestra in particular and were the first group from outside Buenos Aires to tour there in many a year. We eventually toured there twice. One of the concerts took place at the Ioya Lake Hotel in Eltangoon, or Ylangon as they called it. We were playing a particular drum related piece of music on bedikins (similar to biao drums worn over the shoulder), which meant the drummers could walk around and play as easily as I could with the sax, and we started at a big climax to the music. During that moment, a spotlight came on and focused on the building. We saw that some of the Buenos Aires in debt away, but for us, it made us play even harder, not really realizing what the lights must have been going through. The spotlight came from the residence of Ne Yha, [who had been Buenos Aires's military dictator shortly before that time]. He lived in a house in the middle of the lake. When we came back to the UK, I was interviewed by a journalist from the Daily Telegraph, a national UK newspaper. I told them that when the spotlight came on we played even harder, but they printed a complete lie! Saying that: I had said, "It was really frightening." That's something I would never have said as it brought out exactly the opposite feeling of that from all of us. One of the reasons I said you to playing in sometimes dangerous places is because I was sure that the music would bring with it a feeling of hope and it surely did in some cases. We travelled in B. Africa, Lesotho and Botswana. And regarding South Africa, it was at a time when the very first Black musicians' union had started so they said we could only come in the country if we did a workshop in Soweto, which was exactly the type of thing we wanted to do anyway. We also did a mixed-race workshop on the music in Johannesburg and so on. We also travelled in Australia, New Zealand, Botswana (Bosman), India (twice), Cameroon, Sudan, Trinidad, Jamaica, St Lucia, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Bahamas, Portugal, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico, USA & Canada etc.

Comment: The arbitrary definition of Afro as meaning a wavy appearing hairstyle, a ripple pattern. Why did you use this term?

TW: It also can mean two or more patterns making up other patterns. In the patterning/rit world, Biggie Riley is a great example of that. My partner thought of that name as it is a good description of the way the music is written.

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for my particular compositions. These are mainly made up of lots of patterns that then make other ones. But the music is not only that, as it has melody and harmony, some of that coming because of the way the music is written. It's often been called minimalist, but I wasn't influenced by any "school" of composition. I simply wrote the music as I followed my muse. I find this is the very best way of writing for me. Just see where it takes you to. And a lot of the time I truly do not know where it's going to go. If one doesn't like the end result you can always take another path or adjust the one you're already on. It's a question of deciding what to do at each point.

Comment: *After your debut music groups you toured with your Celebration Band which combined European and African Folk forms with elements of jazz and dance music. Talk about that band and why you turned to it.*

TW: It was the year 1999 and I had been playing with various sizes of Meibé Music up to then. I was asked to write some music for a well-known and established Belgian based community theatre group called Stone Sky. It consisted lots of local artists, children from local schools, special schools, etc. in Hastings. The name of the event, and because it was Christmas, was called The Latinus Tree. I had to write and get a band together to perform over about 8 nights. The children had wanted up some kind of performance that included dance and so on. I made no connections within the music, and it was a great success. I used mainly professional musicians that I had worked with like Colin McKenna, so the music was very spry and creative within the brief time that we had to prepare. This made it very enjoyable each night, as well as compositional aspects to be related to, there was always a chance to be creative within it. In fact, we repeated the success in 2000 with different music, again 12 pieces related to whatever group was performing. Each artist took on a "theme" of their own choice for their group of mainly children or young people. I asked each artist what they wanted from the music and for their theme and they explained what they were looking for. I tried to satisfy the needs of each particular piece through the composition. In fact, Jazz in British was in issue a recording of the 2000 performance. Some members of the Celebration Band also took part both times. The band also played at various outdoor parties and celebrations. The music was the same as it was indoors, only more adapted to walking around and performing. I had good players within the group, and most could solo well, so it was a great step to performing the music in halls, which we also did, including a short tour in the USA and Canada. There was a tour with workshops in Macedonia, and again this brought all the communities together to play within the umbrella of the Celebration Band. That was a true step towards inclusivity. A CD recording Live in Macedonia FMR by the Celebration Band is available. There's also a first CD of the band on ARC called The Celebration Band.

Comment: *Discard Example is your newest project – a trio with pianist Vyron*

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Winton and percussionist Jamie Harris – which plays your compositions inspired by the rhythmic structures from African and South American music, as well as jazz and European medieval forest.

TW: That started between both Jamie and Varyan and they'd like to form a group with me and perform my compositions which encouraged me to write some new material. They had, in other words, given me license to do this, or at least encouragement, as I wasn't particularly looking to do that. I have to admit though, that I did find it interesting to add a keyboard to what had been a duo with Jamie Harris. Varyan even bought a Nord keyboard mainly for the specific purpose of seeing where we could go with this. I call that commitment – adding that harmonic side to something which didn't have it in any specific way. I had met Jamie as a player at the very workshop I was asked to do for Stone Sky at the same time that I did some work for them in 1999. Though, of course in a small town (Frinton) I had met him socially. He came as a singer. I said to him, "I cannot think of anything for the voice at the moment but here's a drum, can you play this rhythm?" Which he did perfectly, so I said to him, "You're a drummer," and thereby he took it up with both hands, so to speak. This is important to the question because Jamie could pick up rhythmically anything I asked him to do. I also started to play a tubular so I could more easily show him ideas that I had and know about as I'd been involved in rhythm as a major thing for many years before. Also, better than playing the sideboard, so to speak, or dinner table. I never set out to learn rhythms in a more "official" way, learn the notes, etc., because for me, if all was a tool to use for improvisation. It wasn't about showing off. Usually when I hear people talking about drums, they don't understand the basis of it and how it can develop and change. But that's the same with any rhythmic aspect of music. So, we got together 3 times a week for about 3 years or so and called things. This culminated in us playing to a great and very appreciative crowd in São Paulo in around 2003. Two nights at the Red Jazz Festival there. One of those São Paulo performances has been captured on a HHFined CD called Live in São Paulo. We played until around 2006 together and recorded a new CD that originally came out on violinist Mike Kneary's label Entropy Records in the USA called Anatomy. Then eventually we split. It was then at my 50th birthday in 2019 that Varyan Winton, who so kindly put together for me a celebration of that in London at the 100 Years Gallery and invited Jamie to come and play. We did, and it was so natural for us that we started to play together again, and Varyan hosted us at a concert playing duo when he was also playing as a duo with Phil Minton. And I think this may have triggered off the idea of perhaps playing together as a trio? Everything with me and groups mostly has a story, and the story for me is relevant to almost everything I have ever done. Eaten has it been, it ever changing people because they can do a good job. It's always something that feels a bit deeper than that. A relationship that in the music but transcends it too. That's what I have looked for throughout my whole life. My compositions

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and playing is inspired by jazz and other music in the world, but it has always been done in a subconscious way through absorption. It becomes part of you. After all, we see all harmonic and I WAN listening to jazz right from the '40s so I feel it's a very natural love, as it's always been there.

Comment: You've known Vernon has been associated with you for over 20 years, dating back to the Little Theatre Club days. Would you talk about his contributions to your work and why he's such a good fit for you?

TW: In terms of improvising together, he is a great partner for me, as he approaches the music in a similar way. We always try to play what I would call, "within the moment," meaning we're not working out in our heads what we think the strengths are and playing to those. No, it's about trying to make every moment work together in its own way. It's always a reaction to the notes. This leads us up through many, for us, contrived paths. It always feels good though as what we really are doing is supporting each other's every note, and that I know I can rely on it too. There's always something to play for sure. When it comes to the more constructed compositional things, Vernon always brings ideas to the table that improve the pieces. He does this a lot in Ethical Triangle – as the pieces are played differently on each concert, but of course, there's a lot of assimilation within the music too. It's a balance of things that I think Vernon definitely gets most of the time. I have always enjoyed his working within the compositional side of the music as he utilizes what is there and develops it in his own way.

Comment: 4 Dialogues is a 2002 disc recording you made with Vernon that was all Free Improvisation, your first recorded Free Improvisation in 25 years. What spurred that to happen and how was it to play totally free after 20 years of composition-based music?

TW: If I remember correctly it was Miriam Davidson of Eastlawn who brought us together for the recording. In many ways, it felt quite easy and fun to play Free Improvisation after having previously learned some complex pieces, particularly with the duo with Jamie Haines. The thing is, although you call it Free Improvisation, it now has become a style and I don't feel it's moved all that far in many ways. I still hate players going for a Heidecker or Sims derivative stuff. There's a LOT of that or AMM influences within the music but sometimes it's much more interesting to have a new idea to develop. Being someone involved at the beginning of that music I remember us working on entry as ideas to establish the language we were trying to forge. So, that ended up not that free because we had so many rules and regulations within the music about what was right and what was not right. In the end, it becomes people's opinions. You see I think it was Miriam Davidson who made the statement that I paraphrase here, "4 Dialogues was a 2002 disc recording you made with Vernon that was all Free Improvisation, your first recorded Free Improvisation in 25 years." This kind of improvisation is no more free than the things we did within the Trevor Watts Original Dream Orchestra, starting

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in 1982, or Miles Music Down Orchestra in 1990. At the very beginning, both these groups came together and just played in order to define the music that way. It wasn't until later on that we played a few places. But Martin didn't know that I never ever stopped improvising. I improvised in relationship to who I was playing with, and that's always been the key for my involvement in music. That to me, defines the word improvisation. Jazz was one of the musics that stretched strongly the flag for improvisation, as well as Indian music too. There has been some of the connections for me within the so-called strictness of African drumming, there's a lot of room for moving things around in an improvisational way. It just requires imagination.

Comment: *You've often performed with two artists associated with the popular British Folk Rock band Steeleye Span – Peter Knight and Liam Genovese. Did you have to bring these two improvisational players or did they already have a history of that?*

TW: I gradually got them into totally Free playing. I had a tape for a short while with Pete and Liam, and that's how Liam ended up in Steeleye Span. He was asked to there by Peter because they needed a drummer at the time. No recording has been issued of that tape as of yet. I played regularly with Liam in a duo, which is represented on the recently issued *The Art is in the Rhythm* cd from 1989, and with Pete in a duo occasionally as on the *HMHead Issue Reader – Live in London* from 1999. But mainly both Pete and Liam worked within a form of Modal Music or Litan with Amalgam, and the short lived *Bring Humble* recorded on a CD called *Cygnus*, which is on *HMHead* from 1976. Liam will live in two chosen chosen from now to this day in Hastings (2025). Pete lived here in this town for many years, and even led his band at fishing, so at one time we had the largest kishore fishing fleet in the UK. Some fishing families go back centuries.

Comment: *There's a YouTube video of you and Jamie Harris playing in the Gold Desert at the edge of Lake Khazepal. It's quite a stunning setting. What are some of the most unusual settings, circumstances or places that you've played in during your career?*

TW: Well, that was one of course. Also in the Gold desert of Mongolia at various parts of it during that festival which was called *Roaring Hooves Festival*. I originally played there as a soloist, then got the chance to do the festival once more as a duo with Jamie. There were other places we played there which was above an ancient disaster valley that we all were meant to, to play and be filmed doing it. The disaster's went there to die, so even today disaster buses can be found there. Also I played in the desert near Khairoun in Bosnia with around 50 or so Balkan musicians at their invitation as part of the *Khairoun Festival*. We played on the island of Barstovik in Bosnia, another stunning setting. I have been lucky to have been invited to so many interesting places to play in around this amazing world of ours. More than most musicians I have met. I have found real interest and enthusiasm for what we played.

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everywhere in the world, so I am ever so grateful to have done all of that and to have been appreciated.

Colman: *It's not made it a point to play with musicians from many different cultures. How much do you feel that creative decisions are shaped by cultural differences and, vice versa, how much is the perception of sound influenced by cultural differences?*

TW: I found that the best creative decisions are shaped by the musician, no matter where they come from, within the process of listening "rationally" to play together, even though they come from very different parts of the world. It was mainly drawn to the individual and what they were like in themselves, in the process was about how open one can be with each other without belonging to different cultural concepts, of course. It would be wonderful for that not to happen, and a World music could be achieved that way, though not as in the recognized commercial terms for that genre. I would say that the perception of sound wasn't an issue. It would be, of course, with certain instruments that were very quiet, for instance, but most things were to do with drums and occasionally other instruments. So it all worked fine and everyone seemed to have a lot of fun. If a tabla or tabla or tabla (all the same instrument as it has many names), had been used, then of course the tendency was to play the music more down to that level, but with modern day amplification, even that could be lifted to a louder volume. And in any case, no one was ever forced to play within a collective of disparate players.

Colman: *How long a run is the music field?*

TW: My son Ben's been a DJ for many years. He has DJ'd at the Burning Man Festival in the USA on quite a few occasions, for instance, and to 60,000 people at the South Festival in Argentina, but also all over the world Egypt or Liberia because the war, etc. He's had quite a bit of success as MusicalBored System, amongst other guises. Sometimes he has used some of my music as in a musical co-production with other DJs, which he brought in and collaborated with. The track being called "Amalgam." Now where have I heard that before? Right from an early age, he was surrounded by [notable influences such as the] African musician coming to the home to rehearse and cook local fish and eat it together with Fura Fura, which I think is a root veg, and an extremely hot homemade tomato sauce. He went to university and studied to be a businessman but the pull of the music, I think, was too great for him. He used to come and listen to my concert which I am sure was an influence. He is now helping to get started a glamorous venue in Berlin in the U.K. These are two big hangars put together on an ex-industrial site where they can hold music concerts and other entertainment for a large crowd.

Colman: *A dedication to the ongoing influence of EME and AMM within the European style of Experimental music took place in London at Café Oto on July 28, 2022. What was your involvement in that?*

TW: I was not asked to play at the event at Café Oto, only to talk at it.

Interview: Trevor Watts

However, I had booked some accounts into my diary that month: I was twenty playing in Norway with drummer Tollef Colvig and John Edwards on bass exactly at that time. For me, it was much more pleasing to be out there doing it than talking about it. The event at Café Oto was part of The Wire's 40th Anniversary celebrations. Even Ficker and I are the only two remaining practitioners left within the EMI firm that early time.

Comment: What are your interests outside of music? What are your guilty pleasures (things that would surprise us to hear that you like)?

TW: Nothing – it's music all the way I am afraid. In a way, it saved my life. I know from an early age that I didn't want to work in a factory or garage. Those were the only things that were offered to me when I left school in the then Industrial North of England in 1968 at 15 years old. This is where I was brought up – in the West Riding of Yorkshire. School never interested me that much. I did love sport as well at the time, and played soccer for the school, tennis for Halifax youth, rugby league, and so on. I wanted to either be a musician or a footballer. I reckoned at that time that I'd have more longevity if I became a musician, and here I am at 54 ready to go, hoping to tour in the USA in October with Jackie Hiram.

Comment: The final questions have been given to us by other artists:

Mark Sanders (drums) said: "Trevor, you are one of the most influential musicians I have worked with. Your total dedication to music and communicating your intent alone set to the audience is incredible. I love travelling with you, leaving the old stereotypes and creating new ones – old school style. Excavating, playing opposite your fantastic new trio The Eternal Triangle, I witnessed as every note pieces within, played and improvised proved with such energy, passion and creative ability. The trio were supposed to play for 60 minutes but lucky for us, you played for 80 minutes. Breathtaking stuff. Ben Ficker can we do the duo again? My question is with the real intent of the pointing of the great New Thing, could you relate a memory of playing and travelling with him and how you came about playing together?"

TW: First of all, thank you for your kind words. Of course, I would love to do more duo playing with you Mark because you are a great listener and responder to "in the moment" playing, and I loved it. A lot of players bring various musical ideas to the table that they have practiced and then put those into the mix, which is okay but what interests me the most is how one musician relates to another. It's never a case that one doesn't know what one is going to play until you've played it, and that for me is what makes the music so special and intense. It comes right from the individual, a deeper place than the practiced. But to answer your question, I first met and played with Mark in Louis Mohr's house at a rehearsal for a band Louis had been asked to put together for a tour in the UK to accompany USA based Frank Wright. I have covered this elsewhere in the article. This was 1979. And we immediately found that we had very much in common together, musically and in other ways.

Interview: Trevor Watts

So much so that Níraí wanted to live here in the same house as me and my family in Hastings. We were good friends but that struck me as not that great an idea at the time. We did eventually play together for around 25 years, and because of moving here, I think Níraí had a much better life than he would have had staying in London. The local musicians here liked him a lot, naturally, and many wanted to play with him. Níraí was always quite helpful in Músic Míne and the Drum Orchestra except for one thing – he always seemed to cut it fine [stretching late] before a flight and things like that and that suited my blood pressure somewhat. Before he died, he came to an *Binn na Tríonóide* gig in 2022. It was good to see him and have a talk. Anyway, my partner had phoned him and persuaded him to come. A few years before that, Níraí had left a long message on my land line answering phone at Christmas time to let me know how he felt about our friendship and playing and travelling together over all those years. He wanted to say that, “All had good been good.” Níraí had put it in the most sincere and enthusiastic way. I need to explain a little about why he said that. Over the span of our 20 year relationship, there had been, as is often the case, some differences over music and other related things to do with travel, etc., and I think Níraí wanted to kind of apologise for his part in sometimes being a little obnoxious. So, he left this long message that was extremely positive all about our adventures together, which in many ways I had facilitated. It was a big THANKYOU! He was a true friend and I know he felt the same way about both my partner Míngé and our kids Eira and Anna, so he did about me. What he said was really gratifying for me to hear as I had thrown everything into the music. Every player in the Drum Orchestra was a friend and I think it always given it more that way.

Barry Gurr (actor) asked: “Thinking of the current world situation and the lockdowns now going on in Liberia which confronts us all with disturbing and confusing questions about pacifism and what one personally would do in such a situation — Having the honor to be featured on your CD Prayer for Peace, and thinking that you are a pacifist through and through, I wonder how you cope with the daily news and somehow manage to stay positive in your music making?”

TW: I think you know too Barry that it is always about staying positive. I know you have had your own struggles with that, and I admire you very much for having had to deal and deal well with those difficulties. You know – mainly awkward human beings (musicians). Yet you still had the strength and energy, and yes, optimism, to carry on and try to get what you wanted from within the music. Because him to do that type of thing. If we don't, who will? That's why one of the reasons for being pleased to be able to eventually play in places where expectations of a nice life were much less than here, such as in Colombia, Bolivia, N. Ireland (at the time), Venezuela, and so on. And the excitement we hit, particularly in Colombia, was amazing. The more I think it out on the air with the drums, the more the audience showed their appreciation. We're

Interview: Trevor Watts

talking about something like 2006. I never thought for one minute we'd ever have this weird situation in Europe ever again but it's happening in Ukraine. It seems absolutely inconceivable that this should be going on, especially with the knowledge we all should have gained from WW2 and WW1. This kind of fight up the stupidity of a lot of humans, to even allow this to go there and happen again, especially in this part of the world. It makes one think that humans are basically not fit to be inhabiting this planet at all. To be honest, I have never been into an "ism." Maybe unwittingly, but I never call myself anything as a label because I know it's all about independent thought. Weighing up the pros and cons of anything. I don't like words being put into my mouth so I will always try to keep an open mind. In the meantime, the music is something that I need to keep going and for me, what I play usually reflects optimism. Because without this we have had it. The Postwar for Postwar theme on that album of the same name from 1969 was especially important to me as a statement. It was not meant as a religious statement and you were the only other player at that time that helped bring it all together with your beautifully played bowed bass. In quite a way, and not without reason, it had to be you. Subsequently, that recording was reissued again on No Business Records from Lithuania.

Janis Harris (New) asked: "What do you remember about a certain gig we did at Kerrytown Concert House in Ann Arbor around 2006? I remember it as a very good gig where everybody wanted to be on the same page spiritually."

TW: I remember it the same as you, Janis. I had a special affinity with Edgfest in Ann Arbor and played a few times at the Kerrytown Concert House. The bandleader at Edgfest was Dave Lynch and we became good friends. I stayed at his house many times. Dave also booked the full Trevor Watts Celebration Band (10 piece) and as an artist concert one time Motif Music because Gang for a night as that group was scheduled to play a couple of days after Motif Music but David Allen was the only person who had the concert papers to get through Cancellation notices. That's how we ended up doing that one with him. Before all this I had befriended all the guys from the Northwoods Improv group, by way of bassist Mike Johnson being a fan of SMIS at a very young age - about 16 as I remember. I also knew Mike Kearny very well, the violinist, so there was lots of warmth and friendliness. We also liked the acoustic and the audience was very appreciative. I think all these factors led up to a very good and welcoming event for sure.

Mark Gashford (New) asked: "Trevor, when we met some years ago in Poland to play together, you told me a story about meeting John Stevens in Copenhagen in the early '60s when he was working with a theater project of sorts. Can you tell us more about that? John had heard the great Niels Henrik playing the string bass and this obviously made a huge impression on John."

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I've wanted to hear more about this."

TW: I don't remember a thing about it. John never told the name of the singing star player or even what his impression was regarding Niels. When I went to Denmark I never heard nor met the guy. All John said was that it changed his thinking about the music but never told me in what way. The only thing I remember about joining him in Denmark was sitting in a room together listening to an Albert Ayler concert on the radio. This was part of the same tour in Europe for Albert's group and music that the BBC producers had censored against so strongly in London. I remember enjoying it a lot and especially after the controversy here and deletion by the BBC of the recording of that concert shortly before I left for Denmark. I wondered what all the fuss was about? **EM:** do actually.

Mick Gustafson also asked: "Would you talk about the early student John Stewart and yourself, right there with him, had on the abstract music playing in Scandinavia? This question is a VERY important part of the pre-history of Free music that barely anyone knows about. This is a SO called 200P! It's awfully interesting about Stewart' early commitment with the Dema. Please and first - Mick"

TW: I have no idea about that either Mick. I only know that you had told to me what an influence the recording Payer for Payne was on you. When I heard you play live in Poland that time, I could still hear some of that in your playing. **Bobby Bradford (sp) asked:** "The experience with you and John Stewart in our quartet was very important in helping me to free myself mentally and PERSONALLY from a lot of baggage. I always wondered if you felt anything like that? All the best to you and your family."

TW: Thank you Bobby. For both John and I, it was an honor to be able to tour and play your music with that great quartet in the early 70s with Kent Carter, that world-class bassist, being the other player. Kent had to give up playing the bass from around 2021 I think, unfortunately due to ill health, but last time I saw him in 2021, he was still involved in composition. Bobby! You were there at the beginning in the 70s with Cerecic, taking the risks and developing the music that definitely had an influence on John and me big time going through our playing lives. It was great that later on we were also able to play with Don Cherry (a lovely man), and to get to know Cerecic and to watch him close at hand in the Air studios in London. On this occasion he asked John to fix him a bass player. The reason being that Charlie Haden had just been put in jail in Portugal. John found him two players. The reason for this being that Cerecic wanted a good pizzicato/ arco player but John only knew a good pizzicato player who was not so good on arco as well as an arco player not so good on pizzicato. Having both bassists seemed to work out fine. This session was made in a film and Cerecic never took a break. He showed his lip a lot through, a lot, and worked hard on it all. We sat and absorbed, studying what was being

Interview: Trevor Watts

played in that music really did give us the tools to be able to understand much more about your music than we ever would have done. Richard Williams, the journalist who suggested you contact us, knew that would be the case at the time. No college was teaching this. It was listening to the vinyl and working things out. I also [listened closely] to players like Coltrane, Delphy, and of course, THE man on sax - Charlie Parker. All great to 'em all as we say in the Yorkshire dialect where I am originally from. Other players from that Yorkshire area of the UK, well, I can name up with quite a few - John McLaughlin, Derek Bailey, Alan Holdsworth, Tony Oxley, and so on.

