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Ken Peplowski

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Tenor saxophonist Odean Pope (b. October 24, 1938; Ninety-Six, South Carolina) is best known for his greater than two decade membership in the Max Roach Quartet, as well as for his unique voice on his instrument. A master of circular breathing and multiphonics, Pope’s trademark ‘foghorn’ blast reaches deep into the soul of the listener. Heavily influenced by the sounds of the Southern Baptist church choir of his youth, Pope moved with his parents to Philadelphia at age ten where he found an extremely jazz rich territory with future jazz legends such as John Coltrane, Lee Morgan, Benny Golson, Jymie Merritt, Jimmy Garrison, Philly Joe Jones, the Heath Brothers, Archie Shepp, McCoy Tyner and Bobby Timmons. He was especially influenced by the obscure and eccentric pianist Hasaan Ibn Ali, who also caught the attention of Max Roach. Pope was a member of the Philadelphia group Catalyst in the early to mid-’70s, which merged jazz and funk and presaged the work of later jazz fusion bands. He is an accomplished leader with a number of recordings by his unique Saxophone Choir band, which features nine saxophones and a rhythm section, as well as performing in quartet and trio settings. A strong composer, his songs have memorable melodies and are augmented with his superior arranger skills. Pope was the 2017 recipient of the Mid Atlantic Living Legend Award. This interview took place on January 19, 2018 at his home in the Olney section of Philadelphia.

Jazz Inside Magazine: Your first name is regularly misspelled as Odeon in the press. It’s even printed that way on the disc of your recording Ninety-Six [Enja, 1996].

Interview and photo by Ken Weiss

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Jazz Inside Magazine: Your first name is regularly misspelled as Odeon in the press. It’s even printed that way on the disc of your recording Ninety-Six [Enja, 1996].

Odean Pope: For the most part, that started in Europe.

JI: I looked up odeon. Do you know what it means? Ironically, odeon derives from ancient Greek and stands for a building used for musical performances. That’s so very apropos.

OP: I didn’t know that.

JI: Published reviews of your work over the past 15-years or so typically open with something to the effect that you are, “One of the most underappreciated jazz musicians of your generation.” How do you explain that?

OP: I think mainly because all my peers - Lee Morgan, the Heath brothers, Bobby Timmons, and the list goes on, went to New York in the mid-'50s. I went to New York along with them but I decided to come back to Philadelphia and I think that’s the main reason I didn’t get the recognition I should have gotten. The only person I know who got some international recognition while living in Philadelphia was Grover Washington Jr..

JI: Many musicians use circular breathing and multiphonics [playing several pitches at once] but you arguably use these techniques more than anyone else. Explain your interest in these techniques and how you see them fitting into your music.

OP: The interesting thing about circular breathing is it allows one to play long phrases and to generate high intensity to create ideas and things that you have acquired that takes an amount of articulation and expression to play, and to play long phrases. The way I use circular breathing is to play long phrases as opposed to playing short phrases and it allows me to play, maybe, two choruses without taking a breath. I can play for half an hour without taking a breath. The person who really taught me circular breathing was a piano player by the name of Eddie Green when we played together in the group Catalyst. He used to play the melodica and used circular breathing. All of the people I used to ask before him would tell me all kinds of different ways which were not right. I asked Rahsaan Roland Kirk and we talked about circular breathing but I never got the full understanding of it from him. Fortunately, Eddie Green knew the process and technique of circular breathing [and shared it with me].

JI: So Rahsaan Roland Kirk didn’t want you to know how to do it?

OP: Well, you said that.

JI: How about your use of multiphonics?

OP: That’s a very detailed issue, nothing to do with New York, but just the scene that was happening during that period so I decided to come back to Philadelphia.

JI: Why did you choose to remain in Philadelphia?

OP: I think my health is more important. I chose my health over recognition because, as you know, most of my peers have left the planet.

JI: When asked if you thought of yourself as a hard bop or free jazz player in the past you answered, “I like to think of myself as one of the forerunners of ‘the spirit.’” Would you explain that?

OP: To be one of the forerunners of ‘the spirit’ means to me that I’m always striving to be the frontrunner of what’s happening today. Not the past, but the present, as well as future. I feel that I’ve studied so many different kinds of concepts and I’ve had the opportunity to sit on bandstands, be at recording studios, and to talk to so many great musicians, that I have acquired quite a bit of knowledge in terms of what direction I’m going to go into. Being a frontrunner means that you are one of the ones who is reaching certain aspects of your craft being number one.

JI: Finding your own unique voice on the saxophone was a career quest for you and you certainly accomplished that. How did you pursue that goal?

OP: It’s very strange because ironically, when I was 25, I took all the records and recordings out of my house. I just wanted to concentrate for the next few years [on my sound]. I thought maybe it would take one year but it ended up taking me at least 10 years to get a sense of what I wanted my sound to be, as opposed to going the traditional way of sounding like someone else. I was really determine to reach my own voice.

JI: When Trane got the opportunity to go with Miles Davis, he asked me to replace him [in Jimmy Smith’s group]. I told him, ‘You’ve got to be kidding me,’ because I was no way ready to play with Jimmy Smith. He said, ‘Look, don’t never use the word can’t. Always say I can do it. Take that word can’t out of your vocabulary.’ I practiced with him on Jimmy Smith’s repertoire and he gave me very good information on all the tunes.

JI: What inspired you to move from hard bop to a more free-jazz style?

OP: Many musicians use circular breathing and multiphonics [playing several pitches at once] but you arguably use these techniques more than anyone else. Explain your interest in these techniques and how you see them fitting into your music.

OP: I think mainly because all my peers - Lee Morgan, the Heath brothers, Bobby Timmons, and the list goes on, went to New York in the mid-'50s. I went to New York along with them but I decided to come back to Philadelphia and I think that’s the main reason I didn’t get the recognition I should have gotten. The only person I know who got some international recognition while living in Philadelphia was Grover Washington Jr..

JI: How important is public recognition to you?

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“[Hasaan] did make a recording under his own name in 1965 with me and [bassist] Art Davis and [drummer] Khalil Madi but it was never released. Now there’s some talk about releasing it ... they say that tape was lost in a fire but recently somebody found the tape and it may be released. I was contacted by Atlantic Records about that since I’m the only living artist from the recording session. That was the only recording date that Hassan ever had ...”
and Walnut and he would bring an out of town star like Sonny Stitt or Gene Ammons and use the rhythm section from Philadelphia with people like Tootie Heath, Jimmy Garrison and Sam Dockery. This particular night, Lee Morgan, I think he had just turned 17, and we went down to the jam session. Sonny Stitt was the guest artist for that particular night and Lee Morgan, who had brought his horn, asked Sonny Stitt if it was possible for him to play something and he said, “Yes, come on up. So what do you want to play?” and before Lee Morgan could say anything, Stitt said, “Let’s play “Cherokee.” I’ll play the melody and you play the solo,” not knowing that he was going to play, instead of playing the melody in B Flat Concert, which is the standard, he played it a half step above, which is B Concert. So Stitt played the melody for “Cherokee” in B Concert and when it came to the solo, Lee Morgan was unaware that it was in the key of B and he started sputtering, sputtering, and finally he just put his horn down. That was a very embarrassing moment for Lee and when that happened, we all started playing “Cherokee” starting in B Flat and going through all the keys. So that was our study for the next couple years. Sonny Stitt sent us to school to be able to play a combination of different keys.

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of different keys.

JI: Pianist Hasaan Ibn Ali had the most significant early influence on you around 1960-65.

OP: One day when I was around 13, I was in my parent’s basement practicing and somebody knocked on the window and I opened it and he said, “My name is Hasaan Ibn Ali. What are the possibilities of you coming around to practice with me? Can we get together?” I had not heard of him but I said, “Of course, I like to practice.” So when I first went over to his place, I was so greatly influenced by what he was doing and how he was doing it. I mean he took me by surprise. I just worried him to death. I was there every day. He never had a day job. He would get up in the morning and start playing at 9 o’clock. His father would bring some breakfast to the piano, so between 9 and 9:30 he would eat something, and then he would play from 9:30 to 12. His father would then bring him a little lunch, maybe some fruit to the piano, and he would eat. After that, we’d play a couple games of chess and then we would practice up until 4-5 o’clock. I’d be at his house at a quarter to 9 every morning and we would practice. I’d bring fruit for lunch. His mother was a domestic worker. She would bring him a couple packs of cigarettes. Viceroys was the main brand during that period. She would give him a couple dollars and then he’d get dressed - he always spent the day playing in his bathtub. We both would get dressed and go out to 2 or 3 houses in the community. There were people with pianos in their house who let us play and give us a couple dollars and some hot tea. So this was like our school. We did this for maybe four to five years and then Trane started to come in and we started to do it with Trane but he would never go to the houses with us. He would just practice during the day because he would have other activities during the night that he would do. This was a real learning process for me. To not only be able to learn a lot of tunes, because he’d play a lot of standard compositions and add his own chord structures, and he would pass them on down to me. Most people didn’t feel comfortable playing with Hasaan. There was a place called the Woodbine Club where all the musicians in that period would meet at every Saturday after all the clubs let out at 2:00 AM. They’d all meet there and have a jam session. When Hasaan would get up on the piano, all the horn players would get off the stand. But I was determined that I was going to play with him and that’s why I practiced with him every day so that I could hear his harmonic, rhythmic and melodic structures. Hasaan was one of the greatest. I’ve never heard a piano player play like Hasaan. He was greatly influenced by Monk, Elmo Hope and Bud Powell, but he had his own identity. I think he had more technique, more flexibility, and his ideas was just like the sea. He had ideas as deep as the sea. I mean I never heard anybody, every day, play like that.

JI: The only way people might know of Hasaan Ibn Ali is by way of the Max Roach recording The Max Roach Trio Featuring the Legendary Hasaan [Atlantic, 1965]. Why didn’t he record under his own name?

OP: He did make a recording under his own name in 1965 with me and [bassist] Art Davis and [drummer] Khalil Madi but it was never released. Now there’s some talk about releasing it. Raheem Roland Kirk was trying to get it released but he passed before it happened. They say that tape was lost in a fire but recently somebody found the tape and it may be released. I was contacted by Atlantic Records about that since I’m the only living artist from the recording session. That was the only recording date that Hassaan ever had and the reason he didn’t get the recognition was because he stayed in Philadelphia. He never went to New York. He was content to stay at his parents’ home and practice every day. Nobody ever gave him gigs except for me when I would get a gig.

JI: So the question remains, what happened to him? He had the backing of a star in Max Roach and had been featured on a major label recording that presented his original compositions.

OP: I think what happened shortly after he did the recording as a leader was that he got incarcerated. He called me up and said, “Odean, I’m not gonna be able to go to the mix session. I’d like you to go mix the L.P.” I told him I would and before the mix date came, he made a telephone call to New York and asked Atlantic Records if they would extend a loan to him. He needed additional money. When they found out that he was incarcerated they just put the LP on the shelf and it never got released. I think that and the influence by other activities other than the music is what really destroyed his whole career. He ended up dying young. I think he was 49.

JI: He got out of prison?

OP: Yes, but his mother and father got burnt up on my birthday at their home on 2406 North Gratz Street on October 24, 1980. He went to one of the recreation centers for the homeless and when he died, they only found my telephone number on his body. They called me and said I was his only contact and asked if I could make the final arrangements for him. So I called [a super fan of Hasaan’s] in Boston and he gave me a thousand dollars to make the last rites for him and that was the end of that.

JI: Hasaan sounds very much like Thelonious Monk on the Roach recording.

OP: Right, but there was a difference if you listen to it carefully. The technique is different. Hasaan had flawless technique. Monk had technique too.
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but he didn’t have the kind of technique like Hasaan. Hasaan could play extremely fast, very complex things, and he had his own identity.

JI: Apparently, Hasaan had a tainted reputation around town and was known to push other pianists from the piano bench so that he could play.

OP: Of course, he was doing that all the time. I witnessed it so many times where we would go to places and he would just walk up on the bandstand and push the piano player off and start playing. And see, they respected him so much they didn’t resist, they would just get up and play. He was known for that.

JI: Is it true that when Hasaan saw that you were also studying oboe he suggested you use some of the oboe fingerings on tenor which, as you mentioned earlier, helped you with difficult overtones and multiphonics?

OP: Yes, he asked me when I was doing the oboe, what fingerings were different on the oboe from the saxophone. I told him about the false fingerings and he said, “Why don’t you apply some of those fingerings to the tenor saxophone.” So that’s when I started getting different sounds on the saxophone, like two or three notes at a time and the “foghorn,” that’s what I was really known for, “foghorn.” He greatly influenced me about doing many things on the saxophone, things that I’m still doing today.

JI: Are those oboe false fingerings that you do a rare technique for saxophone or do others use them?

OP: I’m not saying that I was the only one using them at the time, but I used them from the oboe and then I started using other ones. In fact, there’s a book by Larry Teal on saxophone methods that teaches different fingerings above the altissimo range. But I was studying these things on my own. I was so impressed on what the false oboe fingerings would do on saxophone that I started experimenting and found many, many different fingerings. Some other saxophone players are doing them. James Carter is one of the few doing some of those things. He told me he knew about me when the first Saxophone Choir album [The Saxophone Shop, 1985, Soul Note] came out, which he used to listen to.

JI: What was your early relationship with John Coltrane?

OP: I met him when I was around twelve. I used to go over to his house and we would practice and he would give me different ideas. We would practice scales. He was a person who would do scales for maybe two hours before he did anything else. Nothing but scales, and he still was doing that up until his last days here on the planet. That influenced me and I still do regular scales because when you practice them, it gives you a greater sense of what the pitch might be and how closely you are playing perfectly in tune because the saxophone is a very difficult instrument to play in tune all over the instrument. By practice, you gain a sensation in your fingers and you can get the saxophone to sound very round with all of the details. This morning I played scales for about 90 minutes and I’ll play more later. Scales are mandatory for me.

JI: How did you come to replace Coltrane in the Jimmy Smith band around 1955?

