“The Sound”
as requested by you.

You asked for the playability and sound of the early Otto Links.

We listened.
With structural changes both inside and out, “the sound” of yesteryear has been recaptured.

Otto Link Vintage for tenor sax.

www.jjbabbitt.com
MOUTHPIECES FOR CLARINETS AND SAXOPHONES
ORDERTHIS200+PageBook+CD-Only$19.95
Call215-887-8880

Jazz Improv
The Comprehensive Jazz Magazine By Jazz Fans For Jazz Fans
Jazzimprov.com

Enhanced CD Inside
13 Full-length tracks + E-book with pages of transcribed solos, song lead sheets & analysis exercises

Exclusive Interviews
Maria Schneider
Bill Frisell
Freddie Bryant
Wayne Escoffery & Carolyn Leonhart
Kendra Shank
Sara Gazarek
Kenny Carr
Rob Whitlock

Wes Montgomery

THE GUITAR PAGES
19 pages for the jazz guitar player

Over 30 PAGES of CD, DVD & Product Reviews

Jazz Icons DVDs

Columns by Ira Gitler, Todd Coolman, Sue Terry & Others

Annual Guitar Directory
Clayton-Hamilton
Together with an all-star lineup of Los Angeles-based musicians, the big band received an enthusiastic response from reviewers and fans.

Charles McPherson
He remains a strong, viable force on the jazz scene today. He is at the height of his powers. His playing combines passionate feeling with intricate patterns of improvisation.

Terell Stafford
Stafford’s exceptionally expressive and well-defined musical talent allows him to dance in and around the rich trumpet tradition of his predecessors while making his own inroads.

Joshua Breakstone
His flowing lines on up-tempo cookers are impeccably clean and fiery, bearing the mark of a first-rate improviser, while his chordal work on heartbreaker ballads is the final word in finesse. — Guitar Player magazine.

Ken Peplowski
Ken Peplowski is reunited with his NYC working group that includes Ted Rosenthal on piano, Martin Wind on bass and Matt Wilson on drums.

Stranahan / Zaleski / Rosato
Limitless shows that the partnership is working quite well and in all likelihood hadn’t even hit its ceiling yet.
— S. Victor Aaron, Something Else Reviews
IJ: What kinds of challenges do you experience playing with a big band as opposed to a small group?

IJ: The challenges and limitations for me usually have to do with my ego wanting to play more solos because most of the time I’m playing fourth trumpet parts—which I love to play—with Maria’s [Schnieder’s] band and playing with other big bands. I just love to be under the lead, but just doubling it. Sometimes I’m in a real intense crunch in the voicing. It’s kind of energizing for the chops to sit at home doing long tones. Or, writing a tune because it gets you out of that space. Then I come back and I feel much more in flow with the music and with my creativity. I feel that it is really important to get the fundamental of sound together. That’s what practicing basics to me is—long tones, and getting inside of a rhythm while practicing those long tones. Also, using the imagination to almost feel like you are playing on a tune without playing big fancy solos. It is more about hearing all the integral parts of the chord. So my basic practicing consists of long notes, then simple exercises through all keys... some kind of idea... some kind of technical idea—just so I have the fluency and the fluency in my sound and on my horn. That’s basically my practicing while I’m working on other people’s music.

IJ: Sure, actually the big band setting is a really important part of my roots. Where I come from, we had this big band. Dianna Krall played in it. My sister played in it. All the up and coming talents in the town played in that band. It will always be sort of the role model for me as far as a healthy big band feeling goes. It was an integrated band, of old cats mentoring the young cats. This was on Vancouver Island. We played swing dances. We used the money we made from the swing dances to buy all the hip charts: Brookmeyer, Thad Jones, Toshiko Akiyoshi. We would rehearse every Wednesday. There was no money to be made whatsoever. So that idea of fun and the spirit of fun in that big band has always been in the back of my mind when I play with a large ensemble. Since those days, I’ve played with a number of big bands at Berklee in Boston. In Denmark, I played a little bit with Ernie Wilkins’ band. I only really sat in with the band. I finished my degree at Berklee in Boston and then I moved directly to Copenhagen, just to practice. I finished Berklee. I only really sat in with the band. I moved to New York I was working with Diva—for a while. I also got to do some gigs with the Mingus band. Darcy James Argue just started up a band which is called Secret Society. He’s a fantastic composer. It’s really about individuality and writing for the moment, and writing from a place that is truly your own original, and inspired.

IJ: It was such a long time ago. It was right after I finished Berklee. I only really sat in with the band. I finished my degree at Berklee in Boston and then I moved directly to Copenhagen, just to practice. My Aunt let me stay at her house. I had all these cassettes that I was transcribing. I met Ernie just hanging out. I got more from him just hanging out listening and talking about the Basie days. I wasn’t thinking about writing or composing back then. I wish I had because I would have picked his brain...
Ingrid Jensen

(Continued from page 4)

more. I just learned more about this camaraderie, this family feeling. It came from all the bands that he was involved with.

**Ji:** Did you have an opportunity to solo a lot when you were playing with the Mingus Band?

**Ji:** They gave a lot of space to blow. The Mingus band as you know is sometimes just stand-up-and-fight-for-your-space. The first set I did with the band, I didn’t realize that that’s how it worked. If you didn’t jump up and start blowing you were going to get “blowed” over. I think, Earl Gardner was there and he said, “just get up.” He almost pushed me up. I started playing and it was always fun. They let me blow on a couple of tunes on every set.

**Ji:** I sometimes wonder if all-women bands are somehow self-marginalizing themselves.

**Ji:** Absolutely. That’s a valid observation about the state of women in jazz. I am not knocking the band, or the women in the band. There are some fantastic players in the band. They’re playing incredible challenging music. It’s very exciting. Women are

the people that I knew about before I knew about her. That excites me too. Monk hung out with her. Bird asked her to be in his band and she turned him down. There are all these incredible stories of how much of an effect she had on people. Dizzy came over and she showed him some stuff on that piano and helped him figure out his concept. This is the one concept for me that makes sense—you pay homage to a figure that deserves it. There’s so much to still learn about them. I recently turned down an offer to play in an all-women’s festival. I’m pretty well done doing these all-women festivals because I don’t feel that at this point in my career I need to do that. I also feel that it’s an unfair marketing ploy. It’s creating this ghetto that’s not really going to help. Why not just have a festival of music... or a tribute to an artist that I relate to. But to complete my thought on this... The whole idea of just working with a group of people, just because they are from a certain place, or a certain sex, limits that opportunity to go into those few spaces that I like to go into.

**Ji:** I think that if we want to include people and expand the music, then segregating and excluding people has the potential to interrupt or disconnect us from Source or creative source energy.

**Ji:** You’re interrupting that source energy, I think, if you’re forcing something into a certain kind of environment that it doesn’t need to be in. As a

“Her teaching was so thorough and so great that it helped me put together my chords that had never been before. All of a sudden I had some screaming double G’s and lots of heavily articulated notes. Things got a little out of control and I just wanted to play high all the time. Eventually I brought the two together—the idea of music and chops. I went to being a musician first and a trumpet player second.”

getting a lot of experience from all women projects. It gives them an opportunity. The opportunity thing is a little misleading as far as what you need in music as people. I think that the “ghettoization” takes place when you have these concepts as all women, or all black, or all white, or all anything. It’s the concept that breaks down the integrity of the music. It’s kind of an insult to each individual—as far as where they come from musically. That’s because they are no longer there for a true purpose of being passionate about something. They’re there because they were made a certain way. They were born a certain color, or born a certain sex, and they can play their instrument. It’s a very marginalized market that takes place when that happens. It kind of puts things out of perspective for me. If it is about the music, it is about the music period. The one all-women’s festival that I really respect is the Mary Lou Williams Festival. I have a soft spot for it because of Dr. Billy Taylor. He [didn’t] really see the festival as a bunch of women. He [saw] it as a celebration of his friend Mary Lou Williams. He [gave] her this kind of nod that she deserves. Every year he [brought] people to her music. Her music has influenced so many of

women, I know I have a certain energy to bring to music. The guys I play with are sensitive to that, and appreciate that. I recently did a tour with three women and two men and I didn’t even think about it. People came up to us and said, “Oh wow it was really nice to see all those women up there.” I didn’t even realize it. Oh yeah, there are three of us and two of them. Gez, whatever! We’re just playing. I can guarantee that not even one person on that stage even thought about that. I hope that answers the question eloquently. I don’t want in any way to sound like I’m putting down my experience or movement but will come about through a series of actions that appear to be unrelated and coincidental, but that were all along systematically planned for dictatorship.”

― John Adams, 2nd President

with Diva. It was positive. I learned how to play the trumpet better by playing beside the lead player, Liesl Whitaker. She is one of the greatest lead players in the world.

**Ji:** Trumpet is often an instrument where there can be a lot of pyrotechnics involved. Many trumpet players are overwhelmed by Maynard Ferguson and his technique. Can you talk about the temptation to be drawn to technique over the music itself that artists experience, and how that has affected you?

**Ji:** Well, the trumpet for me was very challenging at the very beginning. The most challenging part for me was that I couldn’t stand the sound that was coming out of my bell when I would blow air through it. That sounds like a trumpet. It sounds brittle and kind of narrow and it doesn’t sound anything like a voice. Having grown up listening to Louis Armstrong, and knowing how warm a sound can translate through the trumpet, I was extremely freaked out. I would never get a chance to get that together. I immediately started doing little exercises, somebody must have said something to me. I remember sitting in the band room during lunch hours playing one note and then singing that note, and then playing it again, trying to get the same sound of my voice to come out of the trumpet. That obsession early on helped me to stay away from being a trumpeter. I didn’t want to play the trum-

(Continued on page 6)
Ingrid Jensen

(Continued from page 5)

Things got a little out of control and I just wanted to play high all the time. Eventually I brought the two together—the idea of music and chops. I went to being a musician first and a trumpet player second. This allowed me to combine those two concepts and play the way I play.

**JL:** I always learned a lot from teaching. It reinforced the kinds of things I wanted to play. Maybe you could talk a little bit about the kinds of teaching that you do, and how that experience as a clinician and educator has helped you as an artist or enhanced your creativity.

**JI:** I come from a whole family of teachers. My mother was a grade school teacher. Then she went back to school. My stepfather is a principal of an elementary school. The teaching mentality is just one that came naturally. I saw my mom preparing her lessons. I would go to her class and watch her teach. I realized that being able to translate this gift of music into words, and to inspire other people to play and want to go practice and want to go play, was definitely something I couldn’t avoid. I wanted to just be a player, an artist and a writer and never teach. But every time I get around a group of students who are interested and who are excited about music, it charges me up with a certain energy that I can’t explain. It’s like the playing energy I get when I play with great musicians. It’s a whole other vibe. It’s like a drug you get injected with—with all these different personalities and you see these sparks going off. You see them wanting to go for it and express themselves. So that is what teaching is to me. It’s a real thrill and it helps me to formulate my ideas more clearly, and to learn how to explain them. It forces me into a position where I have to be able to do what I’m teaching. If I’m going to tell a kid to do something, then I better be able to do it too. I just love it because when I’m teaching trumpet students, it gives me a chance to sit at the piano, and play some chords ... and listen to them, and maybe interact a little with them. If it’s their first time improvising, they get a feeling of what it’s like to not play with a play-along record, but to play with a live person—and to just start that flow of creativity going. Those play-along records aren’t going to interact with you. I encourage kids a lot. If you only have a bass player in your band that can play, and you’re playing saxophone, just play as a duo with them. That’s going to get the creative juices flowing a lot better then just playing with something electronic, or playing along with the recordings. Learn the tunes the way they were played. Don’t go to the books. The books have a lot of mistakes in them. They’re just one version. There are so many versions. That’s another level of the interactivity in this music. It evolves because tunes evolve from recording to recording.

**JL:** Louis Armstrong said that when he would travel, he would sometimes have to endure playing with players that were not very good

**JI:** He said he turned down the band on stage and turned up the one in his head. That is killer, man, and Louis was the king of imagination. From what I understand, Louis loved everybody and he didn’t have any kind of prejudice about anything. He just loved life. That’s again what I got from music at a young age was that spirit of life and fun and joy and being silly and just going for it.

**JI:** I agree. His lack of prejudice and fairness are behaviors we can all learn to model after. We all experience criticism.

**JI:** Young upcoming musicians have a lot of issues to deal with. When I was playing in my early teens and early twenties, I was so insecure and so freaked out about what I was doing. First of all, it’s not exactly a normal career for a young girl from Canada or anywhere in the world to take off and play jazz trumpet. That’s a little odd. Because I was one of the first female jazz trumpet players that I saw working, kind of made me nervous. It gave me an insecurity and fear that would manifest itself. When I would think other people were saying something ... or maybe they did say something ... or maybe they did let me play, or they didn’t let me play. But all those things ... when I look back on them now... That was my problem. That was my way of either dealing or not dealing with the situation. Now I’m just so glad to be free of those times in my life, and have the artistic control, and personal power to actually create an environment that is stimulating and supportive. I don’t have to prove myself. That’s in line with the whole women thing. That’s one of the problems when a band is all women. There’s a feeling that they are suppose to be proving themselves—that they can play as good as men. Again, that really doesn’t have a lot to do with music.