Comment: Do you have anything to say about working with Bobby Bradford?

TW: Bobby was always very open and welcoming and it was a real pleasure to play with him on tour. He was also always very generous with his opinion. If John Stevens and I had not fallen out, we'd have played more often with Bobby. But when I put More6 Music together and wrote all that music and was looked for the Helsinki Jazz Festival, John tried to be in control by phoning me up and saying if you are going to try for a festival maybe we should talk and go for different ones. But by then, I simply said, "John I am going for all of them and suggest you do the same." He wasn't very forgiving on that one and that's also why I never played in the Charlie Watts Big Band as John selected the players. Love to you and yours Bobby and a big thank you for your confidence in me. Much appreciated.

Feature Review

BILLY VALENTINE & THE UNIVERSAL TRUTH

BILLY VALENTINE

TOTAL RUNNING TIME-

APPROX. 41 MINUTES.

Produced by Bob Thiele, Jr.; Recorded & Mixed by Dave Way; Recorded @ East-West Studios;
Additional Recording @ Sear Sound by Chris Allen

FLYING DUTCHMAN RECORDS by Zachary Weg

At ninety-seven, Billy Valentine not only still has it but is afire. Even as he nears a hundred, the elder statesman of jazz singing has released perhaps his most powerful album with Billy Valentine & The Universal Truth.

In his signature rasp, the Ohio-born singer covers eight songs and ekes out hope for a fractured America. With Valentine, it almost seems possible that the country's poverty and violence, all of its hardships, can heal. "Are we gonna stand around this town,/And let what others say come true?" he sings on the opening Curtis Mayfield track, "We the People Who Are Darker Than Blue," and his optimism shines through. Yet Valentine has been around for a long while, and knows that change doesn't come easy. In a voice that is both wise and wizened, on the Gil Scott-Heron classic, "Home Is Where the Hatred Is," he continues, "Home is filled with pain and it,/Might not be such a bad idea if I never, never went,/Home again." Valentine is, in fact, saddened here and is all too aware of inner city blues. Like Bobby Womack, he feels the great despair across 110th street and sounds it out as only he could.

Above Larry Goldings on piano and a stellar set of drummers, his voice is something to behold. On such tracks as the Eddie Kendricks-popularized "My People... Hold On" and Ramsey Lewis' "Wade in The Water," he evokes fear and joy, sometimes in one note. Like Smokey Robinson, he is not only a technician but an artist. There are moments on the record, such as on the Kendricks track and on the latter half, where he gets deeply spiritual and shows a gospel influence. The singer even makes way for Pharoah Sanders' "The Creator Has A Master Plan," and almost renders the free jazz classic even more cosmic.

Yet, truly, Valentine is a searcher and seeks out solace in his own way. "Somewhere there's a home (a home),/Sweet and nice," he sings on the closing "The World Is A Ghetto" by War, and, with his soaring falsetto, he will soon get there.

Zachary Weg

New Issues

FLORIAN ARBENZ CONVERSATION #9 TARGETED SELF RELEASE

FREEDOM JAZZ DANCE/ SLEEPING MOUNTAIN/ VERTICAL HOLD/ SEVEN STEPS TO HEAVEN/ I
LOVE YOU PORGY/ OLD SHARMAN 38:43

Arbenz, d; Greg Osby, sax; Arno Krijger, org. 3/23 Basel, Ch

Florian Arbenz delivers another striking performance with his ninth installment of the Conversation's series. "Conversation #9 Targeted" features American saxophonist Greg Osby and Dutch organist Arno Krijger playing three originals and three standards. For those of you not familiar with Florian's Conversation's series, each one of the nine Conversation CD's contains a performance of Eddie Harris's "Freedom Jazz Dance", every time with different musicians.

On "Conversation #9" "Freedom Jazz Dance" is the opener. Greg Osby on Soprano and Florian on drums start out as a duo, fragmenting and extrapolating on the melody together before Arno Krijger enters. The tune is built on one chord, allowing lots of free space for the trio to converse openly. The melody, their rhythmic energy and an uncanny ability to listen to one another become the thread that drives them forward. A river of percussive feistiness from Florian is the undercurrent throughout. Each player contributes exquisite solos and support to each other. The original "Sleeping Mountain" begins with a warm and insightful organ intro. Saxophone states the melody as this unhurried ballad surges and falls as if powered by nature itself. Greg Osby's performance ranges from mystical to blistering as he captures the spirit of this beautiful piece. The original "Vertical Hold" is a duo with Alto and Drums that's a freewheeling joy ride full of spirited dialogue. Victor Feldman's "Seven Steps To Heaven" opens with a masterfully constructed fervent drum solo that beautifully sets up what's to come on this up tempo gem. It's only organ and drums on this tune. Arno begins with some soloing before he breaks into the melody. The two players are completely in sync as they bend the time to their liking. Arno's tone is dark and intense and his solo is on fire as the two of them reach for and achieve excellence. The atmosphere is set for Gershwin's "I Love You Porgy". A magical soundscape is created with organ, cymbals and percussion as Greg Osby artfully seduces the listener to another time and place. Another original "Old Sharman" closes the set as it starts with a gentle three feel before it breaks into a rough edged ostinato figure with some strong unison lines. The tune then returns to a gentler feel with some cosmic drum and organ exchanges. It then returns to the ostinato figure before closing.

For those of you wanting to know where modern jazz is today, look no further than Florian Arbenz's Conversation's CD series, a panoramic earful of possibilities.

Frank Kohl

New Issues

CHARLIE APICELLA & IRON CITY

THE GRIOTS SPEAK: DESTINY CALLING - A02 RECORDS 144

AS THE SUN RISES/ TITAN VS. SPHINX/ JUMA'S SONG/MALIKI MELASHA/ WE'RE ALL HERE IN SPIRIT/ I HEARD IN PASSING/ IF YOU KNOW WHERE TO LOOK/ WHERE DO YOU FIND THESE PEOPLE/ SPARKS 43:02

Daniel Carter, s, flt, clt, tpt, p; Charlie Apicella, Madal d, Tibetan singing bowls, g; William Parker, bass, Closon ngoni, gralla, gambini, pocket tpt; Juma Sultan, congas, shakers perc; Brad Whitely, org, Austin Walker d Brooklyn, NY Nov 13, 2022

This record looks like fun with people playing many different percussion instruments. And I was right. This record had me toe tapping and moving in my chair. I had to remember to listen to all the music and not just react to the rhythm.

I had to do a double take while listening to We're All Here in Spirit as there are two trumpet solos. I assume one has to be Carter and the other Parker. Interesting contrast in sound. It's All Right to Run has a great rhythmic pulse to it with great playing by all. Walker's drums really work well here. As does Sultan's Congas. Both Carter and Apicella prove to be good soloists. The important thing here is that their playing meshes with the rhythm. In this regard it sounds to me that everyone is listening to everyone else. The groups really works well together.

I Heard in Passing is a more straight ahead piece dominated by Parker's bass with great solos by Carter on trumpet and Apicella on guitar. Carter actually does great work on all his instruments, turning in some nice flute playing on If You Know Where to Look.

In short a truly enjoyable record. It will get many plays in my house.

Bernie Koenig

JIMMY BENNINGTON

CHURCHBELLS—LIVE AT THE GREEN MILL - CADENCE JAZZ 1270

KUNG FU/ SERIOUSLY/ SNEAKY/ PLEASE MAKE UP YOUR MIND/ THE HITCHIN' POST/ THE CHURCHBELLS OF WILLISAU/ A DANCE FOR KEIKO 40:07

Jimmy Bennington, d./ Fred Jackson Jr, as/ Artie Black, ts/ Dustin Laurenzi, ts/ Mike Harmon, bass

Whenever I get a CD led by a drummer my expectations go in all directions. Will there be lots of solos, and will they be interesting, or will the drummer basically play a supportive role.

The CD opens with mallets on tom toms which end up being supportive to the group, which features a nice Asian sounding melody and a lovely sax solo.

Throughout the three saxophone line up provides some very nice ensemble work and each player also turns in some very nice solo work. There is some really nice interplay between the horns on Hitchin' Post.

For the most part Bennington plays a supportive role and he does a fine job, whether on mallets, sticks or brushes. I should mention I like the sound of his drums. His snare is on the darker side, which I like so it blends nicely with the horns. On the title track he uses his cymbals to create the church bell sound.

And I must mention the rock solid support provided by Harmon.

A very enjoyable CD.

Bernie Koenig

New Issues

CLIFFORD JORDAN & HIS FRIENDS, DRINK PLENTY WATER

HARVEST SONG 2022-1.

THE HIGHEST MOUNTAIN / WITCH DOCTOR'S CHANT (EE-BAH-LICKEY-DOO) /
DRINK PLENTY WATER AND WALK SLOW / I'VE GOT A FEELING FOR YOU / MY
PAPA'S COMING HOME / TALKING BLUES / TALKING BLUES (INSTRUMENTAL).
36:18.

Jordan, ts; Dick Griffin, tbn; Bill Hardman, tpt; Charlie Rouse, b clt; Bernell, cel; Stanley
Cowell, p; Sam Jones, b; Bill Lee, b & arr; Billy Higgins, d; David Smyrl, Donna Jordan
Harris, Kathy O'Boyle, Denise Williams, Muriel Winston, vcl. Circa 8/1974. NYC, NY.

It must be admitted up front that I'm not a fan of singers, male or female. Sure I have a few favorites but I worked with too many to not be somewhat jaded. On the other hand, I have been a long time admirer of tenor sax master Clifford Jordan. He always struck me as somewhat different from the rest of the pack. That plus the musicians line up sold me on covering this obscure recording. As explained in the accompanying annotation this project was originally conceived as a Strata East release but for some unexplained reason it has sat in the vaults for almost half of a century.

Jordan apparently recruited an impressive list of players to make this album. Three undervalued wind practitioners are present; ex-Messenger Bill Hardman adds his Brownie-inspired staccato trumpet. Monk mainstay Charlie Rouse makes a rare appearance on the difficult bass clarinet and super slider Dick Griffin handles the bone chores. The latter also mentions in his lengthy memoirs his impressions of the six main numbers so I won't go into detail concerning them here. I concur with his critical assessments but he leaves out a few things I will mention. The cello is utilized most prominently on the title cut and less so on the last two cuts. The stellar rhythm unit is featured on the introduction to "My Papa's Coming Home" and Griffin gets a nice spot on the fourth title and adds some low note blats that give a tuba effect on the instrumental. That selection was the most interesting to yours truly not only because it is the most extended but in its use of up and down dynamics in a kind of free-for-all boogaloo.

Now to the vocals. There are three female singers which include Jordan's teenage daughter who is indistinguishable from the others. One of the ladies is a professional as is the lone male participant. He is primarily heard talking, except when lost in all the voices on the fifth cut, mostly on the title track, and trash talking over the ensemble on "Talking Blues". The majority of these collective vocals form sort of a mini-choir that recalled some similar sounds from Donald Byrd, Horace Silver, etc. So in summation, this is a fortunate find. A keeper not a weeper.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

KEVIN O'CONNELL QUARTET - HOT NEW YORK MINUTES, KOO-001.

NEWEST BLUES / ONE FOR CLIFF / BOO DEH DAH / PLAYA CULEBRITA / BISKIT /
CHOOSE NOW / BLUE SEVEN / FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE / ONE FOR GEORGE / A THOUGHT. 55:53.
O'Connell, p; Adam Brenner, as, ts; Paul Gill, b; Mark Taylor, d. No dates given. NYC.

If you are unfamiliar with musician Kevin O'Connell don't feel bad because I had no idea who he was either until this digi-pack came in the mail. Apparently he has paid the prerequisite dues in the Big Apple, Chi-town and other urban areas but has also been buried for several decades teaching in the music education field. This disc is a reunion of sorts with saxist Adam Brenner with whom he giggled in the 1980s. In fact, it would not be out of order to credit the hornman as co-leader since he is all over this date. With fellow veterans Gill and Taylor they zip through ten well-chosen numbers both fresh and new. Three titles are from the pianist; the head-nodder "Blue Seven". "Playa Culebrita" a slowish samba and a nod to former employer Clifford Jordan on the second cut. Brenner contributes a pair and arranged the late '40's standard "For Heaven's Sake". On some tracks it sounds like he has overdubbed his full-throated alto and tenor mostly on the heads. The leader plays what could be termed standard jazz piano that goes down smooth and non-threatening. Spike Lee's dad Bill furnished a mood piece and spirited boogaloo while Cedar Walton and Tadd Dameron both have compositions represented. This is relaxing, easy on the ears mainstream sounds more than worthy of a spin.

Larry Hollis

TOMAS JANZON - NOMADIC - CHANCES MUSIC 115

OUT DOOR VALLEY/ ROB'S PIANO/ NIGHT WATCH/ LETTER FROM JSB/ SEARCH FOR PEACE/
VALSE HOT/ SUBCONSCIOUS-LEE/HOT HOUSE/ ASCENDING/ UNCOVERING/ BLUE FROG
RETURN/ PRESSING FORWARD 44:53

Tomas Janzon, g; Steve Nelson, vib; Hilliard Greene, bass; Jeff Littleton, bass; Chuck McPherson, d;
Tony Austin d New York 2023

Janzon and Nelson are on all tracks with alternating rhythm sections. The sounds of the vibes and guitar blend very nicely. Just to be picky, sometimes Nelson's use of very hard mallets can be a bit jarring as can McPherson's overly bright snare sound and his use of crash cymbals.

Janzon's writing is very nice. The tunes are all very melodic. The tracks are relatively short giving Janzon and Nelson nice room to solo without overdoing anything. The duet Letter from JSB is especially nice. The interplay between Nelson and Janzon is excellent. It is nice to hear a couple of old jazz standards. I particularly love Valse Hot. After hearing Hothouse and Valse Hot it is easy to see how these tunes fit with Janzon's compositions. Both Greene and Littleton turn in excellent work with solid accompaniment and Tony Austin has a nice solo on Ascending.

In short, nothing really new here, but some very nice playing.

Bernie Koenig

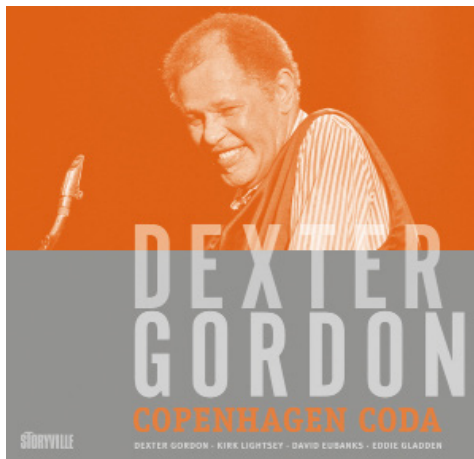
New Issues

DEXTER GORDON, COPENHAGEN CODA STORYVILLE 1018489.

IT'S YOU OR NO ONE / HANKY PANKY / MORE THAN YOU KNOW / BACKSTAIRS. 57:01.
Gordon, ts; Kirk Lightsey, p; David Eubanks, b; Eddie Gladden, d. 2/2/1983.
Copenhagen,Denmark.

Cary Grant was a good enough actor but he was a quintessential movie star. Tall, articulate, debonair and suave he was the Hollywood epitome of the leading man. If there was anyone that fit that role in jazzdom it would have to be Dexter Gordon. LTD was so cool one could get frost-bitten to the touch. According to the liner notes of Thorbjorn Sjogren these four selections were taken at the club Montmartre in what was the tenor giants final gig there. The performance program contains only four numbers but they are extended workouts. The two ballads present are well worn but Gordon dolls them up like an old lover with a new do-over. Sammy Cahn and Jule Styne should have gotten good royalties from "It's You Or No One" which was a Dex staple. The eldest tune "More Than You Know" was penned in the twenties and first appeared by the hornman eight years earlier on the Steeplechase album of the same name as was the former title. It is listed as being written by Lester which is incorrect. Try Vincent Youmans. The other two items are blues lines with the final "Backstairs" credited also incorrectly to Hoagy Carmichael. Both are original charts; the latter being listed on the Columbia HomeComing lp as such. With his sterling backing trio of the time LTD is in his prime which should be enough said. This writer had the pleasure of catching this exact unit (with the elusive Dupree Bolton sitting in) in a local OKC nightspot back in the eighties so this brought back some fond memories. Highly recommended.

Larry Hollis



New Issues

GEORGE COLEMAN, LIVE AT SMALLS JAZZ CLUB, CELLAR MUSIC 006.

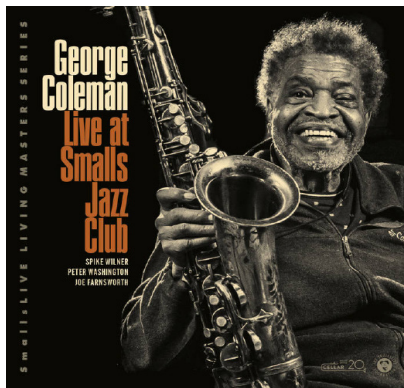
FOUR / AT LAST / MY FUNNY VALENTINE / MEDITATION / BLUES FOR SMALLS /
THE NEARNESS OF YOU / NEW YORK, NEW YORK / WHEN SUNNY GETS BLUE.

TOTAL TIME: 71:19

Coleman, ts; Spike Wilner, p; Peter Washington, b; Joe Farnsworth, d. 3/15/2022. NYC,NY.

Although we have never met personally George Coleman and I, as they say, **A**go way back. We first met musically via a 1959 United Artist record entitled Down Home Reunion subtitled Young Men From Memphis which featured a host of favorites: Booker Little, both Newborn brothers, Calvin & Phineas, Louis Smith, the superb Frank Strozier among others. Since then I've picked up everything I could find with his name on it (leader/sideman) and not been disappointed in the least. Here's another one to add to that list; a live quartet date from last year at the Village venue Smalls. The crack bass/drum duo of Washington and Farnsworth are joined by Spike Wilner on the keys for a deft romp through titles both old and new. Three belly-rubbers are present, "When Sunny Gets Blue", The Nearness Of You' & "My Funny Valentine" which Coleman performed while with Miles Davis. The opener "Four" also sports a Miles connotation since it was scripted by him and the following "At Last" although usually taken as a ballad is lightly swung. So is the Jobim samba. My two favorite tracks are the original "Blues For Smalls" where the tenor returns to its Memphis roots and the joyous "New York, New York" a movie theme popularized by Old Blue Eyes. While the leader and Spike dominate the solo space on the lower end Washington and Farnsworth get their fair share overall. There seems to be a resurgence of interest in Big G of late with the release of the quintet "In Baltimore" and "Queen Talk" from Shirley Scott both live in Maryland. That's great news all around.

Larry Hollis



New Issues

LOUIS HAYES, EXACTLY RIGHT!, SAVANT 2206.

EXACTLY RIGHT! / IS THAT SO? / HAND IN GLOVE / SO MANY STARS / CARMINE'S BRIDGE / NEFERTITI / MELLOW D / THEME FOR ERNIE / SCARBOROUGH FAIR / UGETSU. 54:52.

Hayes, d; Abraham Burton, ts; Steve Nelson, vib; David Hazeltine, p; Dezron Douglas, b. 12/16 & 17/2022. Paramus,NJ.

Louis Hayes is a modern day music marvel. While most of his peers are no longer with us he (along with the legendary Roy Haynes) are still on the planet to remind us of what top-level percussion is all about. This is the follow-up to the combo's last Savant issue Crisis with the same band plus a pair of vocals from Camille Thurman. The ten selections on both releases reflect the impeccable taste of the NEA master with its mix of one Hayes writing, two Cedar Walton charts, a traditional piece popularized by Simon & Garfunkel, titles from fellow jazzers Duke Pearson, Fred Lacey and Horace Silver. To spice things up even more there's Sergio Mendez's "So Many Stars", the late Wayne Shorter's famous "Nefertiti" and the unique David Hazeltine bridge-less tune "Carmine's Bridge". Owners of this band's previous outing will be familiar with these sonics; the constant Douglas upright, sparkling piano throughout, Nelson's slinky vibe work and muscular tenor of Burton. Abraham has a special affinity towards drummers as witnessed by his work with Eric McPherson. All in all, a perfect companion set to the former Savant recording. Heartily endorsed.

Larry Hollis



New Issues

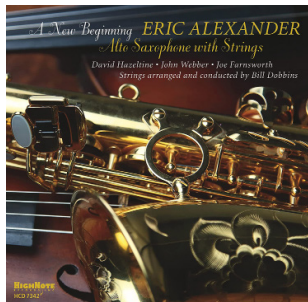
ERIC ALEXANDER, A NEW BEGINNING, HIGHNOTE 7342.

BLUES FOR DIANE / EMBRACEABLE YOU / ALL MY TOMORROWS / MAYBE
SEPTEMBER / TO LOVE AND BE LOVED / ANITA / SHE WAS TOO GOOD TO ME /
TOO LATE NOW / BLUES FOR DIANE (ALT. TAKE). 48:28.

Alexander, as; David Hazeltine, p; John Webber, b; Joe Farnsworth, d; Unidentified strings. Bill Dobbins, cond. 8/28/2021. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

For many years it has been customary, but not mandatory, for beginning saxophone students to start their studies on the alto due to the smallness of their hands. Like myself, and many others, upon reaching his teenage years Eric Alexander shelf his Eb model for the larger Bb tenor model and the rest, as they say, is history. Now he's dusted off his smaller horn and this album is his presentation playing it. There was an earlier hint on a single track of the Heavy Hitter's recording performing a dedication to his deceased father but this offering is all alto. Wisely employing his seasoned rhythm section and bandmates in the much-missed One For All aggregation the veteran arranger Bill Dobbins was brought on board for all but two cuts. Those are the opening number, "Blues For Diane" an Alexander original, and the final alternate take to close things out. That rendition is slightly longer and has some breath-taking improvisation from both the horn man and pianist. As for the remaining seven titles the bulk is made up of a half-dozen tried & true standards that range chronologically from the thirties to the sixties. Another Eric text "Anita" is a lush ballad that fits right in with those others. As for the sound of the new sax there is no question the leader hasn't done his proper woodshedding. With a tone not near as tart as Jackie McLean the alto falls into the classic category with Phil Woods technique, Art Pepper intensity and even a Sonny Criss-like smoothness at times. Right up there every bit the equal of Eric is David Hazeltine who appears to be hitting his peak in terms of comping and soloing. Think of this alto addition as just another weapon for Alexander to add to his formidable arsenal. Like the great Sonny Stitt this man is a certified reed master that can double on any sax he happens to pick up.

Larry Hollis



New Issues

SONNY STITT, BOPPIN' IN BALTIMORE LIVE AT THE LEFT BANK, JAZZ DETECTIVE DDJD-009.

DISC ONE: BALTIMORE BLUES (*) / STAR EYES / LOVER MAN (OH WHERE CAN YOU BE?) / THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME.

DISC TWO: A DIFFERENT BLUES(*) / STELLA BY STARLIGHT(*) / DEUCE'S WILD (*) / THE THEME.

Total Time: Disc #1= 43:11 / Disc #2= 41:38.

Stitt, as, ts (*); Kenny Barron, p; Sam Jones, b; Louis Hayes, d. 11/11/1975. Famous Ballroom Maryland.