OP: I spent a lot of time with Tranе, practicing with Hasaan Ibn Ali. The gig he got with Jimmy Smith wasn’t a permanent gig. Jimmy just called Tranе to fill up a few tour gigs that he had. So when Tranе got the opportunity to go with Miles Davis, he asked me to replace him. I told him, “You’ve got to be kidding me,” because I was no way ready to play with Jimmy Smith. He said, “Look, don’t never use the word can’t. Always say I can do it. Take that word can’t out of your vocabulary.’ I practiced with him on Jimmy Smith’s repertoire and he gave me very good information on all the tunes. Jimmy had about 15 tunes that he would play over the course of a night and most of the tunes I was able to memorize. I played with Jimmy for close to two months and that was very unique and very educational, not only musically. Jimmy was highly educated in terms of what he wanted to do and how he wanted to do it. He was a genius, I’ve never heard anybody play the organ like him. He was so fluent and original. He was one of the first organists that was swinging. Playing with him for two months gave me a big umbrella to work under and I’m still working under some of those things right now.

JI: What was your experience with Jimmy Smith at that young age? He was known to be demanding.

OP: I knew Jimmy Smith before I worked with him. He worked in town with Don Gardner. I knew him before he played the organ. He was playing a thing called the organum, which was something that you would put on the piano and it would get an organ sound. He was nice to me because I was very young and he saw that I was really trying to do something different as well as trying to play his music.

JI: Bassist Jymie Merritt picked you as an original member of his ensemble The Forerunners in 1962. Would you talk about the intensity of that music?

OP: Even today, every time I play that music it’s like I’m playing it for the first time. The notations, the rhythmic structure, the melodic structure, and the harmonic structure [are unique] and all the musicians are playing a different part and each one has to figure out how to fit their sound into what the others are doing. His music was so different, and it still is today. It’s different from anyone else’s music, it’s very challenging. In fact, [at some point] most of the musicians, except for me and Jymie Merritt, had nervous breakdowns because of the music. One night, I remember, the wife of one of the musicians called me up and said, “Odean, what you all been doing tonight because [my husband] has been sitting up all night, talking to himself?” I told her we had been working on some concepts of the music. I think the music was so demanding, and it required so much discipline and hard work and so much preparation, it put out a lot of stress and if you weren’t really flexible, it could really take you to another place.

JI: You had the opportunity to join Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers?

OP: Art Blakey, shortly after I went with Max, asked me to come with his group but I told him I was working with Max and didn’t want to split.

JI: There’s a good story about the first opportunity you got to play on stage with Max Roach.

OP: [Laughs] That happened at Pep’s in Philadelphia around 1966. Hasaan Ibn Ali and Max Roach were very close. Hasaan used to go up to Max’s house and play and Max would record each session. Hasaan sometimes would show up at unusual times. It could be two o’clock in the morning and he’d want to play the piano, and regardless of what time he showed up, Max would open the door for him and tape record it. On this particular day, Hasaan came to me and said, “I’m giving you a little head’s up. Max is in town next week so why don’t you practice a little bit more and I think you and I go down and we sit in with Max.” I said, “Are you sure about that?” He said, “Odean you’re ready to do that.” So I practiced and practiced and, I’ll never forget this, it was a beautiful Saturday day and Pep’s was packed. What happened was that at the second tune of the first set, Hasaan asked Max if we could play something, which he agreed to. Now Hasaan, of course, could play any tempo including the most ridiculous, fast tempo you could do, which is what Max did. Max said, “We’re going to play “Cherokee” and they started playing really fast. Kenny Dorham looked over to me and said, “Do you know what we’re playing?” I said, “Is it “Cherokee”,” and he said, “You got it. Look, this is the introduction, I’m going to give you the cue when we are supposed to come in.” We played the melody and Kenny said, “I’ll let you take the first solo,” but by time it came my turn to solo, it was so fast that I sputtered and sputtered. I was just reduced so I finally stopped playing. The music was just so intense that it made me tighten up. I had played that song many times but never at that tempo. When I got off the stage I was so embarrassed. All my friends were there. It gave me great incentive. I came home and I studied and practiced, practiced, practiced. I had been playing “Cherokee” but not at that tempo. I practiced with Hasaan and the next time I played for Max, I was able to play that tempo.

JI: You’re best known for your greater than twenty years spent as a member of Max Roach’s quartet but you actually worked with him for about a short period much prior to that in 1967.

OP: Jymie Merritt was working with Max at the time and he recommended me when Max was searching for a tenor player for his quartet. So I went to New York and Max said I had two weeks to learn twelve compositions and that he didn’t want any music on the bandstand. I commuted to New York every day rather than stay there. For two weeks he picked me up at the train station and then took me back to the station. He had a unique system of training the band that I still use at times today. He said to play four measures of the music, repeat it four or five times, and then turn over the
Odean Pope

(Continued from page 10)

music and play it by memory. That worked very well.

JI: Your first stint with Roach only lasted about a year. Why so short?

OP: Right, I played with him at first about one year and then I went back home to study, study, study. I wasn’t really ready to play with him at that time and I told him that. I needed more technique and ideas. When I got back home from ’68 until 1979, I didn’t take hardly any jobs, I just stayed in the basement and practiced. Max called me again in 1979 and asked me to join his new group with Charles Tolliver, Jymie Merritt and Stanley Cowell. So I went to his house and studied the compositions and this time I was more prepared. He tried out a number of saxophonists and I was the one he picked. I worked with him from 1979 until 2002, the last 22 years of his career.

JI: Is it true you almost declined the opportunity to join Roach’s band for the second time in ’79?

OP: Yes, I almost declined. I was still rehearsing with the Forerunners at the time and Jymie Merritt, who’s a very inspirational person, told me around 1978 that he was thinking of leaving Art Blakey to go back with Max Roach who was forming another group. He told me I was ready for Max and he would mention my name to him. In fact, he said that Max had asked how I was doing. Max liked me in 1967 because I was trying to play something different from everyone else and that’s what he told people when they asked why he was keeping me. He heard something different in my playing.

JI: Talk about Max Roach as a leader and his expectations of you.

OP: During my early experience with him, I had just learned to circular breathe but I would just hold the note, I wouldn’t move it. We were at Ronnie Scott’s [Jazz Club in London] and this night the place was packed as always when Max played and I was playing and I just held one note for about four minutes. Max stopped the band and said over the mic, “Odean, if you cannot move that circular breathe and to move it around. I worked on that for the next few months and then all of a sudden it was all there. That was a very embarrassing moment for me.

JI: Would you share some Max Roach memories?

OP: He was a very unique person. He was the kind of guy that was really hard on bass players, not so much Jymie Merritt, but others. When I first played with him he had Calvin Hill on bass and he used to pick on Calvin all the time. I remember one funny thing. We were sitting down for dinner once and he said, “Calvin get up from the table because you don’t have any table manners. You’ve got your napkin on the back of your chair!” Cecil Bridgewater said, “Max, you’ve got your napkin on the back of your chair!” So he was really steamed. If Max would get a little angry with you for some reason he wouldn’t let you solo. We were in East Berlin one night and he told [bassist] Tyrone [Brown] to just play the harmonic concept – which means “don’t worry about it because I’m not gonna let you solo.” The only people that he never messed with a whole lot was Cecil Bridgewater and myself. I remember him and Stanley Cowell getting into a big fight at Ronnie Scott’s. We played Stockholm and it was so beautiful with a big crowd. After the gig was over, Max was overwhelmed by the reception from the audience and he sat down at the piano, singing “Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen” and Jymie Merritt said, “We should leave because when he starts singing that song something is getting ready to happen.” So Charles Tolliver, Jymie Merritt, Stanley Cowell and myself left and went back to the hotel. We were playing chess and talking until suddenly we heard all this rumbling downstairs in the lobby of this beautiful hotel. Max had broken all the windows around the hotel, which was now completely a wreck, and then he went to the river and threw all his money in the river. We went on to Ronnie Scott’s but Max was locked up so Kenny Clarke and Jimmy Heath went and got him out of jail, brought him to the hotel in London, and all night Kenny and Jimmy were praying with him to try to get him together. The next day he had scheduled a rehearsal but Stanley Cowell had not heard about it so he never showed up. That night when Stanley came into the club, Max grabbed Stanley by the neck and they fell on the floor. Stanley didn’t want to hurt him, he could have if he wanted to but he had so much respect for Max that he didn’t. Meanwhile, Max was reaching for my horn to hit Stanley with it but I grabbed his hand off of it. He then grabbed a quart sized beer bottle, broke it, and jabbed it into Stanley’s leg and Stanley’s leg was quite messed up for a while. Those are a few things of what he would do. He was a real character in addition to being the great drummer of any generation. He had some other things going on with him that were unacceptable. I don’t know if he was bipolar but he did some really unusual things at times. If he was around a group of people that really [celebrated him with great applause] that would really take him to some other place. I think he would get so emotional and so caught up with that. One time he wore one outfit for two weeks, traveling and performing in Europe. He was also one of the greatest people and most giving people that I’ve come into contact with. When I was sick in Europe and stayed in a hospital there for seven weeks, he gave my wife a thousand dollars every week that I was gone, and anytime I needed anything he was there for me. He was one of the greatest leaders. He always influenced me to continue on the path that I’m traveling.

JI: There was a period where you traveled with both Roach and Dizzy Gillespie on the road.

OP: There’s a park in London that the queen named in tribute to Max called the Max Roach Park and she set up an extensive tour for the Max Roach Quartet featuring Dizzy Gillespie. We traveled in a van that had everything including a refrigerator, library books, everything you could need was right there. And traveling with Max and Dizzy for about two months in Europe, if you can imagine traveling with two of the greatest forerunners of this and any era, traveling with them, listening to their stories, paying attention to what they’re doing, how they are doing it, how they are approaching you about how to play certain things. Dizzy used to always tell me different things - how to phrase this, how to do this, how to play “Night in Tunisia” a certain way. It was just so much information that after that tour I had so much information to work with, and I’m still working with it. It’s a continuum, it never stops. I’m constantly trying to make that next step and I learned that from Max and Dizzy. It was interesting to see the two of them interact on that tour. We were playing once and Dizzy said, “Max, you’re playing too loud,” and Max would run it down a little bit. Dizzy again said, “Max, I told you you’re playing too loud!” I’m saying this to say that Dizzy was the only person, other than Kenny Clarke, who could talk to Max in a way like that and not have him fly off and start cussing and carrying on. The only two people who I knew who could really hound Max was Dizzy and Kenny Clarke. And during that tour, it was Max’s quartet but Dizzy had more to say about what was going on that Max. Max and Dizzy had a good relationship and could talk to one another.

JI: What was your Abbey Lincoln experience?

OP: Abbey Lincoln was a gem. She was one of the greatest ladies to travel with, she was very giving and never separated herself from the sidemen like most artists do when they get to a certain level. She was always talking to us about issues and was very knowledgeable about the political arena.

JI: During your time with Roach, you also studied at the Paris Conservatory for Music under drummer Kenny Clarke. How did you fit that into your schedule and why take lessons from another drummer while learning under Max Roach?

OP: Kenny Clarke, in a sense, was the first drummer to play the foot pedal and I think Max took that concept from Kenny and added onto what he was doing. Kenny was the first to play independent with the left foot and also play the bass drum with his right and have four things going on at once, which was very different during that time. As well as the bebop concepts and rhythmic concepts, he was teaching that in Paris so every opportunity that I would get, I would take lessons from him. He gave me some valuable information that I’m still using today. He was a very giving man, very sincere. I used to go to Paris [with Max] maybe four times a year and sometimes when we were off I would fly over to Paris for a week to study and go to the Selmer Company to get horns that they would give me. In fact, anytime that I’m in Paris I can still go by the factory and get brand new instruments.

JI: There were periods during your extensive time with Roach when he wasn’t working that much which made life a struggle for you. What did you do to earn money and how close were you to pursuing a different career?

(Continued on page 22)
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**Sunday, June 17**
- Victor Goines Quartet; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Terence Blanchard Featuring The E-Collective; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Manhattan Bridges Orchestra featuring Memo & Jacqueline Acovedo; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Joe Lovano & Dave Douglas With Lawrence Fields, Piano, Linda May Han Oh, Bass, Joey Baron, Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Vocal Masterclass with Marion Cowings; Sasha Perry Trio; Edhd Asherie Trio; Richie Vitale Quintet; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

**Monday, June 18**
- Monday Nights With WBGO, Uptown Tentet; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Mingus Big Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Vanguard Big Band; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Lucas Pino Nonet; Joe Farnsworth Group; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Paquito D’Rivera; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

**Tuesday, June 19**
- Jazztopad Festival Presents: Maciej Obara Quartet Presented In Partnership With The Polish Cultural Institute Of New York; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Django Bates Trio With Peter Eloh, Peter Bruun; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Freddie Cole Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- David Murray & Class Struggle With Craig Harris, Trombone, Mingus Murray, Guitar, Lafayette Gilchrist, Piano, Rashaan Carter, Bass, Russell Carter, Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Robert Edwards Group; Frank Lacy Group; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Victor Wooten With Dennis Chambers, Bob Franceschini; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

**Wednesday, June 20**
- Shame Royston Trio With Special Guests Jaleel Shaw And Lee Hogans Album Release Party; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Django Bates Trio With Peter Eloh, Peter Bruun; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Freddie Cole Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- David Murray & Class Struggle With Craig Harris, Trombone, Mingus Murray, Guitar, Lafayette Gilchrist, Piano, Rashaan Carter, Bass, Russell Carter, Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Nick Finzer Sextet; Harold Mabern Trio; Aaron Seiber “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Victor Wooten With Dennis Chambers, Bob Franceschini; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

**Thursday, June 21**
- Ann Hampton Callaway; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Vincent Centuraria With Helio Alves, Paul Sokolow, Adrianno; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Freddie Cole Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- David Murray & Class Struggle With Craig Harris, Trombone, Mingus Murray, Guitar, Lafayette Gilchrist, Piano, Rashaan Carter, Bass, Russell Carter, Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Frank Perowsky Quartet; Bruce Williams Quartet; Aaf Yuria “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Victor Wooten With Dennis Chambers, Bob Franceschini; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

**Friday, June 22**
- Ann Hampton Callaway; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Vincent Centuraria With Helio Alves, Paul Sokolow, Adrianno; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Birdland Big Band; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- David Murray & Class Struggle With Craig Harris, Trombone, Mingus Murray, Guitar, Lafayette Gilchrist, Piano, Rashaan Carter, Bass, Russell Carter, Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- John Bailey Quartet; Ken Fowser Quintet; Corey Wallace DU3tet “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Victor Wooten With Dennis Chambers, Bob Franceschini; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