**JI:** The whole aspect about proving oneself is detrimental to the creative process. When we are concerned with what the people that are observing us are thinking, then it removes us from devoting our full capital of conscious energy to actually creating.

**JI:** Absolutely. There are two things that people say that I know that they believe are compliments when they are saying them. But, these two statements are my pet peeves. One is “I heard another girl trumpet player. You sound better then her.” Well, that’s not really a compliment. Another is “You women play as good as the guys.” Again, those aren’t compliments. Unfortunately, these come from ignorance, and from people not being exposed to the kind of culture that Europeans are exposed to. I don’t hear those comments in Europe—not the way I hear them in the states.

**JI:** I like getting compliments but I realize that compliments, and criticism, like perfume need to be inhaled not swallowed.

**JI:** That’s a good one. Did you put that in the book? You got to put that in there. That’s awesome!

**JI:** But when you think about it, when somebody comes up to you and says you sound great, and you might not have thought this that was a great performance, you might think, well it’s nice of them to say that. Then somebody else might say you sounded terrible. Either of those extremes can be detrimental—one giving us a big head, and the other providing a sign suggesting you to quickly enroll in therapy for six months.

**JI:** Well, I think we’re in a new age. There’s a new flow of healthy attitude going on among musicians these days. I see a lot of musicians who are reading similar books, who are digging deeper into spirituality. Because of that, it is helping us be set free from the competition that is naturally inherent in the business. For example, when the internet came along, everyone freaked out about it in the beginning. People would say “this is going to kill jazz. No one going to get any gigs anymore. It’s all going to be free and no one’s going to make any money.” The internet is giving me the freedom now to have even more contact with my fans—people that really are my fans. These are not people who to whom I have to prove myself or sell myself. It’s the opposite. These are people that are really looking for me and are really interested in the projects I’m doing—and I’m interested in sharing it with them. So I’m busier then ever as a result of my web site: IngridJensen.com. People who might ask “where can I find her?” Click! “There she is. Wow. There’s her phone number. Let’s hire her. Let’s e-mail her about something.” The new website with ArtistShare is even more exciting to me. It’s giving me the freedom to have all this information just streaming on different levels of participation. There are all these live gigs I’ve done—where we’re always recording on live gigs. There are tons of bootlegs on there. There are pictures from the road. There are stories. There is this great window of information that’s going to let me be more in touch

(Continued on page 8)
Concert Halls, Festivals, Clubs, Promoters

PAY ONLY FOR RESULTS
CONCERT & EVENT MARKETING!

Fill The House In Hours For Your Next Performance

CALL: 215-887-8880
www.SellMoreTicketsFast.com

Lightning Fast, Way Better Results & Far Less Expensive Than Direct-Mail, Print, Radio & TV Ads—Comprehensive Analytics!
Ingrid Jensen

with people, and let them know me even more. It’s exciting. It’s really exciting. Not to take away from the magazine format, I think it even helps to separate the men from the boys as far as press goes. There’s just so much control within the press because of the labels. It gives more independent artists, like myself, more freedom—to just be who they are, without having to be beefed up by some other producer.

JI: In jazz there doesn’t seem to be proper attention provided in the mainstream media. What are your views?

LI: I don’t really think about the idea of having to save the music. I think jazz doesn’t need to be saved, or advertised. It would be like advertising a tree that was going to change it’s colors. It’s like this tree will always look this way. Oh, wait. Fall came. Shoot. It’s not the same tree. It’s more like the audience has to come to the music with an understanding that it’s about adventure. In many ways people “dis” Diana Krall because she sings jazz, and gets such exposure from it. People put down that idea of what she is doing. If you look at the grand spectrum of advertising the music and advertising jazz … It is such an empowering thing to the music to have something swinging, melodic and beautiful being played—rather than Kenny G, and rather than the schmalzy, poppy, crummy stuff. And, that’s the kind of music that goes on in all these high exposure environments—like in airplanes, malls, whatever. I just think it’s a very broad spectrum as far as advertising in music goes. I’ve never thought of myself as having to sell it, or advertise it. I’m so caught up in playing, writing and listening—playing off of what’s going on around me. On the other hand, I think the internet is going to allow other people who are not in such locations to get the exposure to the music. I think it is going to allow an insight into the music and into the musicians lives. It’s going to help increase the audience. Again, the internet is a very exciting adventure. If I were a major record label trying to promote a jazz artist right now, I’d be concerned about that. In my eyes, that market that musicians were vying to get into, for so long, is kind of crumbling, in a way. It’s not longer about taking care of the musicians, like it used to be. There’s a select handful of select jazz artists that seem to get the right treatment. But now, it seems that we can take that treatment into our own hands, and have a very high quality of life. We can feel good about ourselves, and reap the actual benefits of contact with our audience—through photos, letters, e-mails, journals and honest and open personal insights, into the music and ourselves and our personal lives.

JI: I interviewed Rob Levitt, a guitar player who used to live in New York City. He used to play for tips in small clubs. He said that he used to live in New York City. He is based around place on your art, on your music, and on yourself is music. He astutely pointed out that the value you yourselves, and reap the actual benefits of contact with the music and ourselves and our personal lives.

JI: If you’re committed to the music, that would naturally come first—rather than forfeiting that to compromise what you believe and what you are really about.

LI: I live with the theory that what you put out is what you are going to get back. If you’re putting out beautiful honest thoughts into the universe you may not get a $25,000 recording contract, or a million dollar recording contract. But you will have music with integrity, that will last. That process will keep you in an evolving state as an artist, rather than a packaging state. It’s easy to package things. There have been many times that I’ve had people say “hey, why don’t we do this with you?” When I played in the Diva Big Band, I remember being told that I should play like Clark Terry or Sweets Edison on a piece. That kind of pissed me off. I said, “No. I’ll play like Ingrid.” I know Clark, and I know Sweets. They like it when I play like me. Those are my idols. Those are the guys I look to as sources of integrity. They never sat down and made a decision, “This is my style.” They really about. If I were a major record label trying to advertise it. I’m so caught up in playing, writing and listening—playing off of what’s going on around me. On the other hand, I think the internet is going to allow other people who are not in such locations to get the exposure to the music. I think it is going to allow an insight into the music and into the musicians lives. It’s going to help increase the audience. Again, the internet is a very exciting adventure. If I were a major record label trying to promote a jazz artist right now, I’d be concerned about that. In my eyes, that market that musicians were vying to get into, for so long, is kind of crumbling, in a way. It’s not longer about taking care of the musicians, like it used to be. There’s a select handful of select jazz artists that seem to get the right treatment. But now, it seems that we can take that treatment into our own hands, and have a very high quality of life. We can feel good about ourselves, and reap the actual benefits of contact with our audience—through photos, letters, e-mails, journals and honest and open personal insights, into the music and ourselves and our personal lives.

JI: If you’re committed to the music, that would naturally come first—rather than forfeiting that to compromise what you believe and what you are really about.

LI: I live with the theory that what you put out is what you are going to get back. If you’re putting out beautiful honest thoughts into the universe you may not get a $25,000 recording contract, or a million dollar recording contract. But you will have music with integrity, that will last. That process will keep you in an evolving state as an artist, rather than a packaging state. It’s easy to package things. There have been many times that I’ve had people say “hey, why don’t we do this with you?” When I played in the Diva Big Band, I remember being told that I should play like Clark Terry or Sweets Edison on a piece. That kind of pissed me off. I said, “No. I’ll play like Ingrid.” I know Clark, and I know Sweets. They like it when I play like me. Those are my idols. Those are the guys I look to as sources of integrity. They never sat down and made a decision, “This is my style.” They really about. If I were a major record label trying to advertise it. I’m so caught up in playing, writing and listening—playing off of what’s going on around me. On the other hand, I think the internet is going to allow other people who are not in such locations to get the exposure to the music. I think it is going to allow an insight into the music and into the musicians lives. It’s going to help increase the audience. Again, the internet is a very exciting adventure. If I were a major record label trying to promote a jazz artist right now, I’d be concerned about that. In my eyes, that market that musicians were vying to get into, for so long, is kind of crumbling, in a way. It’s not longer about taking care of the musicians, like it used to be. There’s a select handful of select jazz artists that seem to get the right treatment. But now, it seems that we can take that treatment into our own hands, and have a very high quality of life. We can feel good about ourselves, and reap the actual benefits of contact with our audience—through photos, letters, e-mails, journals and honest and open personal insights, into the music and ourselves and our personal lives.

JI: I think the music is about experiencing and enjoying the moment. If we are preoccupied with becoming experts, we face the pitfall of stopping or impeding our growth and artistic possibility.

JI: I don’t know what an expert is. I don’t think I’ll ever understand that feeling myself. The music is so humbling. Everyday, the instrument I’ve chosen to play feels different on my face. So, I don’t know if I’ll ever feel like an expert, or be playing from that place. A friend of mine was able to get her chops together on trombone instantly. She started playing and in two years. She had the most incredible technique. She could play anything, and she excelled through every level of improvising from the time she was in high school. She said, “Well that’s it. I think I’ve got it together and I don’t see any reason to go on.” Wow! That’s the opposite of how I feel. I feel like I’m just beginning every time I pick up the horn. At the end of every gig I feel like I’ve come to a new place, and I can’t wait to see where it’s going to go next.

JI: I agree.

LI: There is no knowing it all in jazz.

JI: It seems like the more I learn, the bigger the Universe looks, and the further away I get from wherever we’re going on this path, and from any possible assimilation or mastery of the hypothetical whole, or thorough knowledge, or completion. The more I get into exploring some—like the keys, the tempos, the grooves, the dynamics—the more I see there is to explore and create.

JI: Sure. Then you play that same tune with a whole other group of musicians, and you realize “oh my god you can go here too.” Exploring in different meters, in different styles of music… Again, composing and arranging is a very exciting arena—because now I can create different moods and different modes and different feelings over which to play, that constantly challenge me. A lot of the music that I’m playing in different bands is not in four. It’s in thirteen, and nine-eigh and crazy stuff. It makes a lot of sense musically, but takes a constantly evolving approach to get through it.

JI: One of the things that I observed in Thad Jones’ music was that his playing was a direct correlation, or reflection of his arranging. His improvised or written lines had the same kind of energy about them. Could you talk about the correlation between your playing and your writing?

JI: It’s a growing process for me—the correlation between the two. I think I have more technique on the trumpet than I have technique with which to compose. I spent time transcribing trumpet solos, sax solos, piano solos. That information is assimilated into my playing now in a very free flowing way. With writing, I want to get inside the scores of all these great composers and arrangers—and analyze things more. I want to get that connection with the harmonies as much as I feel I have with the melodies. As I said earlier, I won’t write a line that doesn’t lay on the trumpet properly. I’m not going to just write something on the computer and then see if it works. I’ll sit and play through it.

(Continued on page 10)
GET YOUR MUSIC IN THE NEWS WITH MASSIVE PRESS COVERAGE GUARANTEED IN 24 TO 48 HOURS

GUARANTEED PUBLICATION ON HUNDREDS OF MAJOR NETWORK MEDIA & AUTHORITY NEWS SITES + DISTRIBUTION TO TRADITIONAL PRINT & BROADCAST NETWORKS — TO DRIVE TRAFFIC & SALES TO YOUR BUSINESS

ALL WITHOUT THE EXPENSE, FRUSTRATION & DISAPPOINTING RESULTS FROM SO MANY PUBLICISTS!

BENEFITS

- Massive Seed Exposure To Increase Chances For Increased Media Coverage—Positive Stories And Images Of Your Business Via Major Network & Authority Media Build Your Brand, Prime Your Clients To Trust You And Your Business More.
- Builds Your Positive Image—Builds Your Positive Image Creates Increased Buzz And Exposure
- Increased Awareness, Trust, Reputation For Your Business—Builds Your Positive Image
- Higher Visibility To Build Your Authority — Via Publication Of Your News On Numerous Respected, High Authority, Major Network Sites & Media Syndicators
- Improved Website Ratings & More Traffic — Through High Quality Links From Hundreds Of Trustworthy Brand Name TV And Radio Websites
- More Online Citations For Higher Visibility
- Generate More Leads & Clients

Distribution: Online & Traditional Media

- 13,000 Radio/TV stations (AM, FM, News, Talk, Music, more)
- 3,000 magazines (segment by market, interest)
- 8,000 Newspapers (dailies & weeklies) in the USA

COMPRESSMEDIA REPORTS
Click on links to see the 100’s of media placement of your news

77 CRITICAL QUESTIONS YOU MUST ASK & ANSWER BEFORE YOU EVEN THINK OF HIRING A PUBLICIST

BONUS: ORDER Your Press Release & Get FREE DISTRIBUTION SERVICES To Send Your CD to the Media (You just pay for postage and envelopes). Why pay $500, $1,000, $1,500 a month or more for these services (often with no followup!) — when you can get it free as a value-added premium!

ORDER Start Your Promotion NOW! - PressToRelease.com
Experience Results In 24-48 Hours! CALL 215-887-8880
Ingrid Jensen

(Continued from page 8)

want to make sure that it lays right on the instrument and hopefully sounds like music.

JI: One of the ways I worked to develop technically was to transcribe solos that weren’t played on my instrument. The idea was to provide myself with a challenge. They might lay right on trumpet, but they might not lay right on vibes.

