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Ji: What inspired you to get into music?

LM: I started when I was about ten years old. I actually took guitar lessons for a little while. I guess I had an interest in music without even realizing it. There used to be a TV show—and this is way back—it was Johnny Desmond. He was a big band singer. He had a TV show, and I think it was on three times a week. It might have only been for fifteen minutes each time. They didn’t have many programs on TV—I’m talking about 1950, or something like that. Tony Mottola was a guitar player on the show. Johnny Desmond would come out and he’d sing standard tunes. When I first heard that, I didn’t really know what they were doing, but it was something that interested me. I thought, “Yeah, I want to play the guitar.” I approached my mother and said, “I want to play the guitar.” And I got a cheap guitar from the Sears catalogue...seriously! And then I took lessons at Zapit’s Music Store in Philadelphia. The only thing was, the teacher I had, who played mandolin, and banjo, and guitar, wanted to teach me classical guitar. After a while, I couldn’t remember why I had gotten interested in it to begin with, because the lessons were boring, and I wasn’t able to play any tunes. I finally quit. I wandered for a little bit. Then I had heard some records of Jazz At The Philharmonic, with Illinois Jacquet, Flip Phillips, Howard McGhee, and guys like that. That was where I really got interested. I didn’t really know what it was. It was just music that I had never heard before. I immediately was drawn toward the two saxophone players, Jacquet and Phillips. Then I went through the whole thing again: Now I’m going to be a saxophone player. At school, I asked if I could get into the band because they would give me an instrument and teach me how to play it. The first thing they gave me was a clarinet because they didn’t have any saxophones left. They gave me the clarinet and said that it would be an easy switch for me to go over to saxophone.

Ji: That was in the Philadelphia school system?

LM: At first, I went to LaSalle High School. I joined the marching band. They put you in the marching band right away, without learning how to play, because they wanted to have a whole bunch of kids on the football field to make it look impressive. They actually gave me a clarinet and a uni...
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form. I learned how to play the melodies to the marches by ear because I couldn’t really read the stuff. I listened to what was going on, and I’d hear whatever seemed like the trumpets were playing—the melody. I would kind of fake that on the clarinet. I was fourteen years old by that time, but it had the same name as the famous vocalist: Antonio Benedetta. But he probably started to use that name before Tony Bennett was ever heard of. By this time I was already copying what I had heard on records. Not so much copying the licks, but more or less trying to play in the same style. I was imitating the style of what I heard, trying to get the kind of sounds that the saxophone players got—and then maybe stealing a lick here and there. But more or less just trying to internalize, assimilate, all the things that I heard. I was able to do it really successfully if they weren’t really difficult tunes—

“This teacher was convinced that I would never be able to play. He said to me, ‘You can’t get blood from a stone. You’ll never be able to play.’ ... I kind of let that fly by me. I pretty much started to do it on my own.”

was my first year of actually playing. I discovered then that I was able to play somewhat by ear, and then, gradually, I taught myself how to read the music.

JI: In high school, the kinds of programs proliferating today did not exist then.

LM: They did have you assigned for lessons. What I had was a group lesson. They told me, for instance, “Every Tuesday after school, you’re going to have a lesson with this guy.” There were maybe four kids, but they had all been playing for a while. This teacher was convinced that I would never be able to play. He said to me, “You can’t get blood from a stone. You’ll never be able to play.” So I stopped showing up for the lessons. I think he was happy because he never recorded that I wasn’t showing up for the lessons. He just let it slide. Luckily, I didn’t believe him when he told me that I’d “never be able to play”, and “you can’t get blood from a stone,” and all that. I kind of let that fly by me. I pretty much started to do it on my own.

JI: How did you begin making the transition from marching band to jazz?

LM: Okay, well, what happened was, I really didn’t want to play the clarinet. I wanted to play the saxophone. I did get a saxophone because at this point, my mother could see that I was really interested in it. So my parents bought me a saxophone. By this time, I was starting to get a pretty good collection of recordings—not just saxophone players, but all of the stuff. I was listening to Bird, and Lester Young, and Stan Getz, Dizzy Gillespie and other instrumentalists. Eventually, I transferred over to Olney High School. A kid in the band set me up with his teacher. I started taking lessons every week with a guy named Tony Bennett. He tunes that I wouldn’t have been able to play the bridge to such as “Have You Met Miss Jones,” or “Cherokee.” I didn’t understand anything about chord changes. I was just playing everything by ear. Then, when I went to this teacher—one of the few teachers at that time who taught saxophone and all about chords. Most of the guys who taught at that time taught you about sound, how to read, and all that. But he said, “No. You have to learn chords.” I was always grateful that I had got him for that reason. I was kind of able to put what I was doing naturally with the knowledge that I was getting from the chords. I’d say, “Oh, that’s what this is. That’s why this sounds like that: because it’s based on a certain kind of chord.” I started to put two and two together.

JI: So that bridged the gap from the theory to the practical application. And then from there you must have begun playing around town, playing different jobs with jazz players?

LM: Right. Well, Mike Natale [trumpet] and I were both in All-City High School Band, along with Lee Morgan. Mike and I became friends. He had already started to get some gigs in South Philly, playing weddings. I started to play with him, and I would go down to his house in South Philly and kind of just jam and play tunes. It was a really good experience because we had to learn tunes for the gigs. We didn’t use any music. The kind of tunes we were playing would be “I’m In The Mood For Love,” some jazz hits that we had heard on records, and stuff like that. In the meantime, I was still taking lessons and I was starting to play some more difficult tunes. I was starting to understand “2-5-1” chord progressions. We would go to different jazz clubs in Philly—like the Showboat. There was a DJ from Camden named Tommy Roberts who eventually became a big time announcer for horse racing. At the time, he was a young guy and had a jazz show on the radio...a half hour. He got this thing down on Broad Street called the “Jazz Workshop.” Somehow he was able to talk all these big name jazz players, when they came to town on Friday afternoons, to play at this place so that the kids could go to hear it. On Friday afternoon after school we would take the subway downtown. It cost fifty cents. We’d go in, and they’d have Clifford Brown, Buddy DeFranco, Art Blakey. All these guys came and played. They’d play a set, and then they would get the kids up to play. These guys would critique you and then they would give you some pointers. Then they’d go back and play. It was a good thing for half a buck. I saw so many people there. Erroll Garner, Bird. I got to meet Bird there. He showed up after the whole thing was over, and I got to meet him.

JI: How do you account for him showing up after it was over? I mean, he was booked for the gig, he didn’t show up on time. Is that normal?

LM: You don’t want to hear the whole story.

JI: Go ahead.

LM: What happened was that Tommy Roberts, who ran the thing, needed a couple guys to set up the chairs in the place. You had to go upstairs, and bring these chairs down, and set them up. After this thing was over you’d pull them up and take them back upstairs again. If you did that, you got in for free—you didn’t have to pay the fifty cents. My buddy and I wanted to be the guys to do it—not to save the fifty cents, but we thought that would make us, like, the “in” cats. “Oh hey, Tommy asked us to do this. We set up the chairs.” That kind of thing. One day, Bird [Charlie Parker] was supposed to be there, and Chet Baker was supposed to be there. Chet Baker showed up, and Bird didn’t.

After everybody split, we were taking the chairs back up. I took two chairs up, and as I was coming down the steps I saw Bird walk in. He was with this other guy, and I said, “Wow.” He was very nice. He wanted to be shown which room he was supposed to play in. By this time, that room was closed up. It was dark. So we said, “Well, you know. It’s over. You missed it.” And he said, “Which room was I supposed to play in? I want you to take me there.” So we took him over and walked him into the room. And he said, “Now, you tell the guy I was here.” And that made it all right. [chuckles]. But he was real nice. He hung out with us for about fifteen minutes and then he split. But anyway, I started to learn a lot of stuff from going to things like that.

JI: Did they have big attendance at that event?

LM: Did they have big attendance at that event?

JI: Maybe a hundred.

LM: Things were beginning to happen for you?

JI: Around 1960 you had a break with Woody Herman. Was there something that preceded that?

(Continued on page 8)
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Hang out in New York and have some fun.” So we went up and auditioned, and we got the gig. The following Sunday, we were on the road.

The Mike Douglas Show came along, and they held auditions for that. I didn’t even go because I really wasn’t that good at doubling [on woodwinds - flute, clarinet]. I was told that you had to be a really good doubler, playing flute and clarinet. Vince Trombetta got the gig, and, actually, he was the best guy for it.

When was that?

LM: 1961. I went out there totally unprepared. I didn’t know anybody. I just went there. Somehow, I thought, “Oh, well, as soon as people hear me play…” It wasn’t any kind of ego thing; but I figured I was good enough that I’d start getting some gigs. But it didn’t happen. I got to play some rehearsal bands, but I just never hooked up with anything while I was there. I stayed out there for eight or nine months. Then I came back here again, and I joined George Young’s band. He had a gig in Wildwood for the summer. I joined his band and stayed in Wildwood, and then we went to Vegas for a couple of months. After that, I didn’t know where I wanted to go. I was thinking about going back to L.A. again. I didn’t.

How were you continuing to pursue your development as a player?

LM: When I came off of Woody’s band, I got interested in learning how to arrange. I wanted to learn how to write for big band. I went and I took some lessons with Dennis Sandole. I didn’t take his improvisation course. I just wanted him to show me how to orchestrate. I studied with him for while. He was showing me how to do that. He had a lab band, and I was doing a lot of that kind of stuff. In the meantime, as far as blowing things, I’ve always had kind of an analytical mind. I was always taking tunes and dissecting them, and trying to learn to play them on the piano. I was trying to substitute chords, and figure out why every chord was there—what the purpose was, why is this chord going to this one? What can you do instead? What kind of scale? That sort of thing.

What kind of scale? That sort of thing.

JL: It sounds like a lot of your knowledge of theory and harmony you developed on your own, as opposed to having a teacher who might have imposed his or her method on you.

LM: Like I said, the first teacher I had, he told me I had to learn the chords. I had this Bugs Bower chord book. Thing is though, he made me memorize it. “You have this page of dominant 7 chords.” When I’d come back the next week, he’d ask me to play them, close up the book. And if I couldn’t do...
"You had a better chance of getting in with a big band. You weren’t just going to go into Miles Davis’s group. If you think of who the top groups were in those days, you didn’t look at the [Dave Brubeck] group and think, ‘Maybe I’ll replace Paul Desmond.’"

(Continued from page 8)

it, he’d say, “Well, you have that again this week.” He’d say, “You have to learn these chords.” He didn’t really have to twist my arm. I understood. I was interested in doing it. He didn’t show me, “Well, this is a 2-5-1,” or, “This chord will lead to that.” He basically just showed me that you had to learn these. He was showing me how, in a simplified way, you could improvise over a chord. What he was showing me was more basic than what I was already doing on my own. But it led me to see what I was doing by ear, was still based on this harmonic system. I remember one example he gave me. He took the tune “Exactly Like You” in C, he’d take (hums tune) and then it’s just a C6 chord. Then he’d have me arpeggiate the chord—to fill in the two beats that were rests (hums tune). You know, I had been doing stuff more complicated than that, but it made me see, “Oh, okay! That’s what this is.” Then I was able to take it a step further than that. At least it got me thinking more. It made me realize too why I was having trouble with tunes like “All The Things You Are,” and where to change keys, and all the things like that. I started to say, “Oh, okay, I’ll be able to learn those tunes now because I can see why I haven’t been able to depend on my ear to take me there. So I continued to do that stuff.