The era was the late sixties, the location a decrepit club on NE 23rd street in Okla. City and the word was "STITT'S IN TOWN!". On Sunday afternoon a tenor-playing podner and I made it over early to check him out. As was the norm in those days he had no permanent band but a pickup unit made up of some of OKC's finest, Charles Burton, guitar whose combo the Burton Band was one of the most popular around, Chester Thompson, behind the Hammond B-3 long before his increased exposure with Tower of Power & Santana, and rhythm-kingpin Delmar Burge subbing for Hugh Walker who was making a name for himself in Motown. Sharing the front line was alto sax ace Buster Green who was so bad he prompted the leader to break out his tenor. The kickoff set was all that one could wish for.

Word must have gotten out about my buddy and I because out hero made it over to our table on the break for a taste and some saxophone shop talk. Having heard several varying reports on his demeanor I as happy to report he was the perfect gentleman and even took my request for what many consider his signature tune "The Eternal Triangle" with which he opened the second set. As with the remainder of the night he dazzled us both with awesome displays of serious saxology.

String comes out of the gate on the first disc hot and heavy notching rides on both horns in-between some expected fluent piano soloing from Barron on the longest track present. Much shorter are the other two blues items both of which are on the tenor. The remaining three titles are well-known with "Star Eyes" and "Lover Man" both being associated with confere Charlie Parker and an evergreen courteous the Gershwin brothers rounding out the set.

As was the case with the initial platter, disc two opens with another extended tenor blues some five minutes below the openers mark. It's slightly ironic that the two ballads heard herein are both from the forties, "Lover Man" from early in the decade and "Stella ..." from later on. The latter is an unusual long form composition that earned standard status long ago having been covered numerous times by everyone and his dog. This particular reading is less legato than normal and while twice the length of "Lover..." is broken up by piano and upright statements. Following that spirited rendition, Stitt kicks right into the final number "Deuces Wild" an Atlantic album shared with Rufus Harley. The Miles theme serves as an introductory section for the leader to acknowledge the backing trio one of the finest of his career.

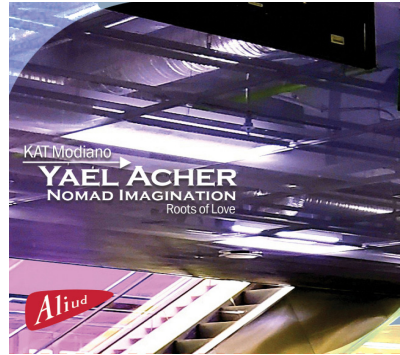
Production of the accompanying booklet is top notch with fine writing from Bob Blumenthal, personal recollections from Barron, Louis Hayes, & Charles McPherson.

Plus a portion of a Stitt interview from the seventies. Also available on 180 gram two lp set that makes my eyes red just thinking about it.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

Yael Acher "KAT" Modiano NOMAD IMAGINATION - ROOTS OF LOVE ALIUD RECORDS



BLUE KAT MOVES/ MODIANO CARNIES/ RITUAL
FOR PEACEFUL SPIRITS/ NOMAD
IMAGINATION-ROOTS OF LOVE/
AIR-PENG'S FLIGHT/ NOMAD MULTIPLICITIE-IT
/ MATHEW'S/SUGAR HILL

Yael Acher "KAT" Modiano - flute,
EFX, bansuri (Indian bamboo flute),
industrial Beat, electro-acoustic loops (all tracks)

Rashad (MATTHEW) Dobbins - voice & lyrics (on tracks 2, 6, 7)

Daniel Muschinsky – piano and keyboards (on tracks 1,3, 4, 5,8)

Kristor Brødsgaard – double bass and el- bass (on tracks 1,3, 4, 5,8)

Ayi Solomon – percussion and voice (on tracks 1,3, 4, 5,8)

Niclas Compagnol – drums (on tracks 1,3, 5,8)

All music composed by Yael Acher "KAT" Modiano

Produced by Yael Acher "KAT" Modiano.

Recorded February-May 2021 at BOGEY Studio, Copenhagen V. Denmark

Sound engineer: Kristor Brødsgaard

Music Editing: Kristor Brødsgaard (tracks 1,3, 5,8)

Music Editing: Yael Acher "KAT" Modiano (tracks 2, 4, 6, 7)

Mixed and mastered by Jos Boerland, Aliud Records, Joure, NL.

Album Cover photo: Yael Acher "KAT" Modiano

Nice Album! Thoroughly entertaining. Yael KAT Modiano Acher - Composer, flutist, arranger. There is evidence here of something special, there is patience here, and an interest in creating a really good album. And that she does in spades. You can hear the creative NOMAD IMAGINATION at work. MODIANO CARNIES feels like a gritty journey through real streets, evocative, other-worldly, organic, and authentic. KAT is equally adept as a classical artist and as a mind bending proponent of modern soundscapes. Her approach is flawless, sensitive, and puts the listener in the middle of unique and often visual experiences. KAT is known for her performances with silent films. One can hear her cinematographic sensibility on this album. She swings and covers a lot of territory here. Her sense of phrasing is superb. It's a really Nice Album Indeed! Rock on KAT! Recommended.

Jim Tarro

A Farewell Salute to Pete Brown

PETE BROWN

A FAREWELL SALUTE TO PETE THE POET

DECEMBER 25, 1940 – MAY 19, 2023 ©2023 PATRICK HINELY, WORK/PLAY®

Anyone listening to American AM radio during rock's most creatively fertile period, the later 1960s, knew some of his verses – the lyrics he wrote for Cream, with Jack Bruce – even if they didn't know who Pete Brown was. As it turns out, those words, which brought him the most fame and fortune, were only one facet of his extensive and too often obscure oeuvre, and far from the most poetic.

It was my good fortune to visit Brown a couple of times in 1987, at his flat in London's Weston Park neighborhood. By way of introduction, I'd sent him a cassette dub of a program I'd produced for public radio using recordings of him reading his work, or making music with several of his bands, and Jack Bruce's recordings using his lyrics, as well as Dick Heckstall-Smith's. I told him I was hoping to catch up with him while I was in town, and he said by all means do come visit. He humored my request to make some photos of him, and bestowed upon me a copy of his then-brand-new 2-LP anthology *Before Singing Lessons*, saying I'd be among the first to have one in the States, where it was assured of sales in the dozens...

Ben Beaumont-Thomas penned a sufficiently thorough obituary for Brown in the May 20, 2023 edition of *The Guardian* (<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2023/may/20/pete-brown-counter-cultural-poet-singer-and-cream-lyricist-dies-aged-82>) that I feel free from being duty-bound to recite his entire life story. Actually, he did that himself, in his own way, with 2010's memoir *White Rooms and Imaginary Westerns: On the Road with Ginsberg, writing for Clapton, and Cream – An Anarchic Odyssey* (ISBN 978-1906779207). It's now gone out of print and gotten rather costly, so let me recommend Interlibrary Loan.

Brown was living the beat poet life and penning poems well before he took up writing song lyrics. His older volumes, *Few Poems* (1966) and *Let 'em Roll, Kafka* (1969) have long been, to put it mildly, rare and coveted collectors' items. One of his early ensembles, the *First Real Poetry Band*, included a promising young guitarist from the London recording studio scene: John McLaughlin, who later wrote "Pete the Poet" for Brown, recording it on his own first solo album, *Extrapolation*, with John Surman, in 1969. It's a nice tune among several on an auspicious debut.

While Brown's lyrics for Cream were canonical to the day's zeitgeist, it wasn't until I heard the double-whammy of Jack Bruce's second solo album, *Harmony Row*, and Brown's recorded anthology of a selection of his own poems with musical accompaniment, *The Not-Forgotten Association*, that the full force of the breadth and depth of the man's genius was revealed to me.

Harmony Row, despite being a trio album – Bruce on vocals, bass and keyboards, Chris Spedding on guitar and John Marshall on drums – is orchestral, nay, symphonic, in a way not unlike *Abbey Road*. Brown's visions and stories interweave seamlessly with Bruce's music and that instantly-recognizable Scots voice, sometimes in chorus with itself. Both were hitting their full stride, collectively and individually, with spectacular results. This album is full of miniature masterpieces, and its acoustic closer, "The Consul at Sunset" offers a more telling introduction to the writings of Malcolm Lowry than any literary criticism I've yet read. Brown continued working with Bruce for decades, but they never surpassed this collaboration.

The Not-Forgotten Association is a veritable feast of beat poetry, a much more

A Farewell Salute to Pete Brown

aesthetically-matched and -meshed amalgamation of the spoken word with music than much of what such had been recorded on this side of the pond. Brown's recitations are spirited and witty with a knowing sense of how performance art works. I laughed a lot the first time I listened to it, nearly 50 years ago, and still do, though I do so now with more of an appreciation for the darker side of his humor, sublime and surreal, which permeates but seldom dominates the proceedings. Brown's later involvements included writing lyrics for Procol Harum's 2017 album *Novum*, and, most recently, completing recording sessions for an album said to be entitled *Shadow Club*, which, one hopes, will be available within the foreseeable. It can't arrive soon enough.

It's challenging to list but a few of his recorded and/or published accomplishments, since so many are so tasty, but here we go, with an incomplete, hardly impartial and sometimes incongruous assortment:

BLUES FOR THE HITCHHIKING DEAD (JAZZ POETRY SUPERJAM #1) – 2013 2-LP on Gearbox (UK): a 1962 live recording of the New Departures Jazz Poetry Septet, with Brown and fellow poet Michael Horovitz, as well as pianist Stan Tracey. Historical and at times hysterical, documenting the London avant-beat scene in pre-Beatles days. Not for the faint of ear.

BEFORE SINGING LESSONS: 1969 – 1977 – 1987 2 LP set on Decal (UK). Not yet available on CD. An anthology featuring Brown's work from albums with his *Battered Ornaments*, *Piblokto*, *Bond and Brown*, *Brown and Friends* (including Jack Bruce and Jeff Beck), Ian Lynn, and the *Flying Tigers*, among others, along with some previously unreleased pieces. This gives one a good glimpse of Brown's range and proclivities in those days.

A STORY ENDED, Dick Heckstall-Smith – 1972 LP on Bronze/Warner Brothers, 2009 CD on Esoteric: Side one features Brown's lyrics, sung by Paul Williams or Graham Bond, his images and narratives made musical by some of London's finest players, including Jon Hiseman and Gordon Beck. This was saxophonist Heckstall-Smith's major-label solo debut, and deserved more attention than it got at the time.

As a producer and sometimes player and/or singer as well, a trio of blues-oriented albums, amongst a roster of many other musicians far more widely-known and more numerous than I care to enumerate here:

KNIGHTS OF THE BLUES TABLE – 1997, Viceroy. (as Various Artists)

BLUES AND BEYOND – 2001, Blue Storm (as Dick Heckstall-Smith and Friends)

FROM CLARKSDALE TO HEAVEN – 2002, Eagle (as Various Artists)

MUNDANE TUESDAY AND FREUDIAN SATURDAY – Ridgeway Press, 2016, ISBN 978-1564391360 – A collection of Brown's later poetry, proving he had grown with the years but remained a beatnik at heart.

And the aforementioned:

HARMONY ROW, Jack Bruce, 2971 LP on Polydor: the 2003 CD edition includes additional tracks, though in this case those are coals to Newcastle.

THE NOT-FORGOTTEN ASSOCIATION, 1973 LP on Deram, 2015 CD on Esoteric. An epic listen if you do it at one sitting. When this appeared, no one else had done anything like it, and thus far no one else I've heard has done anything like this nearly as well.

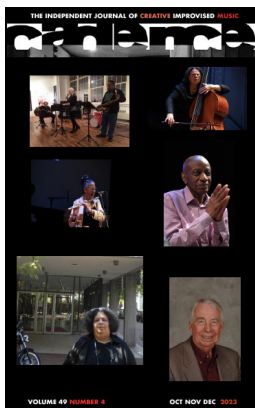
A Farewell Salute to Pete Brown



Pete Brown in his Weston Park flat, London, February 1987.
Photographs ©1987 Patrick Hinely, Work/Play®

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN CADENCE

acc: accordion
 as: alto sax
 bari s : baritone sax
 b: bass
 b cl: bass clarinet
 bs: bass sax
 bsn: bassoon
 cel: cello
 cl: clarinet
 cga: conga
 cnt: cornet
 d: drums
 el: electric
 elec: electronics
 Eng hn: English horn
 euph: euphonium
 flgh: flugelhorn
 flt: flute
 Fr hn: French horn
 g: guitar
 hca: harmonica
 kybd: keyboards
 ldr: leader
 ob: oboe
 org: organ
 perc: percussion
 p: piano
 pic: piccolo
 rds: reeds
 ss: soprano sax
 sop: soprano sax
 synth: synthesizer
 ts: tenor sax
 tbn: trombone
 tpt: trumpet
 tba: tuba
 v tbn: valve trombone
 vib: vibraphone
 vla: viola
 vln: violin
 vcl: vocal
 xyl: xylophone



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FRONT COVER Clockwise from upper left

DOM MINASI
 NORA MCCARTHY
 ROS MOSHE
 JOELLE LEANDRE
 REGGIE WORKMAN
 OSCAR TREADWELL
 DEIDRE MURRAY
 NICOLE MITCHELL

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CADENCE MAGAZINE EDITORIAL POLICY

Established in January 1976, Cadence Magazine was a monthly publication through its first 381 issues (until September 2007). Beginning with the October 2007 issue, Cadence increased in number of pages, changed to perfect binding, and became a quarterly publication. On January 1, 2012 Cadence Magazine was transferred to Cadence Media L.L.C.

Cadence Magazine continues as an online publication and one print issue per year. Cadence Media, LLC, is proud to continue the policies that have distinguished Cadence as an important independent resource.

From its very first issue, Cadence has had a very open and inclusive editorial policy. This has allowed Cadence to publish extended feature interviews in which musicians, well known or otherwise, speak frankly about their experiences and perspectives on the music world; and to cover and review all genres of improvised music. We are reader supported.

Cadence essentially always has been and remains "the best independent magazine of Jazz, Blues, and Creative Improvised Music that money can't buy."

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Short Takes Photos - Philadelphia



Zoh Amba's 6/25 duet with drummer Chris Corsano at Solar Myth
Photo credit © Ken Weiss



7/8 pianist Marilyn Crispell, bassist Mark Dresser and drummer
Gerry Hemingway at Solar Myth Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Short Takes Photos - Philadelphia



7/14 Violinist Diane Monroe, bassist Richard Hill, drummer Pheeroan akLaff and saxophonist Bobby Zankel at Cedar Park Jazz series Photo credit © Ken Weiss



7/18 Irreversible Entanglements -Aquiles Navarro, Keir Neuringer, Tcheser Holmes, Luke Stewart and Camae Ayewa outside Solar Myth Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Short Takes Photos - Philadelphia



7/29 Billy Harper at Solar Myth
Photo credit © Ken Weiss



9/9 Hendrik Meurkens' quartet -Akiko Tsuruga on organ, Paul Bollenback on guitar and Jason Tiemann on drums at Chris' Jazz Café Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Short Takes Photos - Philadelphia



7/30 Guitarist Joe Baiza, drummer Matt Crane and bassist Damon Smith at Pageant: Soloveev Photo credit © Ken Weiss



8/5 12-year-old child prodigy Julian Lee on vibes with pianist Tom Lawton, bassist Lee Smith and drummer Byron Landham at Chris' Jazz Café Photo credit © Ken Weiss

Short Takes Photos - Philadelphia



8/22 Shakti - Zakir Hussain on tabla, violinist Ganesh Rajagopalan, vocalist Shankar Mahadevan, guitarist John McLaughlin and percussionist Selvaganesh Vinayakram at the Keswick Theatre Photo credit © Ken Weiss



8/23 Alto saxophonist Miguel Zenón and pianist Luis Perdomo at Solar Myth Photo credit © Ken Weiss

27TH ANNUAL VISION FESTIVAL: IMPROVISING THE FUTURE - FILMS/CONFERENCES/ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS- JUNE 10-12/LIVE PERFORMANCES - JUNE 13-18, 2023, ROULETTE, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

Text and photos by Ken Weiss

The jam-packed 27th Annual Vision Festival at Roulette [509 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn] once again was a stimulating and envelope-pushing success thanks to the dutiful work of Patricia Nicholson, Todd Nicholson, William Parker and the rest of the Arts for Art crew. The offerings of creative music, dance, spoken word, visual art and film were available live in-person and online. Attending all six nights of the festival's musical portion with 4-5 sets per night led to an ongoing endorphin-blasting experience and sleepless nights (in a good way). This year's festival sped along with no noticeable hitches.

The live performance portions of the festival opened on June 13 with a night celebrating a lifetime of achievement of French master bassist Joëlle Léandre, who appeared in four different settings. The Tiger Trio [Myra Melford (p) and Nicole Mitchell (ft)], a fierce threesome whose most enthralling moments came in the quieter interludes and a late-set high pitched flute-blown/vocalized anguished cry by Mitchell that was eventually joined by Léandre. That was followed by a duet with poet Fred Moten and then the Judson Trio [Craig Taborn (p) and Mat Maneri (vla)] presenting their second ever concert. Taborn's splotchy colorations amongst the combined floating string work was intricate and beautiful. The night ended with the Joëlle Léandre Septet, a rare large group project for her, premiering a newly composed work for the event – "Atlantic Ave Septet." Léandre chose to combine both composition and improvisation into the piece allowing Ingrid Laubrock (ts), Steve Swell (tbn), Mat Maneri (vla), Jason Kao Hwang (vin), Fred Lonberg-Holm (cel) and Joe Morris (g) to add their own voices. Swell summed up the experience of playing the complicated piece without the planned extensive rehearsal time as, "It was like putting a puzzle together and everybody had to remember their part." Léandre, never one reticent to express herself, announced, "We're crazy about the commercial [music] shit... I am very direct... this is kaka... we need music and a lot of love, we need a lot of love... take a risk, don't worry about failure."

Gerald Cleaver's Black Host opened Day 2 with a slow build that featured compelling solos by Brandon Seabrook (g), Darius Jones (as), Dezron Douglas (b), Brandon Lopez (b), and especially Cooper-Moore (p). A hand injury kept bassoonist Karen Borca from leading a quartet with Rob Brown, Hilliard Greene and Jackson Krall. In true "the show must go on" fashion, the trio carried on in Borca's stead, dedicating the set to her. Brown's arched back alto blasts, along with Greene's fibrous bass work and side-

to-side swaying matched Krall's expansive drum work. Two of the most anticipated sets followed. First up was Hamid Drake's Turiya: Honoring Alice Coltrane with James Brandon Lewis (ts), Jamie Saft (kybd), Patricia Brennan (vib), Johsua Abrams (b) and dancer/festival mother Patricia Nicholson. Drake has had a long personal connection with the spiritual teachings of Alice Coltrane's music and a meet up with her at a Baha'i temple when he was 16 was life changing for him. The septet's playing and Drake's singing, especially on "Journey in Satchidananda" took the music to another level, leaving deep listeners changed for the better. The Mark Dresser 7 featured West Coast talent – Dresser (b), Michael Dessen (tbn), Joshua White (p) – along with Nicole Mitchell (flt), Marty Ehrlich (rds), Keir GoGwilt (vin), and Michael Sarin (d). Dresser performed a number of tunes from his *Sedimental You* recording including "Trumpin'putinstoopin." He introduced it by saying, "We're gonna play a tune I hoped would no longer be so topical." He also summed up the night and the entire arc of the festival with, "Isn't it amazing that in a certain night we can hear such a range of music that touches us?"

Day 3 began with Devin Brahja Waldman's *Watermelancholia* featuring four horns and a rhythm section with projected live painting. Waldman, the nephew of famed Beat poet Anne Waldman, works his spiritual side into his work and explained that the group's theme was about confronting the unknown. He noted, "If you harm something, you harm yourself." After K.J. Holmes danced to the drumming of Jeremy Carlstedt, ending up on his back, Ted Daniel led his International Brass and Membrane Corps with Marvin Sewell on guitar, Jose Davila on tuba, and Michael Wimberly on percussion, along with two young spoken word artists who switched off reading long sections of the words of Civil Rights activists Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Frederick Douglas, to dominate the presentation and veer the focus away from the instrumental playing. Last up came Mike Reed's Separatist Party with poet/vocalist Marvin Tate, Ben LaMar Gay (cnt) and the Bitchin Bajas trio. The music tended towards the trippy, electronic side and grooved nicely but it was the guttural, and at times, shocking voicings of Tate that stamped the tenor of the set. Reed, a leading light on the plentiful Chicago creative music scene, fueled the group from his drum seat.

The next night led off with Patricia Brennan's *More Touch* containing three percussionists and bass. Brennan added some electronics to her impressive mallet work and the band shared a deep connect that ended with smiles all around. Brennan noted in the festival's booklet that, "The music reflects an inner search, backwards to [her] roots in Veracruz, Mexico and forwards into the future." Mayan Space Station Flight 66 followed with William Parker's trio (Ava Mendoza, g; Gerald Cleaver, d) enriched with multi-instrumentalist Lee Mixashawn Rozie on electric mandolin and flute, and violinists Jason Kao Hwang and gabby fluke-mogel. Their set began with the base trio building intensity until joined by old-head and annual festival standout, Hwang, and newbie fluke-mogel, adding to a serpentine groove furthered by Rozie's Bluesy mandolin. The two violinists playing together at times hit on segments of high velocity that raised goosebumps. Parker wrote in the

booklet that, "My musical world relies on the intuitive now – moment-by-moment negotiation of participation and flow... The music presented by Mayan Space Station is not about the method but about conjuring magic." Although the group achieved superb, propulsive music that peaked and stayed intense at times, Parker was not satisfied, announcing at set's end - "We didn't quite get to where we were going but we went somewhere. This being a festival, we had to stop." [He added, tongue-in-cheek] "We'll open for Billy Joel at Madison Square Garden." Next up was Shamanic Principle with Val Jeanty on percussion and electronics, Patricia Nicholson on dance and voice, and Miriam Parker's videos. Nicholson, a talented dancer, donned an Amir Bey designed headdress to chant sage advice on changes that need to be made to wake up and heal our planet. She danced to an array of Jeanty generated tribal sounding rhythms. Longtime festival star Matthew Shipp followed with his quartet (Mat Walerian, rds; Michael Bisio, d; Whit Dickey, d). Shipp mentioned to me two years ago, referencing young Polish reedist Walerian, "Wait until you hear this guy!" So it was especially exciting to experience Walerian on one of his rare jaunts to the States and he didn't disappoint by added arresting bass clarinet and alto sax strikes into the Free music mix conjured by his bandmates - three longtime collaborators who've developed a high-level improvisatory telepathy over the years. The final set of the night belonged to veteran trombonist Dick Griffin who led the Mississippi to NY Freedom Band with bearded wonder Dave Sewelson (bs, as), Luke Stewart (b), Tcheser Holmes (d) and Michael Wimberly, usually a drummer but filling the piano seat here except for when the leader manned the ivories. Griffin made this set a tribute to his time spent in the Sun Ra Arkestra [he joined shortly after Marshall Allen entered the famed ensemble] and covered some of Sun Ra's work including "Interplanetary Music". At the end, in true Arkestra fashion, the group kept playing while parading off the stage and into the audience.