JI: Sure. I learned a lot of Coltrane solos. I had to translate to another octave. I was still playing saxophone solos on trumpet. It really kicked my butt getting all that technique together.

JI: Could you discuss some of the artists who have made a significant impact on you?

JI: There is such a stream of trumpet players and non-trumpet players that have influenced me throughout my development. I grew up listening to Dizzy, Clark, Sweets and the early swingers. Then I went through the whole Miles phase. People that I know and people that I’ve met that have had a big impact on me. Laurie Frank taught me the Caruso method, which was really a big transition in my life. Playing with Liesl in the Diva Big Band was a very important part of my learning. I learned how to really blow through the trumpet and get my sound, and not question that so much. Those experiences of working and playing with both of them, combined with all the sounds in my head—Chet Baker, Thad, Woody Shaw, Lee Morgan … It has helped me to have their sounds in my head, to be able to put my sound in perspective. Being an inspired improviser is what I respect among these players—especially Clark Terry. It is the joy that I heard in his playing in the very beginning—when I heard him live and when I heard the first recordings of him. I’ll tell you a story. There was a time when it didn’t seem like anybody had any problem with me sitting in on their gigs—like Clark, Al Grey. I was living in Austria. I had already met Clark here in New York. Whenever he was in Europe, I would call him up and he’d say “Come on over. You’re going to sit in on the gig.” He had me sitting in on all these gigs. One time I took a train from Vienna to Munich to go hang out with him. He had me sit in on a concert that was televised live. It was Lionel Hampton and the Golden Men of Jazz. It was broadcast around the world. I’ve had people ask “was that you on that show… it didn’t come across as far as hiring a band, writing music, playing other peoples music. The label was very supportive. They continued to support me through all three of those records. It was a very positive experience. I can’t say anything negative about it. The reason I am where I am now, without a label, is by choice. It really is because I just feel like we’re in this time now where we need to take care of our art like a baby. I want to own my tunes. I want to pay for the record and I want to see the benefits.

JI: I know that there are a couple labels from overseas that come here and record ten albums in a week, twice a year. The musicians get paid $300 and $500 apiece. They don’t own the tunes and don’t own the recordings.

JI: That’s what the guitarist from Baltimore was talking about. Don’t do it, don’t sell out. $300 or $600 or even $1,200 is nothing. You’re never going to see anything else besides that.

JI: Could you talk about happiness and success?

JI: Your mind is your only limitation. The confidence with which you approach this is going to effect everything. I think back to the times when I struggled when I first came to New York. I did subway gigs. I did street gigs. Those were the best times of my life when I look back on it now. It gives me such a great healthy perspective on what success is. I’m nowhere near being loaded with success. I still have so much to learn. I still have so much to keep growing. That is my perspective on success. It is the joy that I hear in his playing in the very beginning—when I heard him live and when I heard the first recordings of him. I’ll tell you a story. There was a time when it didn’t seem like anybody had any problem with me sitting in on their gigs—like Clark, Al Grey. I was living in Austria. I had already met Clark here in New York. Whenever he was in Europe, I would call him up and he’d say “Come on over. You’re going to sit in on the gig.” He had me sitting in on all these gigs. One time I took a train from Vienna to Munich to go hang out with him. He had me sit in on a concert that was televised live. It was Lionel Hampton and the Golden Men of Jazz. It was broadcast around the world. I’ve had people ask “was that you on that show… it didn’t come across as far as hiring a band, writing music, playing other peoples music. The label was very supportive. They continued to support me through all three of those records. It was a very positive experience. I can’t say anything negative about it. The reason I am where I am now, without a label, is by choice. It really is because I just feel like we’re in this time now where we need to take care of our art like a baby. I want to own my tunes. I want to pay for the record and I want to see the benefits.

JI: I know that there are a couple labels from overseas that come here and record ten albums in a week, twice a year. The musicians get paid $300 and $500 apiece. They don’t own the tunes and don’t own the recordings.

JI: That’s what the guitarist from Baltimore was talking about. Don’t do it, don’t sell out. $300 or $600 or even $1,200 is nothing. You’re never going to see anything else besides that.

JI: Could you talk about happiness and success?

JI: Your mind is your only limitation. The confidence with which you approach this is going to effect everything. I think back to the times when I struggled when I first came to New York. I did subway gigs. I did street gigs. Those were the best times of my life when I look back on it now. It gives me such a great healthy perspective on what success is. I’m nowhere near being loaded with success. I still have so much to learn. I still have so much to keep growing. That is my perspective on success. It is the joy that I heard in his playing in the very beginning—when I heard him live and when I heard the first recordings of him. I’ll tell you a story. There was a time when it didn’t seem like anybody had any problem with me sitting in on their gigs—like Clark, Al Grey. I was living in Austria. I had already met Clark here in New York. Whenever he was in Europe, I would call him up and he’d say “Come on over. You’re going to sit in on the gig.” He had me sitting in on all these gigs. One time I took a train from Vienna to Munich to go hang out with him. He had me sit in on a concert that was televised live. It was Lionel Hampton and the Golden Men of Jazz. It was broadcast around the world. I’ve had people ask “was that you on that show… it didn’t say who it was. But we saw you on TV with Lionel Hampton and Clark Terry.” At first they had to say who it was. But we saw you on TV with Lionel Hampton and Clark Terry. “At first they had to say who it was. But we saw you on TV with Lionel Hampton and Clark Terry.” At first they had to say who it was. But we saw you on TV with Lionel Hampton and Clark Terry.

JI: Absolutely. This makes me think of one of my favorite Freddie Hubbard stories. I’d like to mention that Freddie was so cool to me when I met him the first time. We spent an entire day together. I was seventeen or eighteen years old. He said “you want to play the trumpet, let me hear you play.” I played for him and he came down on me as he would on anyone else about playing properly. He just gave me a bunch of exercises to go practice. But he was so respectful and supportive of the fact that I wanted to play at such a young age. I’m enamored by his playing. His early records are incredible—and his spirit in the music, and some of the live stuff out there is just freaky. At the Jazz Educator’s Convention in California, he was doing one of those live blindfold tests. It was incredible. He played some Booker Little. He almost had all of us crying. He told some stories about Booker Little, and spoke of the respect he had for him. It was so beautiful. The guys interviewing Freddie put on some kind of hip-hop version of a Monk tune. Freddie got so angry. He stood up and grabbed the microphone. He said “turn it off, turn it off…turn that crap off.” His point was that you don’t need a funk group to make a Monk tune sound cool, when it already sounds cool. Monk doesn’t need any help. He’ll be all right. But the most important point for me was when he said, “This music takes a long time to learn. You don’t just learn it. It just doesn’t just happen.” I breathed a sigh of relief when I heard him say that. I’m in my late 30’s, I think I’m just now figuring out how to be me through the trumpet, in relation to this music, and music and life in general. Just to live a healthy existence is something important to do. Whether or not I’m going to make it to the Starbucks Top Five CD list doesn’t really matter.

JI: It doesn’t matter. You’re inspiring people you don’t even know.

JI: Exactly. Hopefully I’m inspiring myself and everyone around me, on a daily basis—so that we are constantly growing together and sharing new things. Like the community I’m in—we’re laughing we’re crying we’re talking we’re digging we’re reading we’re sharing we’re doing things. To me, that kind of emulates a healthy society. It’s very exciting.
Interview by Gary Heimbauer

JI: Can you talk about some of the things that are currently happening in your career that you are excited about?

NH: Thankfully, everything is very exciting right now. Firstly, having my last CD “The Very Thought of You” go to #7 on the Billboard Jazz Chart was awesome. That success opened more eyes and ears to my music and career, as well as opened doors of opportunities. Secondly, I am producing my first ever inspirational and gospel concert. I’ve been singing at church since I was in middle school and will use songs from my past, as well as contemporary inspirational and secular songs. Singing in churches over the last eight years has enabled me to keep spirituality in my life, when I so often don’t make the time to do so otherwise. Planning and practicing for the concert has been inspirational, and that was my personal intention, aside from being able to welcome others to do it with me. Thirdly, I’ve been traveling more internationally. I just recently returned from my first tour in Russia and had a great time there. I had no particular expectations, but the warm welcome I received makes me even more enthusiastic for my return in early April and beyond. And finally, and I mean finally—I’ve been able to find satisfaction in the achievements of my career. I always felt like I was catching up and not in the places that I wanted to be, etc. etc. But lately I’ve been able to stop beating myself up so badly. When a consultant of mine brought to my attention that now I have three international Top 10 CDs in the last five years, it made me put my career into perspective. So I value each event and each moment much more. Of course, now, I have to work harder so that the next five years top the last five!

"finally—I’ve been able to find satisfaction in the achievements of my career. I always felt like I was catching up and not in the places that I wanted to be, etc. etc. But lately I’ve been able to stop beating myself up so badly."

JI: In addition to your involvement in music, what other activities help provide balance and fulfillment in your life?

NH: Jogging helps me straighten out my thoughts. And I managed to watch about six movies last year, which is a record high since 2000. Otherwise, giving time to work with youth makes me very happy and fulfilled. It’s hard to really grasp how less fortunate some children are in regards to being exposed to opportunities and being inspired. Childhood should be the time when you freely dream the most, but many children can’t come close to doing that. So I’ve been fortunate to work...

(Continued on page 12)
Nicole Henry

(Continued from page 11)

with these young spirits in Miami. I also raise money and awareness for Arts Education in our public school systems, reminding people the importance of an arts education to teach young people about ‘feeling’ and ‘expression’ through the arts. But, I also find performing therapeutic – I don’t think about emails, or projects, or anything - just singing. It’s the stress and work that’s behind getting on stage that’s throws me out of balance.

JI: Self consciousness can be the enemy of creativity, and it takes the most strength for a singer to diffuse it. If you’ve experienced that kind of performance anxiety or nervousness in your career, what helped you and how did/do you overcome it?

NH: I’ve never really been self-conscious about performing. Maybe writing … When I used to get nervous or anxious when just about to go on stage, I’d tell myself I needed to sing for me or someone out there listening. That way it became more about a “service” then about “Nicole.” I’d just focus on the lyr-}

ics, and close my eyes if I needed. Another tried and true trick is to hold my breath for as long as I can, and then, breathe deeply through my nose and stretch my body. Then, sip a martini!

JI: What were some of your early influences and turning points that solidified your desire to follow this life path as an artist?

NH: Actually, I thought I would go into act-

ing… but singing opportunities kept popping up. I always sang in school and in church because I could, but I never considered a career in music. I wasn’t aware of my purpose in singing then. But in 1997, after college, I started singing with a dance music DJ and touring the U.S. at raves and night clubs. This was the first time I realized that singing was the way that I could make a difference in the world by emotionally moving people. And while I knew I didn’t want to only sing house music, I knew I wanted to sing forever. That’s when the journey and passion to move people through music started.

JI: Could you talk about your musical background? What steps did you take to get where you are now? What were your studies like? How did you develop your skills?

NH: My background is I played cello, sung in choirs and was often a soloist. I started singing professionally in my mid-twenties, perhaps later than most, so I jumped in and tried to make up for lost time. I just kept singing and listening and singing and singing. On the job training as they say. Along the way I took some vocal courses, two piano classes, I learned to play and write to guitar, but I never really studied music theory. And at first, I felt

Then I learn the most from recording myself in rehearsals and live. Admittedly, my practicing and rehearsing goes in phases, but I try to challenge myself by creating shows and adding new songs to the repertoire.

JI: What advice do you have for young singers who are looking to develop their own voice and the ability to do this professionally?

NH: Be patient, it takes years. Learn how to breathe correctly. Find some great warm up exercises. Take some acting classes. And when singing—the minute you hear yourself sounding like someone else, find your own speaking voice inside your head, and become you again. And I can’t say enough about audio and video recording yourself. One day you’ll listen back you won’t wince… well, not as often!

JI: What is it about jazz that draws you to it? There are so many styles of singing—why jazz?

NH: I love the lyrics, the melodies, the classic ness of the music and the freedom of the form. There’s a wealth of music to be sung in the genre. The challenge, of course, is making a distinct statement, worthy to be heard again. Mostly, I love re-presenting the lyrics. I continue to have other styles of music in my repertoire, including inspirational and adult contemporary, but jazz is also a sacred element to it.

JI: What is the most rewarding facet of your life as an artist?

NH: That I can make people feel emotion and relate to their emotions.

JI: What is the greatest compliment that a listener can give you?

NH: I’m touched when someone shares with me a specific memory from one of my recordings, or one of my shows. That’s special when a performance stays with someone and they can recall it over time.

“...giving time to work with youth makes me very happy and fulfilled. It’s hard to really grasp how less fortunate some children are in regards to being exposed to opportunities and being inspired. Childhood should be the time when you freely dream the most, but many children can’t come close to doing that.”

“Ultimate success is not directly related to early success, if you consider that many successful people did not give clear evidence of such promise in youth.”

- Robert Fritz, The Path Of Least Resistance

To Advertise CALL: 215-887-8880


12
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

How to Get Your Gigs and Events Listed in Jazz Inside Magazine
Submit your listings via e-mail to info@jazzinsidemagazine.com. Include date, times, location, phone, tickets/reservations. Deadline: 15th of the month preceding publication (February 15 for March)
(We cannot guarantee the publication of all calendar submissions.)