JI: Were you transcribing solos?

LM: No. I never did that. I’m not saying that you shouldn’t. I just never did it like. Like, I said, when I used to listen to the recordings, I’d pretty much try to get the concept, rather than saying, “Well, let me transcribe the whole solo and learn how to play it.” I really think that’s good.

JI: Were there players that you wanted to play with?

LM: Do you mean necessarily well-known people?

JI: For example, did you want to have an apprenticeship with Miles Davis’s group, or something like that?

LM: No. I don’t think so. I mean, there were the people that I admired…

JI: Were you more interested in big band work?

LM: You had a better chance of getting in with a big band. You weren’t just going to go into Miles Davis’s group. If you think of who the top groups were in those days, you didn’t look at the group and think, “Maybe I’ll replace Paul Desmond.” Those groups were pretty much what they were. I would have loved to play with Oscar Peterson’s rhythm section with Ray Brown on bass.

JI: And Ed Thigpen.

LM: Yeah. But even without the drums—with Herb Ellis [guitar]. It wasn’t like I had designs on how I would go about doing that. It was a day dream. You’d say, “Wow. I’d love to play with that group sometime.” I’ll tell you one thing, right now (and I’m jumping ahead) when I get to play with Tony Miceli (and there’s a lot of guys in Philly) I’m just as happy as I think I could be. Only in the last few years have I been getting the chance to really play with really top cats. Even though we had really good players back in those days, it was hard to get the kind of gig where you got a chance to play. Talking about the late 50’s and 60’s, it was hard to get gigs. I was playing in big bands, but I was also getting these gigs in bars. Sometimes you’d have a bad bass player, or a singing bass player. They would hire a cat if he could sing, and it didn’t matter if he could play the bass well. You got a singer and a bass player for the price of one. I think you know a little bit about that—you’re younger than I am.

JI: Back in 1977, I remember playing a trio gig like that briefly. The singing bass layer played melody notes, as opposed to bass notes, on bass. Luckily, I was playing drums on that gig!

LM: I used to play with a bass player who did the same thing. He had a good ear for it. I used to say, “Man, he would have made a hell of a horn player!” Because he could hear the melody so well. Guys would sing and they’d stay on the rhythm. Now, we’ve been getting these gigs around town where we go out and play some of these parties, and sometimes corporate things. People just want you to play jazz. It’s not that they’re a jazz audience, but they say, “Well, let’s hire a jazz group.” Tony and I, we’ve been doing some of them. I do some with some other people. To me, it’s a real gig. The rhythm sections are always good. We have a stable of players now. There’s a bunch of good bass players in town now. A lot of these young guys really can play. If you remember back in the days...

JI: There were certain limitations.

LM: There were a couple guys about whom you’d say, “Man, those guys play the right notes.” The first time I ever played with Steve Gilmore, I said, “Man, it was such a pleasure to hear the right notes all night.” He said, “Well, isn’t that what you’re supposed to do?” I said “You haven’t met some of the cats I’ve been playing with!”

JI: How does the rhythm section help you to express yourself? How does that help you in your improvisation?

LM: I think with each different rhythm section you play a little bit differently. If I’m playing with three guys, whoever they might be… I don’t think that I’m saying, “Well, let’s see. I’ve got these three guys tonight, so I’ll probably play…” But then you might find, with someone else, that you might be playing a little bit differently. I might be inspired to play in a certain way because of the way the other guys play. I think that’s good because one of my concepts about playing is that I don’t try to play always in the same way. For me it’s kind of fun to go along with the way different people play, rather than just saying, “This is the way I play so everybody just better follow me.” I might be influenced by the way somebody else is doing something. It will just happen that way that I will just end up sounding like they do.

JI: Tony, could you talk about Larry’s contributions and how he is an important influence in Philadelphia?

LM: I guess it was 1981 or 1982, I had improvisation class at the University of the Arts. It would be at 8:30 or 9:00 in the morning. It was really early. I just remember having that class with Larry. Anybody that knows him, knows he’s totally down to earth—totally unpretentious. He would come in, and we’d have these tunes to play. He would just look at all the instruments in the room and just write out parts for everybody. It was “Girl From Ipanema” I remember one time. He wrote out the tunes for us. We would go hear him play and he’d be playing the stuff he’d covered with us. I guess, because he had been playing it anyway. But he’d play something and look out at us.

LM: Sometimes I would be able to do that. If I had (Continued on page 10)
“As far as recording goes now, you can always do it over again. But you don’t want to just go in there with the idea of enough confidence, that I’m not going to screw it up. That’s not good enough, really. You don’t want to just say I know I can do it without making any mistakes. You have to have a certain amount of that to back you up. But you still want to make it better than that. You want to have enough of an edge to say I really want to do this better than just what I’m capable of.”

would talk. I remember talking about money with him—all aspects of the business. And there’s a whole bunch of great players that came through University of the Arts, that came through him. He’s just kind of our mentor. We all talk about him—sort of worship him in a way. When we’re all together, one of the topics we’ll talk about is Larry and how helpful he was. There’s stuff on the website (Larry’s Improv Page) where you can see how right to the point he is. That was the best thing about his teaching. You’d take all these courses and things that were so confusing. Larry would say, “It’s this!” And like, “Ohhhhh.” I remember so many times just going, “Oh, damn, that’s what it is!” So that was important for us. We would all follow him around. A lot of students would come out. I still do some of that. I have this one student, a dentist, and he’s the same age as me. He played saxophone all these years and about four years ago, he decided he wanted to get more serious about it—not that he’s going to go into the music business. But he said, after all these years, I decided I’d like to really know more about what it is. So he comes every Friday for class and then he comes out very good drummer. He’s on my CD, but we did a CD with somebody else. Afterwards, he said to me, when you do your thing, it’s just like as if you were playing down at Chris’s [jazz club in Philadelphia]. And I said, “what about it?” He said, “well, I can’t do that, I still get nervous.” But he’s a lot younger. And I said, “I couldn’t tell you were nervous, you sounded great to me.” He said, “yeah but I am. When do you get over that?” I don’t know, I mean, I don’t like to think about it. I’m not saying that would never happen. If somebody put me in that situation, and said you are going to have to do this, I might get to the point where I feel “woha, this is pretty important.”

Ji: If you have to read something note for note, I can understand it. But when you’re playing jazz, you get to the point where it’s conversation. You have your vocabulary. You get to speak temporoaneously in music, in the way we’re speaking here. Self-consciousness can be the enemy of creativity—especially when we’re so concerned what people think about us. Then you can’t let yourself go and immerse yourself in the music.

Ji: No.
Larry McKenna

(Continued from page 10)

LM: Well, anyway, Dennis was a great guy, and he taught a lot of people in Philly. Anyone who played jazz around Philadelphia, and is my age, eventually took some lessons with Dennis. I also knew his brother, Adolph. I played with his band. When I went to Dennis to learn, he did for me in the begin-

ning exactly what I wanted. I knew changes. So I didn’t feel as though I needed to take his improvisation lessons. Maybe that was smug of me to say that. But I pretty much didn’t know how to put anything down in orchestration. I was always good at if I had an idea in my head. I could write out single lines. I could sit down and write out tunes, but I didn’t know what to do with the instruments. So I went to Dennis. He started me right off the first week. I had originally gone to someone else, but the other teacher wanted to put me through the whole thing of learning about traditional harmony over again. I said, “no I just want to learn how to make a tune, and where do I put the trumpet, and so on?” This one teacher I had said, “no, no, you have to go back and figure bass…” In the first lesson with Dennis, he said, “we’re having a small group here, trumpet, alto, tenor, trombone and baritone sax, five horns. We’ll put the trumpet on top.” He showed me how to voice it. So by the end of the first week, I wrote sixteen bars of “Laura.” It sounded neat because I wrote it in four-part block harmony, with the baritone sax doubling. I had some guys play it, and to hear it, I said “wow, man that sounds like Shorty Rogers.” It had that sound. And that inspired me to be able to do it more. And that was within one lesson. One time, I asked him to show me how to write the voicing for a certain section?.” He said, “if you wish to learn that, go buy a book or something, don’t waste my time.”

JI: And what book would that have been?

LM: I don’t know. He thought that why bother learning some technique that was used by someone else, when you should be learning your own thing. I can understand that. But from my point of view, it was like, I wanted to learn all the things—so I knew how to do it all.

JI: Right. So you would be able to understand the lineage of the music and how it’s developed.

JI: You got to leave town and go to some small town in Kansas, and you’ll hear somebody better than anybody you’ve heard before. ’... just when you think you’re on top, there is always somebody out there—and that person is not necessarily some big name guy. So I don’t know how anybody can justifiably develop the kind of attitude that enables them to think, I really do deserve all this attention.”

‘You got to leave town and go to some small town in Kansas, and you’ll hear somebody better than anybody you’ve heard before.’... just when you think you’re on top, there is always somebody out there—and that person is not necessarily some big name guy. So I don’t know how anybody can justifiably develop the kind of attitude that enables them to think, I really do deserve all this attention.”

LM: Right. He didn’t subscribe to that kind of thinking. So about that time I started buying some books too. I got that Garcia book, and the next one I got was Henry Mancini, Sounds and Scores. That was one of the first books to come out with recordings. It included recordings of eight and sixteen bar excerpts of his arrangements. You could see how he scored the trombones and the French Horns and so on.

JI: That’s what the Don Sebesky’s arranging book was like too when it was published in the 1970s.

LM: Mancini’s book came out in 1962 I think, and I still have all these books and I still use them as reference. I eventually wound up getting, Nelson Riddle’s book. I have Sebesky’s book, a couple of other ones. It’s funny because sometimes those guys disagree with one another. It will say something in one of the books—“never do this.” Then you’ll open another and it says exactly the opposite in there.

JI: There are a number of bootleg arranging books too. One of them has examples of all the different styles of big band arranging, with examples from the works of many different arrangers—from Woody Herman’s band, Basie’s band, Ellington, examples of Willie Maiden’s music from Maynard Ferguson’s band, and others.

LM: Do you arrange?

JI: Yes. I began writing big band arrangements in the 1970s, after being inspired by Thad Jones and Ellington, and buying and analyzing all of the Thad Jones scores and others that I could get. And, I’ve arranged a lot of small group and big band charts over the years. I’m working on a big band project—writing new things for a recording next year. A number of years ago, you played a number of times with the big band I organized in Philadelphia on and off for a while.

TM: Did you play at the London, downtown?