**Saturday, June 23**
- Ann Hampton Callaway; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Vincent Centuraria With Helio Alves, Paul Sokolow, Adrianno; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Freddie Cole Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- David Murray & Class Struggle With Craig Harris, Trombone, Mingus Murray, Guitar, Lafayette Gilchrist, Piano, Rashaan Carter, Bass, Russell Carter, Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Small’s Showcase; Jade Systrelle Trio; John Bailey Quartet; Ken Fowser Quintet; Philip Harper Quintet; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Victor Wooten With Dennis Chambers, Bob Franceschini; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

**Sunday, June 24**
- Ann Hampton Callaway; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Vincent Centuraria With Helio Alves, Paul Sokolow, Adrianno; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Benny Bennack III ft. the DW Jazz Orchestra; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- David Murray & Class Struggle With Craig Harris, Trombone, Mingus Murray, Guitar, Lafayette Gilchrist, Piano, Rashaan Carter, Bass, Russell Carter, Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Monty Alexander; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

**Monday, June 25**
- Band Director Academy Faculty Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Mingus Big Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Vanguard Big Band; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Art Hoenig Trio; Jonathan Michel Group; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Monty Alexander; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

**Tuesday, June 26**
- Christian Sands Trio; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Janis Siegel; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Ravi Coltrane; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Tom Harrell With Mark Turner, Tenor Sax, Charles Altura, Guitar, Ugonna Okegwo, Bass, Johnathan Blake, Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Steve Nelson Quartet; Frank Lacy Group; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Monty Alexander; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

**Wednesday, June 27**
- Christian Sands Trio; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
Thursday, June 28

- Adrian Cunningham Quintet With Special Guest Vocalist Brianna Thomas From My Fair Lady To Camelot; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Grant Green Evolution Of Funk With Grant Green Jr., Donald Harris; Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Adrian Cunningham Quintet With Special Guest Vocalist Brianna Thomas From My Fair Lady To Camelot; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Ugonna Okegwo, Bass, Johnathan Blake, Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Andy Fusco Quintet; Dmitry Baevsky Quartet; JD Allen “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Lettuce; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Friday, June 29

- Adrian Cunningham Quintet With Special Guest Vocalist Brianna Thomas From My Fair Lady To Camelot; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Grant Green Evolution Of Funk With Grant Green Jr., Donald Harris; Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Ugonna Okegwo, Bass, Johnathan Blake, Drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Andy Fusco Quintet; Dmitry Baevsky Quartet; JD Allen “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Lettuce; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, June 30

- Adrian Cunningham Quintet With Special Guest Vocalist Brianna Thomas From My Fair Lady To Camelot; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Grant Green Evolution Of Funk With Grant Green Jr., Donald Harris; Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Andy Fusco Quintet; Dmitry Baevsky Quartet; JD Allen “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Lettuce; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Sunday, July 1

Jeff “Tain” Watts Travel Band CD Release; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- The Smokestack Brunch: Ali Meyerson; Grant Green: Evolution Of Funk; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Larry Fuller; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Vocal Masterclass with Marion Cowings; Sacha Perry Trio; Chris Byars Sextet; David Gibson Quintet; Jon Beshay “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Monday, July 2

- Mingus Big Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- John Colianni; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Anthony Pinciotti Quartet; Joe Farnsworth Group; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Tuesday, July 3

- Steven Koon Septet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Barry Harris, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Leroy Williams (drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Veronica Swift; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Spike Wilner Quartet; Josh Evans Quintet; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Wednesday, July 4

- George Coleman Quintet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Barry Harris, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Leroy Williams (drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Veronica Swift; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Randy Johnston Trio; Isaiah J. Thompson “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Thursday, July 5

- George Coleman Quintet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Barry Harris, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Leroy Williams (drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Emmett Cohen; Veronica Swift; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Riche Good Group; Randy Johnston Trio; Charles Good “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Friday, July 6

- George Coleman Quintet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Barry Harris, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Leroy Williams (drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Veronica Swift; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Joel “G-Clef” Cavaseno Quartet; Amanda Sedgwick Quintet; Corey Wallace DUBet “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Saturday, July 7

- George Coleman Quintet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Barry Harris, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Leroy Williams (drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Veronica Swift; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Small’s Showcase: Juliesta Eugenio; Elliot Zigmund Quartet; The Amanda Sedgwick Quartet; Brooklyn Circle; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Sunday, July 8

- The Smokestack Brunch: Alex Goodman; George Coleman Quintet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Lee Ritenour; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Barry Harris, piano; Ray Drummond, bass; Leroy Williams (drums; (Continued on page 16)
FRI-SUN JUNE 1-3
JOCO DEFRANCESCO TRI
MARK WHITFIELD - Lenny White

TUE JUNE 5
JOEY ALEXANDER TRIO
REUBEN ROGERS - KENDRICK SCOTT

WED JUNE 6
ALINA ENGIBARYAN
CHRIS POTTER - TAYLOR EIGSTI - MICHAEL LEAGUE - KENDRICK SCOTT

THU-SUN JUNE 7-10
DAFINIS PRIETO BIG BAND
ALEX NORRIS - NATHAN EKLUND - ALEX SIPABIN
JOSH DEUTSCH - ROMAN FILIO - MICHAEL THOMAS - PETER APPELBAUM
JOEL FREH M - CHRIS CHEEK - NICK FINZER - ALAN FERBER - JACOB GARCHIK
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TUE-WED JUNE 12-13
TRIANGULAR: RALPH PETERSON TRIO
Honoring geri allen
DRUIN EVAN - LIQUES CURTIS

THU-SUN JUNE 14-17
TERENCE BLANCHARD THE e-COLLECTIVE
CHARLES ALTURA - FABIAN ALMAGAN - DONALD RUSSELL - OSCAR SEATON

TUE-SUN JUNE 19-24
DJANGO BATES BELOVED
PETER BROWN - PETTER ELOH

THU-SUN JUNE 21-24
VINICIUS CANTUARIA
HELIO ALVES - PAUL GOKLOW - ADRIANO SANTOS - DURAS

TUE JUNE 26
JULIAN SIEGEL
LIAM NOLAN - OLU HAYHURST - BENI CALDEIRAZZO

WED JUNE 27
DUCHESS
AMY CERVINI - HILARY GARDNER - MELISSA STYLIVANDO
MICHAEL CAGE - NEAL MINER - PAUL WELLS

THU-SUN JUNE 28-JULY 1
GRANT GREEN: EVOLUTION OF FUNK
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MON JUNE 4, 11, 18 & 25

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SUN JUNE 3
EMMET COHEN ORGAN QUARTET

SUN JUNE 10
NO BRUNCH

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Monday, July 9

- Mingus Big Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Wallace Roney Quintet; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Vangard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Django Reinhardt NY Festival; Django Festival Allstars + Special Guests; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Ari Hoenig Trio; Jonathan Michel Quintet; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Tuesday, July 10

- Michael Pignéry & The Awakening Ensemble featuring Dominick Farinaccio; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Matt Pennan Group; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- MonoNeon & Friends; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Russell Malone, guitar; Rick Germanson, piano; Luke Selleck, bass; Willy Jones III, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Django Reinhardt NY Festival; Django Festival Allstars + Special Guests; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Charles Bierinz Group; Frank Lacy Group; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Wednesday, July 11

- Claudia Acuña; A Tribute to Abbey Lincoln; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Dr. Lonnie Smith Trio; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- MonoNeon & Friends; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Russell Malone, guitar; Rick Germanson, piano; Luke Selleck, bass; Willy Jones III, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Django Reinhardt NY Festival; Django Festival Allstars + Special Guests; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Avi Rothbard Quartet; Neal Caine Quintet; Jovan Alexandre “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Thursday, July 12

- Roni Ben-Hur Quartet with special guest Joyce Moreno; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Dr. Lonnie Smith Trio with special guest Alicia Olatuja; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Cassandra Wilson
- Russell Malone, guitar; Rick Germanson, piano; Luke Selleck, bass; Willy Jones III, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Django Reinhardt NY Festival; Django Festival Allstars + Special Guests; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Itamar Borochov Quartet; Tai Ronen Quartet; Davis Whitfield “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Friday, July 13

- The Smoakstouch Brunch; Jon Thomas Organ Quartet
- Pat Martino Trio plus horns; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Earl Kugh; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Thumbscrew - Mary Halvorson, guitar; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Tommy Igoe Sextet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Mike Moreno Quartet; Harold Mabern Trio; Aaron Seiber “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Saturday, July 14

- The Smoakstouch Brunch; Jon Thomas Organ Quartet
- Pat Martino Trio plus horns; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Earl Kugh; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Thumbscrew - Mary Halvorson, guitar; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Tommy Igoe Sextet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Valley Ponomarev Quintet; Immanuel Wilkins Quartet; Brooklyn Circle; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Sunday, July 15

- The Smoakstouch Brunch; Jon Thomas Organ Quartet
- Pat Martino Trio plus horns; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Earl Kugh; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Sarah Elizabeth Charles; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Thumbscrew - Mary Halvorson, guitar; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Vocal Masterclass with Marion Cowings; Sacha Perry Trio; Grant Stewart Quartet; Bruce Harris Quintet; Hililei Salem “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Monday, July 16

- Jon Gordon Quartet; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Mingus Orchestra; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Wallace Roney Quintet; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Vangard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Clifford Barrows Group; John Chin Quintet; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Tuesday, July 17

- Tribute to Jimmie Blanton; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Michael Leonhart Orchestra featuring Nels Cline; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Earl Kugh; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Thumbscrew - Mary Halvorson, guitar; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Tommy Igoe Sextet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Mike Moreno Quartet; Harold Mabern Trio; Aaron Seiber “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Wednesday, July 18

- Sheen John and Vuyo Sosabe: In Honor of Nina Simone; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Michael Leonhart Orchestra featuring Nels Cline; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Earl Kugh; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Thumbscrew - Mary Halvorson, guitar; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Tommy Igoe Sextet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Mike Moreno Quartet; Carlos Abadie Quintet; Giveton Gelin “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Thursday, July 19

- Jon Faddis Quartet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Pat Martino Trio plus horns; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Earl Kugh; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Thumbscrew - Mary Halvorson, guitar; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Tommy Igoe Sextet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Itai Kriss & TELAVANA; Immanuel Wilkins Quartet; Corey Wallace DUJfet “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Friday, July 20

- Pat Martino Trio plus horns; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Earl Kugh; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Thumbscrew - Mary Halvorson, guitar; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Tommy Igoe Sextet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Mike Moreno Quartet; Carlos Abadie Quintet; Giveton Gelin “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Saturday, July 21

- Pat Martino Trio plus horns; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Earl Kugh; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Thumbscrew - Mary Halvorson, guitar; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Tommy Igoe Sextet; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Valery Ponomarev; Immanuel Wilkins Quartet; Brooklyn Circle; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Sunday, July 22

- The Smoakstouch Brunch; Jon Thomas Organ Quartet
- Pat Martino Trio plus horns; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Earl Kugh; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Sarah Elizabeth Charles; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Thumbscrew - Mary Halvorson, guitar; Michael Formanek, bass; Tomas Fujiwara, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Vocal Masterclass with Marion Cowings; Sacha Perry Trio; Grant Stewart Quartet; Bruce Harris Quintet; Hililei Salem “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

(Continued on page 17)
“Some people’s idea of free speech is that they are free to say whatever they like, but if anyone says anything back that’s an outrage.”

- Winston Churchill

Monday, July 23
- The Descendants: An African Sextet in New York; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Mingus Big Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Star Experience; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Kennci 4; Joe Farnsworth Group; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Tuesday, July 24
- Stanley Cowell Quintet; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Bill O’Connell; Jazz Latin Quartet, Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Star Experience; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Fred Hersch, piano; John Hébert, bass; Eric McPherson, drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Birdland Big Band; Marilyn Maye with Tedd Firth Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Steve Nelson Quartet; Frank Lacy Group; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Wednesday, July 25
- Post-Tone’s New Faces, Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Star Experience; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Fred Hersch, piano; John Hébert, bass; Eric McPherson, drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Birdland Big Band; Marilyn Maye with Tedd Firth Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Andrew Gould Quartet; Willem Delisfort Project; Mike Troy - “After-hours” Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Thursday, July 26
- Catherine Russell; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Regina Carter Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Star Experience; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Fred Hersch, piano; John Hébert, bass; Eric McPherson, drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Birdland Big Band; Marilyn Maye with Tedd Firth Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Scott Weindolt/Adam Kolker Quartet; Tim Hagarty Band; Jonathan Thomas - “After-hours” Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Friday, July 27
- Regina Carter Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Star Experience; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Fred Hersch, piano; John Hébert, bass; Eric McPherson, drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Birdland Big Band; Marilyn Maye with Tedd Firth Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Steve Williams Quartet; Joe Dyson Quintet; JD Allen "After-hours"; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Saturday, July 28
- Regina Carter Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Star Experience; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Fred Hersch, piano; John Hébert, bass; Eric McPherson, drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Birdland Big Band; Marilyn Maye with Tedd Firth Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Small’s Showcase: Ben Barnett Quartet; Tim Hagans Quintet; Joe Dyson Quintet; Philip Harper Quintet; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Sunday, July 29
- Smokestack Brunch: The Adam Lanson Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Regina Carter Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Star Experience; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Fred Hersch, piano; John Hébert, bass; Eric McPherson, drums; Village Vanguard, 178 7th Ave S.
- Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Vocal Masterclass with Marion Cowings; Sacha Perry Trio; Alex Hoffman Quartet; Jerry Weldon Quartet; Jon Beshay "After-hours"; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Monday, July 30
- Monday Nights with WBGO: Lakecia Benjamin Quartet Plays Coltrane; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Mingus Big Band; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- McCoy Tyner; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Jonathan Barber Quintet; Joel Frahm Trio; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.