ADVERTISING: Reserve your ads to promote your events and get the marketing advantage of controlling your own message — size, content, image, identity, photos and more. Contact the advertising department:
215-887-8880 | Advertising@JazzInsideMagazine.com

Wednesday, May 1
- Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Mark Turner, tenor sax; Rick Rosato, bass; Obed Calvare, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Willelm Delisfort; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’Way
- Fleurine & Boys from Brazil New Album Celebration: Brazilian Dream With Special Guest Brad Mehldau; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Karinna Riggins Live; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Bill Frisell Trio ft Tony Scherr & Kenny Wollesen; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Monday, May 6
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Mingus Orchestra: Celebrating 10 Years at Jazz Standard; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Milos; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Tuesday, May 7
- Antonio Sanchez with Chris Potter, saxophone; Donny McCaslin, saxophone; Scott Colley, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Sax & Taps With Dewitt Fleming, Jr. & Erica Von Kleist; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’Way
- Duchess; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- David Murray with Saul Williams; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Maceo Parker; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Wednesday, May 8
- Antonio Sanchez with Chris Potter, saxophone; Donny McCaslin, saxophone; Scott Colley, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Essentially Ellington Alumni Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’Way
- Duchess; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- David Murray with Saul Williams; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Maceo Parker; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Thursday, May 9
- Antonio Sanchez with Chris Potter, saxophone; Donny McCaslin, saxophone; Scott Colley, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Juilliard Jazz Orchestra: Music Of Duke Ellington; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’Way
- Jeremy Pelt; Jeremy Pelt; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- David Murray with Saul Williams; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Maceo Parker; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Friday, May 10
- Antonio Sanchez with Chris Potter, saxophone; Donny McCaslin, saxophone; Scott Colley, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Jeremy Pelt; Jeremy Pelt; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- David Murray with Saul Williams; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Maceo Parker; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, May 11
- Antonio Sanchez with Chris Potter, saxophone; Donny McCaslin, saxophone; Scott Colley, bass; Antonio Sanchez, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Jeremy Pelt; Jeremy Pelt; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.

Friday, May 3
- Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Mark Turner, tenor sax; Rick Rosato, bass; Obed Calvare, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Houston Person Quartet; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’Way
- Chris Potter Circuits Trio featuring James Francis and Eric Harland; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Emmet Cohen Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Bill Frisell Trio ft Tony Scherr & Kenny Wollesen; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, May 4
- Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Mark Turner, tenor sax; Rick Rosato, bass; Obed Calvare, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Chris Potter Circuits Trio featuring James Francis and Eric Harland; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Emmet Cohen Trio; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Bill Frisell Trio ft Tony Scherr & Kenny Wollesen; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Sunday, May 5
- Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Mark Turner, tenor sax; Rick Rosato, bass; Obed Calvare, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Akiko/Hamilton/Dechter; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & B’Way
- Chris Potter Circuits Trio featuring James Francis and Eric Harland; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Simas & Amorim Duo CD release concert; Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

To Advertise CALL: 215-887-8880 May-June 2019 • Jazz Inside Magazine • www.JazzInsideMagazine.com
Monday, May 13
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Monday Nights With WBGO: Terraza Big Band; Dizzy’s Club Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway
- Mingus Big Band: Celebrating 10 Years at Jazz Standard; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Amanda Brecker; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

Tuesday, May 14
- Seasons Band - Ben Wendel, saxophone; Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Aaron Parks, piano; Matthew Brewer, bass; Eric Harland, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Bill Charlap Trio; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway
- Michael Leonhart Orchestra with Special Guest Nels Cline; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Curtis Stigers with The Birdland Big Band Directed by David Dejesus; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Stars; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Wednesday, May 15
- Seasons Band - Ben Wendel, saxophone; Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Aaron Parks, piano; Matthew Brewer, bass; Eric Harland, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Gil Evans Project directed by Ryan Truesdell; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Curtis Stigers with The Birdland Big Band Directed by David Dejesus; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Stars; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Thursday, May 16
- Seasons Band - Ben Wendel, saxophone; Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Aaron Parks, piano; Matthew Brewer, bass; Eric Harland, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Gil Evans Project directed by Ryan Truesdell; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Curtis Stigers with The Birdland Big Band Directed by David Dejesus; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Eric Krasno & Friends w/ special guest Lisa Fischer; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Friday, May 17
- Seasons Band - Ben Wendel, saxophone; Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Aaron Parks, piano; Matthew Brewer, bass; Eric Harland, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Gil Evans Project directed by Ryan Truesdell; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Curtis Stigers with The Birdland Big Band Directed by David Dejesus; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Eric Krasno & Friends w/ special guest Lisa Fischer; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, May 18
- Seasons Band - Ben Wendel, saxophone; Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Aaron Parks, piano; Matthew Brewer, bass; Eric Harland, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Gil Evans Project directed by Ryan Truesdell; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Curtis Stigers with The Birdland Big Band Directed by David Dejesus; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Eric Krasno & Friends w/ special guest Lisa Fischer; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Sunday, May 19
- Seasons Band - Ben Wendel, saxophone; Gilad Hekselman, guitar; Aaron Parks, piano; Matthew Brewer, bass; Eric Harland, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Jazz For Kids; Gil Evans Project directed by Ryan Truesdell; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Pete McGuinness Jazz Orchestra "Along For The Ride" CD Release: Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Eric Krasno & Friends w/ special guest Lisa Fischer; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Monday, May 20
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Berklee Masters On The Road With Special Guest Melissa Aldana; Dizzy’s Club Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway
- Mingus Big Band: Celebrating 10 Years at Jazz Standard; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.

To Advertise CALL: 215-887-8880
Hello, my name is David Haney. I am a pianist and composer. In 2012 I took over as publisher and editor of Cadence Magazine. We have the same mandate to present independent free press. We are dedicated to the promotion of creative music. I encourage you to give us a try. You will love the new Cadence.
### Tuesday, May 21
- Andy Farber; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Marcus Machado & Friends; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Wednesday, May 22
- Trio Tapestry - Joe Lovano, saxophone; Marilyn Crispell, piano; Carmen Castaldi, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Gil Gutiérrez; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dr. Lonnie Smith with The Jazz Orchestra of the Concertgebouw; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Brandee Younger & Friends with Special Guests TBA; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Thursday, May 23
- Trio Tapestry - Joe Lovano, saxophone; Marilyn Crispell, piano; Carmen Castaldi, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Melissa Aldana Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dr. Lonnie Smith with The Jazz Orchestra of the Concertgebouw; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Chris Dave & The Drumhedz with Special Guest; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Friday, May 24
- Trio Tapestry - Joe Lovano, saxophone; Marilyn Crispell, piano; Carmen Castaldi, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Melissa Aldana Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dr. Lonnie Smith with The Jazz Orchestra of the Concertgebouw; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Chris Dave & The Drumhedz with Special Guest; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Saturday, May 25
- Trio Tapestry - Joe Lovano, saxophone; Marilyn Crispell, piano; Carmen Castaldi, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Melissa Aldana Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Dr. Lonnie Smith with The Jazz Orchestra of the Concertgebouw; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Chris Dave & The Drumhedz with Special Guest; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Sunday, May 26
- Trio Tapestry - Joe Lovano, saxophone; Marilyn Crispell, piano; Carmen Castaldi, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Melissa Aldana Quartet; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Greg Ruvolo Big Band Collective; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Chris Dave & The Drumhedz with Special Guest; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Monday, May 27
- Vanguard Jazz Orchestra; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Arianna Neikrug; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.

### Tuesday, May 28
- Mark Giuliana Quartet - Jason Rigby, saxophone; Shai Maestro, piano; Chris Morrisey, bass; Mark Giuliana, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Fred Hersch Duo Invitation Series with Kenny Barron; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Alan Broadbent; Jazz Masters Play Ornette Coleman with Tom Harrell, Donny McCaslin, Ben Allison, Steve Smith; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Roberta Gambarini Quartet; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Wednesday, May 29
- Mark Giuliana Quartet - Jason Rigby, saxophone; Shai Maestro, piano; Chris Morrisey, bass; Mark Giuliana, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Fred Hersch Duo Invitation Series with Julian Lage; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Alan Broadbent; Jazz Masters Play Ornette Coleman with Tom Harrell, Donny McCaslin, Ben Allison, Steve Smith; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Roberta Gambarini Quartet; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Thursday, May 30
- Mark Giuliana Quartet - Jason Rigby, saxophone; Shai Maestro, piano; Chris Morrisey, bass; Mark Giuliana, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Fred Hersch Duo Invitation Series with Kurt Elling; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Alan Broadbent; Jazz Masters Play Ornette Coleman with Tom Harrell, Donny McCaslin, Ben Allison, Steve Smith; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny Garret; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Friday, May 31
- Mark Giuliana Quartet - Jason Rigby, saxophone; Shai Maestro, piano; Chris Morrisey, bass; Mark Giuliana, drums; Village Vanguard 178 7th Ave S.
- Fred Hersch Duo Invitation Series with Drew Gress & Billy Hart; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Alan Broadbent; Jazz Masters Play Ornette Coleman with Tom Harrell, Donny McCaslin, Ben Allison, Steve Smith; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny Garret; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Saturday, June 1
- Danny Barker; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway
- Georgia Horns; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway

### Sunday, June 2
- JALC Youth Orchestra with Ingrid Jensen; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway

### Monday, June 3
- James Francis Flight With Special Guests Bilal(4/4) & Kate K-S (4/5); Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

### Tuesday, June 4
- James Francis Flight With Special Guests Bilal(4/4) & Kate K-S (4/5); Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Kenny Werner Trio; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway

### Wednesday, June 5
- Kenny Werner Trio; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bway
- James Francis Flight With Special Guests Bilal(4/4) & Kate K-S (4/5); Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
Thursday, June 6
- Hillary Gardner, Ehud Asherie; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Joey Alexander Trio Featuring Larry Grenadier & Kendrick Scott; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Friday, June 7
- Dion Parson & 21st Century Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Joey Alexander Trio Featuring Larry Grenadier & Kendrick Scott; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, June 8
- Dion Parson & 21st Century Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Joey Alexander Trio Featuring Larry Grenadier & Kendrick Scott; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Monday, June 10
- The VI Jazz Collective; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Roy Haynes; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Tuesday, June 11
- Christian McBride Big Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Roy Haynes; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Wednesday, June 12
- Christian McBride Big Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Roy Haynes; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Thursday, June 13
- Christian McBride Big Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Martin Family: Terrace Martin & Curly Martin With Larry Goldings; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Friday, June 14
- Christian McBride Big Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Martin Family: Terrace Martin & Curly Martin With Larry Goldings; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, June 15
- Christian McBride Big Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Martin Family: Terrace Martin & Curly Martin With Larry Goldings; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Sunday, June 16
- Christian McBride Big Band; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Martin Family: Terrace Martin & Curly Martin With Larry Goldings; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.
- Monday, June 17
  - Chico Pinheiro Quartet; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
  - Tuesday, June 18
  - Scottish National Jazz Orchestra; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
  - Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Stars; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Wednesday, June 19
- Scottish National Jazz Orchestra; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Dizzy Gillespie Afro Cuban All-Stars; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Thursday, June 20
- Christian McBride’s Tip City; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Lisa Fischer & Grand Baton; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Friday, June 21
- Christian McBride’s Tip City; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Lisa Fischer & Grand Baton; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, June 22
- Christian McBride’s Tip City; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Lisa Fischer & Grand Baton; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Sunday, June 23
- Christian McBride’s Tip City; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Lisa Fischer & Grand Baton; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Monday, June 24
- Randy Napoleon’s Midwest Guitar Legacy: Grant Green, Wes Montgomery, Kenny Burrell; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Savion Glover; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Tuesday, June 25
- Jonathan Michel; Empirical; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Bad Plus; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Spike Wilner Trio; Josh Evans Quintet; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Peter Lin TNT Quartet CD Release; Django Reinhardt Festival: Samson Schmitt, Pierre Blanchard and more!; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Savion Glover; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Wednesday, June 26
- François Bourassa Quartet; Empirical; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Bad Plus; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Myron Walden Quintet; Miles Tucker Quartet; Mimi Jones and The Lab Session; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- David Ostwald’s Louis Armstrong Eternity Band; Charnett Moffett’s Bright New Day; CD Release; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Savion Glover; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Thursday, June 27
- Sean Jones, Dizzy Speltz; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Bad Plus; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Ethan Iverson Quartet - Tom Harrell, trumpet; Ethan Iverson, piano; Ben Street, bass; Eric McPherson, drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Mike Boone Quartet; Victor Gould Sextet; JD Allen “After-hours”; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Birdland Big Band; Paul McCandless with Charged Particles; Django Reinhardt Festival: Samson Schmitt, Pierre Blanchard and more!; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny G; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Friday, June 28
- Sean Jones, Dizzy Speltz; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Bad Plus; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Ethan Iverson Quartet - Tom Harrell, trumpet; Ethan Iverson, piano; Ben Street, bass; Eric McPherson, drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Mike Boone Quartet; Victor Gould Sextet; Philip Harper Quintet; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Paul McCandless with Charged Particles; Django Reinhardt Festival: Samson Schmitt, Pierre Blanchard and more!; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny G; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Saturday, June 29
- Sean Jones, Dizzy Speltz; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Bad Plus; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Ethan Iverson Quartet - Tom Harrell, trumpet; Ethan Iverson, piano; Ben Street, bass; Eric McPherson, drums; Village Vanguard 179 7th Ave S.
- Mike Boone Quartet; Victor Gould Sextet; Philip Harper Quintet; Small’s, 183 W. 10th St.
- Paul McCandless with Charged Particles; Django Reinhardt Festival: Samson Schmitt, Pierre Blanchard and more!; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny G; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

Sunday, June 30
- Sean Jones, Dizzy Speltz; Dizzy’s Club, Jazz At Lincoln Center, 60th & Bdwy
- Bad Plus; Jazz Standard, 116 E. 27th St.
- Jennifer Wharton’s BONEGASM; Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Paul McCandless with Charged Particles; Django Reinhardt Festival: Samson Schmitt, Pierre Blanchard and more!; Birdland, 315 W. 44th St.
- Kenny G; Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St.