JI: Yes. I was actually publishing big band arrangements for awhile. But, the financial benefits were so limited, and the work was overwhelming. Pretty soon, I was promoting everyone else’s arrangements but my own. We would record an album full of material of the various arrangers, and send the LP out to 30,000 schools—who would then order the charts from their music stores or directly from us. The place to invest one’s efforts is to have your own tunes played, recorded and placed on TV, in movies, and getting other people to record them. One of the problems with the big band was last minute cancellations by players. You’d have trombone players, for example. At the last minute, someone would call and say, I can’t make it now. Then you’d have to call somebody else—because in Philadelphia, many players did not follow the protocol of getting their own subs—as is the case in places like New York or L.A. where the overall level of good musicianship is more prolific, and there is more competition. Plus, you’d get some attitude from someone you might call to sub in Philadelphia. The sub would say, “hey man, how come you didn’t call me in the first place? Then all of a sudden, I’m in the middle of some political thing—and it was just a Monday night kicks band. I got tired of that. Plus, while the big band gave me an outlet for my arrangements, it had its limitations for me as an improviser, as compared to playing with a small group.

LM: I was telling Tony before, that I still write arrangements for big band, but lately I’ve been doing it just for my own amusement.

JI: Where’s the outlet? At school, right?

LM: Well, I don’t plan ahead to do it. I’ll be sitting at home and I’ll get an idea for something and I’ll get out my score paper. I haven’t learned to do it yet using a computer. I just do it the old-fashioned way. But I’m too lazy to copy them. So I have scores at home that I keep saying, “well one of these days I’ll get them copied and bring them around to play. I never made any real money from arranging. Yeah I got paid. Years ago there used to be work doing it for singers. That was always a paid gig in the ads. “Oh, I’ve changed my mind, I want it in another key...” Guys would say, “I need an arrangement for my big band, can you do it for twenty-five bucks?” I would always wind up doing it. One saxophone player who I used to work with in Al Raymond’s band said, “there must be a place in heaven just for arrangers where they have a big band set up, where they actually play your charts at the right tempo, and get it right each time.” It was always the case, when you write arrangements, that something went wrong. John Davis was an arranger and sax player. He went to University of the Arts back when they called it Philadelphia Musical Academy. He eventually

(Continued on page 12)
Larry McKenna

(Continued from page 11)

became a big time arranger in Hollywood. He was arranging for TV shows like *Hunter, Heart to Heart, Falcon Crest* and all that. Apparently, he made lot of money. From what I was told he was getting like twenty-five grand per episode. He would do it at his house on the computer, and they’d send someone around to pick it up. But anyway, at the point he had just gotten out of school, he was playing sax, and we were both working with Al Raymond. I got this connection to write the music for a show. The guy that was supposed to do it was the conductor for Ann Margaret, who was appearing at the Latin Casino [a leading night club in the Philadelphia area—Cherry Hill, New Jersey—that featured celebrity entertainers]. He had promised somebody he was going to write the charts for this show that was going on a cruise or something like that, and he hadn’t done it. So he called Ronnie Robin, who said, “call Larry McKenna.” The guy called me. He had a ton of work, for two horns and a rhythm section—it seemed like a million songs. I said, “well I can’t do this in a weekend.” But, it had to be done by Sunday, and we all had gigs. I called John Davis. John Davis and I met the guy. I was going to charge him six hundred dollars. This is thirty years ago. The guy agreed to it.

JI: Because he was getting probably six thousand.

LM: John says to me, “Wow, you’ve got a lot of balls.” And I said, “I don’t care man.” We still had to get someone to copy it. So the whole weekend, between gigs, we were up writing all this stuff out. We finally get Jack Faith to copy it. Nothing ever ruffles him. He showed up on the last day, and the guy who hired us is sweating. He wanted to make sure it was all done because they were leaving for the cruise the next day. Jack came in with piles of music. We were waiting for our six hundred dollars. Then Jack took out a bill—an itemized bill. It was more than what we charged to write the charts. He handed it to the guy, and the guy said, “Oh, okay,” and wrote him a check—for more than what we got paid. That was the whole thing about arranging. I think unless you make it in the big time, arranging should be just for fun.

JI: It’s very time consuming. It does help your playing a lot. Could you talk about the importance of being a sensitive listener when you’re playing?

LM: It goes back to what I said before. If I’m playing with certain guys I’ll be influenced by what they are playing rather than just going straight ahead and saying this is how I play. You have to adapt your playing.

JI: I think that speaks to having a dialogue with the musicians with whom you are playing. This is in contrast to certain people who go in and simply play their style, expecting everyone to adjust to them. I was listening to a Miles Davis recording from 1960, where he had Sonny Stitt in the group for a European tour. Everyone sounds great. Sonny Stitt sounds great—and he is playing Sonny Stitt. He is not necessarily fitting into the group by participating in and developing a kind of dialogue among players for which Miles’ groups were renowned. Instead, he was playing his stuff, and the group is accompanying him. By comparison, when Hank Mobley joined the group in 1961, there is a dialogue that you can hear emerging between pianist Wynton Kelly and Mobley on *Friday Night Live At The Blackhawk*, for example. They are feeding off one another.

Tony: With Larry, there’s a dialogue. He knows the tunes so well. When you are comping for him, he’s just writing your stuff. If you alter something, he’s right there, and he’s fixed my chords. If I play a dominant chord and it’s supposed to be a minor chord, every time you get there, he’ll adjust. At first, he’ll look over and I’ll wonder what he’s doing. Then, I realize “oh, he’s fixing my chords, while we’re playing.” He’s right in there.

LM: In other words, I’m a pain in the ass.

JI: What kinds of business experience have you developed in your career?

LM: Obviously not enough. I’ve never been a good businessman. That’s number one. I envy people who are. I see certain people that seem to have certain things more together. I think I’ve always been just lazy. I just wanted to play. It’s been important to me that I feel I am doing good at the job of playing music. I would have hated to go with the band, if I was feeling like I was one of the lesser players. So I focused on trying to be a good musician. As far as attitudes go, I don’t know, I’ve always been pretty cool about knowing how to deal with people on that human level. I see some guys who have never learned how to get along with other people—even just with their fellow musicians. They just don’t seem to know. I think that’s something you try to be sensitive about it. The whole thing is, no matter how good you are, you’ll always find somebody who’s better. Buddy Savitt was one of the top tenor sax players in the area. I met him on a trolley car, one time and said “Hey, Buddy how you doing?” I was much younger, and I said, “Hey, Buddy, who are some of your favourite players?” Buddy had a funny way of talking. He said, “You got to leave town and go to some small town in Kansas, and you’ll hear somebody better than anybody you’ve heard before.” He said just when you think you’re on top, there is always somebody out there—and that person is not necessarily some big name guy. So I don’t know how anybody can justifiably develop the kind of attitude that enables them to think, “I really do deserve all this attention.” But there are people out there.

JI: I think that once you reach a certain level as a player, the focus is logically about making music, and not about speed and technique and who is better. Everybody is different. So Stan Getz, Sonny Rollins, Hank Mobley, Joe Henderson, John Coltrane are all different—different voices.

LM: Well, I definitely think that. You can make comparisons to people as far as technique goes and things like that, but there is so much more about music than that.

JI: It’s all about the groove.

LM: Yeah, so, when you get up to that level, the guys you just mentioned, they’ve all reached a certain level of greatness.

JI: It’s content. Someone can be a really articulate speaker but have nothing to say. Someone might earn a doctorate in English Literature, and can write Shakespeare, and can cite and recite books, and poetry. But, if this person has never lived any life to be able to write the great novel he wants to write, then what. On the other hand, somebody else might have lived a lot of life, but might be grammatically imperfect. Whose story do you want to hear—the grammatically perfect, dull, content-less one, or the imperfectly stated content-rich, meaningful story?

LM: Or are you going to compare Sinatra and Pavarotti, who’s the better singer?

JI: Did you have anything that you want to talk about that we haven’t brought up?

LM: I’m saving them for the book. [laughs] No, I can’t. I have plenty of funny stories. They’re usually told on the breaks between sets at gigs.

JI: I know, I’ve heard some.

LM: But I have more since then.

JI: Tony, why don’t you talk a bit about the website you’ve created, dedicated to Larry, called Larry’s Improv Page?

TM: Okay, I made it in dedication of Larry. I thought of the website because I remembered David Liebman talking about his music. He said that the only way he was going to get people to appreciate his music was to teach them about it. That’s how he has kind of spent his life. At that point I started thinking about doing some kind of website. I like doing Web stuff. I like computers. So I thought about Larry, and how important he is and was to so many of us. I also realized that for a lot of us who aren’t well known, but are great players, that maybe strength in numbers could help us. So I designed the website and called Larry and I told him I wanted to do it in dedication to him. Guys would write to me thinking I was Larry, because it’s Larry’s Improv Page. There are a lot of lessons on it. I just want a way for musicians to connect with other musicians, especially young musicians. Larry’s spirit is teaching us, and plays a big part in it.

LM: Right now I am a novice at the computer. I have a computer, right now. I just kind of put it off for a long time. I was intimidated. I didn’t even want to look at the computer. So now I have one. But basically what I’ve been doing, as I’ve always done for years, is to write out things—examples of how I approach improvisation. I’ve been giving them to Tony and he puts them on the website.

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- Dan Boorstin, Past Librarian of Congress
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Sunday, November 5
• George Coleman Quintet, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
• Vocal Masterclass With Marion Cowings, Ai Murakami Trio Feat. Sacha Perry
• Behr Gillette Quartet, Richie Vitale Quintet, Hillel Salem, After-Hours Jam Session, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• John Colianni Jazz Orchestra, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
• Fred Hersch, Piano; John Hébert, Bass; Eric McPherson, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Dizzy Gillespie All-Stars, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Monday, November 6
• Triangular: Ralph Peterson Trio Featuring The Curtis Brothers, Dizzy’s Club Jazz At Lincoln Center
• Theo Hill Trio, Jonathan Michel Group & After-Hours Jam Session, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.