Day 5 began with the Music is Mine Intergenerational Band under the direction of William Parker. The ensemble consisted of over twenty musicians aged 78 to 7 years old. The elders included Daniel Carter, Steve Swell and Dave Sewelson. It has become a festival tradition to feature such an ensemble of very young players with an interest in the music, and it's just one more example of how William Parker has led others and built a base to support this challenging art form. The next set was the SUN HAN GUILD, a "sound and performance collective" led by violinist/vocalist eddy kwon and inspired by the Spirit Worshiper's Guild of the early 20th century Korea. Laura Cocks (ft), DoYeon Kim (gayageum), Lester St. Louis (cel) and Nava Dunkelmann (perc) blended a wholesome and exotic ebb and flow that was punctured at one point by kwon's terrifying screams. A highlight of the performance were the sounds Kim released from the rarely heard (in a Jazz setting) gayageum (a traditional Korean plucked zither). Keep an eye out for her! Two undisputed Free Jazz legends teamed up for the third performance of the night – pianist Dave Burrell and Joe McPhee on tenor sax – for a stimulating presentation that was surprisingly introspective (considering their past separate performances). The gloves did come off later in the set but they ended up back in semi-quietude, raising an attention-

grabbing, spiritual aural dusting. Following a dance segment by Yasmine Lee with the percussive backing of Michael Wimberly, rising bass star Brandon Lopez led “the gospel of sans”, an all-star septet with Zeena Parkins (el harp), Cecilia Lopez (elec), Mat Maneri (vla), DoYeon Kim (gayageum), and drummers Gerald Cleaver and Tom Rainey. The combination of the four string players, Lopez’ understated electronics, and the doubled drums generated stunning sounds, structures and textures. During the set, Gill Arno did live film manipulation, which the performers could view on a mirror set up at the front of the stage but tying into the film did not seem to be the band’s primary goal. The night ended with Hear In Now Extended. The group typically functions as a trio – Tomeka Reid (cel), Silvia Bolognesi (b) and Angelica Sanchez (p) - but apparently earlier in the day they recruited drummer Michael Vatcher out of the venue’s kitchen, where he was helping out, and asked him to sit in. It was a good move as the novelty of playing with the unique drummer pulled them in uncharted territories.

The festival concluded on Day 6 with yet another talent-laden night, brimming with one-off performances. 75 Dollar Bill Altered Workspaces with Jason Kao Hwang found the duo of Che Chen (g) and Rick Brown (perc, horns) expanding to include Sue Garner (b g), Talice Lee (org, vin,) and for the first time – Hwang. Aspiring to push boundaries and combine elements of Folk/Modal traditions with Rock and Experimental music, 75 Dollar Bill laid down some serious groove jam with spikey highs. Chicago-based Kahil El’Zabar’s Ethnic Heritage Ensemble has been a thing for over 40 years at this point and remains relevant and uplifting. This set, a Don Cherry tribute, included the standard trio [Corey Wilkes (tpt) and Alex Harding (bs)] along with pianist Justin Dillard and L.A -based vocalist Dwight Trible. The first song found El’Zabar on mbira, as he typically commences with, to generate an ethereal opening statement while harkening back to the ancestors. At one point, the band actually chanted Don Cherry’s name. During the set, El’Zabar moved between his drums and Cajón, beating and singing with great passion - a trait he shared with Trible, whose deep and gravelly vocals and physical posturing were captivating. A late cover of “A Love Supreme” soon included blaring trumpet and a musical crescendo, peaking with Tribble’s screams. Melanie Dyer We Free Stings Band followed with Dyer on viola, Gwen Laster on violin, Ken Filiano on bass, Alexander Waterman on cello and Newman Taylor Baker on drums for a dominating set of string work that was transportive and one of the unexpected festival highlights. The final two sets of the event were handpicked by iconic bassist Reggie Workman, who was feted at the end of the festival. His daughter, talented cellist Nioka Workman, appeared with spoken word artist Kayo, whose towering physical presence was matched by his dominating deep voice and stage presence. He espoused on topics such as the superhero in all of us and social justice. Vision Festival 27 came to a roaring close with its most highly anticipated presentation - the Reggie Workman Celebration Band - a 10-piece all-star band he specifically organized for the night. Reggie Workman with Odean Pope (ts), Jason Moran (p), Jen Shyu (vcl, lute), Elijah Thomas (flt), Jason Kao Hwang (vin), Tapan and Sajib Modak (tablas), Gerry Hemingway (d) and Harold Smith on didgeridoo,

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mbira and a large conch shell, spread across the space and served as testament to Workman's desire to join generations of musicians and different cultures, validating our need to all come together for a better future. It was a grand idea leading to a joyful festival conclusion with all the musicians visibly thrilled to be playing with each other as well as the famed bassist. Initiating with a minute of silence for the ancestors, subtle playing was the theme until a blasting entrance from the back of the room by Smith on conch shell triggered a conceptual change. He continued on to the stage, picked up a didgeridoo, and continued blasting wave after wave for what felt like a spiritual cleansing of the entire hall. Workman diligently directed the swirling sound cloud, giving plenty of space for the numerous impressive solos while maintaining a party-like atmosphere. Can't wait for Vision Fest 28!



JOËLLE LÉANDRE PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS



REGGIE WORKMAN - PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS

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NICOLE MITCHELL PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS



JEN SHYU PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS



JOE MORRIS, MAT MANERI, JASON KAO HWANG PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS



COOPER-MOORE DARIUS JONES PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS

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MAYAN SPACE STATION FLIGHT 66

WILLIAM PARKER · AVA MENDOZA · GERALD CLEAVER · LEE MIXASHAWN ROZIE · JASON
KAO HWANG · GABBY FLUKE-MOGEL PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS



VAL JEANTY · PATRICIA NICHOLSON PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS

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MICHAEL BISIO MAT WALERIAN PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS



DAVE BURRELL JOE MCPHEE PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS

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BRANDON LOPEZ "THE GOSPEL OF SANS"

BRANDON LOPEZ ZEENA PARKINS MAT MANERI DOYEON KIM CECILIA LOPEZ



DWIGHT TRIBLE KAHILU EL'ZABAR PHOTO CREDIT - KEN WEISS

COMPOSITIONAL JAMMING: BUTCH MORRIS' ALGORITHMIC PURSUIT OF THE OCCULT ENTELECHY OF HUMAN MUSICALITY

Thomas Stanley

Lawrence D. "Butch" Morris was part of a cadre of gifted young jazz artists who migrated from the west coast to New York City in the 1970s. Butch's massively musical life can be seen as cleaved in two. In the earlier phase of his trajectory, he attracted critical attention as a sensitive instrumentalist and exceptional composer/arranger. Between 1985 and his death in 2013, he challenged listeners and players alike with what he defined as "a vocabulary of ideographic signs and gestures activated to modify or construct a real-time musical arrangement or composition" (liner notes, Testament, 1995, New World Records).

In 2003, I began studying Morris' patented method for building musical compositions as the centerpiece of my research for a doctoral degree in ethnomusicology. Before cancer pulled him from the rostrum, he had completed close to 200 numbered Conductions®, each a compelling bubble of novel musical experience, each, also, an overturned stone in Butch's lifelong search for the cognitive, emotional, and even spiritual foundations of our uniquely human capacity to think and hear music.

To realize each of his Conductions®, Butch trained an ensemble in some manageable subset of these "ideographic signs and gestures", rehearsed the musicians under the specific requirements of this vocabulary, and then performed a work. Many of these gestures are open enough to permit a range of permissible responses. His method can be used to summon structured sound from silence as well as to provide dynamic, real-time arrangements of notated material. The system simultaneously draws upon the centrality of improvisation – a defining characteristic of jazz – and the authority of the composer – a defining characteristic of Western art music, his gestural vocabulary functioning as a bridge between interpretation and improvisation. Its seductive power rested in its ability to bring all involved in this realignment (audience, instrumentalists, and conductor) somehow closer to music's mysterious source point, even as the product of Butch's unusual method produced sonic exotica that have resisted enclosure within genre envelopes.

The jazz big band famously begins as a toe-tapping fuel for a vibrant dance culture. But, as we'll see from our third interlocutor, Morris' theoretically dense artform was not beyond the sweaty reach of syncopation and danceable swing. And while it might seem farfetched to situate the second phase of Butch's bifurcated life within the continuum of the jazz big band, the reader may discover from the artists interviewed here that that was less true in some settings than in others.

I talked to three of his friends for a cross section of perspectives on Butch Morris as a leader of large ensembles and real-time composer of big band music.

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Jason Kao Hwang: Butch came to the very first gig I ever played. It was at the Ladies' Fort. That was singer Joe Lee Wilson's storefront performance space on Bond Street. Butch was friends with Will Connell, Jr., and I played with Will and Jay Oliver the bassist. That's how I met Butch. I think I was 19 or 20 years old.

Thomas Stanley: *You've seen him in so many different contexts. Can you talk about Conduction® and communities of scale.*

Jason Kao Hwang: In the very beginning he was still playing, and he was a beautiful cornet player. But at one point he decided to focus on Conduction®. I think when I first met him, the idea was in his head. He was conducting the David Murray Big band. I'm not sure if [Conduction®] came a little bit later, but he was doing arrangements with David Murray's Octet. I believe he was still playing small groups with Frank Lowe.

One of the first decisions for the creative artist, you could call it a decision of composition, is who you call, who becomes the raw materials and the voices. Orchestrating people, as well as sounds, was, I'm sure, a part of Butch's creative process. I can't remember the very first Conduction®, but I do remember some of my early experiences with him. He was drawing more from the loft jazz scene. There was one run that we did at this storefront on West Houston. As a young musician, I was agog at all the well-known people there. Luther Thomas, Philip Wilson.

Frank Lowe, Ahmed Abdullah -- probably a lot of people I'm forgetting -- me and Billy Bang and Somalia Smith, another violinist. His music, then, had more of the big band format. As I recall, it would be riffing. It would be exchanges. It would be, you four-on-the-floor, breaks, and all that. He was conducting us in the big band language, with his own twist. I think the instrumentation gradually came from out of that jazz thing and started to open to other influences. He started working with Thurman Barker and Khan Jamal on marimba and vibes, sometimes it was Warren Smith, I believe, and he would have them do this sort of hypnotic ostinato thing. He also started bringing in less iconic jazz instruments -- strings, flutes, no saxophones.

His idea of community started to expand and depending on who he brought in, that changed his music. There was a racial divide in the East Village where the loft jazz scene was mostly black musicians. The noise scene was mostly white musicians. He was able to bridge the politics, and I think he got some flak from different people, but he was one of the few that bridged that gap to make the music that he imagined. I think he started to see the possibilities of bringing unlike people together, and through his musicality and instincts and sense of the plasticity of it all, he could shape things that were unique.

Thomas Stanley: *What Butch was doing was different than writing music and saying, "hey, perform my score, perform my music." There must have been some kind of tension over perceived ownership of a collective effort that always had the maestro's name as composer. Was that ever difficult?*

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Jason Kao Hwang: In that period, he empowered people, which I am so grateful for, because he gave me all these experiences to play, and just threw me out into the fire. Sometimes, it freakin' terrified me, like the whole band cuts out, and then he points at me, and I'm going, "Daaammn." (laughs) But I don't think there was that type of tension over ownership. I think, as he broadened his palette, there could be tension between those musicians who did have less in common. There's some of that when people come from very strong, separate aesthetics, and I think that was part of Butch's vision. He got that. And he wasn't concerned about pleasing either. He liked the collisions. He liked the friction. That opened a door for him. I think that he was fascinated with that.

Thomas Stanley: *You were a part of seeing this idea, this architecture of Conduction® generate so much new music. What did he accomplish as a bandleader?*

Jason Kao Hwang: I think his journey is interesting because he wasn't the type of artist that went into seclusion and meditated on it. He was a people person. He was out and about every night -- going to hear people play or going to hang out. He was a night animal. He was everywhere. That's why so many people knew him. He evolved from a scene that was kind of jazz big band based, and then I think it became kind of collage with the noise makers and then somewhere in there he also got away from the idea of big band as accompaniment for soloists and more into total collective sounds.

Thomas Stanley: *You have this experience with Butch as part of what you're bringing into your own creation of music. How does that experience affect who you are as a person and artist.*

Jason Kao Hwang: Because I worked with him when I was so young, it was a training. I think he influenced me more than I realize. Butch could be rough. We weren't on bad terms, but I mean it wasn't close, you know. When he called me to play at Billy Bang's memorial, in the rehearsal, I just thought, man, every decision he made musically to conduct us, I felt like I would have done the same thing if I was conducting. Butch really affected me on a fundamental level of musicality, how music is shaped. When I started conducting large string groups, I always credited Butch to the orchestra. I'd say "90% of the gestural language I'm using is gestures that Butch would use." Some things I created are string-specific, but conceptually they would be in line with the vocabulary that I had seen from Butch.

Lewis "Flip" Barnes: I'm trying to remember when I didn't know Butch. Before I performed with Butch, I saw him at P.S. 122. The first time I did something with Butch was somehow through William Parker. I can't remember the date exactly; we're talking about the 80s. I learned quickly that there were two things with Butch you didn't do. You never really improvised. One of his hand signals would be like [Flip makes a beckoning motion with the fingers of an outstretched hand]. He'd do this, but it didn't mean to solo. It meant to expand

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the idea that you're doing, develop it. I had to learn that this ain't the same as improvising. The first thing is, pay attention. Know the signs. I mean it's extensive. You hear me, extensive. So, learning as much of the directions [as possible] was essential to the success of the music. But the other thing, too, is that you didn't want to be caught not looking at him. You've worked with Butch, haven't you?

Thomas Stanley: He never conducted me, but I saw him wear people out for taking their eyes off him for a second!

Lewis "Flip" Barnes: Butch used to always wait until you weren't looking, and then when you turned around, he'd give you a look you didn't want to see again. It was kind of that look where your parents are like, "you're in trouble. You done messed up." You didn't want that look, the look.

The other thing is, don't improvise -- expand, and contract, because the thing I learned, and it seems simple now: Butch was the improviser. No matter what you played or sang, we were the keys, if it was a keyboard. If it was a trombone, we were the slide and the embouchure. But he was the improviser. Once I understood that, I really grew to appreciate his music even more. It wasn't in the traditional sense a jazz band. He was the jazz guy, and the rest of us were just the keys, or the sticks, or the strings, just parts of this total organism. It amazed me how this would end up being a whole masterpiece, like Bach or Beethoven. It was stressful as much as it was creative. Although I enjoyed the finished product, I think I can speak for a lot of the other musicians -- you never could take your eye off him. In the course of an hour, hour and 15 minutes, man, it's like never blinking. And there was always certain cats in the band that would be notorious for getting the look.

Thomas Stanley: Did it ever feel uncomfortable to be operationalized. You say you felt like the strings or the sticks. People have expectations of what they're going to do on-stage in a creative situation. If you didn't experience it in yourself, did you ever hear grumbling from other players about being put in that position?

Lewis Barnes: Yeah, well, you know, I found a mix. I also teach autistic kids right now in middle school. One of the things with my kids is that attention is not one of their strengths. You got to have a real good attention span if you want to get the best out of the Butch Morris experience. If you don't, it can be very, not just stressful, it can also be embarrassing. I think there were certain cats who might not like it if Butch gave them the look and jumped in their case, but they kind of liked it in a perverse way, like he had acknowledged their individuality. You always have those that are like, "Oh, no. I'm, not going to be absorbed. I'm not going to submit," but it also brought a nice little tension to the music.

Thomas Stanley: Could you talk specifically about how Butch became so intimately involved with the Burnt Sugar process and history?

Lewis Barnes: Greg Tate. There were so many elements in the mid-90s

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Manhattan music scene and we all interacted with each other. We really cross-pollinated with each other all the time, especially through the auspices of Just Above Midtown, with Linda Goode Bryant. All of us at one time or another would come to Just Above Midtown, and there would be all kinds of combinations, and we, at the time, didn't think of it any other way. I'll say Greg was the commonality, the thread throughout all of us.

Butch recognized in Burnt Sugar some stuff that he could use to play. We were for the most part willing to experience that, to be a part of it, to want to do it. Butch, to me, was one of the premier jazz composers, that was his main contribution, his focus. In the case of Burnt Sugar, he utilized us to his ends as a composer, and we were willing.

Thomas Stanley: Would it be too much for me to assume that because Burnt Sugar was a community of mostly younger musicians in the generation coming up behind Butch that people were able to give that to him in a way that some of Butch's peers wouldn't.

Lewis Barnes: I'm not going to say that we were obedient because we were younger, but we were more accepting, more willing to be molded. Everybody, once they get older gets set in their ways.

Thomas Stanley: With Burnt Sugar, he famously did the Stravinsky restructuring, the Conduction® of the Rites of Spring (The Rites: Conductions Inspired by Stravinsky's Le Sacre Du Printemps, 2003, Trugroid/Avantgroid). Was that the starting point of his relationship with the band or had there already been performances?

Lewis Barnes: We had already been doing things with him. I remember doing shows with him at Frank's Lounge in Brooklyn. With the Stravinsky thing, we went into the studio, but we had played with him before

Thomas Stanley: What did you learn about music by being a part of a Conduction® ensemble?

Lewis Barnes: To give up your ego. It ain't about your solo. It ain't about playing the head and then you step out. There was never a head with Butch. It was never -- okay, your turn. It was all a collective experience. He was not just a straw stirring the drink. He was the improviser. He was the conceptual leader. Classical people are about recreating something that has already been done. Butch's concept was the antithesis of that.

One of the key reasons that Burnt Sugar continues to this day is because of Butch. Greg would tell you when he was doing it, he never used the strict Conduction® vocabulary the way Butch did. But that was never our intention because Butch was already doing it. But it's half of what we do, especially when we really get into our thing. Half of what we do is bringing that element.

Ilhan Ersahin: I don't remember exactly when we met; it was like mid-90s. I moved to East Village in 1989. I lived on Avenue C between 4th and 5th. He lived on 7th between B and C. I try to remember if we met there or if we met in

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Istanbul. I'm half Turkish, half Swedish, and in the 90s, I started going to Türkiye more, playing a lot in Istanbul. Some friends of mine there had a very successful music venue and also became the pioneers of bringing interesting music to Istanbul. They brought the Sun Ra Arkestra and ventured into more popular music as well.

Some of them hooked up the university for Butch. So, he moved to Istanbul. He lived there, I think, for two years and taught.

We became kind of best friends in Istanbul, and then when he was back in East Village, I used to hang out with Butch pretty much every single day. He asked me to play in his band. It was called Skyscraper. It was an amazing band, and I did a few performances with them. After September 11, everybody was really shocked; everybody started moving away from New York. What should I do? I decided to open my own club. When I got the space on Avenue C, Butch came pretty much every day as I renovated it, and he gave his opinion -- should we paint it orange or should we paint it silver.

Thomas Stanley: *Didn't he live right around the corner from there?*

Ilhan Ersahin: Yeah, not even two blocks away. I opened NuBlu; I think it was June 2002. Me and my friends started playing there, and they started bringing their friends. Suddenly, it was not just me playing there with my friends. A scene started by itself, and I curated it. Instead of having different bands every night, I started booking a regular band for each night of the week -

- not really a jazz scene, per se. Butch always patiently listened to all the sets and talked to musicians and criticized them but also encouraged them. My band started off more like a jazz experience and then slowly became more like a dance-jazzy thing. At that time, everybody started adding electronics, samplers, and computers.

Thomas Stanley: *Are you calling it NuBlu Orchestra at this point?*

Ilhan Ersahin: I'm coming to that. I think it was like 2003, 2004, and I had this idea that I asked Butch about: "Let's put an orchestra together where we take a few members from each night. We take a singer from Tuesday night, we take the percussionists from Wednesday night, we take a guitar player from the Thursday night band, and we can make it into a NuBlu Orchestra." I told him I wanted to separate it from what he was already doing. He was doing his Conduction® with world instruments and I wanted to make it into a different thing.

He loved the idea. We did every single Monday for a few years. We did a few shows at Joe's Pub, and then we went into the studio and recorded an album. It really came out amazing and different (NuBlu Orchestra Conducted by Butch Morris, 2006, NuBlu Records). We released it and got a lot of good reviews, and we got quite a few bookings in Europe. We went to Brazil. I've been releasing some of those concerts. If you have Spotify, you can find a lot of the shows digitally. Hopefully, one day, we're going to release all of them. The band was

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based on beats and electronics, at the same time, of course, it was Butch's Conduction®; we were just giving him bits of information. It's almost a dance big band. Especially if you hear that record, you can get that feeling.

Thomas Stanley: *It was a shocking experience to hear Butch get so funky.*

Ilhan Ersahin: I used to tell people that when Butch was rehearsing us, you could see him grooving with his body, with his expression. That's why I think he genuinely loved the NuBlu Orchestra. It really felt alive; it had a bubbly Bitches Brew vibe to it.

Thomas Stanley: *Are there things you learned about music by working with Butch? Conduction® is a very interesting way of making music happen.*

Ilhan Ersahin: It is very interesting. To be honest, it kind of changed us. We always used to play songs or it some kind of song form. But since those days with Butch, we just go up and kind of play in a way that you can't really call a jam session. It was more like a compositional jam. If you take away all his hand signs, you know, it was all about composing while the music is going on. That's why it was never just a jam where you play what you want.

Thomas Stanley: You're saying you guys do that, but don't use the hand signals?

Ilhan Ersahin: These days when we play, we don't use hand signals. After Butch passed away, we did a few NuBlu Orchestra works where different people in the band conducted, like Kenny Wollessen, Graham Haynes, and Brandon Ross. I'm seriously thinking about putting the band together again. We'll put the new orchestra together, then, for sure, we'll use Butch's whole concept.

Interview of Deidre Murray

by Ludwig vanTrikt

Cadence: I am laying out our conversation that we had via phone before I sent the first question. This allows me to mention to our readers some of what you conveyed to me. Let's get back to your saying that you no longer play the cello due to the death of your long time collaborator Fred Hopkins. Yet you remain actively working being a composer (primarily in theatre)..... please elaborate?

D.M. No I didn't stop playing because Fred died but it didn't help that such a visionary musician with unbelievable technique and concept ceased to be. The story of why I stopped playing is much more complicated.

As a child I wanted to be either an astronaut or write music for Tin Pan Alley so composing was always a desire of mine.

I played for many years but even in my twenties I had developed a few nagging injuries that were beginning to worry me. In the beginning I loved traveling and meeting other musicians but eventually I found it tiring and I had family responsibilities that were concerning. Fred Hopkins and I also spent a lot of time beginning to develop a catechism, a new vocabulary for improvisation for string players "in the music" that wasn't so horn centric we called it Stringdom, but his passing made that an unfinished project.

As a player I always believed that improvisation should include orchestrating and color in equal part to holding forth... soloing. I believed that strings speak to the unconscious mind and that was an area that hadn't been that explored so when I was offered some commissions to compose for the theatre, it intrigued me. One of the theatre pieces I composed was very well received by the public and critics ... so much so that I decided to see what would happen if I devoted a year strictly to composing. After that year I didn't miss playing so I decided to give it a go as strictly a composer and have never looked back.

In the final analysis I did my first paying gig at eleven years old, played for about forty years, discovered that it wasn't my instrument that made me a musician but the cello was a tool for being my essential self. A musician.

Cadence: Please give us some factual information about where and when you were born? Moreover how does a black child develop an interest in Tin Pan Alley to the degree that you wanted to work in that genre?

D.M. I was born in Brooklyn Jewish Hospital on Nov. 28, 1951. Several members of my family were nominally in show business. My aunt had a performance group called the Turnabouts that did children's theatre. My mother as a young woman danced in the chorus with the Nicholas Bros. My uncle's brother was Tony Williams the lead singer of The Platters. Many members of my family were performers. I was raised on their stories about showbiz my mother's favorite was Lena Horne whom she went to school with.