To Advertise CALL: 215-887-8880
May-June 2019 • Jazz Inside Magazine • www.JazzInsideMagazine.com
Clubs, Venues & Jazz Resources

“...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...”

Socrates
Ralph Peterson
Not Afraid To Live

Interview & Photo by Ken Weiss

Ralph Peterson [b. May 20, 1962, Pleasantville, NJ] has solidified his status as a superb drummer, bandleader, composer and educator. He proudly stands on the shoulders of the jazz royalty who preceded him and feels an earnest responsibility to spread their message to listeners and students. Peterson openly talks about his struggles with drugs, his health battles with cancer, as well as his time with mentors Michael Carvin, Walter Davis Jr., Art Blakey, Betty Carter and others. Peterson’s boisterous personality at times matches his passionate and explosive drumming but in this phone interview, taken March 8, 2019, his humble appreciation for all those who have played a supportive role in his life comes through, along with highly insightful commentary.

Jazz Inside Magazine: You’re touring this year with the Ralph Peterson and the Messenger Legacy band in commemoration of Art Blakey’s 100th birthday. What’s been your experience playing with that group of Jazz Messenger alumni and revisiting the music from your past?

RP: I wanted a band that represented as many different generations of the band as possible. My first call was to Reggie [Workman] to see if he would be willing to do it. Interestingly, Reggie joined Art Blakey the year I was born. As time went by, with Reggie’s commitment to teaching at Brian were in the band together, and Bill and Bobby were in together, so we have multiple generations of the Messengers represented. I started playing with the Jazz Messenger Big Band in March of 1983, until Bu’s passing. I’ve been planning and organizing for 5 years so that when Art’s centennial year hit, that I would be in position with what I felt was one of the definitive bands to represent and celebrate his legacy. Yeah, that’s how it happened.

JI: You released two recordings in 2018 on your own Onyx Productions label and plan two more releases in 2019. Is that a pace you plan to maintain moving forward?

RP: I don’t know if I’ll be doing two albums every year but when the opportunities present themselves, given my recent experiences and challenges in life, I am more prone to act than to wait, and having my own record label means having the freedom and autonomy to put two records out in the calendar year. To make a statement that I’m not a one trick pony, that I can focus on more than one musical approach at a time. The 2018 releases – Ralph Peterson’s Gennext Big Band I Remember Bu recording and the quintet Aggregate Prime’s Inward Venture recording are very, very different musical directions. This year the release of the Messenger Legacy band’s CD will be called Ralph Peterson and the Messenger Legacy: Legacy Alive Vol. 6 at the Side Door is set to be released on my 57th birthday – May 20. Later in the year, the big band will release its second record. The work is done, it’s a matter of getting organized and getting the music out. As long as I got the strength to have the ideas and pull it off, yeah, why not!

JI: You’re known to be a serious student of jazz’s past masters. Have you formally studied African percussion?

RP: Not formally, but what I have done is connected with my roots through my family culture. My mother’s side of the family comes from the Caribbean. My grandmother was born in Trinidad and raised in Barbados, so she’s what you call a Trini/Badian. What I learned in studying that was the Caribbean, as a gateway to America from South America in the sea routing of the slave trade, created a couple of very unique cultural and nationalistic hubs, one of which is Brazil. I learned there are more Africans in Brazil than there is any other place on earth, except Africa. And Trinidad and Barbados are very close to South America, I’m studying various musics and learning things about how to play them and getting feedback from older musicians like Ellis Marsalis. I was on the road with Delfeayo Marsalis’ band with Ellis and we would do our little second line stuff, of course, as is required in Delfeayo’s band, and me being from South Jersey, both Delfeayo and Ellis were appreciative of the way I tried to be true to the second line feeling as taught to me by Alvin Batiste back when I was recording Discernment [1986] with Terence Blanchard and Donald Harrison. As I studied, I realized that, and I don’t want to get into too technical a breakdown about it, I think one day it could end up being a master thesis if I ever went back to school, but rhythmic resolution and the downbeat of four is a common phenomenon in the

(Continued on page 22)
music of West Africa, South America, the Caribbean, including Cuba, and up into New Orleans. We’d be on the road, telling jokes, I’d be droppin’ one-liners from my beloved grandmother, who could set you straight and make you laugh all at the same time, and all of a sudden, Ellis asked me, “Man, where do your people come from?” I told him my grandmother’s heritage and he said, “Oh, that explains why you play second line the way you do.” I asked him what he meant and if I was doing something wrong, and Ellis said, “No, no, no, for me it wasn’t until I went to carnival and calypso in the Caribbean that I really understood what second line was about.” What’s important about that, in my experience, is that as a student of both history and the music, your knowledge base broadens when you come to the realization that something always comes from somewhere, and when you make that connection of where it comes from, [Laughs] — that’s a title of a tune by Michele Rosewoman on one of my recordings—it changes you, it alters you in a way that can’t be undone. I’m grateful for that process.

JI: Have you performed in Africa?

RP: I have yet to set foot on the motherland. It is a goal of mine. I made some contacts this year at the Winter Jazz Fest and I’m hoping to get an invite, but not yet. At some point, if I don’t get invited, I’m just gonna buy a ticket and go. I’ll be going to China and Australia for the first time later this year, all touring with the Messenger Legacy. I’ve been to pretty much every place else except Alaska and I can barely get through the winters in Massachusetts. [Laughs]

JI: Would you talk about your take on swing and its importance to your music?

RP: Swing is one of those words, like the name of God. It reveals itself to different cultures in different ways at different times. In the Afro-Cuban tradition, there’s swing. In the African tradition of Bembe Abakua, there’s swing. The notion that the people, and for my own growth spiritually, I’ve been through some things recently and I’m standing in some woods now that have changed my perspective about what’s important. I’m not out of the woods yet but dam it, I’m holding an ax. You know, there’s a certain kind of freedom that comes, and I’m not saying this as breaking news, this is just the existential realization that life is finite. But when you have some experiences that really bring you to a point of acceptance with that, not that anything is imminent, I don’t want to suggest that in this interview, because we’re fighting the good fight, and just for today, we’re winning the battle. I’ve had 4 cancer surgeries in the last 3 years, and I’ve got a permanent ostomy site. My CEA [cancer marker] was up to 25 again last year, and I’ve been on chemo every 2 weeks over the past 7 months, and my CEA is down to 5. So, like I said, I’m not out of the woods but I’m fighting this with an ax and I’m looking for a chainsaw. [Laughs] But it simplifies things in terms of what’s important — playing this music, guarding this music, which is another name for teaching, and just being the best person that I can be.

JI: Is there repertoire that you play today that you didn’t feel comfortable performing early in your career?

RP: No, I was always up for the challenge and the more you play challenging music, the more you learn about how to play music. I never shied away or felt intimidated by any piece of music. It’s always been a vehicle for me to become a better musician, which is what I want to do.

JI: You’ve wanted to play drums professionally since seeing Sonny Payne performing with the Count Basie Orchestra when you were 12. What did you see in Payne’s drumming that captivated you?

RP: Oh my God, there was a combination of incredible execution and incredible showmanship, and showmanship to the point of leadership, even. It was amazing the relationship that Sonny Payne had in Count Basie’s orchestra. Count Basie was clearly the chief, that was never questioned because he was the kind of leader that let everybody shine and knew that the strength of the Count Basie brand rested on the power of the people in the orchestra. He would cut Sonny loose and just watch it, like the rest of us, in awe of him. He was the most entertaining, great drummer I’ve ever seen. Not all musicians are entertainers, or try to be. Some come out to perform and some come out to entertain you without passing a certain virtuosity level, but Sonny Payne had that ability to demonstrate virtuosity and the highest levels of showmanship at the same time. My father played drums, but I had never seen drums played like that.

JI: It was almost inevitable that you would play drums. You come from a family of percussionists including 4 uncles and your grandfather, yet you didn’t know the basic drum rudiments, and failed your college drum audition at Rutgers. Why, with all the drummers around you, did you not have the drum basics down?

RP: Because we learned drums in the African tradition — the oral tradition. In Africa, a drum lesson is taught with the master drummer on one side and the student drummer on the other side of an animal skin, and the lesson is played by the master. The student’s job is to recreate the sound of the lesson and until the proper technique is executed, the proper sound will not emerge. The master will continue to play the lesson over and over and over, and once the student gets close enough to the lesson, then the master will alter the lesson to the next evolution. So that’s the tradition from which I learned music and I’m grateful for that because it gave me big ears. It’s also the reason that I’ve learned how to play trumpet because I learned
trumpet to learn how to read rhythms. When I was in marching band, I was playing trumpet, I wasn’t playing drums, and marching band would have been the natural place for me to have been exposed to and learn my rudiments. I only played drums in high school in the jazz ensemble. It’s not a common routine but it’s how I got where I’m at. Being compelled to learn my rudiments by Michael Carvin was the best thing that ever happened to me because that was the first time musically that I was ever told “no.” It’s funny because I see the same confounded look on students that I teach now who are talented but haven’t done the requisite legwork to bring their skill levels up to their talent. Talent is like hope, and hope is like temp tags on an automobile – after 30-days it runs out. [Laughs] Skilled people aren’t born with their skills, they have to develop them. That’s the work.

JI: How did you finally convince Professor Michael Carvin that you were a legitimate drum student and qualified to be taken into the Rutgers’ drum program?

RP: I came back the next semester knowing my rudiments. He told me, “There’s 26 rudiments, there’s 26 letters in the alphabet, go learn the alphabet of the language of drumming and then you can study with me.” When people deal with you with that level of frankness, it’s actually easy. [Laughs] The world would be a better place if everybody did more of that. The person that needed convincing was Paul Jeffries because he was the director of the buy band and he took my trumpet audition. He knew me as a trumpet player, so we literally had to trick him by organizing a switching out of the drummers during a casual campus concert. When his back was turned, I switched out with the drummer that was playing, and when Jeffries turned around to call the next section, he realized he didn’t know how long I had been playing, and that was how I convinced him. You know, after meeting Terence [Blanchard], [Laughs] I realized that there are people who play trumpet and then there are trumpet players. Like there are people who drink beer and there’s beer drinkers. People who drink beer shouldn’t try to drink with beer drinkers. They will get hurt! [Laughs] I realized I like the trumpet but I’m a drummer that plays the trumpet. I’m still very much into it, and I’m playing a lot of cornet these days because the stoma changed some of my wind pressure realities. The conical bore of the cornet makes it a little bit less strenuous in my lower abdomen. I’m starting to rebuild my ability to play sustain on horn, which took its toll through the operations and the chemo because the chemo effected my dental work. It started to eat the bone, teeth became loose, and I couldn’t play it for a minute. I needed to have an incredible amount of dental work done over 4 months and now I’ve got 5 or 6 teeth in my head that I haven’t had in 20 years, [Laughs] and it’s changing the way I talk and play the horn. I’m dealing and growing from that.

JI: Your college training began on trumpet since you were more advanced on that instrument. Why not stay on the trumpet track at that point? Additionally, your charismatic personality seems better suited to the front of the stage, rather than the rear where the drums reside.

RP: I don’t accept the premise of that assertion because if you asked Miles Davis who’s the most important person in his band, he’d always answer that the drum was most important. I’ve never heard a great band with a sad drummer, and I’ve heard ok bands that were kept aloof by good and great drummers. It could be argued that the drums are actually the front line. Art Blakey’s approach to drumming is something that is unique and not talked about or understood enough. He came from the big band tradition of Fletcher Henderson. Bill Pierce ingeniously summed up Art Blakey’s approach to drumming perfectly to me when he said, “Art Blakey is a master of big band drumming in a small group setting,” and the longer you think that, the more sense it makes, if you think about the way Jazz Messenger music sounds. That’s why we’re celebrating Art Blakey now. It’s not just because of all the guys that came through his band, but for how he changed the trajectory of music, and why.

JI: During your college years, Paul Jeffries brought in numerous established visiting artists. Philly Joe Jones was one who was especially helpful to you.