Tuesday, November 7
• Triangular: Ralph Peterson Trio Featuring The Curtis Brothers, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Frank Lacy Group, Abraham Burton Quartet & After-Hours Jam Session, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Django Reinhardt NY Festival All Stars, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
• Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone Adam Rogers, Guitar Dezron Douglas, Bass E.J. Strickland, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Rebirth Brass Band, Residency, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Wednesday, November 8
• Israeli Jazz Celebration, 7:30pm—Guy Mintus Trio; 9:30pm—Yotam Ben-Or Quartet, Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Michael Ziffer Quartet, Ryan Keberle & Catharsis, Aaron Seiber, After-Hours Jam Session, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Django Reinhardt NY Festival All Stars; David Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
• Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone Adam Rogers, Guitar Dezron Douglas, Bass E.J. Strickland, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Rebirth Brass Band, Residency, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Thursday, November 9
• Leonard Bernstein At The Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra With Wynton Marsalis Celebrates The Leonard Bernstein Centennial; Rose Theater, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Sullivan Fortner, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• New York Jazz Nine, Nick Hempton Trio, Jonathan Thomas, After-Hours Jam Session, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Django Reinhardt NY Festival All Stars, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
• Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone Adam Rogers, Guitar Dezron Douglas, Bass E.J. Strickland, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Talib Kweli – Live band residency: “Quality” album 15th Anniversary, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Friday, November 10
• Leonard Bernstein At The Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra With Wynton Marsalis Celebrates The Leonard Bernstein Centennial; Rose Theater, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Warren Wolf, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Tim Hegarty Group, Jonathan Barber Group & After-Hours Jam Session, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Jean-Luc Ponty, The Flail; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
• Alex Hirsch, Ben-Or Quartet, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Talib Kweli – Live band residency: “Quality” album 15th Anniversary, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, November 11
• Leonard Bernstein At The Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra With Wynton Marsalis Celebrates The Leonard Bernstein Centennial; Rose Theater, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Warren Wolf, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Jon Roche, The Flour, Philip Harper Quintet, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Django Reinhardt NY Festival All Stars, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
• Bad Plus, Bill Frisell, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone Adam Rogers, Guitar Dezron Douglas, Bass E.J. Strickland, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Talib Kweli – Live band residency: “Quality” album 15th Anniversary, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Sunday, November 12
• Warren Wolf, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Ai Murakami, Sasha Dobson, David Schnitter, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Django Reinhardt NY Festival All Stars, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
• Bad Plus, Bill Frisell, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Ravi Coltrane, Saxophone Adam Rogers, Guitar Dezron Douglas, Bass E.J. Strickland, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.

Monday, November 13
• Neal Smith Berklee Octet Featuring Billy Pierce, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Tim Hegarty Group, Jonathan Barber Group & After-Hours Jam Session, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• McCoy Tyner, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Tuesday, November 14
• Jerome Jennings Group Featuring Jazzmeia Horn, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Brian Blade, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
• Lucas Pino Nonet, Abraham Burton, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Diane Schuur; Steve Sandberg Quartet;
• John Zorn’s Masada: Book Three, Masada At The Vanguard, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Stanley Clarke Band with Lenny White, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Wednesday, November 15
• Jerome Jennings Group Featuring Jazzmeia Horn, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Brian Blade, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
• Curtis Nowosad, Harold Mabern, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Alex Hirsch, Ben-Or Quartet, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
• John Zorn’s Masada: Book Three, Masada At The Vanguard, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Stanley Clarke Band with Lenny White, Beka Gochashvili, Salar Nader, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Thursday, November 16
• Embrace: A Musical Celebration Of Friends and Collaborators Of The Incredible Horn, Roswell Rudd, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway.
• Brian Blade, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
• Alex Hirsch, Ben-Or Quartet, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
• Diane Schuur; Steve Sandberg Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
• John Zorn’s Masada: Book Three, Masada At The Vanguard, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
• Stanley Clarke, Lenny White, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
Friday, November 17
- Bobby Sanabria Multiverse Big Band: West Side Story At 60 Reimagined, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Brian Blade, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
- Michael Cochrane, John Fedchock, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Diane Schuur, Birdland Big Band; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- John Zorn’s Masada: Book Three, Masada At The Vanguard, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Stanley Clarke Band With Lenny White, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, November 18
- Bobby Sanabria Multiverse Big Band: West Side Story At 60 Reimagined, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Brian Blade, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
- Kristina Koller, Mike Clark Quartet, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Veronica Swift, Diane Schuur, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Sunday, November 19
- Bobby Sanabria Multiverse Big Band: West Side Story At 60 Reimagined, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Brian Blade, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
- Al Murakami, Tardo Hammer, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Veronica Swift, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- John Zorn’s Masada: Book Three, Masada At The Vanguard, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Stanley Clarke Band With Lenny White, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Monday, November 20
- Steve Nelson Salutes Bobby Hutcherson, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Ari Hoenig Trio, Jonathan Barber, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Veronica Swift, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra: Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Marcus Strickland’s Twi-Life & Friends, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Tuesday, November 21
- Yotam Silberstein, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Maria Schneider Orch, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
- Steve Nelson Quintet, Abraham Burton Quartet & After-Hours Jam Session, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Veronica Swift, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Jason Moran, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Dee Dee Bridgewater, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Wednesday, November 22
- Wynton Marsalis, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Maria Schneider Orch, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
- Taylor Eigsti, Asaf Yuris, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Louis Armstrong Eternity; Veronica Swift, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Jason Moran, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Dee Dee Bridgewater, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Thursday, November 23
- Wynton Marsalis, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Taylor Eigsti, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Veronica Swift, Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Jason Moran, Piano; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Dee Dee Bridgewater, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Friday, November 24
- Wynton Marsalis, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Maria Schneider Orch, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
- Brandon Lee Quartet, Jerome Jennings, Sextet, After-Hours Jam Session With Corey Wallace, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Veronica Swift With The Benny Green Trio; Birdland Big Band; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Jason Moran, Piano; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Dee Dee Bridgewater, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, November 25
- Wynton Marsalis, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Maria Schneider Orch, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
- Michael Stephens, Philip Harper Quintet, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Veronica Swift, Benny Green; Birdland Big Band; 315 W. 44th St.
- Jason Moran, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Dee Dee Bridgewater, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Sunday, November 26
- Wynton Marsalis, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Maria Schneider Orch, Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
- Marion Cowings, Ai Murakami, David Gibson, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Jason Moran, Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Dee Dee Bridgewater, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Monday, November 27
- MSM Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Stranahan/Zaleski/Rosato, Jonathan Michel, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- McCoy Tyner, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Tuesday, November 28
- Dayna Stephens with Taylor Eigsti, Peter Bernstein, Ben Street, Billy Hart, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Spike Wilner, Abraham Burton, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Marcus Roberts Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Terell Stafford, Trumpet; Tim Warfield, Saxophone; Bruce Barth, Piano; Peter Washington, Bass; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Fourplay, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Wednesday, November 29
- Dayna Stephens with Taylor Eigsti, Peter Bernstein, Ben Street, Billy Hart, Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Nate Radley, Steve Davis, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Marcus Roberts; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Fourplay, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

(Continued on page 16)
WED NOV 1
Sherman Irby & Momentum
Eric Reed – Gerald Cannon
Willie Jones III – Vincent Gardner

THU NOV 2-5
George Coleman Quintet
Harold Mabern 11/1–3/11, 4/1–5/11
Mike LeDonne 11/1–4/11
Peter Bernstein 11/1–2/11, 11/4–11/5
Adam Rogers 11/1–4/11
Joah Wepper – George Coleman Jr.

TUE-WED NOV 7-8
Gary Peacock Trio
Marc Copland – Joey Baron

THU-SUN NOV 9-12
Pat Martino Trio + Horns
Pat Bianchi – Carmen Intorre – Alex Norris – Adam Niewood

TUE-SUN NOV 14-19
Brian Blade & the Fellowship Band
Myron Walden – Melvin Butler – Jon Cowherd – Chris Thomas

TUE-SUN NOV 21-26
Maria Schneider Orchestra
Scott Robinson – Tony Kadlecek – Greg Sissbert
Nadjie Noordhuis – Mike Rodriguez – Keith O’Quinn
Ryan Keberle – Marshall Gilkes – George Flynn – Ben Monder
Gary Versace – Frank Kimbrough – Jay Anderson – Clarence Penn

THU Nov 23* Closed for Thanksgiving

TUE-WED NOV 28-29
Mark Guiliana Jazz Quartet
Jason Robby – Fabian Almazan – Chris Morrissey

THU NOV 30-DEC 3
Danilo Pérez Trio: Panamónk
Ben Street – Terri Lyne Carrington

Mingus Uptown Band

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Steinway & Sons
Thursday, November 30

- David Chesky; Jazz In The New Harmonic; Dizzy's Club; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & 6/8
- Haley Nelsanger, Steve Davis; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.
- Marcus Roberts Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Fourplay, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Jimmy Heath Big Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Valeo; Eliane Elias; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Christian McBride & Inside Straight; Steve Wilson, Sax; Warren Wolf, Vibes; Peter Martin, Piano; Christian McBride, Bass; Carl Allen, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Jill McCarron Quartet; Fukushima Tanaiwa Quartet; Davis Whittfield - After-hours Jam Session; Small's, 183 W. 10th St.

Friday, December 1

- Steve Miller, Jimmie Vaughan & Charlie Musselwhite: The Blues Triangle Memphis, Texas, And Chicago And More; Rose Theater; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Fabulous Dorsey Brothers With Peter And Will Anderson, Wycliffe Gordon, Brianna Thomas, Bruce Harris; And More; The Appel Room, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Fourplay, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Birdland Big Band; Marcus Roberts Trio
- Christian McBride & Tip City; Emmet Cohen, Piano; Dan Wilson, Guitar; Christian McBride, Bass; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Braden-Teepe-Wilson aka “Trio of Liberty”; Michael Weiss Quartet; After-hours Jam Session with Joe Fansworth; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Saturday, December 2

- Steve Miller, Jimmie Vaughan & Charlie Musselwhite: The Blues Triangle Memphis, Texas, And Chicago And More; Rose Theater; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Fabulous Dorsey Brothers With Peter And Will Anderson, Wycliffe Gordon, Brianna Thomas, Bruce Harris; And More; The Appel Room, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Fourplay, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Marcus Roberts Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Christian McBride & Tip City; Emmet Cohen, Piano; Dan Wilson, Guitar; Christian McBride, Bass; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Small’s Showcase: Carmen StafFat; Craig Brann Quintet; Michael Weiss Quartet; Brooklyn Circle; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Sunday, December 3

- Paula West Quintet; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Fourplay, Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Greg Rudin’s Big Band Collective; Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Christian McBride & Tip City; Emmet Cohen, Piano; Dan Wilson, Guitar; Christian McBride, Bass; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Vocal Masterclass with Marion Cowings; Al Murakami Trio feat. Sacha Perry; Todd Marcus Jazz Orchestra; Frank Basel Quartet; Hiilie Salem - After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Monday, December 4

- Julillard Jazz Orchestra; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Jim Caruso’s Cast Party; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Tal Gamlieli & Change of Heart; Will Sellenraad Trio; Jonathan Michel Group & After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Tuesday, December 5

- Omer Avital Quintet; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Rebirth Brass Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Eliane Elias; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Christian McBride & Inside Straight; Steve Wilson, Sax; Warren Wolf, Vibes; Peter Martin, Piano; Christian McBride, Bass; Carl Allen, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Ulysses Owens Jr. & Friends; Frank Lacy Group; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Wednesday, December 6

- Omer Avital Quintet; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Rebirth Brass Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- David Oswald’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band; Eliane Elias; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Christian McBride & Inside Straight; Steve Wilson, Sax; Warren Wolf, Vibes; Peter Martin, Piano; Christian McBride, Bass; Carl Allen, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Jerome Sabagh/Greg Tuohey Quartet; Ken Foxer Quintet; Aaron Goldberg - After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Thursday, December 7

- Bill Frisell & Thomas Morgan Duo; Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM; 116 E. 27th
- Renee Rosnes Deep In The Blue - Featuring Melissa Aldana; Steve Nelson, Peter Washington And Benny White; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Christian McBride & Inside Straight; Steve Wilson, Sax; Warren Wolf, Vibes; Peter Martin, Piano; Christian McBride, Bass; Carl Allen, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Jill McCarron Quartet; Fukushima Tanaiwa Quartet; Davis Whittfield - After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Friday, December 8