Tuesday, July 31
- Gabe Schneider Presents Hapa: Love Stories; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’way
- Harold Lopez-Nussa Trio; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- McCoy Tyner; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Gerald Clayton; Logan Richardson, alto sax; Walter Smith III; John Pizzarelli with Jessica Molaskey; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Ian Hendrickson-Smith Quartet; Abraham Burton Quartet; After-hours Jam Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
“A system of morality which is based on relative emotional values is a mere illusion, a thoroughly vulgar conception which has nothing in it and nothing true.”
(Continued from page 11)

**OP:** I was fortunate to get a teaching job at what is now called Settlement Music School. In 1978, Billy Taylor and I first started at the school at 4th and Queen Street and from that experience, they gave me a job to work at Holmesburg Prison with [violinist] John Blake and also to teach some students at the school. That gave me a little money and periodically I would accept some gigs around Philadelphia. I also worked at the mail department at the Wanamaker Building. That’s why I composed one tune that I named “Mail Order.”

**JII:** Catalyst was a Philadelphia-based, collective band you helped form in the early ’70s that combined jazz-funk, rock, soul and avant-garde jazz. It’s considered to have been ahead of its time. What circumstances brought the band together and what made it so advanced?

**OP:** I got a job as music director in 1972 for a special program that got a grant to combine music, dance and art. I brought in Tyrone Brown, Philly Joe Jones, Eddie Green, Jymie Merritt and Sherman Ferguson for jobs teaching there also. Three days a week, Tyrone, Eddie, me and Sherman would stay late and rehearse all night to develop the Catalyst sound. Somehow Eddie Green made contact with the Muse label and we did four LPs and worked quite a bit around town. We were playing all our own music which I think made us stand out over the other groups who played standards. Even today when I listen to that group it still sounds good. Michael Brecker told me he used to listen to all the Catalyst recordings.

**JII:** What was your connection with Grover Washington Jr.?

**OP:** I was in the pit band at the Uptown Theater in the early ’60s. On this particular Saturday night, I had another gig and I had to find a replacement so I asked Leon Mitchell if he knew of another tenor player I could get to sub for me and he said there was a new guy in town by the name of Grover Washington so I called Grover. That turned out to be Grover’s first gig in town since he moved from Buffalo. That’s how we met and shortly after that, once he had a hit record, he used to call me to work with his group a lot...

“...I was in the pit band at the Uptown Theater in the early ‘60s. On this particular Saturday night, I had another gig and I had to find a replacement so I asked Leon Mitchell if he knew of another tenor player I could get to sub for me and he said there was a new guy in town by the name of Grover Washington so I called Grover. That turned out to be Grover’s first gig in town since he moved from Buffalo. That’s how we met and shortly after that, once he had a hit record, he used to call me to work with his group a lot…”

**JII:** You play clarinet, oboe, flute, piccolo, soprano sax and piano but on recordings and performances you only use tenor sax.

**OP:** My feeling about that is that there’s still so much for me to do on the tenor that I haven’t picked up the other instruments. It’s strange but it seems that I can adjust to the soprano’s embouchure a lot better than the tenor’s. I can just pick up the soprano and the sound is right there but the tenor requires more discipline and hard work for me, so I try to utilize as much time as possible on that instrument. I keep telling myself that at some point I would like to pick the bass clarinet up. The tenor requires so much demand in terms of tone, technique and all the qualities that come out of it. I’m always trying to do more on the tenor and to play from the low B-flat to the high F and then above the extended altissimo range that I play, it requires a lot of time.

**JII:** “Cis” is a composition that you’ve been playing very regularly for well over thirty years. You wrote that for your wife and it has meaning to you that listeners will never know. How has it been to perform that song for so many years, especially now that your wife has passed?

**OP:** It’s been done with different configurations and that makes a difference. I’ve done it with the Saxophone Choir, the trio, and the octet, and with each of those groups, it sounds like a different song.

**JII:** Let’s talk about your work as a leader. Your skills as a composer, arranger and orchestrator are vastly underappreciated. You’ve written a number of compositions that are worthy of consideration as jazz standards such as “Epitome,” “Cis,” and “Muntu Chant,” but I don’t hear others covering them. Where is the disconnect?

**OP:** I think the disconnect is with the Saxophone Choir. The music was written for nine saxophones, piano, bass and drums, and I don’t know of any other saxophone choirs like that. The music is difficult to adapt to smaller groups because the melodies are stretched out for nine saxophones.

**JII:** You’ve recorded the same original songs numerous times, including “Cis” at least five times. Why record the same songs so often?

**OP:** It’s been done with different configurations and that makes a difference. I’ve done it with the Saxophone Choir, the trio, and the octet, and with each of those groups, it sounds like a different song.

**JII:** Except for your regular work with Max Roach, you’ve not done a significant amount of guest or sideman work.

**OP:** I’ve worked with Bobby Zankel quite a bit and I like working with him because he uses original music and it’s a great challenge. It’s hard, complex music. Most of the time I’m playing with my quartet or my trio. I’ve played as a duet with Andrew Cyrille a number of times. Playing with other people really helps me develop.

**JII:** The Odean Pope Saxophone Choir has been active since 1977 and utilizes, as you’ve mentioned, nine saxophones plus a rhythm section to translate the power and glory of the gospel choir that you experienced as a child. That large ensemble...
Odean Pope

ble gives you so much to work with, do you feel constricted when working in smaller settings?

OP: Not really because in each one of my groups I try to create something a little different. With the trio I play about fifty percent standards, with the quartet I’m also playing some standards. I like to play standards that haven’t been played so much and that are unique with their chord changes and harmonic and melodic structures. You don’t hear people playing songs like “Nancy with the Laughing Face” and “On a Misty Night.”

JI: “Grey Hair” appears on your Epitome recording [Soul Note, 1994]. What inspired that song?

OP: I meant when you get on the bandstand with me, everyone is on their own. We each have different ideas up there but when I write certain things, everybody’s on their own. In other words, this is your arena and this is my arena, and in order to make them be compatible to one another you have to work with it. It’s like a puzzle that must be put together to make it sound complete. So Ebio to is a message to the musicians who are performing it.

JI: Locked & Loaded [Half Note, 2006] was a critically acclaimed, blockbuster recording you made live at New York’s Blue Note club and featured performances by Michael Brecker, Joe Lovano and James Carter. How did that project come together?

JI: Michael Brecker appeared on stage with you for that recording despite being weakened from the disease that would take his life. What went on behind the scene to get him there?

OP: Jeff Levenson, who was working at the Blue Note at the time, called me up and said that he had wanted to do something with me for many years and that he wanted to record the Saxophone Choir. He arranged a three day recording session at the Blue Note Club and suggested I include a different guest soloist each night, which he left up to me to pick. I had met James Carter about twenty years ago in Warsaw where we struck up a nice friendship. He told me he used to carry that first Saxophone Choir LP around with him so I knew he would be compatible with what I was trying to do. Michael Brecker had told me he used to play the Catalyst CDs all the time when he was going to Berklee. So I knew he knew my music. I first met Joe Lovano after I did an interview at a radio station in New York City. When I came out of the studio, he was sitting on the side waiting to do his own interview. I had never heard about him before. He said, “Odean, I’m Joe Lovano and I really like your music, man, and I really hope we can get a chance to play or do something.” So these are the three musicians I used.

JI: You titled a 1999 recording Ebio to [Knitting Factory] which stands for “everybody is on their own.” What did you mean by that?

OP: A few weeks before we got ready to record, Michael Brecker called me up and said, “Odean, I’m very sick and I don’t know whether I’ll be ready to do the date or not.” I said, “Michael, you can do it. Somebody told me a long time ago not to use the word can’t in my vocabulary. You can do it, I believe in you.” A week later he told me he would give me his best.

JI: Plant Life is a 2008 recording [Porter] you made that also features a composition by that name. What inspired that title?

OP: That was inspired by the creation of plants – trees, the foliage, and the transitions that the trees go through. I was driving upstate to Erie and Buffalo and the plants were so beautiful that I was inspired.

JI: Plant Life featured Sunny Murray on drums playing uncharacteristically more in the pocket. How did you envision Murray for that project?

OP: Sunny and I go back a long ways, we used to play together as a duo. Before the recording, Sunny had invited me over to Europe to do a trio thing with him, which I appreciated, so I asked him to do a trio recording with me for Porter Records who had engaged me to do four or five different things. I felt very close to him and he was one of the few drummers that came out of early period who was doing something different.

JI: There was a 2011 all-star benefit concert for you in Philadelphia after you publically announced your 30 year struggle with bipolar disorder. How has that disorder interfaced with your work as an artist and why come public with that?

OP: Bipolar is a sickness just like any other sickness. I was in a European hospital for seven weeks with bipolar in the past. Bipolar first started with me in 1980 when I lost my brother. I couldn’t accept the fact that he was gone and I was doing all kind of crazy things. I was a devil, I was a different person. And then from that attack, it would seem that whenever something very favorable happened to me, I would get so emotional that the same thing would happen to me. They prescribed medication and I would take it for a short while and then stop. But bipolar can be controlled with medication and exercise, and you can live a normal life. When my wife died, I couldn’t accept that and they put me in the hospital. I first went to my daughter’s house for about two weeks. I was walking the floor all night, wouldn’t go to bed. Finally, her husband came to my room one morning and said, “Put your bedroom slippers on, we’re gonna get you out of here today,” and they put me in the hospital. I was there nineteen days, I wouldn’t cooperate with the doctors, I would just look at them. Finally I told my daughter that I was ready to come home and to take the medication. The benefit concert was set up by my manager Deena Adler. She got Bill Cosby to come and the place was packed. Dee Dee Bridge-water sent me a thousand dollars, as did Al Jarreau, and I was able to use the money that was raised to pay back bills because I hadn’t been working for a while. That benefit concert gave me a new perspective after seeing all the people that were there who thought that I should be helped and treated like a normal person. I don’t intend to be sick anymore, I intend to do what I’m supposed to do.

JI: The last questions were given to me by other artists to ask you:

Gerald Veasley (bass) asked: “Knowing that you still practice extensively every day, I wonder how you maintain your spirit for growing as a musician?”

OP: I think over the years I’ve developed a concept that I have things that I must do and things that I want to do. I get up in the morning and do certain practice exercises that if I don’t do every day, I feel like I’m not complete. I often practice pianissimo, just with my fingers, which I sort of learned from Sonny Stitt. He had certain things that he would do in situations when he wasn’t able to practice. He developed this unique thing of just practicing by fingering the keys and listening to it. Living here I try to be as congenial to my neighbors as possible and I practice from nine o’clock pianissimo and then when twelve o’clock comes, I’ll open up until five o’clock. Then maybe if I go to eight o’clock, I’ll practice pianissimo again.”

“Plant Life” is a 2008 recording [Porter]. The concept behind “Grey Hair” came when I started getting grey hair. I looked in the mirror and I said, ‘That’s a good composition.’

(Continued on page 24)
Pat Martino

Hear Pat Martino at the Jazz Standard
July 19-22, 2018

By Eric Nemeyer; Photo by Ken Weiss

Jl: Could you tell us about your recording that is a tribute to Wes Montgomery.

PM: Personally, the preparation for this goes a long ways back. In fact, the preparation goes back to approximately 1958, 1959. It goes back to a time when I wished I could play the music that I had listened to and fell in love with which is all of the separate cuts on this particular album, Remember. And I’ve remembered those songs throughout my evolution as an individual. It goes back to a time as a child; so many of us have a dream that we wish could come true someday. And in the process of growing and becoming an adult, in most cases, the majority of individuals forget what that was about. And they proceed accordingly to fit whatsoever they have become in that point in their life. And rarely is it in conjunction with what they really wanted to do as children. I wanted to be like Wes Montgomery. I wanted to be able to play like that. I wanted to be able to fluently flow through the music that impressed me so deeply in my childhood. And it took me close to 50 years to reach a point where I have the dexterity at this point in my life to be able to achieve that, with the same intentions that I had as a child, which was the enjoyment of the music itself.

Jl: Do you remember any dialogue that you might have had with Wes?

PM: One of the most significant moments was attention that it really made no difference what you called the chord, because he could care less what it was called. And that said something to me. And it began to reveal to me the multifaceted interpretations and definitions of quite a number of different things that we as individuals see in different ways. One musician sees the same chord as a B-minor seventh flat five. Another musician sees that specific inversion of that chord as B-minor over B. There are quite a number of things. Another musician sees that very same chord as a B-flat major seventh sharpening the root. So what I learned from his response was how little he could care about the name of something and how deeply involved he was in the essence of what that truly represented and what it functioned as.

Jl: Could you discuss your continuing evolution?

PM: Well, I think it’s essential to experience what all of us experience in common. And that’s musicianship, which is to participate as a craftsman, successfully as a craftsman in the midst to the responsibilities of the craft itself. And that is, some of the most basic general terms that are common in such a pursuit would be being on time, being in the union, when of course these things are functionally a necessity, knowing the right people, having a manager, looking for a manager at some point, having a record contract, all these things that are general interest on behalf of musicians who are entering into this as a career. We share them in common, initially. Somewhere down the line due to an experience throughout the years over a broader length of time in the evolution of our interpretations, we begin to see that all of these things really have nothing to do with what we initially started out wanting to be and wanting to do. So in that respect, it’s impossible to tell at the early stages of our own evolution, our experience in music exactly what’s going to happen next and where it’s going to bring us. But one of the most profound things of all of this happened to me when I forgot everything and I reestablished a position that was very similar to the very initial departure as a child and that was the playfulness with a toy; to be able to sit down and enjoy something to such a degree that your parents would have to come over and say, “Stop doing that and do your homework” is something that we all share in common. And something that based on me asking what the name of the chord was. We were at the President Hotel one evening, and I was in his room. And he was sitting on the edge of the bed and he was playing. I don’t remember exactly what it was, but I asked him, “What is that? What’s the name of the chord that you just played?” And he was specific in bringing to my the majority of us forget, primarily because once we are reorganized and pointed in a direction that is going to be feasible for a career and for success within an industrial society, we begin to forget the ecstasy that we had as children lost in the playfulness and joy of curiosity itself.

Jl: What was that process of recovering your memory like?