RP: It was through Philly that I learned what Michael Carvin was trying to teach me by learning the rudiments. Most drummers play rudiments, whether they know they’re playing rudiments or not. Meeting Philly Joe, who is to me, the highest, elegant expression of rudimental drumming in the history of music. Yeah, I’ll go out there and say it. In the standard 26, yeah, it’s Philly Joe. When you get out into the Swiss and the basic 40, then you gotta start talking about Tony [Williams] and Jack [DeJohnette] and Carvin and Eric Gravatt. When Philly came to the school, to show respect for him, I tried to write out and learn his famous drum break from the tune “Ah-Leu-Cha,” from Round About Midnight. So, I wrote it up on manuscript, as neatly as I could, ran up to him, like an idiot, and said, ‘Ah, Mr. Jones, look at this.’ And he looked at it, and I’m sure he had experienced this before because of the way he handled it, and he said, “Oh, what’s this?” I said, “It’s your drum break from Midnight.” He said, “Well, how do you know? Where’s the sticking?” And then I had that deer in the headlights puzzled look that students have when they don’t have an answer. [Laughs] I said, ‘I’m only 18 years-old, I wasn’t around to be able to see you play this,’ and he said, “If you knew your rudiments, you’d have an idea.” He made it clear to me that he had already peeped my hold card as a musician, [Laughs] and I hadn’t even held a pair of sticks in my hand yet. He knew right away not only did I not understand what rudiments were, but that I hardly, if ever, had touched a pair of brushes. Philly Joe also gave me my first pair of brushes. He said, “You can’t come to the gig unprepared. If you’re a plumber, you can’t come to the job with no wrenches…You’ve got to have the proper tools to do the job.” The third thing I got from that experience with Philly Joe is that Walter Davis Jr. came with Philly Joe to the gig, and it was through Walter that I kind of got on the pathway to meeting Art, because Walter gave me my first gig in New York at Barry Harris’ Jazz Showcase. Yeah, that was a very important time in my life and that’s why I take my teaching so seriously because my college days were very important to me in terms of keeping me in the music. I think it’s harder now because there’s less clubs and less opportunities for band leaders my age. See, when there’s more opportunities for band leaders my age, there’s more opportunities for young players to grow. It’s getting done in the larger cities, but it certainly is a heavier lift than it used to be. The industry is so geared towards youth, American culture in general is so geared towards youth and sees experience as something to push back against.

JI: Woody Shaw was another visiting musician who came to your school and obviously inspired you. You recorded four of his compositions on your 2010 Outer Reaches album.

RP: Outer Reaches was the debut of my label, Onyx Music, and it was not only a tribute to Woody, but to all jazz New Jersey. I came up out of the organ tradition in New Jersey, which is serious and deep there. New Jersey had the organ clubs and great players, including Larry Young. Woody’s playing, I mean I understand it from a numeric, technical thing. I understand what he’s doing, but I don’t know how he did it. It just freaks me out, the...
stuff he played on that horn. He just defied the physics of the horn. If you learn to play the wider intervals that he was linking together, you start to come into that phrase feeling that he generated. A lot of trumpet players nowadays understand that and certainly use it. I was a Maynard Ferguson freak until I heard Dizzy Gillespie, and after Dizzy I heard Clifford [Brown], and then I heard Freddie [Hubbard], so there’s a very lyrical base there, but that shit Woody was doing? I can only associate it with Coltrane, at that point. And there was a lot of it that I didn’t listen to because it was over my head. A lot of Woody Shaw and Joe Henderson was lost on me until my ear gained a level of sophistication and maturity in order to appreciate it. I’m still fascinated by Woody. I’m also really grateful to have been able to work with another trumpet player who is pushing on that vocabulary in his own way. I’m talking about my former student, Sean Jones, who I taught at Rutgers when he was in grad school. Sean not only understands the Woody thing but has combined it with the Bill Fielder thing and his own thing to really open up the sound and vocabulary. When he goes there, there’s nobody that can deal with him. Josh Evans also has a very wonderful voice of his own that is reminiscent of Woody, yet very much his own. Yeah, I just sit back and admire those guys, and if they let me come on the bandstand to play my little stuff together, [Laughs] and he don’t even have to tell you that you need to …

“...I remember [Walter Davis Jr.] wanting me to learn a tune and I was just being lazy about learning it, so he would just call somebody else down to the club who knew the tune and have them sit in and play. Let me tell you, when you feel the threat of unemployment, you get your shit together, [Laughs] and he don’t even have to tell you that you need to …”

JI: During the midpoint of your college days, you played in Walter Davis Jr.’s trio. He’s overlooked today. Would you talk about him and give a memory?

RP: That was around 1982. Walter taught me the Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk repertoire, as well as all of his incredible body of work as a composer, which, when the Messenger Legacy goes into the studio, will be addressed in no small way. That’s a peek at 2020, hopefully before it’s all done. Right now, we’re not playing any of Walter’s music in the book, but I imagine we’ll get there. Walter would teach me. He would do things like that in the morning. What it did was make me question why I had only been asleep for only 3 or 4 hours. He wouldn’t question me like that, he’d say, “Oh, you’re still sleeping.” He wouldn’t ride me about it, but he’d still keep calling again. It wasn’t an everyday thing, it wasn’t like he was a drill sergeant. He was more like Yoda.

Ji: Your most significant early break came in 1983. While still in college, Art Blakey asked you to become the second drummer in his band, which you did until his death in 1990. Was he having health issues at the point he hired you?

RP: Blakey wasn’t having health issues when he hired me, he was as strong as a bull in ’83. He didn’t start showing signs of wear until late ’89. His decline was fairly rapid and merciful in that way. He was able to go out pretty much playing until the end. I met Art Blakey at the Jazz Forum, I sat in at Mikell’s, and at Mikell’s he said, “I’ve been waiting for you. We gonna put the big band together.” Now, he would say that occasionally to people, but this time he did it, and it was like winning the lottery and a graduate research fellowship all at the same time. And I’m not talking about the money that was paid, I’m talking about the value of the knowledge that I learned. Yes, I did it until he was no longer with us, and then went back one more year to Mt. Fuji and I did it with Lewis Nash, the year after he passed.

Ji: How intimidating was it to take the stage with Art Blakey that first night?

RP: You gotta remember to breathe. I was ok on the shuffles, but I wasn’t clear on how much he wanted me to play. I would just watch him and try to mimic him, stay under him soundwise. But then it became clear to me that he wanted the feeling of two drummers playing at the same time. He trusted the work that I had done to learn about him and how he played. He trusted it more than I did, so his encouragement was to go ahead and play because he knew I wouldn’t stray far from him. He knew I wouldn’t bust into any Tony Williams-isms or Max Roach-isms. He knew that my reverence and deference at that point was completely there.

Ji: What was Art Blakey most critical about regarding your playing?

RP: About being myself. Even when I was trying to play his stuff, sometimes I would try to physically execute it the way I would see him execute it, and I couldn’t pull it off. But when I closed my eyes and focused on the sound, I would get closer, even though mechanically I was pulling the sound out with a different technical approach. We were built very physically different so we’re not gonna create the same sound on the drums the same way. Physics doesn’t allow that, and of course, the muscle and the sound that was embedded in his hands, I hadn’t even begun to develop a sound yet. He would be critical through encouragement with me. He never really dogged me. You know what he dogged me on? He dogged me on stuff off the bandstand, on not letting women get inside of my head and pull me away from the music, or get in between me and any musician. He was adamant about me being the best parent I could be. You know, his son Takashi lived with my mother and father for a summer or two in New Jersey long before I even played with the band, so we were connected like family. He had a home in Northfield, and I grew up in Pleasantville. At that point, my father was deputy chief sheriff in Rutherford.

Ji: It’s a classic story that at your first rehearsal with the Jazz Messengers, Blakey told you to arrive at a certain time, and then he showed up five hours late, and the first thing he asked was if you had showed up on time. As far as a learning experience, what did you take from that early incident?
Ralph Peterson

**RP:** To be on time is the most important thing about playing time. We weren’t just sitting around, waiting for him to show up. We rehearsed and ate, and I learned the music. If he had walked in, God forbid, and found out that, “Oh, you didn’t come so we just left,” he’d have fired everybody! [Laughs] Many of the drummers who you will see paying tribute to Art Blakey, in addition to me, like Carl Allen, Cindy Blackman, Terri [Lyne Carrington], they used to all fall by the rehearsals and play, because very often, when a new piece of music was brought, Art would learn it just listening first. And if he could listen to somebody else play it, then he could figure out what he wanted to do with it quicker. There are other drummers who were certainly mentored by Bu in that process, and they were all in New York when I got there, but for some reason there was something about me that made them relaunch the big band. And that meant a lot to me and still means a lot to me. That’s why I don’t take this Messenger Legacy project lightly at all.

**Ji:** Who was the first drummer to join him in the band?

**RP:** His son, Art Jr.

**Ji:** Would you share a memory of Art Blakey?

**RP:** There are Art Blakey stories for public consumption and there are Art Blakey stories that remain closed-holed. One that I tell my students all the time is we were at Mt. Fuji, rehearsing the big band and the phrasing in the trumpet and trombone sections was not happening. Art was not at the beginning of the rehearsal. I was playing and the cats in the band, all the Jazz Messengers at that point, were trying to tell me how to play like Art Blakey. You dig? None of them being drummers, by the way. So, it’s getting a little testy, and Art comes in and listens and observes for a minute and stops the band and goes on a 30-minute diatribe because none of the horn players are tapping their feet. He’s saying, “What the hell are you looking at Ralph for if none of y’all keeping your own time? Each tub stands on its own legs.” So, it was a nice moment of advocacy for me. It taught me something important of ensemble playing in that everybody is responsible for their own time, and when everybody’s responsible for their own time, the drummer is then set free to become creative. If I’m not carrying your water, I can drink my own.

**Ji:** You also got to play for Elvin Jones towards the end of his life.

**RP:** That came in 2000 at the 19th anniversary of the New York Blue Note jazz club. It was also the year that Elvin Jones had surgery on his femoral arteries in his legs. He was performing that week at the club and wasn’t sure of his physical ability and wanted someone on hand every night in case he needed to pass the baton. So, not only am I the last drummer that Art Blakey called, but I’m actually the last drummer that Elvin Jones called to sub for him. He hired me to be at the Blue Note every night and I think I played drums three times three times out of the six-night engagement. After I played, the next two nights, I never heard him play so strong in all the times I heard him play. He let me play trumpet on a couple of tunes with the band after he found out that I could play the horn. So, I had musical usefulness, as well as a practical usefulness. That was an amazing week because it was like a postgraduate, high-intensity, up-close and personal daily master class. It was the kind of thing that changes your life forever. I was four-years clean at that time and Michael Carvin told me that before they called me, they called him and asked, “Is your boy cool? Is your boy ready?” [Laughs] Because my youthful indiscretions had become the stuff of legend and folklore, and I had become my own worst enemy. Thank God, next month I’ll be 23-years drink and drug free. It’s well in my rearview mirror now, but we go through what we go through.

**RP:** I’m not sure about the negative buzz at that time, the youthful indiscretions hadn’t even taken off yet. I still had milk on my breath, I was drink-

**Ji:** Blue Note Records formed Out of the Blue (OTB), a young lions all-star ensemble in 1984. There was some negative buzz related to your time with that band.

**RP:** The typical years of struggling to earn a reputation that the band seemed to hover around Ralph Bowen and Art Blakey after he found out that I could play the horn. So, I had musical usefulness, as well as a practical usefulness. That was an amazing week because it was like a postgraduate, high-intensity, up-close and personal daily master class. It was the kind of thing that changes your life forever. I was four-years clean at that time and Michael Carvin told me that before they called me, they called him and asked, “Is your boy cool? Is your boy ready?” [Laughs] Because my youthful indiscretions had become the stuff of legend and folklore, and I had become my own worst enemy. Thank God, next month I’ll be 23-years drink and drug free. It’s well in my rearview mirror now, but we go through what we go through.

**Ji:** Your career has had almost a magical beginning.

**RP:** No, it wasn’t easy because I was young and stupid. I was clearly a part of the early ’80s jazz renaissance. I was set up to be the Blue Note’s answer to what Wynton and Branford were doing at CBS, without a doubt. That’s what OTB was about. That’s what my records were about, but it didn’t necessarily make working in New York that much easier as a leader because New York had more clubs then, and guys who are my age now were still leading bands. And you could hear the difference between older guys leading bands and bands led by younger guys, and the audience still had a great level of sophistication and appreciation for music created by guys who are my age now. One of the things I think is important in the resuscitations are great, but you can’t pay no bills with them. I was starting to stand on principle on some business issues, and when you stand for something, you sometimes expose yourself to the slings and arrows. So, when it was time for me to move on, I did so seamlessly because at that point, I was working with Stanley Turrentine, David Murray, Henry Threadgill and Jon Faddis, all at the same time. So, I had a broad spectrum of musical outlets, and within six months of leaving the band, I was approached by Toshiba EMI and given the opportunity to be the first release in the early ’80s savings of Blue Note Records by Toshiba EMI. That bailout, which was a distribution deal between Toshiba EMI, Somethin’ Else Records and Blue Note, is how my first six records became released on the Blue Note label, and so, to me, the universe had balanced itself because at that point I had autonomy. I could stand for what I believed in as a leader. I can remember traveling issues, being told that I could travel a certain class, but the band would have to fly another class, and I declined, saying either we all fly the same class or no class. That kind of integrity is something I learned from the people who taught me music. I never wanted the music to be disrespected just because the people who happened to be playing it were young.

**Ji:** Many of the drummers who you will see paying tribute to Art Blakey ... like Carl Allen, Cindy Blackman, Terri, they used to all fall by the rehearsals and play, because very often, when a new piece of music was brought, Art would learn it just listening first. And if he could listen to somebody else play it, then he could figure out what he wanted to do with it quicker. You played with Art Blakey and had the backing of the historic Blue Note label. You bypassed the typical years of struggling to earn a reputation that other musicians had to endure. Would you talk about your early days on the New York scene?