- Bill Frisell & Thomas Morgan Duo; Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM; 116 E. 27th
- Renee Rosnes Deep In The Blue - Featuring Melissa Aldana; Steve Nelson, Peter Washington And Benny White; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Jimmy Heath Big Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Birdland Big Band; Eliane Elias; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Christian McBride & Inside Straight; Steve Wilson, Sax; Warren Wolf, Vibes; Peter Martin, Piano; Christian McBride, Bass; Carl Allen, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Christian McBride & Inside Straight; Steve Wilson, Sax; Warren Wolf, Vibes; Peter Martin, Piano; Christian McBride, Bass; Carl Allen, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- David Gilmore Quartet; Mike DiRubbo Quartet; Corey Wallace Dubet “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Saturday, December 9

- Bill Frisell & Thomas Morgan Duo; Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM; 116 E. 27th
- Renee Rosnes Deep In The Blue - Featuring Melissa Aldana; Steve Nelson, Peter Washington And Benny White; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Jimmy Heath Big Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Billy Stinch; Eliane Elias; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Christian McBride & Inside Straight; Steve Wilson, Sax; Warren Wolf, Vibes; Peter Martin, Piano; Christian McBride, Bass; Carl Allen, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Small’s Showcase: Mike Bond Trio; Syliva Cuenna Quartet; Mike DiRubbo Quartet; Philip Harper Quintet; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Sunday, December 10

- Bill Frisell & Thomas Morgan Duo; Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM; 116 E. 27th
- Renee Rosnes Deep In The Blue - Featuring Melissa Aldana; Steve Nelson, Peter Washington And Benny White; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Jimmy Heath Big Band; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Billy Stinch; Eliane Elias; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Christian McBride & Inside Straight; Steve Wilson, Sax; Warren Wolf, Vibes; Peter Martin, Piano; Christian McBride, Bass; Carl Allen, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Christian McBride & Inside Straight; Steve Wilson, Sax; Warren Wolf, Vibes; Peter Martin, Piano; Christian McBride, Bass; Carl Allen, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Vocal Masterclass with Marion Cowings; Al Murakami Trio feat. Sacha Perry; Ian Hendrickson-Smith Quartet; Corcoran Holt Sextet; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Monday, December 11

- New York Youth Symphony; Ted Nash, Extended Works; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Chris Botti; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Jim Caruso’s Cast Party; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Ari Hoenig Trio; Jonathan Kreisberg Quartet; Jonathan Barber Group & After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Tuesday, December 12

- Joe Lovano Classic Quartet; Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM; 116 E. 27th
- Marquis Hill Blacktet With Special Guest Willie Pickens; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.
- Stacey Kent; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Chris Botti; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Kenny Barron Quartet - Mike Rodriguez, Trumpet; Dayna Stephens, Saxophone; Kenny Barron, Piano; Kiyoshi Kitagawa, Bass; John Nathan Blake, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Kirk Lightsey; Jonathan Kreisberg Quartet; Abraham Burton Quartet & After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Wednesday, December 13

- Big Band Holidays Featuring The Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra With Wynton Marsalis And Vocalists Catherine Russell And Kenny Washington; Rose Theater; Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy.
- Joe Lovano Classic Quartet; Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM; 116 E. 27th
- Marquis Hill Blacktet With Special Guest Willie Pickens; Dizzy’s Club; Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdwy.

(Continued on page 17)
**Tuesday, December 19**
- Dick Hyman: Standards And Strides; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdw.
- Chris Botti: Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Freddy Cole Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny Barron Trio - Kenny Barron, Piano; Kiyoshi Kitagawa, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Spike Wilner Trio; Abraham Burton Quartet & After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

**Wednesday, December 20**
- Sherman Irby: A New Christmas Story; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdw.
- Chris Botti; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- David Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny Barron Trio - Kenny Barron, Piano; Kiyoshi Kitagawa, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Spike Wilner Trio; Abraham Burton Quartet & After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

"...among human beings jealousy ranks distinctly as a weakness; a trademark of small minds; a property of all small minds, yet a property which even the smallest is ashamed of; and when accused of its possession will lyingly deny it and resent the accusation as an insult." —Mark Twain

**Friday, December 22**
- Spanish Harlem Orchestra; Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
- Sherman Irby: A New Christmas Story; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdw.
- Chris Botti; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Klea Blackhurst, Jim Caruso & Billy Stritch In “A Swingin’ Birdland Christmas”; Freddy Cole Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny Barron Trio - Kenny Barron, Piano; Kiyoshi Kitagawa, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Eddie Allen Quintet; Metta Quintet; Corey Wallace Dubtet “After-hours”, Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

**Saturday, December 23**
- Spanish Harlem Orchestra; Jazz Standard, 7:30, 9:30 PM. 116 E. 27th.
- Sherman Irby: A New Christmas Story; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdw.
- Chris Botti; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Klea Blackhurst; Jim Caruso & Billy Stritch In “A Swingin’ Birdland Christmas”; Freddy Cole Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny Barron Trio - Kenny Barron, Piano; Kiyoshi Kitagawa, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Small’s Showcase; Sam Raderman Trio; Eddie Allen Quintet; Metta Quintet; Philip Harper Quintet; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

**Sunday, December 24**
- Sherman Irby: A New Christmas Story; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Ctr, 60th & Bdw.
- Chris Botti; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Klea Blackhurst; Jim Caruso & Billy Stritch In “A Swingin’ Birdland Christmas”; Freddy Cole Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny Barron Trio - Kenny Barron, Piano; Kiyoshi Kitagawa, Bass; Johnathan Blake, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Vocal Masterclass with Marion Cowings; Robert Edwards - After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

**Monday, December 25**
- Chris Botti; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Klea Blackhurst; Jim Caruso & Billy Stritch In “A Swingin’ Birdland Christmas”; Freddy Cole Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Christmas With The Bad Plus - Reid Anderson, Bass; Ethan Iversen, Piano; Dave King, Drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Fabien Map Quartet; Jonathan Barber Group & After-hours Jam Session; Robert Edwards - After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
Frank Foster

“the talent to perform jazz music is one of the most beautiful gifts of God”

Interview by Eric Nemeyer
Photo by Joe Patitucci

FF: It was a great pleasure working with him, because our styles...In spite of the fact that a lot of people say, “Oh, yeah. Y’all sound just alike!”...They weren’t really listening, because Frank Wess and I are worlds apart in style. His style is more adaptable for romantic ballads, and Basie realized this, and used him in that context. But, it’s very good working with him, because both of us insist on a top-notch rhythm section. And both of us are composers, and we offer a different style, different approaches to writing and arranging.

FF: When you had the 12-piece band in high school, were you arranging for that band?

FF: Yes, I wrote all the arrangements for the band.

“The things I admired about [Coltrane’s] playing —his harmonic awareness, and that sort of “sheets of sound” approach—I fell in love with the ‘sheets of sound’ thing, and I started just emulating that. The ‘sheets of sound’ being long, sweeping, almost glissando-like combinations of notes, based on a certain chord or a certain scale. I really fell in love with that approach…”

really, I had the thing happening on the fast tunes. And Frank was more adept at playing medium tempo tunes and ballads. And, whereas I eventually learned how to play a ballad, I really was more at home on faster songs, faster tempos. So, when we worked together, we were sort of a very good complement to one another. We were able to use a broad range of songs, from slow to fast, and where he shone—I didn’t get in his way, and where I shone—he didn’t get in my way. And of course, I played tenor and soprano, he played tenor and flute, so we had at least a three dimensional thing happening, with three instruments represented...And if he felt like playing some alto, he would do that. But of course, his first love is the tenor, as far as saxophones are concerned; he only played alto out of necessity, with the Basie Orchestra. But, both of us are composers, and we offer a different style, different approaches to writing and arranging.

JI: Could you provide a brief synopsis of your career highlights?

Frank Foster: My career actually began in Cincinnati. I had my own 12-piece band my senior year in high school. I just worked local dances around school. I played with dance bands around town; the first group, with a name you’d be familiar with, would be Snooky Young. That was after my college days. I left school and went to Detroit and worked with Snooky for part of a year, until I got drafted into the Army. After I came out of the Army, of course I spent eleven years with Count Basie, from 1953 to 1964. During that time, I wrote many arrangements for him and I met just about everybody in the music field. After leaving Basie in 1964, I freelanced around New York City. I had moved to New York when I began working with Basie. I was out of the Basie Orchestra for 22 years, from 1964 to 1986. During that time, I worked with various groups, from Elvin Jones Quintet, Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra...I worked a short period with the Woody Herman Orchestra, and a very short period with the Lloyd Price band. I recorded with a lot of folks.

JI: You’ve worked with some really great people. Could you comment on what it was like working with them, and if you could contribute a story or two, and how you might have, or not have, adjusted your style? For example, you and Frank Wess worked together on a number of albums.

JI: When you had the 12-piece band in high school, were you arranging for that band?

JI: How did you begin studying arranging? Obviously, at that time they didn’t have the scores and the materials they have now. Were you transcribing things, or...?
(chuckles) So I just started arranging on my own, without any formal lessons—just from listening.

JI: The Basie band—obviously they had a certain style, a certain instrumentation. How did that begin to impact or influence your compositional and your improvisational approach as a player?

FF: The keynote of the whole Basie orchestral theme was simplicity—and swing. So, I didn’t write too many elaborate orchestrations with Basie. I kept them very simple in terms of thematic content and harmony, although I learned a lot about harmony from listening to other arrangers, like Thad Jones and Ernie Wilkins…and Benny Carter.

JI: Was Thad doing a lot more arranging prior to the time that you started contributing to the Basie band?

FF: No, Thad didn’t do a lot of arranging; he did a few things. He has an extensive knowledge of the art of arranging and his compositions, his arrangements, were very effective. I guess, in terms of the amount of arranging, I did more, and Thad did a little less, and Frank Wess did even less. But they were just as expert, if not more...

JI: You play alto, and you play tenor. Was that always the case, from high school on?

FF: No. I played alto until my second year of college, and at that time they were short of tenor players and had an abundance of alto players, so I switched to tenor. And, I haven’t played alto since, except on a few occasions. As my style of playing became more adaptable to the tenor, I just put the alto down altogether.

JI: Have you found that, over the years, as you developed your sound on tenor, and the things that you were doing, that that was influencing your arranging style?

FF: Not so much. When you’re arranging, you have to think of all the instruments, their properties and their qualities, their mechanics....

JI: From live performances that I’ve seen, and on your recordings, it’s apparent that you’ve been influenced by some of the other tenor players who were around, such as John Coltrane. Would that be safe to say?

FF: Oh, yes. I was influenced by John Coltrane, Wardell Gray, Dexter Gordon, Don Byas… I guess those were my main influences on tenor saxophone once I switched.

JI: When you heard John Coltrane, and began to be interested in his work, how did you go about studying his music? How did you assimilate it into your own playing?