PM: The process itself had more to do with seeking a closer awareness of consciousness on a philosophical as well as a spiritual level than it had anything to do with a career orientation or the replication of the past for a better future. There was a period of tumult, just very volatile confrontations with just many things that were alienated immensely to me. And what it always caused me to do was to sink back into solitude. And it brought me closer to individuals such as Thomas Merton and of course nowadays would be similar to individuals such as Eckhard Tolle and others. And it brought into a closer interest in certain artists’ innate references to such states of mind, such as John Coltrane “A Love Supreme”, “Giant Steps”, but the meaning of these terms had much more to do with the attainment of a higher goal as a human being not as a musician. And because of this it came down to a reassessment of my own interests. And my intentions had very little to do with a career anymore. And not only that, it would have been foolish to move in those directions due to the fact that it had already been done. And there was a history already built for that. So when I finally got back to my relationship with my instrument as my tool as it was in the beginning, prior to my educational interruption with that ecstasy, it was no longer interfered with. And the second time through, it’s been a childish ecstasy all the way; it’s playful to the max. And within, like so many others, I am primarily interested in the human experience and from a third point of view the fidelity with regards to interpretation and definition and the decoding of all things that lead to a happier existence.
Odean Pope

(Continued from page 21)

pianissimo, just with my fingers, which I sort of learned from Sonny Stitt. He had certain things that he would do in situations when he wasn’t able to practice. He developed this unique thing of just practicing by fingering the keys and listening to it. Living here I try to be as congenial to my neighbors as possible and I practice from nine o’clock pianissimo and then when twelve o’clock comes, I’ll open up until five o’clock. Then maybe if I go to eight o’clock, I’ll practice pianissimo again. I think the answer to the question would be that my spirit and my whole development comes by way of steady practicing and maintaining my physical fitness through riding an exercise bicycle, I think it inspires me to want to be a better person. There is so much out there to learn and to develop and I have to practice or that cannot happen. Scales and the concept of chord changes and the fourth system and third system are the key and what keeps me very energized and want to keep doing more.

Joey DeFrancesco (organ) recalled a memory: “The first time I met you was in the 9th grade when you did some teaching at my high school, CAPA [Philadelphia High School for Creative & Performing Arts]. I remember you teaching us “Giant Steps.”

Ji: Any final comments?

I’ve had the good fortune of going down to Ornette’s place in New York often while we were working on this recording …. Just looking out and seeing him there… One time before, I was at the Blue Note and I remember seeing Illinois Jacquet and Sonny Rollins [in the audience] there on the same night and it gave me the same kind of feeling when I saw Ornette …”

Any final comments?

William Parker (bass) asked: “What are your goals for the future? What haven’t you done that you would like to do?”

Joe Lovano (saxophone) recalled playing at the Blue Note club with you which led to the Locked & Loaded recording: “Playing with the amazing Odean Pope Saxophone Choir and standing toe to toe with you, experiencing the total power of your playing within the full ensemble, captured me from the first note to the last and was a thrilling, explosive experience through the evening. That night was also extra special for all of us because Ornette Coleman was there to hear us and sat right in front of me. That fueled my ideas and added to the inspiration that filled the room for all of us.” Would you talk about performing in front of Ornette Coleman?

OP: I like to listen to piano players and George Burton is one I’ll mention. I brought him into the Saxophone Choir when Eddie Green passed and he developed so fast. His teacher, Tom Lawton, is another pianist I’ll mention. He took George Burton’s place in the band and he is another talented guy, an excellent reader, and his concept of improvisation is very creative and interesting.

James Carter (multi-instruments) asked: “What wisdom did you get from your association with Max Roach?”

OP: I think I grew quite a bit working with Max because he gave me so much flexibility regarding my improvising and playing. When you improvised he never cut you off, the only time he did was when I was playing that one note. He was a tremendous supporter of you developing your own ideas, and without him I don’t think I would be where I am today in terms of development, creativity, the love for the music, and all of the other things that goes into being a great artist and staying positive.

OP: I’ve had the good fortune of going down to Ornette’s place in New York often while we were working on this recording, especially when we were mixing it. Just looking out and seeing him there… One time before, I was at the Blue Note and I remember seeing Illinois Jacquet and Sonny Rollins [in the audience] there on the same night and it gave me the same kind of feeling when I saw Ornette because I used to love the way Illinois played. When I was twelve or thirteen I thought that was what I really wanted to do. Between Illinois Jacquet, Sonny Rollins and Ornette Coleman, the energy and ideas came by just looking at them. It seemed like energy was coming to me when I looked at Ornette. Ornette was the kind of person who treasures what you're doing.
Famoudou Don Moye

Relentless Pursuit of the Pan-African Pulse

Interview and photo by Ken Weiss

Donald Franklin Moye Jr. was born on May 23, 1946 in Rochester, New York, into a music-loving family and shared his father’s interest in the drums. Entranced in the ‘50s and ‘60s by the rare exotic African and Caribbean rhythms and percussion techniques, Moye is able to swing and improvise in the conventional jazz manner while also developing an expansive, unique polyrhythmic style. He’s best known as a member of the Art Ensemble of Chicago since 1970, as well as his time with The Pharaohs, The Leaders, Randy Weston, Kirk Lightsey, Steve Lacy, Wadada Leo Smith, Julius Hemphill, Henry Threadgill, Hamiet Bluiett, Pharoah Sanders, the Sun Ra All Stars, Archie Shepp’s Attica Blues Orchestra, Don Pullen, Steve McCaill, Andrew Cyrille, Milford Graves, Baba Sissoko, Kenny Clarke and numerous other well-known artists. This interview was started live on October 8, 2017, while he was in town with the Art Ensemble to play Philadelphia’s October Revolution Festival [Ars Nova Workshop], and completed by phone from his home in Marseille, France on March 21, 2018.

“...you have to personalize what you do. It’s not about sounding like somebody else. You can do that too but you have to try find your own personality. That’s the gift that was given to us from the masters: Roy Haynes, Kenny Clarke, Max, Baby Dodds, Elvin, Papa Joe Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Billy Higgins, Ed Blackwell, Buhaina and many, many more. Find yourself, express yourself, define yourself.”

Jazz Inside Magazine: What’s your family background? Where does Moye come from?

Famoudou Don Moye: My grandfather was born in Pensacola, Florida and his grandfather was from Haiti. He was a mix of Haiti and Seminole. My mother’s side was from Richmond, Virginia and it’s a mix of Cherokee and probably Irish or Scottish. I was Dougoufana and the other fist was Famoudou. That was 1974.

JI: What do you mean by too heavy?

FDM: Names in traditional societies have a rhythmic spiritual vibe because of the way people get their names. You can’t be messing around with those kind of traditions if you don’t know what you’re doing. The name don’t just come out of the sky. They probably have a ritual and some kind of sacrifice, especially in the Griot societies. They have more than five hundred years of tradition so there’s a lot of energy attached to a name in addition to what they want to reflect through the person who gets it and what his responsibilities are. People of most indigenous cultures have significance attached to their individual names.

JF: You ended up meeting Famoudou Konaté in 1985 in Guinea, ten years after taking his name. That had to be a special moment for you.

FDM: I was on a tour of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, West Africa with a trio that included saxophonist John Tchicai and pianist, percussionist and poet Hartmut Geerken. We did a concert with the Ballet National de Guinée in Conakry Guinée so I put out the word there that I wanted to meet Famoudou Konaté personally. When we met he said, “Who is this Famoudou who?” I said, ‘It’s Famoudou Me! And here’s a boom box, a fifth of Remy Martin Napoleon Cognac, a carton of Marlboros, and a Swiss Army knife. Now let’s talk, Master.’ [Laughs] That was my formal meeting with him. The name Famoudou had come to me and this was me realizing what the name really represented. I made sure I went and got the connection of who this guy really was so I’d know what I was messing with.

JF: You brought him gifts?

FDM: That’s what you do, that’s the world tradition. You give, you don’t take. Anytime I go to different cultures, I take gifts along, and they give gifts back. It’s the spirit of giving and sharing, and certainly not stealing or copying. These other cultures start out by giving. They feed you and then, depending on your presence inside of what they’re doing, the sky is the limit from there. If you’re already knowledgeable about their traditions, if you half way speak the language, and know the importance of what they’re doing, then you’ll probably have to take a duffle bag along because it’ll be full when you leave. [Laughs]

JF: You term your playing to be “Sun Percussion.” What does that title infer?

FDM: Energy from the sun. That’s an extension of the Sun Drummer tradition. I was inspired by all the energy and the spirit from participating with the Sun Drummer. I said to myself, ‘Hm, I’m Sun Percussion, I do more than hand drums, I’ll expand on that.’ All the people I deal with, you have to personalize what you do. It’s not about sounding like somebody else. You can do that too but you have to try find your own personality. That’s the gift that was given to us from the masters: Roy Haynes, Kenny Clarke, Max, Baby Dodds, Elvin, Papa Joe Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Billy Higgins, Ed Blackwell, Buhaina and many, many more. Find yourself, express yourself, define yourself.

JF: You’ve had a lifelong interest in world rhythms and it’s been your inclusion of various African and Caribbean percussion instruments and rhythmic techniques that have separated you from many...
other jazz drummers of your generation. What peaked your interest in this and why do you think the investigation of ethnic rhythms wasn’t more prevalent amongst other musicians at the time?

FDM: For me it was prevalent at that time. I was hanging out with the Puerto Ricans in the housing projects of Rochester, New York when I first heard it, and I felt it also in the Townsend Children’s Band and the Statesmen Drum and Bugle Corps. Then I started playing the bongos. My first connection with hand percussion was through listening to Perez Prado and Dizzy Gillespie. I’ve always been captivated by drums, any kind of drums. I got disciplined at school many times for pounding on the desks but the music saved me. A lot of my buddies in the housing projects ended up dead or in jail.

FDM: It ain’t no interpretation. If you want to do it right, you go deal with the people who play it. I never did YouTube study or bought too many books beyond basic drum techniques, I went to the people that actually do it. I believe in the direct approach. There are no shortcuts to finding out what it really is. If you watch something online and rewind it over and over again, that’s not connected to life. That’s just a diversion. You have to see how those cats express themselves live in their own context whenever possible. When you’re with them, you can see and hear what’s on their minds. If they are going to a party or to a ceremony, you get some of the same rhythms in different functions. I was in Haiti and I wanted to go swimming but all the beaches in Port-au-Prince were completely polluted so I drove about 100 kilometers out of town, stopped on the side of the road near a little bridge. I had a little drum I was beating and a couple of people came over the bridge and they started drumming and then the mayor and some more people came and played, and we all got together for about three days. If you’re around different cultures, you get all of it. Everywhere I go with the Art Ensemble, the percussionists come out so I meet people from all over and I’ll capitalize on that and go to visit the places of the people I’ve met. That’s part of the way I get involved with the relentless pursuit of the pan-African pulse. That’s what I call it. My classification of how this life really goes is if you really want to consider yourself adept at a certain tradition, can you do that all night authentically? Not just one or two songs. Do you have the capacity to play this music at a high level with these musicians for a whole gig? That goes for any kind of tradition, jazz, reggae, the blues, djembe, koteroba, bâta, cumina, samba, rumba, taiko or whatever. Can you do that? Then, you can call yourself a good drummer in the context of that tradition.

FDM: Not much, I was too early for rock & roll, but I respect any music that’s well done and sounds good to me. Oh, I had a lightweight brush with rock, being a teenager of the late ’50s and early ’60s, and being around that environment of the LSD scene and all that stuff. That was my encounter with rock through Frank Zappa, Jimi Hendrix and people like that. They were pretty advanced and every now and then I listen to some Zappa because he was a bad dude. [Laughs] He’s one of the great American composers and he always had great rhythm sections. Then Santana came along and he did a good job of exposing people to other cultures because the white kids of that era didn’t know anything about that.

FDM: It’s all the same, it just depends on what I’m doing at the time. Philly Joe Jones told me it’s all the same, man. You have to take that ass whooping from whatever instrument you’ve got. It’s gonna be an ass whooping.

JF: Is it true you named a son Bongo?

FDM: No, that was his nickname. All the kids that came by to take lessons, they were Bongo One, Bongo Two. That was just a little term of endearment. He’d say, “Stop calling me Bongo!”

“Cab [Calloway] told us how back in the ‘30s and ‘40s he had to rent a sleeping car because they could never stay in hotels. Under the floor boards, they had rifles and pistols because once you got out of the big cities, it was like the Wild West.”

FDM: I went to Morocco first because I went to play at the Casablanca Jazz Festival and then I got a job teaching over there. Three months became six months and then a year, things kept going on. I had a hip operation in Italy in 2009. My manager Luciano Ciaiazzo had a brother, who was the mayor of Pomigliano and he called up his buddy who was the chief orthopedic surgeon in the hospital there and they took me in for the surgery. I ended up coming back too soon from rehab and that’s why my Italian right hip is weaker than my French left hip. In 2011 I started having trouble with my left hip in Casablanca where I met an Italian bass player, Claudio Citarella, whose girlfriend was a French neurologist, who introduced me to an orthopedist in Nice, France. So, I did the other hip in Marseille. That’s how I initially ended up in France.

FDM: Not that many. There’s Javier Campos Martinez, the bâta/rhumba and Cuban master rhythms master in Marseille. Also I rehearse regularly and perform occasionally with Christophe Leloi [trumpet], Simon Sieger [piano, tuba, trombone], and Remi Abram [tenor saxophone].

JF: What’s a typical day for you in Marseille?

FDM: Get up, go to the studio. For the first time in forty-five years I’ve got a rehearsal studio. I’m not living in a space where I can just get up and go downstairs and play at home. So, I’ve got a studio now. All these other cats that I know did that and now I’m doing it too. [Laughs] So I go across town to the studio and hit, and I’ve usually got students or classes, or just auto-torture. We call it duo torture, auto-torture, group-torture, it’s all torture, but it’s better than doing it by yourself. The auto-torture is difficult – self-torture. You have to make pleasantries out of all this stuff just to get through it. You’ve got to psyche yourself up, otherwise you get older and then you start playing tricks – mental tricks. “Oh yeah, I got this.” You ain’t got that, man, you’ve got to face that drum set! The hardest thing is to do that by yourself, at least for me. Roscoe [Mitchell] gets up every day, for the fifty-five years since I met him, he’s still doing some of
the same exercises in a similar order. He may change the selection of the instruments, but when he’d come to Chicago and stay at the house – 6:30 piccolo, 7:30 clarinet, 8:30 alto, 9:00 breakfast, and 10:00 tenor. That’s the cycle, and Lester [Bowie] had the same exercises he did and used them all the time for years. These are the people I was closest to. Even though I worked in all kinds of other groups outside the Art Ensemble. I wasn’t as close with Joseph [Jarman] and his personal thing of how he did his development. [Malachi] Favors was an unknown element. He was old-school, didn’t tell you nothing until you made a mistake. He got me good on bass players though because a good drummer gotta be able to play with all kinds of bass players, and then you go to piano players, and then you go into the interpretation and phrasing of the frontline pretty boys. [Laughs] I like trios because everybody’s got to throw down. Duos, you got to really throw down. The music doesn’t lie, only humans lie. If you’re dealing with truth, don’t mess with human beings [Laughs], sooner or later lies are gonna come up, but I know the music does not lie.