You played with Art Blakey and had the backing of the historic Blue Note label. You bypassed the typical years of struggling to earn a reputation that other musicians had to endure. Would you talk about your early days on the New York scene?

(Continued on page 26)
tation of this music is to go back and grab young people and show them how hip the people they think are outdated really are because the music that people are playing now, the groove constructs that a lot of creative musicians are playing on, are the R & B and funk roots that guys my age grew out of, and they think it’s new! It’s fucking hilarious. [Laughs] They think they discovered it.

**JI:** David Murray hired you in the mid-late ’80s for his octet which featured avant-garde players such as Baikida Carroll, Craig Harris and Wilbur Morris. How was it playing in that setting?

**RP:** It helped me to not get completely swept up in the cliched language of my generation. My contemporaries – Wynton, Branford, Terence, Marlon Jordan, Mulgrew, we were all influenced by a particular kind of language, and what was great about David, and playing with David, was he knew I possessed that, but he would challenge me not to play it. He would really get in my face not to play certain things that I played in other bands. He said, “I didn’t bring you in here to change my music into how you want it to sound.” So that’s how you learn to be a sideman, which really teaches you to be a leader. That’s the process that’s getting circumvented now, which is why, I believe, the music and the careers and the longevity of some of these musicians just don’t have the staying power, because the music doesn’t have the depth. You know, a house that’s built on top of the ground is different from a house that has a ten-foot foundation dug all the way around. And when life happens to those two houses, depending on what it is, one could end up floating down the damn street because it ain’t anchored to nothing.

**JI:** Michael Brecker hired you in 1998 and you developed a closeness with him. You’ve said he taught you balance between performing and living. Would you expound on that?

**RP:** Michael and I shared some things in life that were spiritual in nature, not religious, and that spiritual growth led us to conversations about the difference between who I am, what I am, and what I do. Because I used to walk around with my chest out, saying, ‘Yeah, playing music is not what I do, it’s what I am.’ What I learned from Michael is that I’m a father, I’m a son, I’m a brother, I’m an uncle, I’m a teacher, a mentor. I’m all those things, primarily through music, but also through martial arts and fellowships and fraternal organizations that I belong to which enable me to have impact on the solutions in my community, and therefore in the world. That’s what’s important about being, not where my record charts on jazz radio.

**JI:** Is it true that when you played trumpet in Brecker’s band, he would play the drums?

**RP:** Michael Brecker was one of the most complete musicians I’ve ever played with. We would often, during the encore bass solo, when James Genus would play, we would both walk off stage and I would grab the horn and Michael would sit down at the drums, and I would play a solo after the bass solo. We used to have a lot of fun with that. I miss Mike a lot, he used to call me, like Elvin, always checking in with how I was living, in terms of keeping my life clean. He would remember to call me on my “clean date.” You don’t always experience that level of caring from human beings that you play music with.

**JI:** You also spent time with Betty Carter. She was famous for developing young artists. What was your experience with her and how did she challenge you?

**RP:** I wasn’t a young artist when I got to Betty Carter, that was the most challenging thing about it. That was the biggest head job. When I joined Betty’s band, I was 34, going on 35, and most people were leaving that band by the time they got in their ‘30s, if they lasted that long. I subbed for a gig at Yoshi’s with Craig Handy, Curtis Lundy, Jacky Terrasson, and maybe Mark Shim. I ended up staying with the band for about 10 months after that. It was an incredible experience to play with Betty. I did so much training on tempo and dynamic transition with playing with her records, so the opportunity to be able to play that stuff with Betty, while she was still here, was a dream come true because I thought I was too old for that opportunity. Here’s an interesting thing – I call Betty Carter the nicest firing I’ve ever had. When Betty let me go, she told me, “You need to go on and develop your own band. I ain’t got nothing else I really need to teach you.” And she said, “Plus, there’s a few more y’all I want to get to before I get out of here.” And I didn’t know what it meant then, but she knew that she was sick. I was like, ‘Oh, Betty, you gonna live forever, Thanks for the opportunity, call me if you need me,’ and then a year-and-a-half later, she was gone. I’m grateful for all of those playing experiences that I’ve had because they fashioned me into whatever weapon it is that I am now.

**JI:** [Pianist] Geri Allen played on your earliest recordings. Would you share a memory of her?

**RP:** We were doing a promotional follow-up to the Triangular record and Mild Seven cigarettes from Japan, came in, put us in the studio, put us in all these designer clothes, and shot a video. The studio was hot, they had to turn the air off during taping because of the noise that it made. And we were doing “Just One of Those Things” at warp seven tempo. We got finished with the first and the second takes and I was done, but Geri wanted one more shot at it. Now you could have taken my shirt and jacket off and rung it out, but Geri was like, “Let’s do one more.” I said, “Geri, what do you want from me?” And Geri hollered back, “My dignity!” [Laughs] She had felt that she hadn’t played well but that’s just the humble place that she came from. I never heard Geri not play well, each solo was a masterpiece. She was one of the most in-the-moment musicians I ever had the privilege of playing with. Nobody gets out of this life alive. We need to cherish and bring our champions their roses while they’re here and honor them.

**JI:** Beginning with your first leader recording, you’ve shown interest in working with unusual time signatures and structures. What attracts you to that?

**RP:** I’m not sure what attracts me to that. The challenge of finding the groove and asymmetry. Swing exists in 17 too, it’s just not as obvious. The central focus of [my band] the Fo’Tet deals in asymmetrical swing concepts, whether it’s Afro Cuban or whether it’s what I like to call “Swunk,” which is like part swing, part funk, swing with a backbeat. I’m not sure why I’m attracted to that, it’s a product of who I am and what I came through musically and how I try to bridge all the disparate influences that have impacted on how I hear music.

**JI:** [Pianist] Ornette played on your earliest recordings. Why did you wait nine years to release your horn solo [Back to Stay, 2000, Sirocco Jazz]?

**RP:** I don’t know why it took nine years but some of that had to do with when it was recorded and released, and my trials and tribulations in learning how to live and stay clean, which led to the title of Back to Stay, because that’s what I was coming back from – a relapse.

**JI:** In interviews over the years, you’ve often mentioned a desire to release a recording featuring yourself on trumpet. Why the delay and when will that happen?

**RP:** Because playing the trumpet is a full-time gig. I’m planning on going on sabbatical at Berklee soon. I’ve never taken one, and once I go on sabbatical, I’m going deep, deep into the shed because I’ll have that block of time to dedicate to it, and then I’ll record. There’s also been all the other issues I’ve dealt with. Life happens, with or without your permission.
Ralph Peterson

**JI:** You’ve also become proficient on bass and piano. Have you given thought to a one-man-band, solo project with overlapping tracks of piano, trumpet, bass and drums?

**RP:** No, I don’t play enough bass and piano for that. I have thought about doing the trumpet recording in a particular way where nobody on the record is playing on their primary instrument.

**JI:** What would be the benefit of that situation?

**RP:** I think each person would be able to express themselves from their alter ego.

**JI:** Your final Blue Note recording Art [1994] was a tribute to the then recently passed Art Blakey. In the album’s liner notes, you point out that shortly before Blakey died, he told you that the best way to pay tribute to him was to be yourself. How did that conversation come about?

**RP:** After my daughter was born, he was at my apartment in New York, with my daughter sitting on his lap, eating curried chicken that I had cooked, telling me, “You don’t have to chase me musically anymore. You don’t have to try to play like me because you couldn’t deny me musically if somebody held a gun to your head.” And he was gone within a year-and-a-half of that. So, he not only gave me permission but insisted that I at least start to reach for my own stuff. And what I found in playing this Messenger Legacy project, I am challenged to do both – honor him but be myself. And when I lose sight of being myself, I very often musically find myself frustrated. There were two times during this first West Coast tour where I literally heard his voice in my spirit say to me on a particular song, “Well, what the fuck do you have to say about this?” [Laughs] A kind of, that’s enough about me, what about you? It’s a delicate balance because if my point of departure is something other than Art Blakey, then it becomes a thing that anybody else can do, and the Messenger Legacy is the closet you’re gonna get to that feeling. Some generations have never heard it or felt it, and while I’m here, I can’t let that happen.

**JI:** Blue Note Records purged part of their back catalog at one point, including your early recordings. What was your reaction upon hearing that?

**RP:** I wanted a leasing deal, I still want a leasing deal. Every time an artist releases a record, it seems to me that every label has ever recorded that artist has an opportunity to sell units of the record that they recorded with that artist, especially in the digital age where space and storage is not an issue. It seems the most ass-backwards thing is to put a record out of print or purge a catalog. That’s bean counter language. Some part of a record label has to have at its core the preservation of the culture. I would love to come to an agreement with Toshiba EMI and rerelease my early recordings, but I can’t seem to get a conversation started with them. That’s good music. We were young and full of piss and vinegar.

**JI:** You started your own record label, Onyx Music, as a means to control your music.

**RP:** I never understood why a record had to be released at a certain time of year or why did it only stay available before it went out of print for a lesser and lesser amount of time. I was in Malta, and Gary Bartz was also there at the festival. We were hanging out at the pool and me and Orrin [Evans] and a couple other people were complaining about the recording industry, and Gary Bartz shut us all down by saying, “Y’all need to shut up because y’all ain’t in the recording industry. Y’all not in the record making business.” ‘What do you mean? I got recordings,’ I said. “No, no,” he said, “You employees of people in the record making business. You don’t own nothing.” And we all got quiet.

[Laughs] And I’m telling you, that thing stuck with me like a splinter in my mind. The more that technology evolved, which brought down the cost of making a record, I began to see my opportunity. When I signed my first serious cymbal endorsement deal, I took the royalties and bankrolled my record label, and I’ve been doing it like that ever since. I’ve been at Berklee for almost 17 years, so I’m at a kind of professional freedom because I’m not playing my gigs to pay my bills. That gives me artistic and professional freedom. I don’t live grand, but I’m comfortable.

**JI:** It’s no secret that you battled substance abuse earlier in your career. Even while under contract with Blue Note, you were essentially a homeless crack addict. Thankfully, you’ve been clean since 1996. Would you talk about that part of your history and how bad it got?

**RP:** It got so bad that I spent the summer of my last year using, sleeping in someone’s Lazy Boy recliner in their living room. It got so bad that I was 158 pounds in the frame that I am now. It got so bad that there was a time where my mother would stand outside of the bathroom when I was in her home, just to make sure I wasn’t doing anything in there. And most of all, it got so bad that I couldn’t stop and stay stopped, well after I knew I needed to. And that’s when things began to feel hopeless. I’m really grateful to my dear friends who circled them wagons and offered me a life preserver back then, and most of them are still my friends now. My life today represents a win against addiction the box that you’ve been stuffing drugs into, you’ve got to find something else to go inside that box, and the answer is spiritual in nature. Again, not necessarily religious, but spiritual in nature. That’s what’s been working for me come April 24, for 23 years. I keep a running calendar, so I know how many days, because I never want it to be too far away from me, how long I’ve been clean.

**JI:** Unfortunately, you’ve also dealt with numerous significant health issues during the latter part of your career. You’ve mentioned the four surgeries, you’re undergoing chemotherapy for recurring colon cancer, battled Bell’s palsy, and substantial orthopedic surgeries, including spinal fusion. Would you talk about dealing with this multitude of problems and getting on with your life?

**RP:** These challenges are my life, they are part of

(Continued on page 28)
my life. They’re not problems, unless I don’t deal with them, or unless I allow them to define my life itself. That’s why I’m putting out two records a year and still training martial arts, working towards my fifth-degree black belt. I get up at 4:35 in the morning, three days a week, go to the Y. I just had chemo two days ago and swam a mile at the gym before chemo. I can swim a mile in 45 minutes. I focus on staying healthy and being positive. In addition, my mother passed in October and I went through a divorce in August, but none of these things define who I am. I simply don’t allow it. Those are circumstances, the next dragon to slay in life, and you keep having these challenges until your life is over. What matters is not that you had challenges, but how you met them. My practice of Buddhism keeps me centered. My life is better than it’s ever been, not in spite of what I’ve gone through, maybe even because of what I’ve gone through, because each thing has caused me to be a better person in order to keep living.

**Ralph Peterson**

(Continued from page 27)

**Ji:** Sean Jones, your former student, helped build your trumpet embouchure back up after the Bell’s palsy. Of course, you learn from your students, but how was it to become the student of your former student?

**Ralph Peterson:** I got over that a long time ago. If I named all of the drummers that I’ve learned from… There is a custom in martial arts where eventually the student is expected to eclipse the teacher in certain things because the student’s body is younger. It wasn’t just Sean, I gotta give credit and love to my “shero,” Ingrid Jensen, and Brian Lynch. A lot of people were very encouraging. I’m still battling back from the Bell’s and the dental issues.

**Ji:** You’ve taught many of the finest drummers on today’s jazz scene, but you realized early on when you got to Berklee that even the best drummers didn’t know tunes, so you created a jazz repertoire development class that taught 50 songs in 15 weeks. Would you talk about that unique course and how you determined the 50 tunes?