FF: The things I admired about his playing—his harmonic awareness, and that sort of “sheets of sound” approach—I fell in love with the “sheets of sound” thing, and I started just emulating that. The “sheets of sound” being long, sweeping, almost glissando-like combinations of notes, based on a certain chord or a certain scale. I really fell in love with that approach… I wasn’t drawn to musicians of any ilk, I could—n’t shake it. Almost everything I played was Charlie Parker-ish, and earlier I had been influenced by Johnny Hodges, and Willie Smith, and Benny Carter, until Charlie Parker came along and he wiped everything out of the way. But I never got into transcribing solos, even now, when that seems to be a big part of the jazzed program—transcribing, analyzing.

JI: You raise an interesting point. In years past, you could go down to the clubs, and sit in and listen in, and it was all in a live or impromptu

(Continued on page 22)

Frank Foster

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Frank Foster

(Continued from page 21)

setting, where the music was evolving. And now, it’s moved from that...into the classroom, which gives people the opportunity to develop their technique to some astonishing level ... Could you comment on that?

FF: Yes. My only classrooms were the dance-halls and the nightclubs...I would stand right close to the saxophone section, or sit under the lead alto player or the solo tenor player, and absorb what he was doing. I think that, in a sense, is better than all this classroom activity. We seem to be producing generations of derivative players...only one in ten is really developing an individual style, and the rest of them almost seem like clones.

JI: How do you see, if there is one, a way out of that dilemma?

FF: I don’t know if there is a way out of it...I don’t think we’ll ever go back in time to a less complicated era. You know, we’ve got television, we’ve got computers, and we’re able to do so much with technology—and people get hung up on technology. Right now, I’m sitting at a computer, writing out a score. I just don’t think we’re going to be able to return to the so-called Stone Age of jazz (chuckles), where the principal activity is sitting up under someone, live. Thank God, we still have some jazz clubs left, and people can do that. And, we have these situations where Monday night bands or Tuesday night bands can play; but back when I was coming up, every week I heard a different band, in the same dancehall. You don’t have traveling bands coming through like that anymore.

JI: Given that Americans are kind of moved by what’s “in the moment,” and things come and go, and everybody wants instant relief from pain, and fast learning...Someone recently said, “Well, jazz used to be—what’s Charlie Parker, or John Coltrane, or Miles Davis gonna do next? And now, it’s who’s gonna be the next Miles Davis, or the next Charlie Parker?”...instead of observing, and taking a liking to, and appreciating the ongoing growth of any musician’s music and career. Do you have a perspective on that?

FF: Well, I’m not looking for the “next” Charlie Parker, or John Coltrane, or Miles Davis. I’m just looking for somebody who’s going to come along with a thing of his or her own that will inspire me not to liken that person to Charlie Parker, or Coltrane, or Monk or Miles...

JI: Rather, to enjoy their original voice, which is the most important non-musical thing is to maintain physical and mental health, and not become involved with drugs, thinking that drugs will help them perform, or will enhance their performance.”

FF: Yes. And, see, the media and some of the critics—I don’t know, if they’ve got this mental-ity of ... who’s going to come out with something that will represent a natural evolutional development of jazz, in which it still is creative, and still is spontaneous, and still is applicable, and relevant, and still contains those elements which always characterize jazz ... the element of swing, the feeling for the blues...I would like to think: devoid of electronics. I would hate to see jazz move totally over into the world of electronics, and have somebody say, well, the next great person is gonna be the one who does something different on a synthesizer. I don’t wanna hear that. You know, for how many decades did I grow up with acoustic music? And then, suddenly I was assaulted by electronics. And people say it’s getting to the point when you can’t tell the difference between acoustic instruments, as they have been known to be, and so-called electronic imitations. And I was distressed—I love classical music, European classical music—and I was distressed by the fact that they say: “Well, we’re mixing synthesizer with the symphony orchestra, and we’re partly electronifying (chuckles) the symphony orchestra.” And I said, Oh, man, why does this have to be? Why can’t we keep this acoustic purity somewhere in this music? So, as far as I’m concerned, I don’t want to hear about the next great jazz person being somebody who’s heavily electronified! I want to hear what somebody’s gonna do with the alto saxophone, the tenor saxophone, the trumpet, the guitar, the trombone, the acoustic piano, as they have always been.

JI: What do you think are the most important non-musical things musicians need to learn in order to remain happy, and balanced, and be successful?

FF: The most important non-musical thing is to maintain physical and mental health, and not become involved with drugs, thinking that drugs will help them perform, or will enhance their performance. Now, so many musicians got hung up in the drug thing, and it ended the lives, of many great musicians. And, it killed the careers of musicians, who never even got to be heard from in the mainstream. I knew musicians in Detroit who, if they hadn’t gotten hung up on drugs, and got to New York, and got to the mainstream, and recording, and performing throughout the world, they would have been as big names as some of those who are out there now. And, of course, there are great names who were just brought down by drugs. I won’t even mention any names....
Frank Foster

FF: I’m not either. I’m referring to a “God-consciousness,” which can be Presbyterian, or Baptist, or none of the above, you know. First of all, the talent to perform music, to compose, arrange, perform, is God-given. God gave everybody in this world something to use for the betterment of mankind, of humankind. Some of us He made musicians, some of us He made carpenters, some of us build houses, or some of us own grocery stores, or whatever. God gave every being born of woman something to use for the betterment of humankind. And, the talent to perform jazz music is one of the most beautiful gifts of God, as far as I’m concerned. Because it’s so much fun (chuckles), it’s so fulfilling and rewarding. When you have done something...When I have created a new piece, a song or a symphony, or whatever—the satisfaction that I feel, even down to enjoying the physical act of writing notes with a pen in hand, is just a great, great feeling. And the feeling of knowing that when somebody hears these notes performed, and the notes come off the paper, and come alive—the enjoyment and fulfillment they’re going to get out of it—that really gives me a real boost. So, that’s the beginning of the spiritual awareness: It’s a God-given talent. And, we’re all supposed to live our lives according to the word of God, and we’re supposed to treat our fellow beings the way we’d like to be treated, simply stated. And if we can play some music for some people, and make them happy, hey, I think that’s doing God’s work.

JI: It’s contrary to the attitude of many of the people and some of the musicians that we all run into in the music business, where sometimes a negative and undeserved behind-the-back criticism, or the competitiveness and lack of cooperation you encounter alienates certain people, and runs contrary to that spirituality that we’re talking about.

FF: Right, right. I agree with that.

JI: We talk about playing a lot, and how important in writing and playing it is to develop harmonic, and melodic, and rhythmical understanding, and of course the other subtleties, such as dynamics and phrasing, and texture, and so on. But there’s an element that a lot of people overlook—they don’t necessarily overlook it, but it doesn’t occupy as much importance—namely, listening. Gary Peacock, in an interview mentioned that if you’re in the mode of deep listening, then the playing will simply take care of itself.

FF: Hmm. Well, I agree with that, at least in part. To that I would add—you’ve got to work to become what you’d want to be, musically. And, listening is a very important part of it. When I do clinics, and workshops, whatever, seminars and discussions around the world at universities and music schools, one of my most important statements to the students is: These two things on either side of your head, known as ears, are your best weapons, and your most important tools in developing whatever you need to develop, as far as jazz is concerned. And that means whether you’re a passive listener, or you’re listening to learn; if you’re listening for enjoyment, or you’re listening to learn various techniques, or listening for analysis, analytical purposes—your ears are the best weapons you have. In addition to ears, I think some talent and feeling for the blues is necessary—I mean for players. Now, for people who just want to be part of our audience, listening is very important because listening—really, truly listening—develops your faculties, so that you become a wonderful fan of the music (chuckles)...and, we need fans! This music is not...I mean, jazz is not elevator music. Elevator music forms a certain ambiance for things you do in life, or getting from one place to another, but jazz has stories, messages. And people should develop their listening power, to decipher these messages. And, I think it takes a certain degree of intelligence to listen, even aesthetically, for long periods of time; but I think people are more developed as individuals, who listen attentively. And, who strive...who want something more than just what the media has to offer, in the way of not only music, but in all types of entertainment. If you go with the general public, you’re just going to be fed a bunch of garbage, and you’re gonna eat it all. But if you want something more, you will develop a taste for jazz, for true jazz.

JI: Do you have a favorite funny story about working with Basie, or any particular players you worked with, that you want to share?

FF: Okay. I got a couple of stories. One is an Ella Fitzgerald story. Years ago, when I first worked with Ella, with the Basie band, we were talking in Birdland. We were standing at the bar, havin’ a little drink. And I said: “Miss Fitzgerald, my wife is a big fan of yours. She thinks you’re marvelous, she thinks you’re wonderful, she thinks you’re the greatest that she’s ever heard, and she thinks the sun rises and sets around you...” Every sort of compliment about what my wife thought. So, Ella finally said, “Oh, that’s very nice. Now, how do you feel?” And I said, “Oh, I feel fine.” (heartly chuckles) Naturally, I cleared it up later.

JI: Yeah, I’m sure.

FF: With Basie, there’s this time we were on tour in England. And the band was wearing—we had sort of a tan tux uniform, with gold stripes down the middle of the trousers, and the gold lapels. And coffee brown bow ties, and coffee brown shoes as the uniform. And I, uh, mis-placed my shoes—I think somebody purposely mis-placed them for me! I couldn’t find my uniform shoes. We played this concert; I think it was Manchester, England. Thousands of people in the audience. And the only other shoes I had was a pair of dirty blue and white sneakers—I mean, real dirty! And, so, I had to have something on my feet, so I went out on stage to play, and I had these blue and white sneakers on, with this tan tux and gold lapels. And, I was featured on one of the songs, “Jumpin’ At The Woodside”—you probably know that one. And, when an artist is featured on a solo, that artist usually goes around to the front, down, and there was a mike at the center of the stage in the front. Well, I chose not to play into the mic on my extended featured solo, for obvious reasons, and I just stood up behind my music stand to play my solo. And, Charlie Fowlkes, the late Charlie Fowlkes, who played baritone, sat next to me. And he decided to pull my music stand out from in front of me, revealing me standing there with this classy tux on, and these dirty blue and white sneakers. Everybody in the audience broke up, and the band broke up. Basie fell off the piano stool, laughing! ‘Cause the spotlight was right on me!

JI: Sounds like Charlie Fowlkes and some of the guys in the band knew it was going to happen in advance!

FF: It sounds like they did, yeah....But, I played one hell of a solo!

JI: So they forgot about the sneakers...! What words of wisdom have you received from a teacher or a mentor or is there a quotation, or a fragment of wisdom that’s inspired you, or that you abide by?

FF: Well, I remember, somebody told me a long time ago: “Never get satisfied with yourself, kid. ‘Cause the minute you think you’re the greatest, you’re just going to be fed a bunch of garbage, and you’re gonna eat it all. But if you want something more, you will develop a taste for jazz, for true jazz.