**FDM:** I’m a citizen of the world. I just try to maximize the situation and just try to be comfortable wherever I am, however, these are strange times. But I’m in constant communication with the musicians and friends. So I don’t buy into this shit about expatriatism. I’m an African-American, it ain’t gonna be, ‘I’m never going back.’ I’ve spent the majority of my life traveling and I’m not gonna get caught up with the hoax of going somewhere to the perfect place. This shit is horrible everywhere, man - France, England, Russia, Africa, Asia and beyond. It’s the whole new world order. My roots are in the United States. There ain’t no feelin’ like the feeling I have in the world order. My roots are in the United States. American, it ain’t gonna be, ‘I’m never going to...’

**Ji:** Has your view of America changed since you moved away and do you plan to move back in the future?

**FDM:** When I got out of school everybody I met had a band or had been in the Army bands. Roscoe was in the Army band with Albert Ayler and Eddie Harris at the same time. [Laughs] There were not a lot of accessible music conservatories so musicians went into the Army band and went home from there, and they just got their ass kicked every day practicing and playing morning, noon, and night. When I went to Chicago, there were still five playing levels, starting with the at home level, then there was the scrub jamming practicing level, then there was the level where you might start playing house parties or weddings, then the next level you play in a real club, and then you go to the top level where you be playing with the big boys. I went through all of that, and there was always tutelage from the top cats. I was working with six different bands, seven days a week, and rehearsing all day, every day when I got to Detroit, Paris, New York, and Chicago. I was a country boy, it wasn’t like that in Rochester so I had to get out of there. I would have never got that there. I left New York because I found a house in Chicago, twice as big for half as much. We were always committed to quality of life and not just making every gig and then getting home and don’t have nothing.

**Ji:** What’s your journey from a starting musician to one of prominence?

**FDM:** I’ve seen the dudes that made drums out of stools. They’d be sitting around and get off the stool and the top of the stool was a drum head. They had a whole stool drum ensemble. Then I’ve seen other cats that had shoe drums, they had a drum attached to the shoe, and they would play and dance. There were also the cardboard carton cats that would make things out of that material. I also saw an ensemble called the Ramadan Horns whose wind instruments were made of car and truck mufflers. There were also people who made instruments out of saws and large gourds. There’s a whole world of strange instruments out there. You can go to almost any indigenous culture and you will find these non-professional, side of the road cats that have been playing music their whole life. They come home from their work and they might play until 10 o’clock at night or later. I’ve seen that in Guadeloupe, Haiti, Mexico, India, Sierra Leone, Morocco, Guinea, and Spain. Nobody got no money, but that’s the strength of the human spirit. People are gonna beat on something. Just like the whole hip-hop phenomenon and rap, to me, that’s an extension of the demise of music education in the public schools: no instruments, no music programs, no bands - so kids just made themselves be the band and the instruments.

**FDM:** When I got out of school everybody I met had a band or had been in the Army bands. Roscoe was in the Army band with Albert Ayler and Eddie Harris at the same time. [Laughs] There were not a lot of accessible music conservatories so musicians went into the Army band and went home from there, and they just got their ass kicked every day practicing and playing morning, noon, and night. When I went to Chicago, there were still five playing levels, starting with the at home level, then there was the scrub jamming practicing level, then there was the level where you might start playing house parties or weddings, then the next level you play in a real club, and then you go to the top level where you be playing with the big boys. I went through all of that, and there was always tutelage from the top cats. I was working with six different bands, seven days a week, and rehearsing all day, every day when I got to Detroit, Paris, New York, and Chicago. I was a country boy, it wasn’t like that in Rochester so I had to get out of there. I would have never got that there. I left New York because I found a house in Chicago, twice as big for half as much. We were always committed to quality of life and not just making every gig and then getting home and don’t have nothing.

**Ji:** Well the band does seem different these days. Nobody is painting their faces or dressing up and the use of small instruments has lessened.

**FDM:** I paint my face sometimes, it’s the feeling. As far as the small instruments, tell that to Homeland Security or Customs or the airlines that want to charge you two hundred dollars for an extra bag. Back in the day, we had cargo containers, flight cases and international carnets. It wasn’t all the hassles of standing in a check-in line and trying to explain why you’re traveling with a set of drums and percussion. Now it’s a thousand dollars to do that. So that was by choice because we paid for all of that equipment, for all the years we did it, and it wasn’t exorbitant. We could have made a lot more money if we hadn’t committed to the thing of traveling with our own equipment.

**FDM:** We just recruit all the time. I’ve got a percussionist, Dudu Konaté from Senegal and a percussionist/griot Baba Sissoko from Mali. Roscoe’s got Fred Berry, who goes all the way back to his groups of the early ‘60s with Malachi Favors. We’re always looking. We’ve never put a restriction on ourselves. We just figure out a way to pay for it.

**FDM:** Through their rhythms of life, their vision of society, their relation to the reality of all the bullshit that was going on at that time in white American culture. That was before all the American white kids went crazy. The poets were cultural beacons of a time to come when people would start using their brains more reflectively. The Beats played with musicians during poetry readings. I can’t say that the poets effected my playing because I was listening to Miles, Coltrane, Duke and others, but it was more of their lifestyle that had its...
effect. Their words were good for the brain, put something on your mind. They turned me onto other writers from around the world and from different social origins.

**JF:** You also met Timothy Leary, the famous LSD pioneer.

**FDM:** I can tell you the last meeting with him. [Laughs] I was in Tangiers, Morocco in 1969 with the Detroit Free Jazz band after we had done some productions with Julian Beck and Judith Malina’s Living Theater in Europe. We rented a house and Timothy Leary shows up in town with all these rich, white hippie kids, talking about how they were gonna have a new ‘LSD Nation’ on the beaches of Tangiers [Laughs]. The Moroccan Customs and Border Police showed up and said, “Oh, hell no, not here!” We got ourselves out of town in the next days, down further south to Essaouira, because they were busting everybody that didn’t look right in Tangiers as a result of Leary showing up. At that time, Tangiers had a pretty good jazz scene because Randy Weston had a club there, which is one of the reasons we ended up there.

**JF:** After the Detroit Free Jazz band disbanded in Copenhagen you relocated to Rome. How did you join forces with Steve Lacy there?

**FDM:** Oh, I did all of my research at that time on who was doing what and where in Europe. That was his mindset at that time – getting ready to make history by going forward into the unknown future. Of course I wasn’t gonna say no. It was significant because of the range of the material and all the stuff they were doing. We rehearsed every day at the big house they rented in the suburbs of Paris. Lester had his wife, Fontella Bass and four kids with him and two dogs so it was a family environment plus a work situation. Rehearsing every day was mandatory. It was the formula for serious research. We warmed up on twenty songs at a time and every couple days we’d change the list of songs. We’d do all kinds of songs – ragtime, blues, country western, R&B, straight-ahead bebop, ballads and calypso. They were all really into percussion so we’d have a period every day when we’d work on rhythms and percussion techniques. Lester Bowie’s first wife and vocalist Fontella Bass was often working with us, so that was a good experience with that level of vocalist because she was an accomplished gospel and R&B singer. For me, this was the real deal. It wasn’t like we were studying, we were DOING this! We were playing music at the highest level.

**JF:** It’s ironic that you became a member of the Art Ensemble of Chicago yet had never been to Chicago.

**FDM:** Well, yeah. [Laughs] They had several guys from Chicago that were on the short list of drummers in ’67 after Phillip Wilson left to go play with Paul Butterfield. Phillip said, “I’ll be right back, I’m just going to make this quick tour,” and he never came back. He ended up playing at Woodstock and beyond. They considered drummers Jerome Cooper, who was buddies with Roscoe, Steve McCall, and Thurman Barker. There were about ten cats around Paris and Chicago that were possibilities, and then I showed up. I think the hook was my hand percussion. I hit it off pretty good with Malachi [Favors]. There was a concert at the American Center where I played with the Steve Lacy Quartet on the same bill as the Frank Wright Quartet and the Art Ensemble. We did our set and then the Art Ensemble was playing, and when they got to an open section with percussion, I took my conga drums to an open area next to Favors, put them in place, grabbed a nearby chair, sat down, and started improvising with them. They looked sideways at me but Favors told me to keep playing and that’s how we first got started. I was in the right place at the right time. They later came to watch me play again at a gig with Steve Lacy and saw that I could play trap drums too. I did some gigs and tours with them before Lester came and asked me into the group.

**JF:** Was that your sly way of auditioning for the empty drum chair?

**FDM:** Of course, I was hoping to throw my hat in the ring next to the ten other drummers vying to get the gig with The Art Ensemble of Chicago.

**JF:** How did Lacy react to you telling him you had taken up with another band?

**FDM:** I told him that the Art Ensemble of Chicago wanted me to tour with them on a regular basis and I asked for his advice. His response was, “Are you nuts or bullshitting me young man? You’d do best...”
to go on about your business while you’ve got some business to go on!”

JI: Would you talk about life with the AEOC, especially back in the ‘70s and ‘80s? They were known for presenting very animated stage presentations which included at least once, Joseph Jarman ripping off his clothes until he was completely naked.

FDM: Jarman did that in 1969 at a big rock festival in the north of France before my time in the band. He was playing guitar, doing a parody on the social element of rock & roll, and during his solo, he started taking his clothes off. That was an historic moment, a direct extension of his theatrical activities. He was doing all kinds of theater pieces in Chicago and Paris. At that time there was a great interdisciplinary activity between music, dance, theater, creative writing and painting. Everyone performed together.

JI: The group traveled in a bus with two guard dogs and shotguns and rifles.

FDM: That was the Cab Calloway legacy. Cab told us how back in the ‘30s and ‘40s he had to rent a sleeping car because they could never stay in hotels. Under the floor boards, they had rifles and pistols because once you got out of the big cities, it was like the Wild West. You had to carry guns to protect yourselves. We bought a 1951 Greyhound bus after we played at the 1972 Ann Arbor Jazz and Blues Festival. We went straight to the Greyhound used bus lot in Detroit and got our bus. It looked just like the bus that Louis Armstrong, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope traveled around with in the On the Road movies during the ‘50s.

JI: Did you ever have to pull the shotguns out?

FDM: Yeah, hell yeah! Four o’clock in the morning, up in the countryside of Michigan, our bus broke down. We were out there in the middle of night, waiting for the sun to come up, and all of a sudden, all these lights appeared and the white vigilantes were there with their guns. They said, “What you boys doing out here?” We said, ‘We’re here minding our business. What you doing?’ And we had our guns and the dogs were barking and they said, ‘Well, look here, Jethro over there, his cousin is a mechanic, and in the morning he can fix y’all all up and you can get the hell out of here.” We said, ‘Thanks a lot Bubba, we’ll see you at six o’clock.’ It’s a good thing we had our guns because it could have turned out differently.

JI: Joining the AEOC and not being from Chicago, were there problems for you upon arriving in Chicago with the band?

FDM: I quickly became immersed deeply into the Chicago tradition just by virtue of the fact that I arrived with the Art Ensemble. If I had arrived on my own, it would have taken me years. I met a lot of the characters and personalities from the scene because they were coming to see who the hell is this? They talked about how the Art Ensemble went to Europe and came back with some dude who’s not even from Chicago. They were saying, “Who is this dude,” and I was saying, ‘You will find out.’ [Laughs] I had to brush back from the cats. Even Jack DeJohnette came in and tried to turn me into a punching bag, and I punched back. Chicago is the “punching bag tradition.” They spar with you to see if you’ve got heart. You can’t go in half stepping. Fear is not acceptable. A lot of times, the older cats would try to make you flinch and you had to stay there and take it, and then the next time they would say, ‘Nobody told you to talk, man, go get me some cigarettes and get back to this rehearsal on time!’

JI: You’re saying that Jack DeJohnette challenged you?

FDM: Yes. Steve McCall challenged me, and Philip Wilson, and Thurman Barker and Jerome Cooper, and Robert Shy. All of the drummers, that’s part of the deal. They said, “You look like you can play. You got heart?” There was no physical contact, just psych stuff. All those cats were good at heart, it’s not a negative thing, but the music tradition is precious. This was in the days before all the jazz schools. The jazz school I went to was in the neighborhood.

FDM: The Art Ensemble did some joint touring with Max Roach’s Double Quartet. Did you have much of a relationship with Roach?

FDM: I was watching Max every night and we got to be good buddies until I walked his daughter home one night. He drove up in a taxi and said, “Okay, that’s the end of that shit!” [Laughs] We were just going back to the hotel, the string quartet was walking too, then Max got out of the taxi and walked with us. Oh, boy, we laughed about that! Chico Hamilton was on that tour too, and for my taste, Chico Hamilton was one of the baddest soloists at that time. Also one of the all-time drummers for me was Joe Dukes. Did you ever hear Joe Dukes with Brother Jack McDuff? That was a bad dude there.

JI: You performed with other prominent and influential bands in the mid-‘80s. How was it playing drums with eight brass players in Lester Bowie’s Brass Fantasy?

FDM: It was great because I came up in drum and bugle corps as a kid. We were national champions in the early sixties.

JI: You were also a founding member of the jazz supergroup The Leaders [featuring players such as Chico Freeman, Don Cherry. Arthur Blythe, Kirk Lightsey and Lester Bowie]. What was the concept for that band and how was membership determined?