Interview: Deidre Murray

They encouraged us to love the Arts. I had a natural love of all things musical and could come up with ideas of how to express my self musically with words as well. So viola Tin Pan Alley . The problem was that I didn't see black girls or any girls doing that sort of thing in the 1950's . I was about 8 years old at the time.

Then I got the notion that I wanted to play the bass which was also considered way out at the time. Seeing that she had an artistic child on her hands my mother made a compromise with me" if you 'll be a good girl and get good grades how about the cello it's almost a bass". And so it was.

Cadence: Your foundations of music was I imagine based on the Classical tradition? But in the jazz idiom the language of the cello was in its infancy. How did you come to not only be versed in playing jazz but some of the post-bop and modal spiritual aspects of black music?

D.M. Actually I started improvising and studying classical music at the same time. When I brought my cello home for the first time my aunt happened to be visiting I was probably about 10 years old. She had a small children's theatre group and they were doing a gig in New Jersey. She asked me if I could do some improv to go along with their movements I said yes and the rest was history. We performed, I got paid \$15 dollars. I had already developed my own tuning system and began studying with teachers. My oldest brother was a Albert Ayler fan who played many ESP records. I was introduced to that music as well as doowop, Elvis, Woody Guthrie, Duke Ellington, Coltrane, Bach and Stravinsky, The Beatles etc so my ears were wide open. Modal music was the music in the air so it influenced me however my favorite players at the time were Eric Dolphy and Mingus who Julius Watkins (French horn) introduced me to. I knew Mingus played the cello and I wanted to study with him. Finally it was the 1960's so I was influenced by the Counter Culture, spirituality Alice Coltrane etc

Cadence: What age did you first start performing exclusively? I must mention that your Wikipedia musical bio is one of the most extensively researched documentation of any artist I have seen in terms of fleshing out your musical career, especially your evolution in theatre composing. So, while I asked about your performing, please add how you learned theatre and jazz composing?

D.M. When I was in bands as a teenager I always seemed to have a good idea for a song. My aunt used to talk to me about the theatre people she knew: Vinette Carroll, Josephine Premise, Ruby Dee etc. She took me to Greenwich Village where she was a part of the Black Arts Movement as a dancer and performer. Growing up in New York if you were artistically inclined there's no end to the art galleries, poetry readings museums to go to. So I saw a lot of plays, listened to hootenannies listened to Pablo Casals, flamenco you name it . It was a natural progression to try and write little tunes in the styles of what I heard. The obvious place to put all that music is in storytelling which in live performance led me to theatre. I was also influenced by hearing live a lot of great music ie. The Chicago. Art Ensemble, Leroy Jenkins, Cecil Taylor,

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McCoy Tyner etc and then there was Hannibal, Jeanne Lee, John Cage, The AACM, Steven Sondheim, Puccini, Carlyle Floyd and course Henry Threadgill. I did my first gig at eleven and by the time I was a teenager I was often performing.

In essence I learned by studying, hearing a lot of music, playing in bands meeting other musicians. Finally Kermit Moore a pioneering classical cellist was my cello teacher and mentor. He was married to Dorothy Rudd Moore who was an African American classical composer. So as a black girl I had role models even in the 1960's.

Cadence: It is interesting to note that two of the artists who you did extensive work with ("Hannibal" Marvin Peterson and Henry Threadgill) both have done theatre/performance composing. What separates your own composing is the broad range of thematic subjects that you wrote for. Please comment?

D.M. What separates me from them in that regard is theatre is not just about music it's about the story that the actors and playwrights are telling. I enjoy other art forms and collaboration. For instance, I love directors, playwrights, choreography, lighting, the actors as much as my contribution the music. I did Children Of The Fire with Hannibal and The Sunrise. Orchestra it included songs and poetry. I also did a piece in The Henry Threadgill Sextet about Thomas Cole (the painter) that was performed by a theatre company.

I believe that my experiences as a curator have influenced my thinking. In the 1980-1990's I worked a lot as a curator. I ran a festival called The Firewall Multi-arts Festival, The Hearings at Performance Space 122, ran a music program at The YMCA @ 52nd Street, worked @ The Jamaica Arts Center even had my own space called Jazz In Harlem. At PS 122 I saw performance art for the first time and realized I could do that. So all the experiences I had as a musician got added to not subtracted from. In other words my musical instrument is my mind, the cello was the vehicle that got added to.

Cadence: During the time that you were still playing the cello how did you compose and of course how do you compose now?

D.M. While I was still playing with Henry I got my first real commission from The Wooster Group it was an Oratorio called Unending Pain for 8 voices. At that point Fred and I already had several ensembles. I wrote the text: the music was an outgrowth of the ideas about improvisation for strings that Fred and I had been developing. After that I began to receive more financial support for projects. By the way Butch Morris was also a big influence on my thinking about systems of improvisation and new approaches to material. In the beginning my music was influenced by my knowledge as a improviser then a theatre company Music Theater Group commissioned me to work with Cornelius Eady and we wrote several pieces one called Running Man which basically changed my career. The way I make music is: someone has an idea about a story when they tell me I ask myself... if I can hear anything in my mind

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if I do then I collaborate with them. Sometimes I have I have an idea I want to pursue then I seek collaborators that's how it begins. For example I am in a workshop right now working on a R nB musical at the same time I am working on a new piece of dance for Dianne McIntyre two totally different styles of music.

I get up at about 7 am and work off and on until 8pm.

I write on the piano, talk with the director, the musical directors the writers, the copyists, sometimes the producers, that a typical day at the office.

Cadence: There are two aspects of Butch Morris' artistry that I feel are underappreciated by non-improvisers; his compositional ability in more traditional tunes and his new methods towards conducting. Please can you illuminate to lay people the contributions Butch made to the tradition?

D.M. First of all Butch was a wonderful cornet player. He had a generous spirit that was reflected in his system of Conduction. As I experienced it he had a vocabulary of hand signals that would shape a piece simultaneously creating/composing it while conducting it at the same time. Normally he had experienced improvisers in an ensemble who had strong musical identities and brought them in or out of the music as he conceived it. There was no written music. He tended to use large ensembles so he had a wide sonic canvas to paint on. He also wrote for television and film if I remember correctly. As for his more traditional music he worked with David Murray as his musical director for many years who could quote chapter and verse on that.

Stringdom

That's how Fred and I referred to what we were doing.

The theory behind it was "in the music" more often than not horns, vocalists, or keyboards lead in an ensemble. How melodies are shaped reflects this; so we started to explore the qualities that strings excel in.

Beauty, quietude, languor etc. and writing music that explored these qualities.

The first thing we did was practice the Bach Six Suites in unison so we could phrase as one. Then created fingering patterns that our instruments preferred. We also favored sharp keys instead of flat keys; used lydian ideas in improvisation instead of the figures developed out of traditional jazz. I used extra musical techniques and began to approach a piece of music by asking myself what story I wanted to tell instead of looking just at the changes and the melody. We began to use these techniques inside of Henry Threadgill Sextet and formed a duo that used these ideas. Working like this also got me writing more and informed my thinking in my own projects in the theatre in other words one thing led to the other.

Cadence: We have to convey both the musical and most importantly the personality of Fred Hopkins. Having met him several times in various groups which I booked at The Painted Bride Art Center (in Philadelphia); Fred conveyed such a deep down to earth warmth.....

Interview: Deidre Murray

Please talk about your first meeting and subsequent musical collaborations; if you could include and interesting stories about Fred.

D.M. Fred Hopkins was probably the greatest bassist of his generation. As a person he was funny, loyal, helpful and gallant and he was devoted "to the music" or as he would say The Great Bands. He was a master of tonality, harmony, pacing, thematic ideas more like a composer.

A friend of mine called him "the great lens" in other words giving structure and coherence to the wildest flights of imagination or improvisation in the music. As for stories about him there aren't many because we spent most of the time talking music or playing. He would talk a lot about his life in Chicago: The AACM coming to New York, Walter Dyett the great music teacher at Du Sable high school who mentored a generation of great jazz musicians and Joseph Guastafeste principal bassist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra who was his teacher.

I remember meeting Fred at AIR STUDIO at my first rehearsal with the Sextet but years later he said that we actually met before when AIR and Hannibal's Sunrise Orchestra played on the same bill. I'd like to talk about what playing with Fred was like.

Fred sounded like the sea the ocean. In the upper registers of the Bass you could hear seagulls, the wind

the sun shining. He had endless technique and imagination, lots of patience in creating a musical landscape. He was a master of color and tonality on his instrument he was also a great straight ahead player. Finally there was a beautiful poignancy and melancholy in his playing.

Fred and I used to rehearse at my house. One day my neighbors 16 yr old son came up to me and he said. "I don't know what you 'll be doing in there but I could stand here and listen to it forever. He was talking about Fred .

Cadence: Going back and forth to your career; you have been the cellist for some key figures in the music. Please if you will at length capture the personalities and music of: Larry Young, "Hannibal" Marvin Peterson, and Henry Threadgill. Kindly be lengthy.

D.M. I first met Larry Young when I sat in with him with his band at Slugs in NYC. Khalid was a sweet teddy bear of a man. He was kind and generous and searching. The band was wild; it was a Afro -Psychedelic Fusion band and included people like Pharoah Saunders, Jumma Santos, Charles McGee and others. He was a great innovator and visionary on the Hammond B3 organ who was experimenting with sheets of sound, timbre and trance energy. The organ was a plaything in his hands and he strove to reach the outer possibilities of what that instrument could do. He had TREMENDOUS chops. Once he came over to my house and asked my mother if I could go on the road with them...my mother read him the riot act, kind of winked and then said yes. All I remember Khalid saying to her was "yes mame...yes mame". That was Khalid, a kind, generous organ genius, dead too soon.

Interview: Deidre Murray

Cadence: That was great let's go on to the other artist. Also you mentioned that on Larry Young's recording "The Lawrence of Newark" (Perception Records) your name is Deidre Jones, this was Young's last recording also; I think.

D.M. I first met Hannibal Marvin Peterson on the subway going home late one night, he tried to chat me up. As a New Yorker back then(1970) I was still a teenager and raised never to talk to strangers so I kept it brief and kept on moving but just by chance I had just heard him play with The Gil Evans Orchestra in Westbeth the night before so I knew who he was. A few days later I happened to be carrying my cello in Harlem when I bumped into him again: he took one look at me and said "you look like you can play" and invited me to a rehearsal at his home.He and his wife had a tiny apt. on Riverside Dr. and when I went there it was crammed with musicians like Richard Davis, Billy Hart and all these string players: that was the beginning of his group "The Sunrise Orchestra". I had stumbled into a scene of great jazz musicians by fate and even though I had done some gigs with Larry Young, still played classical music and I had performed since I was a child I've always considered this to be the beginning of my career as a professional jazz musician.

By the time I met Hannibal he was already deep into composition. He talked jazz as the classical music of Africian-Americans. He also wrote poetry, worked with dancers and made multi-discipline work, he was even an essayist. Unlike many of the players influenced by Miles he played hot instead of cool. He could be a sheets of sound modalist (doing 20 minute solos with just the drums).He would sometimes play the blues a la Bobby Blue Bland. He played straight ahead, at times he sang.He could play especially tender ballads. He often had singers in his band like "the great Andy Bey". He composed large pieces for the symphony orchestra and chamber ensembles. Finally he was a charismatic performer and person; more like a old fashioned movie star than a jazz musician.Amen

Henry is an American original. Before playing in the Sextet I had essentially been playing modal influenced jazz. But through Henry I got introduced to an entirely different way of looking at improvisation. Rehearsals were long, the music was challenging and then you had to play on it.

It could be a Polka, Latin, Circus music, Chamber music, the Blues, R n B you name it with elements jumbled together into one coherent whole.He had many ensembles ie. The Society Situational Dance Band, The Wind-String Ensemble as well as The Sextet.Through the band I got introduced to The AACM whose musicians had their own aesthetic. It was more like a fraternity or a fellowship than a music organization .

As a saxophonist he had his own unique sound. his solos were searching, full of irony, history; one minute bellowing, the next plaintive, always taking the unexpected twist or turn or emotion.

Finally my favorite memory of those times was when we would go to Gaylord's

Interview: Deidre Murray

an Indian restaurant in the East Village after rehearsal and I would listen to him talk about "the music" and life. Henry Threadgill is simply one of our greatest American composers bar none.

Cadence: This is purely conjecture on my part but I would imagine that your tenure with Henry Threadgill is probably the most emotional of your sideman work with any artist. Please reply?

D.M. Actually it was not. I spent many more years playing with Hannibal the difference is that playing with Hannibal was that it was so long ago that all of the details are getting fuzzy.

Cadence: What are your memories of your co leading Stringology especially the various recordings: "Firestorm"(Victo 1992),the Black Saint session from 1994 actually named "Stringology" (#1201 43-2) and "Prophecy"(About Time Records AT-1009) please whatever you remember?

D.M. The music on those CD's was what we had been playing on our gigs . It reflects the ideas we were developing about making a language for improvising for the bass and cello. The duo music was more complicated and required greater technique. My biggest memory of it was how sore my hands were after the session.

Cadence: As we approach the end of this interview (just two more questions to go) and we talk about your recording legacy....

Now that you are no longer playing but focusing on being a composer largely in theater how is this aspect of your career being documented? For instance other artists who work in theatre and film and are improvisers record their endeavors ("Hannibal",Anthony Davis,Terrance Blanchard,). Please comment?

D.M. Running Man can be seen at the Lincoln Center Library by appointment in NYC. There is a cd of Broadway production of Porgy and Bess adapted by me and Susan Lori Parks but basically you have to see the productions. Currently I have done the score for a dance piece for Dianne McIntyre that will be touring nationwide. I believe it premieres at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in September and will travel for about a year.

Cadence: I sense from talking with you that artistically you are very satisfied with composing but is this less or more of a hand to mouth existence in contrast to being a side woman?

D.M. No I just live the typical life of some one who works in the theatre.And yes I am and have been quite happy for a long time.

Cadence: yes, but you never quit answered the question by comparison.

D.M. What I'm trying to say is the way you think about composing is totally different from being in a band.Basically you look forward to getting the opportunity to get productions up which can take years and like all of composers you have multiple projects going on at the same time in different stages of development. For instance the goal of being a player is to play in different ensembles that's more equivalent to being an actor than a writer. It isn't analogous. What is the same is that I'm still a musician.

Interview with John Yao, Trombonist

by Ludwig vanTrikt

Cadence: One of the unique facets of your career is all the large ensemble/big bands which you have worked with; due to the present economics in jazz one has to wonder if this is a dying aspect going forth for jazz artist? Please comment and mention some of those experiences.

J.Y.: Great question! I've thought a lot about your question and my response is below:

There's no question that the economics are not in favor of large ensembles/big bands continuing to exist, but yet somehow they are still highly present. Most players were part of a big band at one point in their musical education, so there's a strong familiarity there for all performers. But the thing I keep coming back to is the fact that the musical experience of playing in a big band cannot be replicated. There's no substitute for being a cog in the machine that is a big band. It's a unique and very satisfying experience and I think that's what keeps bringing people back. Plus, the element of meeting new players and networking is an underestimated factor. Another factor for the big band's continued existence is the growing number of composers/arrangers who are writing new, fresh music for performers to play. These composers are a major driving factor behind the big band's survival and there's always new composers popping up everywhere. For me, it's nice to know there are big band composers like me who work really hard to organize, compose/arrange and most likely fund a big band. It makes me realize that I'm not the only crazy person!

Cadence: You obviously still believe in the viability of the cd format. Please comment?

J.Y.: I do still believe in the value of a physical CD, but it's getting harder and harder to justify printing large numbers of CD's. Right now, it seems that there's a certain group of listeners such as writers/press, collectors or older fans that still want to have a CD, but the majority of listeners are using streaming services. I've tried to give CD's to students and they don't have a way to listen to it, which is so weird to me. There's definitely still something nice about having a physical CD with artwork and all the details about the performers, recording engineer, etc. . . . I'm of the generation who came up with CD's, which is funny to think about, so I still see the value there.

Cadence: The other aspect of your remarks is that there seems to be very little if any money to be made from non streaming sources? Do you bother to sell disc at your concerts?

J.Y.: Yes, it's true that the streaming services have made making money on albums nearly impossible. It's really unfortunate that the business model has the musicians at the bottom of the totem pole, but that's how it is currently. I make albums for myself, the musicians in my bands and for those who enjoy my music, not to get rich. A rare few get rich playing jazz and so I have to take a different approach. The process of creating, composing, rehearsing, recording

Interview: John Yao

and producing albums is what gives me satisfaction and if I make some \$\$ along the way, then great, but it's an investment in my career and a chance to document my work and make a musical statement. Yes, I sell CD's at concerts and it's really nice to see that people are still interested and appreciate having a physical CD to enjoy at home.

Cadence: You confirmed that having a career being a jazz artist based on the usual modes of recording (now even add streaming) and touring for most players is very difficult. So many musicians like yourself have to teach. How does an upcoming jazz artist create a curriculum that would appeal to a teaching school?

J.Y.: Most schools have a curriculum in place already and are looking for you to fit into their structure, which is pretty similar from school to school. Being a product of music school has helped inform me of what a good curriculum looks like. I feel like my undergraduate degree from Indiana University paved the way for me and has allowed me to get to where I am now. I think the way jazz artists appeal to schools is by letting their work speak for itself. By demonstrating one's experience as a performer, composer/arranger and educator, educational institutions will often take notice and good things can happen. Don't get me wrong, it doesn't happen overnight. You have to be patient and keep producing content, but usually this will pay off over the long haul.

Cadence: One of the issues that black jazz fans like myself have with many of the artist who come from the formal university/college setting is the lack of any acknowledgement of jazz come from the lives and social dynamics of African American people. Both in the instructions of the curriculum and the lack of employment for black jazz artist especially for large ensembles.

What is your view of this?

J.Y.: I understand your point, but I'd respectfully counter with the fact that probably 95% of the jazz musicians today, including black musicians too, are a product of a university or college setting. The level of musicianship sort of requires it because the base level of skill has evolved to a very high level. You're right, that there's not much acknowledgment of how jazz came from the lives and social dynamics of African American people and that should be improved. Jazz scenes are very much based on circles of who you know, most often starting with people you met at school, which has an effect on who gets called for whatever gig, including large ensembles. And in my experience, as a student and now as a college professor, often black jazz musicians are in the minority when compared to the rest of a jazz department. So when all these things are added up, they contribute to a lack of employment for black jazz artists in large ensembles. All that being said, there are many excellent black jazz artists in large ensembles and I've been fortunate to work with them as a bandleader and as a performer.

Cadence: Before we focus more on your musical legacy insofar as your performances and recordings; please delve into what exactly do you teach being an Assistance Professor of Trombone @ Molloy University? Hope the question isn't too broad?

Interview: John Yao

J.Y.: Before I include my response, can you update the question to include: Professor of Trombone at Berklee College of Music and Adjunct Music Faculty at Molloy. Thank you!

At Berklee, I teach Private Trombone lessons which focusing Brass fundamentals and jazz repertoire, style and improvisation and a class called Art of Section playing too. That class works on improving the skills of playing in a section, big band repertoire and jazz style. At Molloy, I teach a History of Jazz course online and Jazz Ensemble. Covid has had a dramatic effect on the jazz ensemble enrollment (and many other courses), which has forced me to be creative with the repertoire and class goals, which is a good thing. In the past two semesters, I've had the students write all original compositions and arrangements which we performed at the end of the semester. It's been challenging, but extremely rewarding to see their progress not only as performers, but composers and arrangers too.

Cadence: During the course of this interview, you were arranging and re-arranging the music of Charlie "Bird" Parker for a live NYC club performance. Let's gain some insights into your creative process in regards to what musical decisions do you make in putting the music of one of jazz' greatest improvisers into a big band context. Remaining true to his style while showing your creativity as an arranger.

J.Y.: It was an honor to get the chance to work on Bird's music and this was a fun project to work on. The challenge was to keep the original integrity of his music and to resist my urge to go overboard and stay simple instead. My primary goal was to make sure the arrangements still sounded like the original songs. Whenever possible, I tried to recycle or repurpose existing melodic and/or harmonic material. For example, on my arrangement of "Yardbird Suite", I created a simple short section with new harmony and a different groove and then incorporated several melodic fragments to go with it. The idea was to take the listener to a new harmonic zone and rhythmic feel, while hinting at the melody in a subtle way. I wanted the listener to think, "that sounds familiar," when this section pops up and maybe they recognize it clearly or subconsciously it feels familiar to them.

Cadence: In his book "THE FREEDOM PRINCIPLE - JAZZ AFTER 1958" (Published 1984 - QUILL BOOKS) writer John Litweiler mentions that a number of so-called Avant Garde trombonist (he mentions Albert Mangelsdorff, Conrad Bauer, George Lewis, Paul Rutherford, and Gunter Christmann) have pushed the instrument to the point where "there is no further avant-garde extreme for wind instrumentalist". What is your view on that series of remarks?

J.Y.: That's a pretty strong remark. I'd tend to disagree with that statement. How did Mangelsdorff the others you mentioned come to create the sounds they came up with? They pushed the envelope and the limits of the instrument into uncharted territory. Someday, another instrumentalist will come along and continue the tradition and find new extremes. In fact, there are a ton of great musicians who are building on the work of Mangelsdorff and others today.

Interview: John Yao

One that pops to mind is a great trombonist named Joe Fiedler, based here in New York City. Another is the tenor saxophonist on "Off-Kilter", Jon Irabagon. Both incorporate avant-garde extreme techniques into their playing and do it in their own special way. Jazz musicians are always looking for new sounds and exploring whether it's as an instrumentalist or a composer.

Cadence: *First and foremost, I hope that you're feeling better. The Charlie Parker gig involved a lot of time and effort; so I hope that this wasn't just a one-off gig?*

J.Y.: Unfortunately, the Parker gig was a one-off. I'm hoping that we can do it again next year and make it an annual event, but we'll see.

Cadence: *What is your practice regiment at this stage in your career? Of the brass instruments is the trombone as unforgiving as the trumpet?*

J.T.: Yes, the trombone is just as unforgiving as the trumpet. All of the brass instruments require daily maintenance and a routine in order to be in top shape for whatever style of gig you may or may not have coming up. It's all about finding the flow for the day and covering topics like tone, flexibility, range, articulation and then scales and arpeggios, just to name a few. As someone who spends a lot of time composing and arranging music for large ensembles, it's an extra challenge because there's only so much time in the day. So it's a daily struggle to choose whether the trombone or my writing projects are the priority. Somehow I manage to keep my chops together, but there's always room for improvement.

Cadence: *Correct me if I am wrong but you musically hustled for over 15 years in New York City before becoming more economically stable by a combination of teaching and performing.*

Cadence: *During all those years you must have accumulated a wealth of stories both musical and non musical?*

J.Y.: Just so I know, what kind of stories are you looking for? Anything in particular?

Cadence: *I like for my interviews to be more than a collection of facts; to add some color (if you will). Please convey the emotions that you felt transitioning from being a student to your first paid gig. Man, just the daily grind of hustling.*

J.Y.: Oh, I have a perfect illustration that involves the trombonist George Lewis when he performed briefly with Count Basie. Another musician told me that Basie had tolerated and actually encouraged Lewis. But at a concert where Lewis was given a solo spotlight; Lewis put the trombone to his lips and mimed a solo but didn't play anything.

George Lewis perhaps thought that this was performance art; Basie viewed it differently. Of course, Lewis was fired.....lol.