JI: Frank Foster

"...the talent to perform music, to compose, arrange, perform, is God-given. God gave everybody in this world something to use for the betterment of mankind, of humankind. Some of us He made musicians, some of us He made carpenters ..."
Ted Nash
Commitment, Dedication, Challenges, Growth

New York Youth Symphony
Ted Nash Extended Works
Jazz At Lincoln Center, Dizzy’s Club, December 11

Interview by Eric Nemeyer

JI: Talk a little bit about your life in New York City and how you’re able to stay balanced among the hustle and bustle and noise and so on.

TN: I lived in Brooklyn for a while. I moved here when I was eighteen. I was a bit sure of myself, a little cocky — because things seemed to go so easily for me when I was young. In Los Angeles, people seemed to care that I was young, and they thought that was interesting. “Wow, he plays great for somebody who’s seventeen or sixteen or whatever.” I was getting gigs, and then it was time to come to New York where the people were serious about music—jazz. This is where everybody was. This is where all my heroes lived. So I moved to the city and I had gotten an attitude. And people were like, “Hey, you see that little line going around, all the way around the building and down the street? Get in the back of that line, that’s where you belong.” I learned quickly. This was before the young lion thing too, so I didn’t get the benefit of that vernacular. But I realized that I had to work. There was so much still to do and to work hard. I got a little bit side-tracked I think in my first few years in New York. It wasn’t anything specific. It wasn’t like drugs or alcohol. I was in a relationship that was just not very supportive of what I did—and I didn’t practice enough and I didn’t write enough music. I did gigs and I kept working and playing with think in my mid 30s or so I started to really investigate composition. I realized that playing your own music was important. It really helped identify you. Again, I felt very young at it. I realized that my favorite projects are those where I’ve done a lot of orchestrating or composing. Living in the city—I’m pretty relaxed with it. It doesn’t matter how active, or crazy, or loud, energetic the city is. I maintain an even energy level for myself. I do have a cabin that’s out in Pennsylvania, in Wayne County—the Northeast tip of Wayne County in the upper Delaware area. I’ve got ten acres of wooded property and a log cabin and a piano, and it’s the polar opposite of being in the city. So I have the best of both worlds. I did most of the Chakra [album] writing out there in the cabin. I enjoy being in the city. I’m not doing a lot of in-town work. I used to do Broadway shows. I did some studio work. I used to do a lot of private parties and things back when I was in my 20s and 30s. Even in my 40s I was still doing Broadway shows because I needed to earn a living. Now I don’t need to do any of that work. I realize that most of the work that I do I could get on a plane and come here and do, or be on the road. So in the back of my mind there is the possibility that I may not always be in the city for my permanent place of residence. But I’m still not quite at that point. I like the energy. I think a true extrovert is somebody that thrives on energy of other people. That’s why you see a lot of people going to a café, a coffee shop and sitting and doing their homework or doing their work. It’s not like they’re engaged with anybody but they just love the energy of people around them and it helps them produce. I do get that.

“...the commitment also means that we’ll get called for things that we really want to do and we have to say no. That’s what a commitment is. You are that dedicated to something. I think that’s a challenge at times”

bands, but I feel like I just missed a few years there where I could have been developing more and achieving more creatively. I had a rebirth in my late 20s where I had started to really discover music that I had never heard before, and started to develop more in my personal way of playing, and getting away from sounding like everybody that I liked. Then starting in my 30s, I

JI: How was he conflicted?

TN: He saw the band as an opportunity. He was in the band originally when Thad and Mel founded the band in the mid 1960s and wrote some of the early music. Then he saw it as an extension of his own creativity, as an opportunity to explore new sides of himself. But I think some people felt that it was at their expense. They didn’t necessarily want to play music that was so free. So there was resistance from the band. I think Bob was conflicted because he wanted to stay there. He loved Mel. He loved a lot of the guys in the band. He loved the opportunity. Yet he felt like people weren’t digging the music enough. So he always felt bad. More and more he would sow up and you could tell that he was feeling insecure about the music. He felt like he wasn’t getting support. Not too long after that, he moved to Rotterdam where he felt that people understood his music better or something.

JI: Talk about the kinds of study and investigation you did as you began to pursue your interest in composition.

TN: Being in the Mel Lewis band for ten years, I heard Thad Jones and Bob Brookmeyer in particular. I studied their scores so I got my basics about orchestrating for a big band kind of through that. As I started to do projects that involved string quartets, or an accordion, I would study the music in which those instruments were featured — say, Bartok’s String Quartet. So I bought the score to that and I brought it on the road with me. I battled through trying to understand a lot of that music. I got particularly involved with tango, loved listening to Piazzolla and nouveau tango stuff and very old tango. The Jazz Composers Collective is a group I was a part of back in mid 90s. For about 13 years we did five concerts a year, and we always were featured on one of the concert. That was the opportunity to push myself – and to come up with something new. That’s where I came up with some of the ideas that I really like with my small band stuff.

JI: I really liked that album the Mel Lewis and Brookmeyer did with the big band in the late 70’s. I think it had a blue cover and it had all these great charts by Bob Brookmeyer.

TN: I joined the band just after that record came out. Tom Harrell was in it. Dick Oatts had a feature called “Make Me Smile.” Steve Coleman or Kenny Garrett had been playing with the band. I used to sub for Steve. The chair opened up and Dick Oatts asked me to join. Brookmeyer was the musical director at the time and we played a lot of that music. He wrote more music that was very challenging, and kind of went away from Thad’s more traditional way. A lot of guys in the band loved it, and a lot of guys in the band resisted it. Bob Brookmeyer was very conflicted and eventually left. He just said I can’t do this anymore.

JI: Talk about your work at Jazz at Lincoln Center, Dizzy’s Club, December 11

(Continued on page 26)
Ted Nash

(Continued from page 24)

year celebrating Duke’s [Ellington] Centennial and doing of just Duke’s music. We didn’t do anything else that entire year but Duke. So it really did feel like a repertory orchestra. I wouldn’t trade that year for anything because I learned a hell of a lot about not only Duke, but about music. The band still had a bit of reputation of being a repertory band in that it started out that way. But now the majority of what we do is new music or original music, or music written by cats in the band. The direction of the band has certainly changed in the last three, four, five years. There was a point when I felt like maybe my contribution to the band was through. I wasn’t really giving anything to the band that they needed necessarily and I almost left. I’m glad I didn’t—because now I feel very involved with that direction. I write a lot of music. Wynton is so wonderful to work for. He’s always encouraging us to write, to find our own voice, to always be honest in the music. I think people are starting to learn a little bit about Wynton in that he feels a tremendous responsibility for keeping jazz alive. He has a strong mission to make that sure jazz doesn’t die. Part of that is preserving older music, and part of it is creating newer music. So it all comes together. I feel like all the music is valid. I remember once, a long time ago, I ran into a hero of mine, Dave Liebman. I went to hear him play in Chicago. I remember showing up for a gig and someone said, “Hey, how’s that gig you’re doing with a Duke Ellington Orchestra and the way he encourages members.”

TN: Yes, and Wynton’s a deep thinker. He reads a lot. I’m always learning about things when I’m talking with and hanging out with him. We laugh too because we’re about the same age. We have kids the same age. We have fathers who are musicians. We grew up in the same era listening to the same music. So we have so much in common and yet we didn’t really hook up until the mid-90s. We feel like it would have been interesting if we had met a decade earlier - what that would have been. I’m so glad that I have him next to me a lot of times. He’s a great inspiration.

Ji: Well that’s a good healthy attitude. People who don’t know the inner workings of an organization and often times project their own understandings or misunderstandings onto things. Plus, things don’t remain static. Everyone and everything is always in process – and does not remain stagnant and stay the way it was when it started out. The Jazz at Lincoln Centre Orchestra may have seemed like it was a Duke Ellington repertory band for a year. But things have to start somewhere before they begin to grow and take on the life of the participants and all of the energy that’s evolving and growing on a daily basis.

Ji: What are some of the challenges that you experience in your work if any with Jazz at Lincoln Centre?

TN: It’s a full commitment. We have annual contracts. We’re committed to them. They take up about seven months work out of the year. That’s basically a positive thing—but we also can’t do a lot of other things. So the commitment also means that we’ll get called for things that we really want to do and we have to say no. That’s what a commitment is. You are that dedicated to something. I think that’s a challenge at times because there are things that come up - benefits. So that happens sometimes.

Ji: Everyone is growing and evolving. It sounds like there is a healthy attitude that is a part of the Orchestra and the way he encourages members.

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“Creating a healthy environment in which the band can keep evolving is a responsibility that I have. The band [Jazz At Lincoln Center Orchestra] still had a bit of reputation of being a repertory band in that it started out that way. But now the majority of what we do is new music or original music, or music written by cats in the band ... There was a point when I felt like maybe my contribution to the band was through. I wasn’t really giving anything to the band that they needed necessarily and I almost left. I’m glad I didn’t—because now I feel very involved with that direction. I write a lot of music.”

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Paquito D’Rivera

“It takes a great man, not just a great musician, to try to make other people feel good.”

Interview & Photos by Eric Nemeyer

JI: Tell us about your book.

PR: The book is called Portraits and Landscapes. This is a traveling book. As you know I spend most of my time traveling and watching the landscapes through the windows of the train or bus, and meeting different types of people. I decided to put that in a volume and put it out. It was published in Spanish by Universal but now I’m looking for a publisher in English. I think it could be very interesting book – especially for musicians and people that don’t have a chance to travel. The book covers from Thailand to Buenos Aires to Mexico to Japan, Taiwan, China. There are tales about people whom I’ve had the chance to work with – people like Yo-Yo Ma, Lionel Hampton, Dizzy Gillespie, Cachao, Celia Cruz. I also describe different parts of the world while being with those artists. These are chronicles of my travels.

JI: Are there pictures in the book?

PR: Yes. This is my third book and a very important part of my books are pictures – taken in different parts of the world and with a variety of people and animals that I met in those places. I love animals. So there are a number of pictures of elephants, and big parrots in the Amazon, and dogs.

PR: Yeah, yeah yeah. [laughs]. The cover of the edition in Spanish was taken with a group of baby elephants in Thailand. Seconds after the photo was taken, one of them stole from me a bunch of bananas. [laughs]. I’ve had so much fun traveling around the world that I decided to put it in a book to read about our nomad life.

JI: Could you talk about your association with Lionel Hampton?

PR: The first time I played with Lionel Hampton was at his festival in Moscow, Idaho. For me, it was a dream come true. Lionel Hampton was on the first recording I got, Benny Goodman, Live At Carnegie Hall. So, playing “Memories of You” with Lionel Hampton was a fantastic experience for me. I played many times with him after that – and I always had a lot of fun.

PR: No. Just watching him play was plenty. He loved playing music so much. Somebody told me that one time he was sued for playing too much. He was playing in Las Vegas and they told him he had to play one hour. He would always play an hour and forty five minutes or two hours. Then people didn’t have the chance to gamble. The owners wanted people to be able to gamble. I think it was Frank Wess who told me that Lionel Hampton was then sued for playing too much. Another experience I had playing with Lionel Hampton was in the Jazz Nativity. I was one of the kings, along with Tito Puente and Lionel Hampton. Then we played the closing jam session. Then we all packed our instruments and went downstairs for the party. When we came back upstairs, Lionel Hampton and Tito Puente were playing a duet.