FDM: Because the Art Ensemble rehearsed and worked so much, we encouraged each other to make damn sure that everybody got all of their pet projects done during the Art Ensemble’s down time so as to get that off their chests. Everybody had elements that they wanted to look into that would not have been successful inside of all the music that the Art Ensemble was trying to do. So The Leaders was an extension of me wanting to play a different kind of music. I had been playing around New York, Europe and Chicago with Chico Freeman and one day we sat down and came up with a construct based on the cooperative ideals of the Art Ensemble of Chicago. Philippe De Visscher, the Belgian agent that was booking the Art Ensemble decided he wanted to do an “All-star band,” whatever that means, so me and Chico sat down and did a list of people we’d like to perform with. Our first choice for piano was Don Pullen, but he was too busy with the Don Pullen/George Adams Quartet so we called Hilton Ruiz, who stayed for a short time until he got too busy. So we called Kirk Lightsey, who I never imagined I’d be working with because he was like one of the “big boys” when I was in school in Detroit, one of the “men.” [Laughs] Lightsey said he’d do it and then we called Don Cherry, Arthur Blythe and Cecil McBee. We really had eyes to hire Lester Bowie but he was too busy with the early version of Brass Fantasy, Jack DeJohnette, and the Art Ensemble. He did join us later once Don Cherry committed to Old and New Dreams. The Leaders was a cooperative band without a leader. It differed from the Art Ensemble in that everyone cooperated on doing tasks but they weren’t collectively paying for anything. With the Art Ensemble, fifty percent of all profits went into the pot to pay operating expenses, everybody was a leader and we all paid in the same amount.

JI: In 1983 you were part of a percussion quartet with Andrew Cyrille, Milford Graves and Kenny Clarke that recorded Pieces of Time. Would you talk about that special collective?

FDM: That was Kenny Clarke’s last recording session. Andrew put that all together. Andrew called me and said, “We have to do this because Kenny’s coming to New York!” Kenny was hesitant to do that recording with us because he said doing all that percussion wasn’t “his thing,” but then Max [Roach], his buddy, stepped in and told him, “Go ahead and make that money.” Max was driving Kenny around in New York then because Kenny was sick. Kenny was great, he was really humble.

JI: What current projects are you involved in?

FDM: I’m studying, studying, studying. I’m working a lot with Archie Shepp’s projects and I work with the Kirk Lightsey Trio. I’ve got my Percussion Ensemble: MMusic, with MMusic standing for the countries of origin for the six percussionists in the band - Morocco, Mali, United States, Senegal, Italy and Cuba. I also have some projects that I’ve been working with to keep my edge. I’m playing with a good trumpet player named Christopher Leloil who I met in Shepp’s band. I’m also working with a Martinique saxophone player, Remy Abram and a young multi-instrumentalist named Simon Steiger. There’s not that much work. I don’t jump out there like that – I say, ‘Say No and Get Mo.’ I just pick my spots but I’ve got enough work going on. I’d be doing the same thing if I was living anywhere else. The idea isn’t to run around so much. You’ve got to stay focused and a lot of times touring takes you out of focus unless you’re fortunate enough to be doing your own thing most...
of the time. I’ve never been the one answering the phone to be a hired gun but I tip my hat to the cats that can get up and go out the door, going to a different gig every night, the way the conditions are now. My real focus is to stay home because I’ve seen so many musicians that were never home so they didn’t have no home, and all they’d talk about was music. I say, ‘Man, I’ve got enough music to last me.’

**JL:** What are your guilty pleasures?

**FDM:** I’m supposed to answer that! [Laughs] I’ve got hobbies but I’m not answering that! The last three houses that I’ve had, I’ve designed the kitchen, so that’s a pleasure, but that’s not guilt. I cook all the time. I like to do wood refinishing and gardening. I also do a lot of archiving. Cats used to laugh at me when I would go out after the concert with my sack and get all the ticket stubs and concert programs, stealing posters off the walls before the concert started so that I’d have a whole collection of memorabilia.

**JL:** The last questions have been given to me to ask you from other artists:

**Roscoe Mitchell** (multi-instruments) asked: “Now that the Art Ensemble of Chicago is approaching its 50th Anniversary in 2019, what are your thoughts moving forward?”

**FDM:** To consolidate all of our experiences and get up the next day and go forward, don’t go back. Roscoe’s going forward and I’m just keeping in step with him. You’ve got to get up and do something. We’ve got an expanded format for 2019 and beyond.

**Hugh Ragin** (trumpet) asked: “When a student is learning African rhythms, how important is learning the dance and the language of the culture that produced those rhythms?”

**FDM:** Critical, because it’s a multisensory experience. I tell my drum students, ‘If you can’t dance yourself, how you gonna play dance music?’ If you’re gonna play rhumba and salsa, rhythms, grooves, and whatever else you hear, you’ve gotta dance and sing through your instrument. The music is in the language and the language is in the music and the music are in the drums.

**Dan Weiss** (drums) asked: “I would love to know a handful of your favorite recordings and why you like them.”

**FDM:** *Le Carnaval des Animaux* by Camille Saint-Saëns, which is a cello piece, because I was a violin student for a little while. I listen to a lot of Toumani Diabaté, the kora master/griot from Mali. Another of my all-time favorites is *Albert Collins & the Icebreakers*, that’s Texas blues. The Mendelssohn Violin Concerto and the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto. I used to listen to them every day when I was in high school. I had a record with them on the same album. Charles Mingus’ *Black Saint and the Sinner Lady*, John Coltrane’s, *Kulu Se Mama*. I would also have to say Mario Santamaria’s *Yambu* and Tito Puente’s *Puente in Percussion*. Another one that really inspired me was *Totico y su Rhomberos* with Jerry Gonzalez, Steve Turre, Don Alias, Andy Gonzalez, and Totico the singer. I bought that record in the subway at 43rd Street in New York. For me, Don Alias is killing on that.

**Kirk Lightsey** (piano) said: “Moye is one of my best friends. We talk every day and he is still one of my favorite drummers in the world! My question is what memories do you have of The Leaders, and I wonder what you have to say about how that great band ended?”

**FDM:** Ok, I’m not going to go into the details of the ending, but the beginning and the duration was great. Playing with Kirk and with Cecil McBee was a real challenge, they had been playing with each other since the Army in the ’50s. They came out of Detroit and did all those piano-bass duos around New York because there was a city ordinance that you couldn’t have a drummer in a lot of clubs. Consequently, the rhythm foundation and the intensity and strength of all of Kirk and Cecil’s duo gins were really solid because they had played a lot without a drummer. When they played, all the rhythms were there, so I had to put myself inside of that equation as a trio and rhythm section to compliment the band, because if you missed a beat, they’d run over your ass. I had to learn to play with those masterful artists.

**Pheroan akLaff** (drums) asked: “Why did you decide to become facile in European languages, while many expatriate musicians did not?”

**FDM:** That goes back to grammar school. I lived in a building in upstate New York in the ’50s, after World War II, and there was a whole mix of cultures who were there because work was available. We lived in the projects and on my floor we had Greek, African American and German families, and also a good mix at school, Italians, Polish and Puerto Rican. We had a choir at the church that sang songs in many different languages. So, I heard all these different languages every day. I studied Latin when I was in high school. I’m learning to comfortably speak French, English, German, Spanish, Italian, Wolof, Bambara, Arabic and some Kikuyu. I just deal with whatever it takes to ask where’s my money, [laughs] where’s the hotel, what time is the gig, and what time is the next flight? It costs a whole lot of money when you don’t know what you’re talking about. People don’t always know that I often understand their language. So, I really get to hear what they’re saying on the side.

**Pheroan akLaff** also asked: “Do you believe that U.S. audiences have ‘caught up’ to the level of curiosity, receptivity, or critical analysis offered by European listeners in the 20th Century, regarding African American creative music paradigms?”

**FDM:** Whew, that’s a mouthful! I wouldn’t say caught up, Americans often just don’t have an awareness of other cultures. Everything is focused on the American thing. I’ve found Europeans and the Japanese to be a lot more open but in the States you’ll have some magic moments when you least expect it then you say, ‘Now this is the real deal! This is the American feeling here!’ Any other audience, in any other place, would not understand this like that.

**J.T. Lewis** (drums) said: “Maestro Moye it was an honor to be asked to be included in your interview. You are one of my heroes and I hope I can make you proud to continue the tradition of this special music from Africa and Black America. When I listen to your playing, your vocabulary is very large, it sounds like it comes from a lot of places. Can you explain how you developed such a large drumming vocabulary?

**FDM:** A large influence came from the Art Ensemble and the way we used to rehearse all kinds of music. We’d always do twenty different songs as a warmup every day and change them often to incorporate different styles of music. Once I got to Chicago I played with a lot of different people. One group was called the Pharaohs, which was founded by Phil Cohran. A number of those people went on to become part of Earth, Wind and Fire. There were six percussionists in that group and that inspired me to form my own percussion ensemble. I was also working with African dance companies and modern dance companies. I often worked with the legendary Von Freeman, which I consider a feather in my cap, and also the great piano player Willie Pickens. The great Chicago drummer Wilbur Campbell started calling me to sub for him. I was studying with Muhal [Richard Abrams] and playing with the AACM Big Band as well as co-leading many projects with percussionist Enoch Williamson. I was also working with poets, actors, dancers and theater groups. I was playing with percussionists from Africa, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Columbia, and beyond. I also had contact over the years with all kinds of drummers. I was fortunate to have an open mind or have my mind opened, and have had concentrated exposure to a lot of different musical disciplines.

**Jamaaladeen Tacuma** (bass) asked: “How did you become involved and inspired in fashion and personal style, a passion that you enjoyed in the past and currently still. How was that passion transferred to the visual and performance concepts of the Art Ensemble of Chicago? I mean the Art Ensemble’s performances were crazy with Bowie walking around in a lab coat and Malachi’s and your face painted, it was definitely visual.”

**FDM:** I’m an adherent to the old style, old school, of dressing for the occasion. There are several different ways to reflect that in your choice of dress. You have the tribal influence, the spiritual influence, the ritual influence, the social influence. All of these things were reflected in my vision of the world around me. The people that I saw coming to town to play when I was coming up, they dressed. It wasn’t just jeans and t-shirts. My exposure to people dressing for performance stayed with me and as I moved out into my own consciousness I started seeing styles like the Native American aesthetic, the African aesthetic, the Indo-Asian aesthetic and the world wide Indigenous aesthetic. I had a mixture of all these influences from traveling around, meeting tailors and crafts people, buying stuff and combining elements. In conjunction with all of that was the Art Ensemble’s encouraging every member to have their own look. Everyone was focused on dressing and preparing their appearance for the stage and beyond. There were performances when I first got in the band that everyone painted their faces including Lester, Roscoe and occasionally even Fontella Bass when she performed with us.
Art Blakey
His Life & Music — Part 7

By John R. Barrett, Jr.

The Messengers opened 1963 in Japan, their first appearance in that country. On their Tokyo concert of January 2, they played behind singer Johnny Hartman – the first time a vocalist appeared with the group. (This event would go unrecorded; their first disc with a singer would be 1964’s Kyoto, made with Blakey’s cousin Wellington.) Spring was spent in a lengthy tour, as Blakey hit San Francisco in February, Birdland in March, Europe through April, and back to the Jazz Corner on June 16, where a live album was made called Ugetsu.

Their final record at Birdland, the crowd is receptive and the sound is warm – they also had a new batch of tunes, many composed in Japan. “One by One”, a landmark for Shorter, has a prim theme that quickly turns sassy – the cue comes from Blakey, thumping the toms with insistence. The longer the horns play, the more their harmonies fan out; Wayne turns hopeful on his solo, moving up with a bittersweet tang. Hubbard is peaceful on the choruses, flamboyant on the bridge; his highlight is a pleading note, held for six bars. Walton’s bit recalls Booby Timmons in its breathless blues; Fuller has a great tone, but does little with it. A wonderful opener, this signifies the group is ready ... the crowd is certainly ready to applaud.

During his time with Blakey, Cedar Walton did not write many tunes ... but those he did were priceless. On his first rehearsal with the group, Walton brought in a thing called “Mosaic”; it became the title cut of their next album. The same thing happened here: Cedar’s lone composition was penned in Tokyo, its title coming from the Japanese word for “fantasy”. At once the mood is set, when Cedar launches a Tyner-like vamp, simple yet lavish.

Freddie offers the theme with gentle grace, then blasts off for an athletic solo. His notes are limitless, flapping like butterfly wings as Workman makes a sinewy walk. If he is a storm, Shorter is a spring wind, puffing steadily but softly. His turn is one long variation of a compact phrase; as Walton’s vamp returns, he moves like Trane for an exquisite mood. Fuller sounds a little pugnacious, pacing with tiny steps. His notes are rounded, sweet, and long – his is the most coherent solo, and the most consistent. Wait for the end -theme, where the horns trade tiny solos. Fuller does a long quote of “It Never Entered My Mind”, and Walton sounds exactly like Tyner on “My Favorite Things” ... like the best fantasies, this one comes true.

Fuller’s “Time Off” is a racer, allowing Blakey and the trombonist to show their chops. The drums are big here: mostly toms, with occasional cymbal for emphasis. Curtis blooms on his solo, a warm flurry of delicate notes. His wavelike patterns are followed by the Monk-inspired “The High Priest”. Workman starts with a nervous bounce, the horns sketch the uneasy melody.

The stage is tense for Shorter’s “Ping-Pong”; Cedar’s comp explains the title. Shorter begins with the quote of “While My Lady Sleeps”, then runs through jazzed corridors – decent, but we’ve heard it before. Better is Hubbard, who dances around the scale with deft precision – Fuller succeeds him in mid-chorus, and continues the thought with lively steps. The end is the best part, where Hubbard screams as the rhythm freaks out – it’s a Ferris wheel out of control. No solo really stands out; the tune is the star of this one.

“I Didn’t Know What Time It Was” puts the spotlight on Shorter, who starts with restless, rippling patterns, as Coltrane would sound on A Love Supreme. Slower than most renditions, the tune is a walk through the rain: leisurely, sad, cold, and beautiful. Cedar’s chords are glassy and gorgeous; we don’t hear the other horns ‘til the end, when they roar with big-band dynamics. Because of Fuller’s presence, Wayne didn’t get the solo time he had on past projects – this rectifies it, and how. He ends it with a rusty trill in the image of Coltrane, and soon launches into “Ginza”, another standard of his. The ensemble harmonies are rich, the feel propulsive – Wayne’s solo has a worried feel in its frantic lines, a tough sort of fragility. Hubbard opts for diagonal lines, in a persistent march upward: cymbals roam free, and Walton is the real McCoy. Curtis’ effort is his best of the evening, where muscular phrases match his tough tone. Workman has a spindly part, matched well with Cedar’s comping; the end-theme tops the entry, and the disc sadly ends. Almost perfect from beginning to end, this may be the Messengers album to hear first.