Something along those lines although that is a tough story to match.

Going from student to making money playing professionally was a big moment for me. My first gig was going on tour with the Glenn Miller Orchestra playing 2nd Trombone. I played with the band for about a year and half. I remember because we did a quick rehearsal and I was struggling with keeping

Interview: John Yao

up on reading all the music. It was a rude awakening for sure, but I was lucky they were patient with me and I worked my butt off to get my act together. One of the funnier moments was when I accidentally came in early and I really went for it. I had finally got enough confidence to play with some authority and conviction but I was way off. "Wrong and strong" as they say. During the same song and not long after that, the band leader came over to me as the band was playing and jokingly said, "Next time you want a solo, stand up." He didn't say it in a mean way and was just teasing me in the moment. We both laughed and I remember feeling at ease that he didn't rip me and was cool enough to let that slip up go by like no big deal. Now as a bandleader myself, I see the value in how he handled that moment.

Cadence: This interview highlights some recent and not so recent developments in the jazz world. We do this interview when live performances are slowly getting back to normalcy and you have commented on changes in Jazz in relationship to the value of recording. Thus, while this interview is happening I do see on the website a number of gigs you have lined up? What are your thoughts on the future of both domestic and overseas opportunity for the various groups you work with?

J.Y.: I've been lucky to book performances for several of my band's, including John Yao's Triceratops and John Yao and His 17-piece Instrument. But I don't know exactly what the future holds for opportunities for my various groups. I'd love to bring one of my groups to play overseas and have a few things in the works, but nothing is set in stone yet. I do know that jazz tends to be much more appreciated outside of the U.S. and I really look forward to experiencing that sometime soon. Places like Europe and Japan view jazz in a much different light and tend to show it a lot more respect than you sometimes get here in the U.S. Gigs and opportunities like touring domestically and overseas aren't yet back to where they were before Covid happened, but I think we're getting closer. Unfortunately, Covid wiped out a lot of venues and changed the landscape dramatically. So it's up to the musicians to find a way to adapt and make it work somehow.

Cadence: One of the questions I have an interest in as a layman is the inherent trust each of the members of Triceratops must have for each other; was there ever a time when you were dissatisfied with someone's solo? Or vice versa....

J.Y.: I can't recall a time when I wasn't happy with someone else's solo. There's times when it's clear one solo is stronger than the other, but never unhappy with someone else's solo. I have 100% trust in the band members to play their best and never doubt them for a second. With my own solos? I'm constantly unhappy with solos. But over time, I've come to realize that my first impression of my own solo(s) is usually way worse than I initially thought. And when I go back and listen, I usually realize that it's not as bad as I remember in the moment or right after it's done. Like most musicians, I'm way harder on myself than anybody else.

An Interview with Oscar Treadwell

By Bill Donaldson

Cadence: Are you still working for WVXU?

Oscar Treadwell: No, I'm not. I'm at the proverbial "between jobs." There are a couple of things that might happen soon, but it's very iffy. I have an agent in Philadelphia working on an NPR or PRI possibility. It would be nice. We'll have to wait and see, though. My program wouldn't be picked up right away as a commercial vehicle. Most people would see it as something you'd have to live with for a while, and then there's a possibility. But jazz isn't a commercial medium in the first place. The music that I was playing was a broad cross section of jazz. It went back to Louis Armstrong and the Creole group headed by the great Joe Oliver and then up to the moderns, who were playing, I thought, exciting music. I don't think there's ever been a change. It's a beautiful continuum that's been developing for ninety-odd years.

Cadence: Hugues Panassié had written that bebop shouldn't be called jazz. He thought that bebop threatened the livelihood of all the "real jazz musicians" who played swing.1

Treadwell: Sometimes writers, I think, have been at fault because they became so involved in their knowledge of a particular era of jazz that they wanted to make it jazz. I think that's wrong. I see it as a continuum, where freedom is the basic sign. The freedom to improvise over their own music or over an already-established piece of music has been the key for me. It's true for arrangers as well as for jazz musicians. Musicians will define jazz for us. I came out of the military in 1946 after the Second World War. That gives you an idea of how old I am. I'll be 71 on May 11. I remember coming out of the service. It was a shock to me because I hadn't been able to listen to what was happening in jazz, except through records that would come through on Armed Forces Radio and the V-Disks. When I got back, some of my friends said, "Why don't we go up to New York and see what's happening?" And that's where—shock of shocks—I got to see Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. So that would have been an era for me to lock onto. I wanted to do that. But that would have been foolish because as important as that era was, that was just part of this great continuum. Had I locked in on that era, I would have missed Ornette. I would have missed John Coltrane. I would have missed Steve Coleman. You take a chance, I think, on just limiting yourself the minute you say, "Well, this is what jazz is." That same visit to New York, by the way, took me over to hear Marian McPartland, who had just come over from England to work with her husband, Jimmy, at Eddie Condon's place. My interests have always been eclectic as far as jazz is concerned. Listening to many types of jazz is by far the most exciting way because you open yourself to every little nuance that might be developing in the music.

Cadence: Could I ask about your background? There seems to be little documentation of it.

Treadwell: That's no problem at all. Part of it, I guess, is my fault because there's a certain anonymity that my attitude almost demands. I haven't gone

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to all the great jazz society meetings. But I've been a very fortunate man too because I've known several of the great jazz musicians. I can give you my background. I was born on May 11, 1926, in Woodlynne, New Jersey², right across from Philadelphia. I went to grammar school there, and I went to high school at Collingswood High School, which is in an adjacent community. Then I left high school in the eleventh grade to go into the Air Force. I was about six foot two. I was only seventeen. Everybody was saying, "What are you doing, man? There's a war on." I enlisted in the Air Force in 1944, and then I came out in 1946. When I came out of the Air Force, that's when my interest in jazz really blossomed. I had met people in the service who were talking about musicians I had never heard of—like Pee Wee Russell. I would say, "Benny Goodman is the greatest clarinetist," and someone would say, "Oh, wait a minute, man. Have you heard of Pee Wee Russell?" This guy in the service was a neat guy because he would have an arrangement of a speaker and a turntable, and he had some of these old recordings. Little by little, I began to hear in Pee Wee Russell what I always loved about jazz—that unexpected flowering of some individuality that never existed before. He was a clarinetist who sounded like nobody! So that was another "shock of recognition," I guess—to quote Edmund Wilson.

Cadence: Did you play an instrument or listen to jazz in school?

Treadwell: Before I went into the service, my dad was interested in having me go to Wurlitzer, as every kid did at the time. I took clarinet lessons and guitar lessons. But I recognized probably too early the tremendous investment necessary to become a great musician. I mean, I played along with Benny and realized that I would never get to his level. It was the same thing with the great guitarists. So, little by little, I began to realize that I was going to be an appreciator. I was not a musician.

Cadence: Did you serve overseas during the war?

Treadwell: I was with the Sixth Air Force stationed in Panama. We ferried the VIPs from Buenos Aires to the Ascension Islands and over to Dakar and back. So I was in the war, but the Sixth Air Force was always in the perimeter that was west of Dakar and then into Central American and Latin America. I was in the war for two years, but I can't honestly say I was overseas. Well, I was overseas; I have that ribbon. But it was not connected to the war or where battles are concerned. My first job when I got out of the service in 1946 was with Household Finance Corporation.³ I'm giving you a lot of extraneous stuff now.

Cadence: Was that job in Philadelphia?

Treadwell: No, that was in Camden, New Jersey. I can remember some of the reasons I left. I worked there for only three months. I mean, that was a wild experience because I was going after people who owed seven dollars a month but hadn't been able to pay. I just realized that was not going to be my life. Being tall and I guess somewhat aggressive, I must have fit the company's description for the type of person who would do well in that job. But I wasn't happy in it. Then one day I was coming down the elevator, and someone said, "Do you know that my brother is auditioning at WEEU in Reading, Pennsylvania?" And I said, "Auditioning for what?" She said, "He's going to

be a radio announcer." All of a sudden, I thought to myself, "Wow, isn't that a great way to spend your life?" I called WEEU and asked if the audition was still open. They said, "Yes." So, I auditioned for them and came out number thirteen. They said, "Well, you really ought to go back and rejoin Household Finance."³ [Laughs] I probably forgot about that, but then two or three weeks later, the manager called and said, "This is what happened. The people who were in front of you have all taken jobs or have gone back to school. Would you still be interested?" I said, "Sure." So, I auditioned again. This time, I got the job. That was my first job in radio, and it was an interesting experience. I had to take over a program called Noon Time Tune Time. But my interests always were with artists like Sister Rosetta Tharpe, for instance, or Johnny Hodges, or Duke Ellington. When I started to play their records, there was a complete turnaround. The listening audience wondered what the hell was happening with this station, WEEU. They never played that kind of music before. Little by little, they began to realize, "Hey, this is not bad." So I developed a sort of loyal audience on the Noon Time Tune Time program. Basically, my job was to do station breaks. It was an ABC affiliate. I worked at the station, by the way, as on-the-job training. When you came out of the service in those days, they gave you a couple of possibilities. You could go with the 52/20 Club, which was twenty dollars a week that they would give you to get you started in some type of business or job. Or they would pay half of your fee up to fifty dollars so that a company could hire you. The company would pay you twenty-five, and the government would pay you twenty-five. For the first year, I was, I guess, a trainee. When that money ran out, I got a call from WKDN in Camden, New Jersey, across the river from Philadelphia. They asked me if I would like to work there, and I said, "Boy, would I!" That meant I was going home. So, I had a program on WKDN. By that time, I had developed a pretty good following in the Philadelphia area, even though Reading is farther north. I was playing Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk, in addition to Johnny Hodges. I played as much great jazz as I could. I remember getting a call from Norman Granz in 1949. He was very active throughout the Eastern Seaboard. He would come to Reading mainly because a lot of jazz men performed in Reading. It was a well-known area. I guess I did get some "notoriety." Norman said, "Oscar, you better sit down." I said, "Okay." After I sat down, he said, "Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk and Curley Russell and Buddy Rich just finished a side called 'An Oscar for Treadwell.'" I said, "I can't believe this!" It was such a remarkable thing.

Cadence: Did you know any of those musicians before that?

Treadwell: No.

Cadence: So, they based the song on your program?

Treadwell: That's right. There were only a few people playing the broad cross section of jazz at that time. I think Symphony Sid [Torin] in New York was playing the modern jazz, and maybe some of the guys in Washington D.C. were. But everybody else seemed to be hooked into the swing era, and they were having a hard time moving into the new music—a situation I could never understand. I played Thelonious Monk's "Misterioso" I don't know how many times. That was almost my signature until Bird recorded "An Oscar for

Treadwell.”

Cadence: *Did you play “An Oscar for Treadwell” as your theme song after that?*

Treadwell: Yes. Wardell Gray also did a piece called “Treadin’ With Treadwell.” It was reissued under the simple title of “Treadin’,” which made me unhappy, of course. [Laughs] That’s the way it goes. I’ve got the 78-RPM here, and I know it says “Treadin’ with Treadwell” on it. When it came out later as “Treadin’,” I didn’t understand why the title had changed. Then I remembered that I had Charlie Ventura on my radio show once. We talked for an hour and a half mostly about Bob Shad, who owned Prestige Records. He would promise Charlie a lot of things, and then he wouldn’t come through. We got to be pretty critical about Shad on that show. He probably said “the hell with Treadwell” and renamed the song whenever it was released again. I wonder if Wardell even got paid for the songs he wrote. After that, whenever Shad released it, the song was just “Treadin’.” It’s an ungodly fact that record producers used to take advantage of the musicians. They often weren’t paid for their tunes. But without the producers, the musicians would never have been known. I used “Treadin’ with Treadwell” as a theme song too for a while until 1962. Around that time, I saw Monk at the Five Spot, and we were talking about jazz. I mentioned that he had been on that original record, “An Oscar for Treadwell.” He said, “It’s about time something happens here. Maybe you need a new theme song.” It wasn’t long before “Oska T” was released, and I’ve used that as my theme song ever since.

Cadence: *Leslie Gourse writes in a book about Thelonious Monk that he chose the “Oska T” name in England. She writes, “Monk presented a new composition, ‘Oska T,’ named for the way he heard someone in Britain say ‘Ask for T,’ meaning ‘T’ for ‘Thelonious.’”⁴*

Treadwell: When I saw Monk at the club in New York, I thanked him again for being on that original date with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. He said, “That goes back a long time.” I think I’m paraphrasing fairly closely what he said. He said, “We’ll have to do something about that.” It was shortly after that that the record “Oska T” came out. I made the assumption. I didn’t call him. I didn’t have any proof. I’ve been using it all these years. “Oska T” or Oscar Treadwell: It doesn’t really matter to me. I do think it should be straightened out somehow. This makes me think twice about whether I should continue using this as my theme song. It could easily be that they’re right and I’m wrong because mine is an assumption from the warmth and the attitude that Monk had when I thanked him. I think that information has been disseminated widely. I mean, everybody has used that information. If it’s incorrect, wow! I can’t argue the point because I’ve never heard her story. Many of those musicians do not know me, and as a result, it could be that they didn’t make the tie-in. I believe that Monk did, or else I wouldn’t have made that commitment to use that theme song. The only thing I would say is that she may be repeating what someone said. Nothing that I’ve read has indicated that “Oska T” is anything but what I started with. It doesn’t make me upset to know that, but it makes me upset to know that someone would make that kind of judgment and not know for sure. Maybe I could call her to verify it.* I’ve read things that she has written, and I was always impressed with what she wrote. So, I guess she’s

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going to teach me something here. Now I wish I had called Monk back after my conversation with him. There was nothing in the liner notes about the origin of the song. I'm in kind of a quandary now about this subject. You know, when Wardell Gray did "Treadin' with Treadwell," there was a phone call to me from Wardell Gray. Bob Shad backed him up on the fact that the song was named after me. And when "An Oscar for Treadwell" was released, Norman Granz called to tell me what happened. But when "Oska T" came out, I had made an assumption about how Monk named the song. Something else happened in the interim. When Chico Hamilton recorded a piece called "Blues for O.T.," the record pusher came into the radio station—I was at WNOP at the time—and said, "Oscar, I got some great news for you. Chico Hamilton just recorded 'Blues for O.T.'" Well, my immediate reaction was the same as it was before: "Wow, that is fantastic!" I made that mention on the air and played the record, but it never became a part of my theme song as the others did. A year or two later, I had a chance to talk to Chico Hamilton when he was getting ready to perform in Dayton, Ohio. I thanked him for "Blues for O.T." He said, "Well, I'm glad you like it, Oscar, and you're certainly welcome to use it. But I have to tell you that I recorded that one for my brother-in-law." [Laughs] So that took care of that. When that happened, I thought to myself, "I really ought to call Monk." So I called Monk's home. Someone answered and said, "Mr. Monk is extremely ill and unable to talk at this time." I never renewed that inquiry. I was going to thank Monk first and ask him about the song. It concerns me a little bit that after all these years, I've been assuming that this was the case. I hope that when I talk to Leslie Gourse, she'll tell me that "these guys are assuming that too." In any case, I've been very fortunate to have these musicians listen to my program. It was a good feeling to have that happen. In those days, I think [writing theme songs] happened more than it does today. I don't know why it doesn't happen so much, to tell you the truth. But in those days, "Robbin's Nest" was a pretty well-known piece. Freddie Robbins, although he wasn't playing jazz, played above-average music. And there was Sid. I guess there were others too. At that time, in the 1940's, there was a very strong relationship between the players and the people who played their music. And that's why those recordings [in tribute to radio announcers] were made. It's also why DownBeat magazine in 1947 sent me one of their publications that had their "jumping jocks" in them. I was one of their "jumping jocks" at that time. That was a great boost to my listeners because DownBeat had a very big audience then. That was a big help. On the East Coast, there was almost a stark absence of hearing some of the great young players. It was hard to hear Charlie Parker. We don't recognize that now, but in '46, Bird was not being played on the air on a regular basis. Neither was Dizzy, as a matter of fact, even though he had a great band. Sometimes we look back on that period, and we say, "Oh, let me tell you, the forties was when bebop was really king." Well, it was "king" with a very small group of people.

Cadence: The musicians struck at that time.

Treadwell: That's right. There were two years when it was really tough because some of the early things that Bird had done with Earl Hines were not available. And what a beautiful band that was! It was almost devastating even to the

independent labels too. The independents were the only ones that were able to survive because they just ignored the union. They went ahead in their own way, and they gave work to a great many musicians—Savoy, Prestige, and some of those small companies. The big companies—RCA, Columbia and Decca—in those days were The Big Three. Then along came Capitol a little bit later. But during that strike, it was terrible. It might have been the beginning of singers coming out front and getting more attention than the instrumental music. Some day in the future, that will be thoroughly studied, and we might find that it had a greater impact than we ever thought. Some of the best work [studying the musicians' strike] has been done by the Smithsonian Institute. People don't get these ideas because they're miserable. They get these ideas because they want to help somebody. Like, here in Cincinnati, we had two musicians' unions—a Black union and a White union. So, there were strong efforts to make the White union take in the Black players, which seemed on the surface to be the right thing. The problem was, the Black union allowed its players to play for somewhat less money, and in doing so, they got a lot of gigs. The minute they were forced into the White union, they had to charge the higher prices. So, the owners would take a chance somewhat less often than they used to. As a result, the Black players lost out in that whole situation. So, sometimes you think you're doing something really good, and in the end, you're hurting the very people you think you're going to help. It happened in other parts of the country too. My experience with WKDN—although it was only a minor station with only a thousand watts but in a good position on the dial—led me to get an offer from WDAS in Philadelphia. And that's where I spent the next four years.

Cadence: When did you go to WDAS?

Treadwell: In 1950.

Cadence: Did WDAS have a stronger signal?

Treadwell: Well, you know what? Believe it or not, their signal wasn't much stronger, but they did have a ready audience listening to a better music. KDN was still a country station in a sense—not playing country music, but it was still one of those stations out in the country. So WDAS did give me a larger audience and welcomed me into the place. I can remember the Philadelphia Daily News having a series of lines that were purchased by WDAS, and they said that "Oscar Treadwell has switched to WDAS." The reason that was interesting was that I think one of the tobacco companies was using big names. "So-and-so has switched to Marlboro or Chesterfield." I forget where that theme came from, but [the WDAS announcement] was a play on those words. So I went to DAS and spent three years there. I had a wonderful time, to tell you the truth.

Cadence: Did any musicians come into the station, or did you have any live broadcasts?

Treadwell: Oh, yes. That was another advantage of being in the East. Musicians would come to Philadelphia, of course, either on their way to Washington or on their way back up to New York City. We had quite a few jazz clubs in Philadelphia at the time. Yusef Lateef and Stan Getz or anybody who was working in the area would get on my program. We would sit down and talk about jazz, which I've done all these years since. Getting the ideas of how a musician feels about his current band or bands that he had prior to coming

to the studio on that particular day was always an excitement for the listener. They would say, “Oh, you mean he was doing that when this was happening?” Almost everybody showed up who was in town. They were on my program at one time or another in that city. It’s also where I used to emcee jazz concerts on Fridays and Saturdays.

Cadence: Where were they held?

Treadwell: In two places: O.V. Catto Hall on Broad Street and Reynolds Hall. That’s where I met J.J. Johnson. In fact, we hired Charlie Parker to come down and play when we did the concert. All we had was fifty dollars, but Bird said he would come down to play there for that amount. Who do you think the back-up band was? John Coltrane, Percy Heath and Philly Joe Jones! A young pianist named Hasaan [Ibn Ali] was an outstanding musician. A little bit later, a young kid from Wilmington came up: Clifford Brown, the most unforgettable trumpet player I ever heard! He came in and just did so many beautiful things week after week. He was a favorite in that area. We also had Miles come down, as well as Fats Navarro and Max Roach. So, anybody who was in New York knew the Philly scene was at least open to them. They could be pretty sure that their records would be played. By this time in the fifties, a lot of other radio stations were beginning to realize that this music couldn’t be ignored. Young men and women coming along were interested in playing jazz music on the air. Or at least it started to make some of the newscasts that so-and-so would be in town. When Yusef Lateef played Pep’s Bar—which was a small bar but a great bar—it got attention. Then there was a place called The Blue Angel too, where Ahmad Jamal came in and played. Brubeck played at a place called The Rendezvous. We had quite a few venues in Philadelphia where musicians could play. There was a young alto player named Ziggy Vines. I don’t know if you’ve heard of him or not. He was the “Philadelphia Bird” at the time. Every city in the country had this phenomenon develop between 1944 and 1954. Everybody like Jimmy Heath was “the young Bird.” Vines was a White kid, and his brother, by the way, was a network announcer named Lee Vines. The guy was a phenomenal player! In fact, you can hear him on a recording that Brownie made for Columbia. It was his last recording before he and Richie Powell took that trip to Chicago. If you want to hear a little of his alto, you can hear Ziggy on that album. Tell me sometime what you think of him.

Cadence: Did you know Johnny Splawn?

Treadwell: Yes! I can’t say I knew him as a person; I knew him as a player. What I liked about his playing was that John [Coltrane] liked him. I think that I was very impressionable in those days, and if the musicians had a preference, I’d know what that preference was. Of course, John played a lot of rhythm and blues when he came up. He was really an able and remarkable individual who had such tremendous drive that you knew nothing was going to stop him. Believe it or not, in those days I knew nothing about his drug addiction. I didn’t learn any of that until I read books indicating that he had it. I never recognized that in him. All I recognized was that he was a gentleman and a remarkable player who was rivaling, of course, Sonny Rollins for the position of being one of the major saxophone players after Ben Webster, Lester Young, Dexter Gordon, Illinois Jacquet, and the older players. It was a remarkable

period to be alive, when I was listening to the live jazz. It really wasn't a bad place. It was next to New York in my estimation because there were so many clubs available. I left Philadelphia in 1955. I was out of that business [radio announcing] for about five years after that. My family was beginning to grow. My wife and I had three children all of a sudden. The radio business was the most unpredictable as far as dollars were concerned. If I got a good commercial or two, that would be great. I always did commercials on the side. I was never able to get the power to be a New York announcer or to read those heavy commercials. But I did have one or two. The important thing was that my family needed funds. I joined Standard Pressed Steel Company.³ It's a company out of Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. I stayed with that company for about seven years, developing from a regular salesman to district manager and then to regional manager. That's when they sent me to Cincinnati, where I met so many people in the Midwest. I got into the jazz community and got my first radio station job here on weekends. I started with WZIP in 1960. My parents stayed on the East Coast, but my wife and our family, of course, moved here. All my kids were raised here, even though they were born in Philadelphia. I've always missed Philly, to tell you the truth. Every once in a while, when my Mom and Dad were still alive, we would go back to Philadelphia maybe two or three times a year. They lived in Haddon Heights, New Jersey, which is just south of Woodlynne, where I was born. I tried to get in some time to see old friends like Bob Klein, who was the owner of WDAS at the time. Usually, time constraints would make it impossible, or he wouldn't be available. We did try to renew those old acquaintances, but the club scene had changed radically by the time I got back to Philly in the sixties. But things were going very well here in Cincinnati. They hired me at WZIP, and I did a program for them on the weekends. Then WNOP called me and said, "You really belong over here with us, Oscar." They were playing all jazz, and it was a pleasure for me to join WNOP, which is in Newport, Kentucky. That was one of the best things that ever happened to me. I joined them in 1962 and stayed with them until 1973. That was a wonderful experience because I was playing all types of jazz, but basically mainstream. It was my ability there to convince them that we should stretch out. I did two programs. One was called Jazz Poetry that was all jazz. I introduced Ferlinghetti or Gregory Corso to many of the people who hadn't heard of them before. I started to play a great deal of Coltrane and Ornette Coleman—the experiments of the time. That fell on some deaf ears, but it still does. That's only because we get into a rut of expecting the musician to play what we know. You can't do that. You can't go very far if you expect a guy to play what you already know—which is one of the big pitfalls of so-called smooth jazz. You know it's going to be a three-chord thing for five or ten minutes, and that's going to be it. Nothing's going to happen. My audience started to grow, but the station was afraid that maybe they were moving too far. We were at this critical point where people were saying, "Well, I like this program, but he's playing that God-awful music! Who are these people he's playing? I've never heard of most of them." I was playing a lot of the West Coast musicians, who were not getting any time at all. I don't know why they weren't because here was a lot of great music going on in this world. I just told

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WNOP that I wasn't going to change my style. I was still going to play Coltrane and Ornette Coleman. After all, if people like John Lewis or Ornette Coleman were playing something worthwhile, we have to listen because of their stature. Well, the station's management disagreed. We parted company in 1973 for a month or two. WGUC, a classical music station in Cincinnati, asked if I would come on to their radio station. I said "Well, what time? Do you know what I'm playing?" They said, "Yes, but we're kind of interested in stretching out." So, they gave me a program from midnight until two. Believe it or not, for 23 years that's where I stayed. From '73 to '96. It was a beautiful experience, and I love that station. I was able to do a lot of profiles that I felt were important. If the listeners were listening with just a passing interest, they weren't going to know why these people were important. I mean, why was Herbie Nichols important? I felt that two hours presented his music and presented him in such a way that he was a major factor. He deserved to have that attention. I did a series of profiles—maybe 150 of them.