PR: Cachao was a friend of my father back in Havana. He was the reason that I wrote this piece “Conversation with Cachao.” It is written for contrabass, saxophone and symphony orchestra. It was commissioned for the Caramoor Music Festival. I wanted to write a contrabass concerto but they wanted me in the picture. I remember those conversations my father had with Cachao in little cafes, in his office, in central Havana. So I said let’s put this together and dedicate it to Cachao and Tito. My father’s name was Tito. My relationship with Cachao was very warm.

JI: Did you have much opportunity to play with Cachao in Cuba?

PR: He left Cuba when I was very young. He was part of the line of contrabasses for the TV station symphony orchestra. I played a couple of times with the symphony as a soloist. He was known mostly for the dance music that he recorded. But he was a very versatile musician. He played symphonic music, ballet – anything.

JI: Did he provide any guidance or ideas about how he wanted you to play.

PR: No. He had such a great sense of humor. Cachao was a lesson by himself. He was a magnificent contrabassist. He had that grace to play music.

JI: You had a long association with Dizzy Gillespie. Talk about how that began and developed.

PR: There is a chapter in my book called “General Holmes in Havana.” That was the initiation of our friendship. I arrived in my house in Marianao, a suburb of Havana City. I found a paperback with something written on it in kind of a “Spanglish.” It said, “Paquito, we have been looking for you. Don’t disappoint us. – Dizzy Gillespie” I said, “What kind of joke is this?” Then I went to the grocery store around the corner. The guy there said, “Did you receive the note?” I said, “What note? What type of joke is this?” He said, “It’s not a joke. There was guy who came in here – a chubby black guy with these chicks. He was speaking in a new language to you. Don’t disappoint us. – General Holmes” I said, “General Holmes in Havana.” That was the initiation of our friendship. I arrived in my house in Marianao, a suburb of Havana City. I found a paperback with something written on it in kind of a “Spanglish.” It said, “Paquito, we have been looking for you. Don’t disappoint us. – Dizzy Gillespie” I said, “What kind of joke is this?” Then I went to the grocery store around the corner. The guy there said, “Did you receive the note?” I said, “What note? What type of joke is this?” He said, “It’s not a joke. There was guy who came in here – a chubby black guy with these chicks. He was speaking in a new language to you. Don’t disappoint us. – General Holmes” I said, “General Holmes in Havana.” That was the initiation of our friendship.
PR: Did Dizzy Gillespie offer any ideas or suggestions to you?

JI: He was a born teacher. He was always teaching something harmonically or rhythmically. Every day we had something new to learn from him. The way he addressed the audience... Playing with him was like going to school. Sometimes, without saying a word, he would teach you how to play certain phrases and what not to play. That’s an important thing – because sometimes the more important notes are not the ones that you play, but the ones that you leave out. Dizzy was an example of that... of what not to play. He was a master of leaving space for others to shine.

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JI: How did you develop your arranging skills?

PR: By studying scores and reading orchestration books. Don Sebesky’s book. But, mainly listening and comparing with the score. Maurice Ravel, Kodaly, and the arrangers for Stan Kenton, like Pete Rugolo, Pete Russo, Johnny Richards, Chico O’Farrill and of course, Thad Jones. I think Stan Kenton has been very underrated for the past 30 or 40 years. I think he is one of the Big Band titans. He knew how to surround himself with great arrangers. I never made a living as an arranger. I do it because I like it. But, I learned a lot from an Argentinian guy who lives in New York for many years, named Carlos Franzetti. He is a master of the colors. He was a sarcastic comment to him, and then tried to pinch him to see what he had to say. We were talking about sight reading music, I said something to provoke him. I said, “Dizzy, I heard that Charlie Parker played by ear, that he didn’t read music.” Dizzy became very serious and said, “That is a big lie.” I said that some people play pretty good without reading. He said, “Not that way. For you to play like Charlie Parker, you want to know what the hell you’re doing.” I agree with him. I think that reading music is very important – as important as knowing how to play by ear. First of all, it saves a lot of time in the studio. When you are able to have a guide to show you where you are going... You can play in small groups without reading music. But when you play in a large ensemble, it is impossible to organize without reading music. Dizzy was very aware of that. There is no reason not to be able to read music. That is like asking me to read the New York Times for you. Read it yourself! Reading music is an asset. It’s a blessing. Improvising is also a blessing. When you combine both you are in heaven.”

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JI: Could you talk about your recent album Paquito D’Rivera Tango Jazz?

PR: There was a Tango concert at Jazz At Lincoln Center. The musical director was Pablo Aslan, the great Argentinian bass player. They called me to be the guest artist. They imported the musicians from Argentina, Uruguay, a bandoneon player – the one jazz bandoneon player, Michael Zisman. He is such an impressive player because he gets the bebop language into the Tango thing. When I heard the reaction, we tried to record it live at Lincoln Center. Sometimes it is more important to listen than to play. So I learned from the way they played the Tango. I was impressed with the results. We got permission and put out the CD.

JI: Could you talk about your other current album, Pan Americana.

PR: Pan Americana was commissioned by Jazz At Lincoln Center ten years ago. The piece featured Nicholas Payton and myself. I remembered the enormous contribution of Latin-American musicians to the jazz language. Then they put together this suite – and the lyrics were written by Annie Colina. She has been in exile for 50 years and she is here in New Jersey. The Pan Americana Suite is an homage to the entire continent – the entire Americas. It puts together instruments from the entire continent – the marimba from Central America, the steel pan from the Caribbean, the harp from the Andes, and the bandoneon from Argentina.

JI: What kind of practice do you do on a daily basis to maintain your skills?

PR: The saxophone is a very noble instrument. When you stay in good shape with the clarinet, you practically don’t have to play the saxophone too much. The clarinet demands much more attention. That’s why there are so few of us around. I don’t play the alto sax too much at home. I have the clarinet assembled all the time, and it’s over there in the corner. Whenever I have a chance I practice scales. These days I don’t have too much time to practice because I’m doing so many things. I’m traveling and writing. It’s not that the saxophone is an easy instrument. There is no such thing. But staying in shape on the clarinet keeps you in shape on the sax. Frank Wess said the clarinet was invented by five men that never met. Usually I use a book of exercises that belonged to my father. The exercises keep me in good shape. I practice certain tonguing exercises in all keys and portamentos – long jumps. They are very good for the lips to keep you in good shape. I don’t have a routine to practice anymore. I used to have one when I was a kid.

JI: What is special about the Rossi Clarinet that you play?

PR: I have five of them – one in A, one in C and three in Bb. I love that instrument. It makes your life easier. I play a rosewood instrument. Luis Rossi is a soloist also. He made that instrument for the soloist – so it is very well built instrument. He has also continued to improve the instrument. The wood is carved differently. The instrument is longer and the barrel is shorter. The sound of the instrument is very pure and mellow. I try to have a dark sound and this instrument gives it to me.

JI: What have you observed about leadership from the influential players with whom you have worked.

PR: I try to learn constantly so I absorbed those things naturally. I am a better leader though since I had the chance to work with these lead-
ers, like Lionel Hampton, Dizzy Gillespie. Even when Lionel was almost 100 years old, he didn’t want to stop playing. That is a great example. It was the same thing with Tito Puente – the love for what we do, the dedication.

PR: One of my favorite quotations about business was something that Dizzy said which went something like: “I love the music but at the end of the day I want to be paid.” Could you talk about some of your business perspectives?

PR: I am not a very good businessman. But I have a good manager. There is no rule. Sometimes you have to do things for no money, and even have to pay to do something – for a good cause. I like what Dizzy said that you quoted. We make a living out of music and we don’t do anything else. I think it is important for your self-respect to put a price on your work – because this is work. It doesn’t look like work to other people, but this is work. We have to practice, we have to pay for [instrument] repairs, we have to dress correctly. That’s another thing that has disappeared from the jazz music – and I hate it. Sometimes musicians dress for a performance as if they are just going to the grocery store at the corner or something. You have to be on some musicians, because they dress like sh*t – except the Wynton Marsalis Orchestra. Someone who has changed his dress habits for the best is Danilo Perez. The first time that he was going to play with me at Carnegie Hall, he was wearing a pair of huaraches – very rustic shoes that the Mexicans sell in the streets for two or three or four dollars. It is a yellow shoe with the sole made out of a tire. He was wearing something similar to a tuxedo with the huaraches. He was very young – maybe 20 years old. My wife, Brenda told him: “You are not going on stage at Carnegie Hall with those huaraches man.” He told her he didn’t have any other shoes. She said: “You know we are in New York, and on every corner there is a shoe store. So you better go and buy a couple of pairs because we are not going to let you go on stage this way. And, you have to comb your hair.” Ever since then he has become a very well-dressed musician – very elegant. We are very proud that we kind of initiated that for him. When you are well dressed look better on stage and the music comes out better. You don’t have to wear tuxedos all the time, but clothing has to be part of your profession.

JI: What are some of the things you have discovered about human nature.

PR: Some people have the opinion that you can be on bad terms with the drummer or the pianist and the quality of the music will have nothing to do with that. I don’t agree with that. Maybe you can behave that way in a big band or in a symphony orchestra. The guy playing the third bass chair may have nothing to do with the tympanist. But when you are playing this type of music, the better the relationships we have in the band, the better the music is going to sound. It reflects in the music when the musicians don’t like each other. Many years ago, I got rid of any negative elements in my band. I don’t like negative people. I’m so happy that I achieved that – with the band that I have for the last 20 years. They get along with each other. If there is a problem – any type of problem, we can solve it among ourselves, like in a family …. Even better than in a family. If we have a problem we talk about it and try to solve it. We really like and admire each other.

JI: A few months ago we ran interviews with a number of educators. Michael Mossman made a comment about students that really applies for us all: “what determines a student’s [or a person’s] success is whether they decide to see the world as a place of abundance, where the success of others is to be applauded and emulated, or a place of scarcity, where the success of others is to be feared.”

PR: That takes a nice man like Michael Mossman to think that way. Most negative people don’t know how to do that. It takes a great man, not just a great musician, to try to make other people feel good.

JI: In Quantum physics, it is understood that particles change when observed. Wayne Dyer phrased it that when you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change. If we view someone in a positive, friendly way, that’s often what we get in return.

PR: James Moody had a great line. He said, “If your telephone doesn’t ring, it’s me.” [laughs]

JI: With everyone in a business like music or entertainment wanting attention, how do you avoid letting your ego get out of control?

PR: Ego is something that is very important. It keeps you running, with the desire and to aspire to do things. The problem with the ego is like

“Dizzy Gillespie was a born teacher. He was always teaching something harmonically or rhythmically. Every day we had something new to learn from him. The way he addressed the audience…. Playing with him was like going to school. Sometimes, without saying a word, he would teach you how to play certain phrases and what not to play. That’s an important thing – because sometimes the more important notes are not the ones that you play, but the ones that you leave out.”
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