Three more tunes were recorded this night, to appear on the CD reissue of Ugetsu: a cursory take on “The Theme”, Shorter’s slow ballad “Eva” (all twisting melodies and chorded horns) and the Monk-inspired “The High Priest”. Workman starts with a nervous bounce, the horns sketch the uneasy melody.

The drums are big here: mostly toms, with the occasional cymbal for emphasis. Curtis blooms on his solo, a warm flurry of delicate notes. His wavelike patterns are followed by Walton, at which time the cymbals do their job. Wayne spins a weary circle, giving way to Hubbard’s fast flight. Art does what he can to drive him faster, and then there’s Cedar, dispensing elegance with the speed of a player piano. You’re amazed at their skill, their wealth of compositions ... and wonder how a tune like “The High Priest” could be not good enough. Such things will happen with stand-
Art Blakey, Part 7

ards this high.

In the mid-'Sixties Art’s recording schedule slowed down considerably; three months passed between Ugetsu and his next album, A Jazz Message. Title to the contrary, this does not feature the Messengers, but rather an intriguing one-time quartet. Two of the players had never recorded with Blakey: McCoy Tyner, already famous with Coltrane, and Art Davis, the second bassist on a rejected take of “A Love Supreme.” The fourth member, Sonny Stitt, had worked with Art – but hadn’t done so since 1950! Cut on September 5 for the Impulse label, this could have been a disaster … but considering the people involved, you know otherwise.

The band earns its keep with the opening song, a blues called “Café”. Davis begins with a baião-like figure, seemingly ¾ and 4/4 at the same time. Blakey provides some hard sticks, establishing the time as 4/4; the theme comes from Tyner, as a vaguely sinister Latin dance. After this he steps back, providing thick chords for Stitt’s relaxed solo.

Far smoother than his norm, Sonny hums at mid-tempo, a chain of sly, interlocked notes. A few choruses in he begins to move: there’s a passionate trill, an urgent rush, and constant bombs from Blakey. This solo is well put together; the musician’s story. Tyner gets good. Davis’ turn seems without meter, a conventional blues, begun by Davis in a typical tempo, a chain of sly, interlocked notes. Tyner, already famous with Coltrane, and Art Davis vehicle Golden Boy. His famous block chords are heard just a little, but enliven the tune whenever they’re played. It’s interesting that both Stitt (the gritty competitor) and Tyner (the dazzling sophisticated) play the opposite of their usual roles. Davis gets another solo, filled with broadswoops and elliptical phrases; on the second chorus Sonny comes in, hitting a riff like a car horn. This is the door-knock of the title: an inviting sound, and an inviting tune.

“Summertime” is made for Stitt, its chord structure ideal for his lyricism. He does the theme simply, with the tiniest hint of vibrato – his rasp deepens at the solo, where he unleashes a flamboyant trill. Art’s snare keeps pattering like soft rain; the brushes are constant, working a light mist on a big cymbal.

The most noteworthy part of Tyner’s solo is that he uses nothing from his 1960 version, made with John Coltrane for the My Favorite Things album. While that effort was an echoeslashed onslaught of chords, this take is intimate, mixing cocktail phrases with patches of silence. He has totally changed his approach for this record – while Tyner was aggressive with Coltrane, pushing him with energetic comps, here he steps back and lets Sonny work at his own pace. This draws it all together: this isn’t four superstars in the same room, but a genuine group.

Side Two opens with another blues, bookended sweetly by Tyner. Inspired by “After Hours”, “Blues Back” combines slow lonely chords with a steadily marching cymbal. Sonny’s got a syrupy tone, well-suited for things like this; he quotes “Lucky So-and-So”, then spins dizzying circles for his finish. McCoy’s effort is somewhat clunky, and it ends rather suddenly – decent in parts, but it seems like an afterthought.

“Sunday”, a Jule Styne standard, is given the soft touch by Stitt, who includes bits of “Too Close for Comfort” and “There’s a Small Hotel”. There are no notes, rather a stream of vibrato-filled sound – there are times when he sounds like Stan Getz! Davis gives an intricate twang to his walk, somewhat buried by the cymbals; McCoy’s turn is sleek, and all the notes twinkle. It is followed by a fast “The Song Is You”, where the alto coos one moment and groans the next. Sonny fires on all cylinders: his solo is a breathless sentence, where a thousand ideas are linked effortlessly.

Stitt does not employ his usual quotes or devices at any point on this album, doing the whole thing fresh – he seems motivated by the new surroundings, as is Tyner. McCoy’s solo is closer to usual work, with lots of punchy chords – still, there’s a ballroom touch he didn’t use often. In one sense, this isn’t a Blakey album: the leader never solos, and rarely breaks out of mid-tempo. Viewing it another way, it’s a very typical effort – Art gets a group sound from disparate personalities, and turn familiar elements into memorable music.

Art began 1964 by recording the “jazz version” of a Broadway show, the Sammy Davis vehicle Golden Boy. While many such albums were made during the ‘Sixties, this is Blakey’s only foray in the genre. Written by Lee Adams and Charles Strouse, authors of Bye Bye Birdie, the show is best known for the standard “Yes I Can”; the album featured an 11-piece Messengers, with tuba, French horn, and the first-time pairing of Freddie

“As the Jazz Messengers entered their second decade, stability was replaced by turbulence. Recording offers declined as the music was changing direction; touring became a larger part of the schedule, putting further demands on the musicians. Stays in the group became briefer, especially at saxophone – to no one’s surprise, Wayne Shorter was a hard act to follow.”

(Continued on page 35)
Hubbard and Lee Morgan. (They would reunite on Art’s Soulfinger album, cut on May 12, 1965.) This was Morgan’s first date with the group after a three-year absence; he would return to the group, replacing Hubbard, in March 1964.

Around the same time as Golden Boy, the regular sextet was making an album at Van Gelder’s, called Free for All. Recorded on February 10, the title cut opens with rainfall: sad chords from Walton, paired with drizzling cymbals. The horns sink their teeth in the aggressive theme: the prominent voice is Fuller, his tone at its most rubbery. Wayne’s solo is first, and wastes no time: in a gritty tone, he draws curlicues through the active drums.

Swooping noises are next, followed by a metallic two-note flutter; the other respond in a simple riff. One chorus is basically a single held note, blown in the tone – and passion – of Coltrane. His tone turns warmer by the end of his solo, with the intensity at its highest; Fuller tries to follow with a series of long whoops. It’s actually pretty good … it fails enough for a cycle.” He had been with the group longer than any previous saxophonist – both his sound and compositional style would influence those who followed.

As the Jazz Messengers entered their second decade, stability was replaced by turbulence. Recording offers declined as the music was changing direction; touring became a larger part of the schedule, putting further demands on the musicians. Stays in the group became briefer, especially at saxophone – to no one’s surprise, Wayne Shorter was a hard act to follow. Through 1965 the chair alternated between the veteran John Gilmore and a young Gary Bartz: sometimes they’d play together, for a dynamic resembling the Griffin/McLean Messengers of ’57.

It was Gilmore who went on a European tour in late February; a March 7 stop in London was filmed at Cine-Tele Studios for the TV show Jazz 625. Morgan is absolutely on fire, spraying notes on high as Gilmore lays a smooth background. He wields a mute on “Lament for Stacy”, stepping gingerly among the wavering discs. Lee’s eyes seem closed whenever he plays, getting deep into the fabric of the songs – it was one of the last times he would play for the Messengers.

Morgan left after the group returned to America, sometime in the summer of 1965. He too proved difficult to replace: Charles Tolliver played a few club dates in June, but the band worked much of the summer without a trumpet. A solution came via Dizzy Gillespie, who suggested to Art the name of Chuck Mangione.

A native of Rochester, New York, Mangione was not yet 25, but already had impressive credentials: he had recorded four albums with his group The Jazz Brothers, contributed a song to the repertoire of Cannonball Adderley (“Something Different”), and did a stint in Woody Herman’s big band. He was not unknown to Blakey, having sat in with the group in its stops through Rochester – Art used this opportunity for housecleaning, hiring Lonnie Liston Smith and tenor Frank Mitchell along with Mangione.

Their first engagement was a week on the Jazzmobile, a moving trailer that brought jazz to the streets of New York City. According to Gary Bartz, Blakey was so occupied bringing in new talent that he forgot to tell his current men they had been replaced! “[W]e had come back to New York from a gig in Cincinnati, and all that week we were hearing advertisements on the radio for Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers at the Jazzmobile. Neither Hicks [pianist John Hicks] nor I had heard from Bu about this, but we figured ‘Well, we know where we’re working’. So we went up there. We could hear music from all the way down the block. And there was the Jazzmobile moving down the street, with Art and a whole new band!”

Liston Smith was only in the group a few months, his stay going unrecorded. His replacement was a drum student, a former child prodigy who claimed he hadn’t practiced the piano since 1960!

Keith Jarrett had attended Berklee … was scheduled to study with the renowned Nadia Boulanger but decided against it … he wanted to see if he could make it as a musician.”
Art Blakey, Part 7

described it to Jarrett’s restlessness. “Sometimes a man has so much talent he would get bored waiting for the other cats to catch up …[I]t’s like a kid in school; put him in the wrong class and he gets bored.”

Jarrett’s only record with the band would be Buttercorn Lady, recorded at Hermosa Beach’s Lighthouse on January 1, 1966. It would be reissued in 1995, retitled Get the Message. He has fun with “Buttercorn”, spinning a long, funky calypso. As Art feeds him tom-toms, Keith dances with precise steps – somewhat clunky at first, his harmonies broaden when Mangione coos behind him.

“Recuerdo” has one those perfect Messenger Moments: Chuck goes Dizzy-like on the mute, Mitchell answers with toughness … and Blakey tuning the toms behind both. While he had something of Morgan’s touch, Mangione also shows a warm edge, at times absent from Lee’s work. In the midst of his emoting, Chuck sneaks in a quote of “Shadow of Your Smile”, absolutely perfect for the surroundings. By this moment alone, Mangione proved he belonged in the Messengers; Wynton Marsalis characterized him as “really low-key – it wasn’t a step forward, but it wasn’t a step backward.”

The tune also contains what critic Alan Goldsher calls the most bizarre Messengers solo: a dissonant Jarrett, plucking and scraping piano strings in ways that were common in classical music (Henry Cowell did it in the 1920’s) but at the time unknown in jazz. According to Mangione, Blakey liked this: “Art would encourage him by yelling ‘Act like a fool!’ And Keith did, because Keith is Keith. He was as unique then as he is now. Similar discord appears on Chuck’s feature “My Romance”, where odd triple-time sequences mix with the sweetest mute you ever heard. If there was tension between Jarrett and Mangione – as apparently there was – it resulted in beautiful music.

The later Jarrett is heard on “The Theme”, in a dense sustained cloud of intricately-connected notes. It is simple by his later standards (in the ‘Seventies he’d do this sort of thing for 45 minutes straight) but it certainly shows the direction he was going. The horn riff behind him is little softer than normal – they seem to be giving him deference. Mitchell gets a good turn on “Between Races”; clearly inspired by Shorter, I also hear some Rollins in the slower passages. The bell-like comps provided by Jarrett are wonderful.

On this session you can hear the roots of Keith’s greatness, but he was already growing tired of the Messengers. In the spring of 1966 he was sitting in with Charles Lloyd on his off-days; he even appeared with Lloyd on a TV broadcast, made on February 16. This was not a surprise to the band, some of whom saw Jarrett as an opportunist – he would join Lloyd full-time at the beginning of March.

His replacement was Mike Nock, a New Zealander who supported Yusef Lateef on the Live at Pep’s albums. His stay lasted about a month, followed briefly by Lonnie Liston Smith and then by Chick Corea, fresh off a stint with Blue Mitchell’s band. One album was made during his stay, but surprisingly Chick did not appear on it. As with many jazz albums in the late ‘Sixties, Hold On, I’m Coming attempted to reach a pop audience by covering the hits of the day. Recorded on May 27, the disc included such curiosities as “Monday, Monday”, “Secret Agent Man” and, most improbable of all, “Walking My Cat Named Dog”!

The expanded lineup included two trombones, Garnett Brown and Melba Liston, the guitar of Grant Green, and the organist Malcolm Bass; while not officially a Jazz Messengers session, Corea was the only Messenger absent. Despite the commercial trappings, Hold On, I’m Coming sold poorly; the Messengers would make no studio album for the next five years. Corea and Mangione left the group at the end of October; they briefly formed their own band, which played Rochester until Chick joined Stan Getz. After an unsuccessful attempt to rehire Bobby Timmons, Blakey was able to get McCoy Tyner, right after he left Coltrane’s group. The trumpets flew by in quick succession: Bill Hardman for most of 1967, Randy Brecker at the end of ’68, then followed by Woody Shaw. Many stars played with Art in this period, including Buster Williams, Kenny Barron, Joe Henderson, George Cables, and Joe Farrell – but, apart from some bootlegs, no recordings were made of them. While the Messengers had always been a live act, this was especially true in the late ‘Sixties.

Blakey was fond of calling his bandmates “my youngsters”, but in late 1970, he was proud to make an exception. After a long career in Europe, the bebop legend Don Byas came back to the United States … and found himself forgotten. After his appearance at the Newport Jazz Festival, Byas made the rounds on the New York club circuit – no one was interested but Blakey, shocked that this pivotal figure was unemployed.

He took Byas on a lengthy tour of Japan; Don didn’t replace Ramon Morris at tenor, he

“Blakey was fond of calling his bandmates ‘my youngsters’, but in late 1970, he was proud to make an exception. After a long career in Europe, the bebop legend Don Byas came back to the United States … and found himself forgotten. After his appearance at the Newport Jazz Festival, Byas made the rounds on the New York club circuit – no one was interested but Blakey … and took Byas on a lengthy tour of Japan...”

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