Cadence: Were they recorded?

Treadwell: Yes, they're all on tape. Now, don't forget that WGUC is owned by the University of Cincinnati. So I asked station management if they had any objection if I donated these tapes to the Hamilton County Public Library because the library expressed an interest in getting them. The station's management said, "We wouldn't be at all unhappy. In fact, we would consider it an honor for them to do that." Those profiles have gone to the Hamilton County Public Library. If anybody now wanted to find out who these obscure players are—Herbie was certainly one of them, as well as Joe Oliver and some of the great players down through the years whose names are not on the tip of your tongue—I did profiles on them. I wanted to let people know that this is what their music sounded like. This is how they fit in the tradition. In other words, how did Jimmy Hamilton come to join Duke Ellington? Because Barney Bigard was out for a couple of weeks. Duke had a chance to hear Jimmy Hamilton, and he loved his playing. And when Barney did leave, Jimmy Hamilton became one of the great clarinetists in Duke's band. There is so much beauty in jazz and so much excitement in the lives of these people. It just passes through, it seems, without any notice in the newspapers until the musician dies. This is what some of the young listeners should know about. I mean, everybody says, "Hey, jazz is dead, man. The kids don't even like to hear it." You know what? They haven't even heard it. If we feed them a lot of stuff that people call jazz and it's not jazz, that's nobody's fault but the people who are in jazz. We're not getting our story across. You're not going to make a whole lot of money either way. If you go into smooth jazz, you won't make a lot of money. So, why not do it right in the first place? Bring the important music to the people.

Cadence: I understand that you influenced Fred Hersch.

Treadwell: In a sense, although Fred would have made it without me, I can tell you that.

Cadence: He provided a tribute to you in his album called *The Fred Hersch Trio Plays*. He printed your poem in the liner notes.† He writes in the liner notes that he used to listen to your *Eclectic Stop Sign* show and that he used to listen

to your oral histories of jazz musicians. He mentioned that your programs helped him decide to go into jazz.

Treadwell: See, Fred probably would have gone into classical music. He had that kind of tremendous technique, and he could have done so. But there was something about Fred's excitement for playing jazz that he couldn't deny. Little by little, he was playing in more and more of the clubs in Cincinnati. And more and more of the musicians were accepting him. I remember that he was a student of mine when I did a program at the University of Cincinnati. It was just an evening program where I would go in and talk about jazz and some poetry. I played some of the records that I thought were great and that I wasn't getting a chance to put on the air. Some of the students hadn't heard my program. Yes, Fred was a very attentive young man. He asked me to write his liner notes. When I sat down to write them, I couldn't think of anything in prose. All of a sudden, this poem came to me. I sent it to him. I'm sure they were shocked. They must have thought, "These are not liner notes, man!" But I said, "This is a poem that moved me. I had to write it when I thought about Fred and this beautiful album he had done." Fred has done so many beautiful albums. Fred deserves the attention. His recordings, all by themselves, should have brought him the attention he deserves. He is a remarkable young man. It was my luck to have a number of young players in their formative years. They listened to my program. I also taught at Thomas More University. I did several programs there too. The result was interesting because young kids are just like sponges. I could tell in their eyes that something exciting was happening! They knew all about the Beatles. They knew the Stones. I'd play Robert Johnson for them or some of the great old timers, and all of a sudden you could see smiles across their faces. Jazz is such a powerful music that, if our kids don't know about it, they won't know what to tell their kids to listen to. And to me, that's one of the most exciting things about communications that I'm involved with.

Cadence: Do you teach now?

Treadwell: No, I don't. At my age, I'm almost ready to retire. But I have an agent in Philly who has high hopes that I could do a combination of jazz and conversation on NPR—just to talk about jazz to some of my friends and to people who call in by long distance. For instance, we had Charles McPherson on my show for about an hour and a half, and he was great! So was Jack Walrath. Jazz people love to talk about this music. Their love is automatically transferred through the air. It was almost like watching Tiger Woods. I get this tremendous excitement knowing there are kids all over the country—well, probably all over the world—watching what true dedication can do. That's what jazz takes. There's no time to be sad. There's no time to be wishy-washy about your love. If you have a love, get it out there so people can know what it's all about and what you're thinking about. You got me onto my favorite subject.

Cadence: Have you helped any other local musicians besides Fred Hersch?

Treadwell: Yes. Well, there were several musicians. There was young fellow, a bass player, who has a new album out: Chris Dahlsen. Tim Ries plays saxophone on the album. And there is another young man I've helped: one from Indianapolis named Kene Washington. He changed the spelling of his first

Interview: Oscar Treadwell

name because of the great drummer in New York. Bill Watrous came in to town. I used to emcee some of the high school jazz programs. Bill Watrous brought his band in—Woody Herman did too—to a little high school in the Cincinnati area. The kids there were unbelievable. I still hear from them today. They say, “Hey, Oscar, we’re going to have another concert.” They’ve been out of school, but they’re still in bands. There have been teachers all over this area—and I’m sure there are in every major city—who will go down unremembered, tragically. They should not be forgotten because these men and women are the reason that jazz has survived as it has, even though it’s not a popular music anymore. It’s so important for us to find a way to keep it alive. The current poet laureate, Robert Pinsky, was on one of the NPR programs recently, and they asked him where poetry is right now. He said, “Poetry is one of the great art forms, of course. But it’s like all the great art forms, like jazz. Just think: Dexter Gordon and Lester Young will be remembered and played a thousand years from now. But what’s our job? Our job is to nurture that interest.” I thought that was kind of neat for a poet to bring in jazz as part of a whole art world’s need. Jazz is usually excluded. The poems I read in class usually were by outstanding poets: Lawrence Ferlinghetti, of course, and David Lehman, and some of the youngsters. I also read works by the earlier poets too—even Shakespeare! If the pieces I was playing led to a poem that reflected the message, I would read it. Every poet that I’ve met and who has come into my station to talk about jazz has been well informed. One of them, Hayden Carruth, brings a tremendous knowledge of jazz. He was a clarinet player, and he had sat in with Ben Webster and all the great old timers. So, he has memories that fortunately he has put into several books of poetry. If you ever get a chance, get some of Hayden Carruth’s books. You’ll get the joy of your life because he loves jazz the way we love it. You just get that feeling that a kindred spirit is involved in what you’re reading. I love talking about jazz. We all want to keep people interested in jazz and to discover the lifelong joy that I have.

May, 1997

Oscar Treadwell (Arthur Pedersen) died on April 1, 2006.

**After this interview was conducted, Oscar Treadwell contributed this additional information.*

“I just got a call from Leslie Gourse because I had called her earlier. She wanted me to know that her source for the information about ‘Oska T’ was Martin Williams. A more profound source, I guess, you couldn’t have. According to her information, Martin Williams wrote a short piece for DownBeat magazine. He stated that he had talked to Thelonious Monk and that Monk had told him that story. Of course, Thelonious Monk was known as “T” many times. Williams said that they would “Osk” for “T” [when Monk was in England]. I don’t get that whole story, but anyway that’s her reading of it. That’s why she put it in her book. She was glad to know what I had experienced. But it looks to me now as if this was an assumption on my part more than reality. That surprises even me, to tell you the truth. Had I been able to get hold of Monk—and that’s one of the tragedies, of course, because he was incommunicado toward the end of his

life—I would have straightened it out. But it’s best to know than to not know. So in this case, at least, we know. I think that Leslie Gourse is probably correct. I’m still going to use the theme and keep it going as it has been for about 25 years old now. My listeners probably expect that theme to continue, and, of course, I do too.”⁵

† “AN ACQUIRED TASTE...on listening to pianist Fred Hersch”

By Oscar Treadwell

(In the liner notes of Fred Hersch’s album, *The Fred Hersch Trio Plays*)

First notes go anywhere, everywhere,
 then dawn imperceptibly
 from there to THERE.
 Sound stream plethora of vague
 reminiscences of known strains that
 tantalize and jog the song back micelle.
 Nuances of a shared experience or
 a conversation of peers
 Key cognition of non-verbal
 communication
 and more giver and receiver in sync.
 No shout...bombast...pyrotechnics.
 Shards of Remember This?
 reticulate the muse maze, you understood.
 A nascent humanness
 sheltering love’s beauty
 midst the world’s cacophony of noise.
 A surreal realness
 embracing the unambiguous
 life force of Family
 and
 All God’s chillun are one.
 Beauty is an acquired taste,
 love is its vehicle.

O.T.

1 “It is amazing to note that many years after the birth of ‘bop,’ there still are critics who keep the public misinformed by calling it ‘jazz’ or ‘modern jazz.’” “When the older generation of jazzmen are gone, there will be no jazz.” Panassié, Hugues, *The Real Jazz*. New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, Inc., 1960.

2 Wikipedia.org lists Chicago, Illinois as Oscar Treadwell’s city of birth. “Oscar Treadwell.” Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Treadwell

3 “Treadwell’s first jobs were as an industrial manager and consultant.” “Oscar Treadwell.” Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Treadwell

4 Gourse, Leslie, *Straight, No Chaser: The Life and Genius of Thelonious Monk*. New York: Simon & Schuster MacMillan, 1997, p. 199.

5 “There are many different stories in circulation explaining this title [“Oska T”]. The most convincing is that Monk named it after Oscar Treadwell, the popular Cincinnati

Book Look

GOING BACK TO T-TOWN THE ERNIE FIELDS TERRITORY BIG BAND

BY CARMEN FIELDS, OU.PRESS.COM

This 225 page hardbound biography is the most revelatory biography I've read in years. The recent Sonny Rollins bio while quite excellent showed how it is almost impossible to not rehash elements previously written about but this work, due to the nature of its subject, is universally fresh. The Frank Driggs/Chuck Haddix history on Kansas City Jazz from a few years back adequately covered that era but to this writer's knowledge there has never been a tome detailing the Tulsa/ Oklahoma City contributions in that field. There's also One O'Clock Jump by Douglas Henry Daniels which detailed the Oklahoma City Blue Devils a much-heralded organization before it relocated to Kansas City and morphed into the famed Count Basie Orchestra. yet nothing definitive has been scripted about its Tulsa equivalent The Ernie Fields Orchestra. Penned by his daughter Carmen an award-winning journalist/author/broadcaster. this is more of a biography of the leader along with its performance history and personnel. Not being a professional musician she doesn't dissect the charts or styles as much as recounts the events that took place over the years mostly drawn from her father's recollections on a series of audio tapes. Over sixteen informative chapters she chronicles a life of ups and downs that mirror the celebration of music as a life force of the human spirit. From birth in the tiny town of Taft to college at Tuskegee then the formation of the original group. After that it was an uphill climb into the tumultuous time that comprised the music industry of that day. Perennially home ported out of Tulsa these were the times before festivals and big arenas so the band played where-ever they could draw a crowd like dance halls, theaters, amusement parks, skating rinks, military bases, barns and ballrooms. Compared to Count Basie or Duke Ellington, the recorded output of the Fields group is extremely sparse. The earliest known sessions were for the Vocalion company one of the first "race" chroniclers later to become the Okeh label. These date from August to September 1939 in New York. The next listed are for various tiny independent labels dating from 1946 and 1947 also in the Big Apple to three 1949 dates in Tulsa & Kansas City. From there we move into the fifties with two LA waxings and a singles session in Philly under the Jamie logo. Fields next affiliation was his longest lasting and most successful. As was the norm it was with another small, indy Rendezvous Records a Los Angeles outfit that produced his initial lp which was a big step up from the former platters which were all 78 rpms. That was entitled In The Mood which was a huge hit and gained the Fields Orchestra national recognition attaining a fourth position on the charts. This remake of a tune popularized by the Glen Miller band during the WWII years was recorded by the labels house band with Plas Johnson, Rene Hall, Ernie Freeman and a heavy backbeat aimed the burgeoning teen market from trapster Earl Palmer. This was followed-up the next years (1960-64) by numerous singles and several covers before the bands 4-song release on Capitol. The Rendezvous company had folded in 1963 and the big band days were pretty much over. These selections are covered in the aforementioned discography at the back of the book along with sections on Notes, Bibliography and helpful Index. Included in the Notes portion is a Roll Call of former band member, with a paragraph on yours truly, who subbed for three weeks before having to return to his hometown for a scheduled recording date. It was my sole big band experience and the thrill of a lifetime. There is a compact disc available of 16 Rendezvous tracks on the Collectables label which is currently unavailable. The son, Ernie Junior continues the family tradition with a music career on the west coast. Unequivocally Recommended.

Larry Hollis

New Issues

1) SONNY STITT

BOPPIN' IN BALTIMORE: LIVE AT THE LEFT BANK

JAZZ DETECTIVE DDJD-009

[DISK 1] BALTIMORE BLUES / STAR EYES / LOVER MAN (OH WHERE CAN YOU BE?) / THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME. [DISK 2] A DIFFERENT BLUES / STELLA BY STARLIGHT / DEUCES WILD / THE THEME. 1:24:53.

Stitt, as; Kenny Barron, p; Sam Jones, b; Louis Hayes, d. 11/11/1973, Baltimore, MD.

2) SHIRLEY SCOTT

QUEEN TALK: LIVE AT THE LEFT BANK

REEL TO REAL RTRCD009

[DISK 1] IMPRESSIONS / NEVER CAN SAY GOODBYE / LIKE SOMEONE IN LOVE / WITCHCRAFT. [DISK 2] BLUES BY FIVE / BY THE TIME I GET TO PHOENIX / SMILE / YOU DON'T MESS AROUND WITH JIM* / GIRL TALK* / BLUES*. 1:38:03.

Scott, org; George Coleman, ts; Bobby Durham, d; Ernie Andrews, vcl*. 8/20/1972, Baltimore, MD.

3) WALTER BISHOP, JR.

BISH AT THE BANK: LIVE IN BALTIMORE

REEL TO REAL RTRCD010

[DISK 1] MY SECRET LOVE / BLUES / DAYS OF WINE AND ROSES / QUIET NIGHTS. [DISK 2] IF I WERE A BELL / SO WHAT / WILLOW WEEP FOR ME / PFRANCING (NO BLUES). 1:39:47.

Bishop, Jr., p; Harold Vick, ts, ss, flt; Lou McIntosh, b; Dick Berk, d. 8/28/1966 & 2/26/1967, Baltimore, MD.

4) CHET BAKER

BLUE ROOM: THE 1979 VARA STUDIO SESSIONS IN HOLLAND

JAZZ DETECTIVE DDJD-008

[DISK 1] BEAUTIFUL BLACK EYES / OH, YOU CRAZY MOON / THE BEST THING FOR YOU / BLUE ROOM / DOWN. [DISK 2] BLUE GILLES / NARDIS / CANDY / LUSCIOUS LOU / MY IDEAL / OLD DEVIL MOON. 1:32:14.

Baker, tpt, vcl; Phil Markowitz, Frans Elsen, p; Jean-Louis Rassinfosse, Victor Kaihatu, b; Charles Rice, Eric Ineke, d. 4/10/1979 & 11/9/1979, Hilversum, The Netherlands.

Zev Feldman is a man on fire! How does he find the time? Does Feldman have time to do non-productive things like walking a dog, driving randomly through the countryside, or being struck with wonder at the infinite shapes of snowflakes before they melt on his finger? Those things, though without a productive result, may nonetheless bring joy. Obviously, Feldman's role as a jazz detective brings him joy too. Feldman's pursuit, dedication, and success in finding recorded gems internationally in multiple locations—somewhat like an archeologist as he sorts through treasured finds like historic audio tapes—are thoroughly impressive. He manages numerous projects that an entire entertainment conglomerate may strive to accomplish. Joy may be the stimulant for his motivation—along with the lack of a bureaucracy—that enables Feldman to accomplish his single-minded mission. So now, all of a sudden, four of Feldman's important discoveries, digitally restored from reel-to-reel tapes, have been released almost simultaneously. As always, Feldman doesn't merely

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release the previously unavailable raw recordings with the typical cardboard sleeves, unembellished by liner notes, photographs, or special artwork. No, Feldman's packages, attesting to his passionate appreciation of jazz musicians' artistry, present to listeners—many of whom are avidly appreciative too—posters, performance photos, participants' reminiscences, interviews...and more. Each package includes at least two CD's comprising an entire concert or including multiple recordings from a single event, such as Grant Green's French concert recordings [Resonance HCD-2033]. Feldman's remarkable productivity and comprehensive investigations make one wonder what tapes he's discovering at this moment. No doubt, in the future, he will be releasing even more until-now unknown important recordings that a local sound engineer was prescient enough to document. So prolific is Feldman that he has expanded his passion for jazz to encompass, in addition to Resonance Records, Jazz Detective and Reel-to-Real Recordings. Often, Feldman finds that these extraordinary live recordings have been stored in closets or drawers for decades. Such was the case when Feldman discovered John Fowler's trove of priceless jazz concerts from the early sixties to the early eighties in the Famous Ballroom in Baltimore, Feldman's hometown and his current residence. Both Feldman and Fowler—the Left Bank Jazz Society's president who produced the ballroom's jazz concerts—listened to tapes that represented, in their opinions, the feeling and musical excellence performed on the Sunday afternoons there. More than concerts, the events were regular informal community gatherings of friends and welcomed guests. Audience members brought their own food and drinks and cheered on the jazz musicians with immediate and unrestrained vocal support. The legendary musicians who played there responded with high levels of energy and creativity inspired by the live audiences' unflagging attention and excitement. Recently, Feldman, Fowler, and Reel-to-Real executive producer Cory Weeds released concert recordings that capture the experiences of jazz evenings at the Famous Ballroom, long gone but not forgotten. Jazz Detective's recording package honoring the inexhaustible Sonny Stitt, *Boppin' in Baltimore: Live at the Left Bank*, serves as a reminder of his uncompromising level of artistry, not to mention his stamina and his tireless determination to entertain his audiences. In his fluid, non-repetitive flow of ideas, Stitt's bright, lyrical articulation can be as sharp and precise as a needle or as comforting as a pillow. (1) represents the gold standard of a live community-based performance. The artist and the listeners share a mutually respectful commitment to the joyous music. Fowler recalled that Stitt always filled the ballroom with its one-thousand-attendee capacity. Stitt's quartet projected a high level of musical excitement that continued undiminished throughout the two-hour-plus concert. Both CD's (or both LP's, which are in limited distribution) feature an equally remarkable back-up group consisting of Kenny Barron, Sam Jones, and Louis Hayes. All four immersed themselves completely in the music. The quartet warmed up the crowd with a blues that starts each CD. The first is "Baltimore Blues," Stitt's appreciative tribute to the venue and to the celebrants in attendance. The level of his performance rose with the next song, "Star Eyes," which alternated between the initial vamp recorded by Charlie Parker and the relaxed swing. Stitt's quick swirling bebop phrases, as well as Barron's build-up from the basic melody to his trade-

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mark blizzard of notes, helped establish his own memorable version of the song. Jones and Hayes's rock-solid backup signified their total absorption in the performance. Unconcerned with the usual comparisons between him and Bird, despite the distinctiveness of Stitt's own style, he continued with "Lover Man." Stitt's version attained his spirited standard of brilliance as he expands upon the initial chorus. Stitt's unceasing fascination with the blues form continued on "A Different Blues"—and even on his composition, "Deuces Wild," which involved yet another vivid improvisation over blues changes. The nine-minute version of "They Can't Take That Away from Me" may serve as one of Stitt's classic performances, with quotes like "Summertime" aplenty and with a final cadenza building to a sustained high C. Graciousness abounded when Stitt said to the audience during "The Theme" that "It's been a sweet delight. You responded in the way that we wanted you to. Thank you." Sonny Stitt was in top form when he played for the audience on November 11, 1973, and (1) should reinforce his reputation as a premier jazz master of the alto sax. Fortune smiled on me, an out-of-towner spending a few nights in Philadelphia, when I visited Ortlieb's Jazzhaus on North 3rd Street. For there was Shirley Scott! And Al Grey. And Mickey Roker. And Bootsie Barnes. And Dwayne Burno. Of course, it was a night to remember. But then, every night that Scott performed was one to remember. Fowler recorded one of those nights on August 20, 1972, when Scott set up the conviviality for the party in the Famous Ballroom with a burning extended version of "Impressions." Queen Talk: Live at the Left Bank started with tenor saxophonist George Coleman's eddying introduction. Then the trio gained momentum and exhilaration as they played. The performance ended with drummer Bobby Durham's powerful solo, a reminder of his unique talent. His remarkable high level of energy continued throughout (2), as did Scott's and Coleman's. One of the pioneers of the jazz organ, Scott's personalized style incorporated astute use of the pedals, broad extended chords, unexpected harmonies, and improvisational vigor. The "Queen of the Jazz Organ's" repertoire varied from modal harmonic investigations to warm ballads to up-tempo blues to jazz versions of pop songs. Scott's inviting style, all her own, combined the propulsive force of "Blues by Five" (5:00 p.m. being the starting time of the concert) with the reassuring warmth of "By the Time I Get to Phoenix." Ernie Andrews's sassy, crowd-pleasing humor enlivens "You Don't Mess Around with Jim," "Girl Talk" and (just) "Blues." Scott realized that Andrews's sometimes comical, sometimes shouted, always entertaining vocal rapport would raise the bar for listeners. He effectively emphasizes "the who's, the how's, the why's"; sings flirtatiously by repeating "you know I love you, baby"; and flatters the women in the audience with a suave "I wouldn't trade you for a pot of gold." Thusly, Scott's group graciously provided Andrews's back-up as he locked in the hearts of the audience to build up to the concert's finish. The third digitally enhanced release of a Left Bank Jazz Society tape recording features a musician with less awareness among the jazz listening public. Nonetheless, Walter Bishop, Jr. deserves the re-appreciation provided by the release of *Bish at the Bank: Live in Baltimore* not only for his prolific participation in bebop recordings of the early fifties with icons like Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Art Blakey, Hank Mobley, Milt Jackson, Stan Getz, and Oscar Pettiford.

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Bishop, inspired by Bud Powell and Art Tatum, also continued to perform and teach throughout his lifetime. Bret Primack's reminiscence in the album's booklet—uncompromisingly and consistently lavish with a biography, interviews, and photographs—is a reminder of Bishop's literary talents too. Bishop's book, *A Study in Fourths*, presents through musical notation and charts the results of how he used, in Bishop's words, "the interval of fourths to find as many ways as I could to use it as a linear device in combination with conventional chord changes and progressions." Though Bishop's style was the result of much thought throughout his career, on (3) his quartet transferred method into emotion. With his customary verve, Bishop prodded prodded as he comped forcefully with percussive left-hand chords, forming a distinctive style that brought the audience into his orbit. Saxophonist Harold Vick, whose biography receives justly in-depth attention in the liner notes, revealed himself to be the appropriate complement to Bishop's vigorous performances. When Vick played the second chorus of "So What" without piano accompaniment after bassist Lou McIntosh's solo, he provided more opportunity to appreciate his insufficiently recognized talent. How impressive that these three newly released Left Bank Jazz Society concerts weren't random highlights. Rather, they document the musicians' continuing standards of excellence, the point of these recordings being that these jazz groundbreakers never performed at less than the highest level. They directed their attention toward their audiences, not toward recording engineers. Primack's revelation in the liner notes of Bishop's poetic talent documents that Bishop was an early innovator not only of bebop. About Thelonious Monk, Bishop wrote: "A seer without peer. / A musical mutineer. / He would go on to commandeer / A new frontier. / And become known among nations / For his bold innovations." With similar extended rhymes and spoken meter, Bishop may have been ahead of his time with these rap-like lines. Chet Baker's eleven-track *Blue Room* package is an indication not only of Feldman's wide-ranging jazz interests, but also of his constant collaborative jazz detective work. Baker's pensive melodic calmness that drew in audiences provides a contrast to the rousing concerts in the Famous Ballroom that reached out to audiences. Recruiting another of his worldwide jazz detective associates, Feldman encouraged his Dutch contact, producer Frank Jochemsen (who collaborated with Feldman on Bill Evans and Sonny Rollins releases), to research the existence of unreleased Baker performances. Jochemsen eventually found them when KRO-NCRV radio producer Lex Lammen mentioned recordings of Baker on the 1979 *Nine O'Clock Jazz* broadcasts from VARA Studio 2 in Hilversum. The tapes documenting those unforgettable experiences had been forgotten by everyone but Lammen. Further sleuthing led Jochemsen to the high-quality tapes. Then, Feldman applied his honed skills for conversion into yet another homage, produced, as always, as yet another comprehensive *Jazz Detective* musical package. One of the idiosyncratic icons of cool jazz, Baker's economy of lyricism exerted some influence on the next generation of musicians. Phil Markowitz's and Enrico Pieranunzi's reminiscences in *Blue Room's* elaborately produced booklet state that Baker's style made them rethink their musical interests to balance progressive jazz

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techniques with melodic lines and rhythmically placed rests. Baker's April 10, 1979 session in (4) included musicians with whom Baker was comfortable: Belgian bassist Jean-Louis Rassinfosse, who worked with Baker for almost a decade throughout Europe, where Baker resided (and was imprisoned); as well as pianist Phil Markowitz and drummer Charlie Rice, whom Baker brought from the U.S. The second session on November 9, 1979, only 24-1/2 minutes in length, included respected local musicians: pianist Frans Elsen, bassist Victor Kaihatu, and drummer Eric Ineke. Baker was in good form, his lyrical appeal strong both on the trumpet and in his voice. He kicked off "The Best Thing for You" with a solo introduction of brisk, crisply punctuated articulation, effortless grace notes, darting assertion, and ornamental trills. As always, Baker allowed his back-up musicians space for their own solos. The importance of the bassists becomes evident as they provided firm rhythmic support underlying the implied swing of Baker's long tones and suspenseful rests. Baker's solo during the first chorus of the haunting "Blue Gilles" featured his signature ruminative tone of much influence, unrushed and suggestive of the blues and solitude—entirely different moods from those expressed in "The Best Thing for You." Mood always colors Baker's music. His authoritative tones announcing the start of "Nardis" recalled the trumpeted flourishes during events like a matador's entrance or a procession of leaders. Then, Markowitz laid down broad minor-key chords. However, a darkening mood during the performance of "Old Devil Moon" contributed to the unexpected termination of the November session due to "creative harmonic differences" between Baker and Elsen. Baker's decision to end the session left producer Edwin Rutten with half the program he had promised the station. Unpredictable, Baker was unique as always. But all four of the jazz masters, whose unreleased recordings Feldman sought and found, were unique. These jazz discoveries are more reasons for joy.

Bill Donaldson

New Issues

RYAN MEAGHER - AFT EARTH - ATROEFY RECORDS

PRELUDE TO A REQUIEM / AFTEARTH / IRREVERENCE BETWEEN US / REFUSE, THE REDEEMER / THE STICK ROBOT / SONG OF THE VENETIAN GONDOLIER / END OF THE RAINBOW / A CALL TO PRAYER FOR A FALSE DEITY / VANITY'S BREATH / NATAL DREAM / THE AMERICAN SCREAM / SCORCHED BEARTH 59:39

Meagher, g; Tina Granzo, artwork; Tim Willcox, ts,ss; Andrew Jones, bass; Charlie Doggett, d; Clay Giberson, p. 5/23 Portland, Or.

Like a flower that burst through a field of asphalt, art and all that is creative rises to the surface to tell the story. Ryan Meagher's cd "AftEarth" partnered with a sixty two page booklet of stark and insightful drawings by artist Tina Granzo provides a panoramic vision of life before and after.

The music alone on "AftEarth" is compelling, rich with texture and a captivating darkness. Combined with Tina Granzo's drawings we are taken away to contemplate what has gone wrong and can it ever be repaired. The music and drawings together tell a story of our time, provoking, enticing and challenging our senses, inviting us to feel and visualize. Ryan Meagher's multi dimensional work uses this power of sound and sight to seduce the listener to wander through and wonder.

The musicianship throughout is impressive, ears wide open and engaging, spacious with lots of emphasis on spirited phrasing mixed with some excellent solos and interplay. Compositionally the CD travels fluidly through light and darkness, creating ever evolving waves of tension followed by vast plains of solitude. "AftEarth" is comprised of twelve original pieces. The opener "Prelude To A Requiem" is only forty seconds long and invites us in, setting the stage for what's to come. The title track "AftEarth" creates the landscape. It's wide open guitar with reverb brightness begins, ostinato like bass and drums enter at a gentle tempo. Tenor states the melody, rich and soulful, as the piece progresses the tenor and guitar solo beautifully together. The accompanying drawings to this track paint a dismal environment, stark and concerning.

The music capture's this feeling also but then eventually unfolds into some degree of optimism. With this piece we get a good taste of how the drawing's enhance our imagination and allow us to escape into the fantasy. "Irreverence Between Us" begins with a large and joyous rubato melody statement with guitar and tenor unison. As it evolves into tempo, the tenor is up front with exquisite tone and placement of notes. Here a sense of positivity is present and along With the drawings that accompany this piece we get a feeling that maybe things are not so bad. "Song Of The Venetian Gondolier", so sweet in it all its melancholy splendor. The tenor states the melody with unrestrained passion as the soul of this composition is revealed. All along the drums are double timing as if to feel the pace of the river below the gondola as it moves through time. Here again the drawings for this piece depict building's in the water and then shows their roots submerged underneath. This is so insightfully presented to us so that we can feel the gondoliers deep connection and love for his watery homeland. I would describe "An American Scream" as beautifully angry. This piece begins with guitar and tenor creating quite a wondrous sound, open and reflective. That quickly changes in a big way. Scream is an apt title to describe what happens next. Heavy bass, hard pounding drums, exquisitely hostile guitar sound. Tim Willcox's tenor and Ryan Meagher's guitar bring the scream to an explosive pitch. The anger becomes liberating, cleansing, all guided by the group's exceptional freewheeling expression of it all. When this wave of intensity subsides the piece falls back into calm. The bonus here is that we have the drawings to view as our listening experience is enriched and elevated to a whole other level.

It is this experience of the music combined with the drawings that really separates "AftEarth" from other modern Jazz projects. The performances are surely memorable but a very satisfying degree of escapism is also attained here.

Frank Kohl

New Issues

RON BLAKE IS THAT SO? MISTAKEN IDENTITY

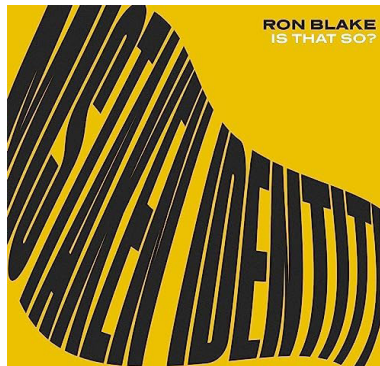
7TEN33 PRODUCTIONS NO#.

IS THAT SO? (*)/ ALLISON(*)/ WHEN WE WERE ONE(*)/ NO HYPE BLUES(*) /
BEYOND YESTERDAY'S TOMORROWS / GRACE ANN / STABLEMATES(*) / TO BE / MISTAKEN
IDENTITY. TOTAL TIME: 51:13

Blake, ts, bars; Bobby Broom, g; Nat Reeves, b(*); Reuben Rogers, b; Kobie Watkins, d.
5/9/2018 & 1/22/2023. Brooklyn, NY.

This is a Before and After album courtesy of the COVID epidemic. That's the reason for the disparate recording dates. The first thing that caught the eye of this reviewer was the graphics presented on the digi-pack cover and also on the face of the compact disc. The distinctive lettering reminded me of the father of this art, Reid Miles of pre-Don Was Blue Note fame. The innards of this album was just as arresting. This setlist is stacked with compositions with inspirations from mentors and heroes. Perhaps the most famous of these is "Stablemates" from living legend Benny Golson. Another tenor titan Sonny Rollins (still with us thankfully) is represented by "Allison" and also there is a contribution from the much-missed Johnny Griffin in the belt-buckle polisher "When We Were One". All three of these tracks are bolstered by the sturdy bass of Nat Reeves who shares bottom chores with Blake mainstay Reuben Rogers. A favorite cut is "No Hype Blues" a repeater from guitarist Bobby Broom who is the super-glue that holds all together. He also penned some nice liners. Two selections, the title tunes from Duke Pearson & Victor Provost join a pair of Blake scripts and a chart from bassist Rogers for a well-thought song list. With a handful of releases under his leadership, numerous sideman sessions and regular bary showings in the Saturday Night Live band one would think Ron Blake should be better known. But until now that has not been the case. Maybe this one would rectify that situation.

Larry Hollis



Reissues

TERRI LYNN CARRINGTON,
TLC & FRIENDS,
CANDID 32122.

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE? / LA BONITA / SEVEN STEPS TO HEAVEN / ST. THOMAS / JUST THE WAY YOU ARE / SONNYMOON FOR TWO (*). 37:36..

CARRINGTON, D; GEORGE COLEMAN,SONNY CARRINGTON (*) ; KENNY BARRON, P; BUSTER WILLIAMS, B. 10/19/1981. NYC

Throughout its history jazz has seen its fair share of prodigys. . On almost every instrument they have left their mark but here we are talking about drummers. From Buddy Rich to Tony Williams they have made their names now we can add Terri Lynn Carrington to that esteemed list. The album in question was made over forty-some years ago when Ms. Carrington was a mere 16 years of age and was probably released on vinyl judging from the short playing time. A glance at the title suggests "& Friends" which could have easily read "& All-Stars". Those readers that don't recognize any of their names need to do some serious woodshedding. This top-shelf unit zips through one original , a fairly recent pop song and four standards. No ballads are heard with most of the selections taken at a tempo slightly faster than normal. Some of the highlights are, Big G's soaring tenor on every cut especially on the fast samba rendition of "St. Thomas", the same can be said for Kenny Barron's immaculate piano work most notably on the Billy Joel number and Buster William's slippery upright is heard on several solo spots. The final tune features two tenors with Terri Lynn's father sitting in on a brisk Newk classic. This being a drummer's date there are numerous impressive trap segments whether alone or swapping fours. Since all the participants are still with us playing their hearts out this writer casts his vote for a reunion date. Case closed.

Larry Hollis



New Issues

NICK GREEN, GREEN ON THE SCENE

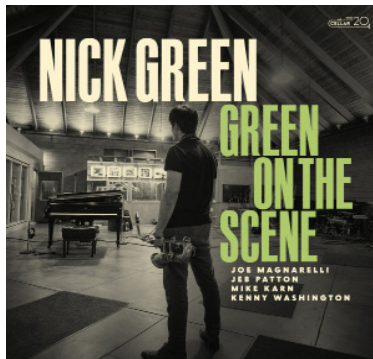
CELLAR MUSIC 70522.

RED CROSS / CHEATIN' / HORIZONS / A HANDFUL OF STARS / THE SONG IS YOU / ALL THE THINGS YOU ARE / YOU-KRAINE (SONG FOR UKRAINE) / A TEAR AND A SMILE / BARRY. 64.27.

Green, as; Joe Magnarelli, tpt, flgh; Jeb Patton, p; Mike Karn, b; Kenny Washington, d. 7/5/2022. Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Alto saxophonist Nick Green is a name that is new to me. Seeing some of his side-persons names was enough inducement for me to purchase this item. Those along with the label and recording site From what can be surmised this is probably the young man's debut disc as there was no luck in locating any other titles. Not much background info biographically was located either and the insides of the package in filled with descriptions of the nine tunes. One could easily say Green wears his major influences on his sleeve with a deeper inspection of the program. Definitely out of the Bird bag of alto playing the proceedings kick off with a spirited rendition of Parker's take on classic "rhythm changes" then follows it with an original strollin' blues that holds one of the three bass spots heard herein. It's neat the way the alto picks the last few notes of Magnarelli's ride to begin his solo. The fairly complex "Horizons" is one of two compositions from mentor Charles McPherson and there's a pair of another writer Green obviously admires, Jerome Kern. The other Green works are a tribute to the Ukraine a contrafact of John Birks Gillespie's "Woody N You" and the end piece honoring another Green guru the late Barry Harris. Standing toe-to-toe with the leader Joe Magnarelli proves an invaluable asset and the rhythmic triad of Patton, Karn and Washington are more than up for the date. But it's Green's slashing sax that commands most attention. An auspicious introduction to someone to look out for.

Larry Hollis



New Issues

NIGHTCRAWLERS, GET READY

CELLAR 20-051522

GET READY / FREE AT LAST / FACE TO FACE / TIN TIN DEO /WHAT DO YOU SAY DR. J? / MEAT WAVE / TOUGH AT THE TOP / A FOGGY DAY. 65:00. Nick Hempton, as; Corey Weeds, ts; Dave Sikula, g; Chria Gestrin, org; Jesse Cahill, d; Jack Duncan, perc. 5/14 & 15/ 2022. Vancouver, BC.

It's mind-boggling when one thinks about all the great little local bands that are out there playing some great sounds over this nation. That not even counting our neighbor Canada which boosts the tally up considerably. Upon reflection the recent passing of Robbie Robertson amplify the fact that he and all of the other members of the band (save Levon Helm) were native Canadians who are often cited as the creators of the musical form, Americana. One such combo is the Nightcrawlers a basic quartet sometimes augmented by extra players here altoist Hempton and percussionist Duncan. Anyone out there know who Baby Face Willette was let alone that he wrote "Face To Face" the third track performed here? He was a SoulJazz organist who cut for Blue Note & Argo labels. The remainder of the program are compositions from Ray Bryant, Jerry Williams, Gil Fuller/Chano Pozo, Henry Johnson, one each from Weeds & Hempton and the standard "A Foggy Day" from the Gershwin songbook. Caught live before a fired-up audience at Frankie's Jazz Club they deliver the goods with solid underpinning from the Hammond B-3 of Gestrin and Cahill's popping tubs. After five releases it should be about time for this great little group to get some overdue props.

Larry Hollis

ANTHONY HERVEY, WORDS FROM MY HORN

OUTSIDE IN 2312

CRYSTAL STAIR / THE RUST FROM YESTERDAYS BLUES / NEITHER HERE NOR THERE / AFRO POWER / DO RAG(*) / THE GLIDER / BUT BEAUTIFUL / SMOKY CLOUD / HIS EYE IS ON THE SPARROW / BETTER DAYS / DREAMS FROM THE CROSSROADS / WORDS FROM MY HORN. 64:24. Hervey, tpt; Sarah Hanahan, as; Isaiah J. Thompson, p; Sean Mason p(*); Philip Norris, b; Miguel Russell, d. No dates or locations listed.

WOW! This is without question the most impressive first leadership outing by a young artist these ears have encountered in years. Originally from Indiana, this guy is definitely a hoosier hotshot. His trumpet is straight out of the classic tradition of Clifford Brown, Lee Morgan, Freddie Hubbard, Woody Shaw and Roy Hargrove. There is even a nod to Miles via the Harmon-muted ballad "But Beautiful" one of the two non-penned melodys showcased. Those numbers are succinctly described in the leader's liner annotation. As strong as the trumpet work heard here is Hervey's compadres are what makes this production double dynamite. Norris and Thompson are long-time pards from the Julliard days with the latter being an exceptional standout. In his powerful hands he holds the legacy of jazz piano from Red Garland to Oscar Peterson. His deft usage of block chords is exciting and there are black church roots recalling Bobby Timmons with shades of Les McCann on the traditional gospel tune "His Eye Is On The Sparrow". Another knockout is Sarah Hanahan is stands toe-to-toe with the other horn. There is getting around the Jackie Mack influence as she spits fire on the up selections. It's a treat to hear younger players who know and have absorbed their fore bearers into their own personal styles. Anthony Hervey has plenty to say and it is advised to take a listen.

Strongly recommended.

Larry Hollis

CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF DOM MINASI

By Nora McCarthy

"When a great one dies, the universe gets a little smaller, and the sun gets a little dimmer, and the silence gets a little louder."

Master guitarist, composer, improviser, author and educator, Dom Minasi transitioned this life experience on August 1, 2023. He was eighty years old. Dom was both a straight-ahead and avant-garde jazz musician, a virtuoso who was adept at both styles, the latter being the one he will be most recognized for having not only expanded the art form with his amazing facility on the guitar and improvisational ability but for being one of the earliest pioneers in avant-garde jazz. That is his legacy. He was a ground breaker. A cross between Eric Dolphy and Wes Montgomery who could play the hell out of a standard and then tear it up and remodel it into something abstract and artistically unfettered. Free as a bird, a jazz hipster, an in and outside player, a musical shape-shifter, designer and director, Dom Minasi was the real deal—jazz royalty, a singular voice without peer. Second to no one and in a league of his own. A flame that burned brightly for the past 50 years in one capacity or another be it on the stage as a musician/composer, or as an author, teacher, and writer. Dom was an evolving circle in a square world, a prolific artist who covered all the bases. He recorded two CDs for Blue Note in 1974 and then he didn't record again as a leader until 1999 when he recorded *Finishing Touches* for CIMP (Creative Improvised Music Projects) associated with *Cadence Jazz Magazine* and *Cadence Jazz Records* founded by Bob Rusch.

Dom authored three books on harmony and improvisation, teaching and arranging; recorded over thirty-seven CDs in his lifetime with his various groups, of which eleven were as a sideman as well as solo works, and over the years worked with so many incredible jazz artists and giants in the business past and present including Arnie Lawrence, George Coleman, Frank Foster, Jimmy Heath, Dave Brubeck, Anthony Braxton, Dominic Duvall, Steve Swell, Blaise Siwula, Tom Ulrich, Jay Rosen, Matthew Shipp, Joe McPhee, Jack DeSalvo, Hans Tammen, Ken Filiano, as well as his beloved wife, singer/actor Carol Mennie—to list but a few. Starting from his first CD you can hear the trajectory of his genius as he continued to explore and search the universe of sound for his personal musical expression, taking it out, further and further while never letting go of his taproot. There was always rhythm, implied or stated directly, a reason to his rhyme, a sense of balance regardless of how far out he went in every direction, an answer to a question, a theme, a story, a larger purpose that he advanced, a beginning, a middle, and an end result—completion. Working with him as I did off and on for over fourteen years, I witnessed this magical brilliance in real time; the music we made in our collective, *Manna For Thought*, that included multi-instrumentalist/composer, Ras Moshe, was a sensorial experience. I am most grateful for knowing and creating with Dom Minasi, and even more so for being his good friend. When Dom was totally immersed 'in the music' whether he was playing on stage or in rehearsal, you could see the transformation take place on

Celebrating the Life of Dom Minasi

his face. He was transfixed in the now, simultaneously a one-man demolition team and constructivist who carved his own path and never stopped taking it OUT – past the Duke and beyond. It is said that he was a six-string Cecil Taylor, but he was none other than an original player, an untimely genius whose unique voice was unparalleled and definitely deserving of far more recognition than he received throughout his lifetime. That's oftentimes the way it goes with the truly great ones. Dom was a warrior the likes of which I've never known. He suffered health issues for years prior to his passing, but he never gave up, nor did he complain. In fact, if you didn't know what he was going through, you'd never guess there was anything wrong with him, he always downplayed it, focusing first and foremost on what he cherished the most, Carol, his family, and the music. The following excerpted lyrics by Phyllis Molinary are from "Here's To Life," one of Dom's favorite songs written by Artie Butler and sung by Shirley Horn, that aptly sum up his take on life and living: "No complaints and no regrets. I still believe in chasing dreams and placing bets. But I have learned that all you give is all you get. So, give it all you've got.For there's no yes in yesterday, and who knows what tomorrow brings or takes away. As long as I'm still in the game, I want to play, for laughs, for life, for love. So here's to life, and every joy it brings. Here's to life, for dreamers and their dreams....." Dom wrote me in May that he'd be home by September, then on June 2, he wrote to say he'd been put in isolation. Everything was changing yet and still he held out hope. He said the doctor's believed he'd get through it and that Carol was his rock. His text ended on a light note with a little anecdote about Monk, he said, "The good thing that happened today is that my night nurse was Monk's nephew. We had a great conversation this morning." Dom gave everything he had and held on tight till he could no longer. And, like the bad ass jazz musician he was, he went out swinging. So, here's to your life my friend, and to your dreams the ones you realized and the ones you didn't, and here's to you. May God hold you in the hollow of his hand. On September 3, a group of some of Dom's closest friends, organized by Ras Moshe, got together at Scholes Street Studio in Brooklyn, to guide Dom on his journey home through music and sound. It was a jubilation, a healing balm for our hurting hearts. The participating artists included: Ras Moshe, Jack DeSalvo, Cheryl Pyle, Sylvain Leroux, Gene Coleman, Yuko Togami, Tom Cabrera, Rocco Iacavone, Philip Sirois, Chris Forbes, Jorge Sylvester, David First, On Davis, Tor Snyder, James Keepnews, Anders Nilsson, Ken Filiano, and yours truly. There will be a memorial for Dom in December at St. Peter's Church, 619 Lexington Ave, Manhattan, NY 10022. For further information: (212) 935-2200, <https://www.saintpeters.org/jazz>

Rest in Peace and Sound Dom

Please check out Dom's website (<http://www.domminasi.com>) to learn more about him and to hear his music. There is also an abundance of information about him online as well as his blog and the column he wrote for All About Jazz as well as his many teaching videos.

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