**Ralph Peterson:** The creation of the course grew out of my experience at Rutgers, studying with Ted Dunbar and his jazz improv class, which had a 38-tune requirement. However, with all due respect, Ted didn’t agree that drummers could play the melodies. He believed that drummers had to play the melodies on piano, and then he found out that I play trumpet. So, now I’m trying to learn “Donna Lee,” “Quicksilver,” and “Little Willie Leaps,” all these hard-bop bebop tunes on the trumpet, and I knew I could execute these melodies, with phrasing, on the drum set, and because I can, I’m a little different from all of the drummers who don’t play trumpet. That experience carried me to Berklee and meeting a group of talented young drummers who didn’t know “Stablemates,” or “Cheesecake.” They didn’t know basic construct melodies. If you learn these tunes, and the music on the record that these tunes come from, you will get an education in the vocabulary of the language of jazz and how to use it. There was no class like that at Berklee and now I teach two sections of it. The principle of why up the tune count from 35 to 50? Because in 15 weeks, it gives you the ability to learn music, which is a useful skillset when somebody calls you for a record date and sends you a Dropbox file with 9 tunes in it, which you gotta play for a gig in two weeks and you’re not gonna have any rehearsal for them except for the rehearsal check. Your ability to do that can’t be based on talent. You gotta bring some skills for a circumstance like that, and it ain’t just reading because the chart ain’t gonna tell you how to make it feel.

**Ji:** Do you recall the best question a student has ever asked you?

**Ralph Peterson:** No, but I can tell you the best answer a student’s ever given me. You ready – “I don’t know.” That’s the best answer a student can give you because then they’re teachable. Part of the problem with students is that they walk around trying to act like they know what they don’t know, and the reality is they don’t even know what they don’t know. So, when they admit it to you, you have a real opportunity to put something meaningful in the glass because it’s hard to fill a glass that’s already full. The problem is that the students of today are more collectors of jazz than they are students of jazz. They carry all the tunes around in their cell phones, and so much music passes their ears, but they don’t know the music on an intimate level. You can collect great Picasso paintings, but that doesn’t mean you know shit about painting. That makes you a collector of paintings. In order to be a student of music, you gotta go inside and understand the process, and that involves becoming uncomfortable and facing what you don’t do well.

**Ji:** Who have you played with that we would be most surprised to hear about?

**Ralph Peterson:** Regina Belle, the R&B and gospel vocalist, who went to college with me and Terence at Rutgers. Another vocalist, who you may not think of as a vocalist, Phyllicia Rashad. Yeah, I did some gigs in New York with Clair Huxtable. I also did a track with The Roots back in the mid-’90s with Jamaaladeen Tacuma before The Roots had really taken off. I’m hoping that that experience will get me on the Jimmy Fallon show. Jimmy came down to the gig in New York last summer and heard Agggregate Prime.

**Ji:** What inspired you to study Buddhism?

**Ralph Peterson:** The end of my first marriage. [Laughs] Being on the road with Buster Williams and being at a transition point in my life where I had to deal with some decisions and stand up and deal. Buster introduced me to Nam Myoho Renge Kyo in Zurich, Switzerland and I’ve been chanting ever since.

**Ji:** Would you talk about your involvement in taekwondo, and the relationship between martial arts and your music?

**Ralph Peterson:** As I became a black-belt, the thing that dawned on me is that martial art is itself, an art. Which means there’s subjectivity to the way it’s practiced. Just like you have Chinese style, Japanese style, Korean style, Brazilian style martial arts, you have New Orleans, Chicago, Philadelphia, New Jersey approaches to jazz. All of them swing and move differently, and like each to the other, it depends on the practitioner. There’s issues of balance, patience and pace, and there are spiritual principles in play with the development of your body as a martial artist that are very much in line with the same principles that help you become a great musician. At the core of each is the necessity to show up and put in the work. At the same time, it’s a complete and total distraction from music that helps me cleanse my brain. It also keeps me in shape. Playing drums is a physical thing, and the way I’ve made my reputation playing drums, I can’t just all of a sudden bust into tiki-boom, tiki-boom style. They’d be like – “He’s done. That ain’t Ralph Peterson no more!” I’ve made my own bed so I’ve got to stay in shape so I can sleep in it. [Laughs]

**Ji:** Were you an athlete in school?

**Ralph Peterson:** Yeah, I ran track, intermediate hurdles, and played basketball. I was a good athlete.

**Ji:** The word on the street is that you’re also a great salsa dancer.

**Ralph Peterson:** [Laughs] Oh, my God! You must have been talking to the Curtis brothers or something. Where’d you get that one? I know I like to try. Dancing is like golf, it’s one of the things you can have a lot of fun doing, whether you do it well or not. I think that dancing is an integral part of playing this music. During listening session with students, I will often compel the students to get up and start dancing to something, usually starting with James Brown, and then seeing if they can convert that same movement to dancing with Count Basie. If you can’t respond to music physically, inside your body and move to it, how the hell you gonna play it?

**Ji:** What are your other interests outside of music including guilty pleasures?

**Ralph Peterson:** I’d like to play more golf. When I look at my life, there ain’t a lot of space for any more work or pleasure. I feel that I’ve got a balance of stuff that is a comfortably full plate, and I dig that. I don’t feel any gaps. I’m connected spiritually, I’m connected to my recovery. I have a sponsor and I sponsor men in recovery. I practice my Buddhism in a way that works for me, and I share all of these aspects with my students who are extensions of me being a parent. My fraternity, Phi Beta Sigma, is also important to me.

**Ji:** The final questions have been given to me by other musicians to ask you:

**Antonio Sanchez (drums) asked:** “I’d like to know what drives you? I’m always interested to hear what drives people. Is it the music or something more personal? Now that you’ve been having these health battles, that’s not something everyone experiences. How have you been able to beat the odds, because I think of myself, if I was in a situation like that, how would I react? I have no idea. It seems super scary to deal with reality like that, and...
it’s inspiring to see people dealing with what they have to do.”

RP: The simple answer is I don’t have a choice. Well, I do have some choices - I could either fold, and let the cancer cells in my body define the rest of my life, or I can live as much of my life that I’m physically capable of at the highest level of intensity that I can live it at, for as long as I can. And I’m choosing the latter. Having lost both parents, and having an experience on the operating table that people call “coding.” I don’t have the same fear that I used to have. Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die. I’m not afraid of dying anymore, and when you’re not afraid to die, you’re also not afraid to live. By the way, Antonio was the second drummer I ever taught at Berklee. That was in 1993 and I was still living in Philly and I would come up to Berklee because Ron Savage, the now dean of the Professional Performance Division, was then the acting chair of the Percussion Department and he asked me up.

Terri Lyne Carrington (drums) asked: “How do you view your growth over the last fifteen years as a player and as a human being, and how do they intertwine?”

RP: The last seventeen years at Berklee have given me the opportunity to get to a place professionally where I have artistic freedom based on professional stability. Berklee helped save my life. I would not be alive were it not for the college’s support and my health care. Terri Lynne came to the school shortly after I got there, and we’ve worked together and supported each other’s projects. She’s been a shining example of excellence and I’ve tried to do the same as an educator from the standpoint of teaching this music. For me, it’s a centurion’s post – I’m guarding the gates of what I love. As an artist, these last fifteen years have been this emergence into a fully-realized, empowered artist. I really feel a sense of freedom. I don’t have to worry about saying shit that’s gonna piss the record label off, that they might drop me from the label. If you let me hear some shit twice, I ain’t got to read works against the skill set of reading because I’m blessed with the ability to hear, and the ability to slow the page, and then you come back to it, slow it down, and try to read it. I’m a musician who’s been working on my reading, it doesn’t matter the accuracy. In The Real Books or Snare Drum Book by [Anthony] Cirone, just turn the page, you read until you make a mistake. You turn the page.

You read, read, read and as soon as you make a mistake, turn the page, so that you don’t memorize the page, and then you come back to it, slow it down, and try to read it. I’m a musician who’s been blessed with the ability to hear, and the ability to hear works against the skill set of reading because if you let me hear some shit twice, I ain’t got to read it. I had to learn that about my gift so that I could develop my skill set, and a lot of musicians who are naturally talented, struggle with that.

Orrin Evans (piano) asked: “I’d like to hear about your time living in Philadelphia and leading your pocket trumpet band.”

RP: Hah! Well, Orrin was in it. I was living in Philly from ’91 – ’94 because my dear friend, who threw me the life preserver and pulled me up, lived there. He gave me the opportunity to recalibrate, start to get my life back on track. He put me up in an apartment across the hall from him and got me to start training Taekwondo. I had done martial arts also in high school. My mind cleared and musical ideas came. I was playing pocket trumpet then but it’s a little too small for me now when I pick it up. Maybe I’m too fat to play it? [Laughs] I developed a book during that time which I am still developing and playing. After relapsing in Philly, I moved to D.C. for two years.

Ari Hoenig (drums) asked: “Your playing and thinking seems to be so rooted in tradition, yet so progressive, original, and creative at the same time. Is this a conscious choice you made for your music? Also, what inspired the progressive side of things?”

RP: I believe in the principle of you can only go as far forward as you’ve been backwards because you don’t know if you’re playing something new if you haven’t checked out what’s old. A lot of the young cats out now who are devoid of swing think they’re playing something new, but what they’re playing is the old shit that we grew up on before we discovered swing. [Laughs] The other piece of it, and Ari has it in his playing, I’m really proud of my relationship with him and Orrin, and all of these guys, but there’s a degree of courage required in recognizing what your guns are and sticking to them.

“You can only go as far forward as you’ve been backwards because you don’t know if you’re playing something new if you haven’t checked out what’s old. A lot of the young cats … who are devoid of swing think they’re playing something new, but what they’re playing is the old shit that we grew up on before we discovered swing.”
Steve Wilson (alto sax) said: “You often talk about the whole history of the music and the drummers, particularly. We used to sit down and talk about Baby Dodds, and you could play something verbatim from Philly Joe or Cozy Cole, or whoever. You’ve got something from everybody’s language – everyone from Baby Dodds up to Milford Graves, and beyond. You’ve got the whole history in your playing. I know you like to talk about your mentors – what did you get from Michael Carvin?”

RP: Wow! Steve’s observation is actually the answer to Ari’s question. Man, what didn’t I get from Carvin? Like I said before, the first thing I got from Carvin, that I needed the most, to be told no. I had to learn that I couldn’t get everything that I wanted just because my parents were paying tuition to Rutgers. The tail can’t wag the dog. If students knew what they needed, they wouldn’t come to college, they’d just go get it. I have a limited tolerance for students telling me what they need, and Michael Carvin helped me with that. He helped me to commit myself to understanding Max Roach, Elvin Jones, Art Blakey, and all the way back to Baby Dodds. Baby Dodds and Zutty Singleton are two names that Michael Carvin taught me, and he taught me that every time he said the name of a drummer that I didn’t know, my responsibility was to go learn something about them, so the next time their name came up in conversation, I could participate instead of looking stupid. Sometimes today, students don’t want to be challenged to that level because they shudder at the feeling of being exposed, but the exposure is when you know how much space you’ve got to grow. I got a lot from Carvin. He’s a martial artist, and his great relationship with his daughter continues to inspire me in my relationship with my amazing daughter Sonora, who’s the principle flutist in the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Michael Carvin taught me that you can’t be afraid in this music to be who you see yourself as, and to be able to alter course when you see what you’re doing isn’t working. We still have long conversations.

JI: What is your connection to someone like Milford Graves?

RP: David Murray, it was through David Murray, Craig Harris and Henry Threadgill that I took an earnest study in the music that’s called avant-garde and began to understand it for the kind of sound theater that it is. I owe a lot to those guys. Back to Ari’s question, the fact that my stuff is rooted in tradition but has this kind of open-ended, progressive slant on it comes from the period I spent when I was working with Stanley Turrentine and David Murray at the same time. That’s about as far across the expanse of the language of tenor saxophone as one could conceive.

JI: You’ve made it a point to study all the master drummers that have come before you. That’s a lot of different styles and concepts. If you can play like all of them, how do you take all that information and make Ralph Peterson? What is your statement on the instrument?

RP: The one thing I learned about taking on the task of emulating Art Blakey is that it’s like walking towards a mirage. No matter how close you think you are, you’re never gonna get there, but that doesn’t mean you don’t move forwards towards it. The point is the movement, the journey, you’ve got to keep moving because it’s the movement that’s gonna make you grow. It’s not about ever getting there, and that’s another thing I learned from Carvin. No matter how close I get, I’m still gonna be in it. Some people may hear me and hear Elvin or Art or catch me on a good night and hear Philly, or if I’m playing with the right band, they’ll hear Baby Dodds and Papa Jo. I just did a gig in Qatar, a Frank Sinatra review, I had so much fun playing in my Sonny Payne hat musically. It was a gas, but I was still me at the same time. They’re all a part of me because I put in the work, but they’re filtered through the who that I am and that makes it different from the next drummer over to me. If you look at all the drummers who have studied with me and they don’t sound alike or like me – Ari Hoenig, Justin Faulkner, E.J. Strickland, Johnathan Blake, Dana Hall, Joe Dyson, Rodney Green, Tsyshawn Sorey, Vince Ector, Antonio Sanchez, Mark Whitfield Jr, Obad Calvairre, Chris Beck, Jonathan Barber, etc. These cats don’t play the same way and that bodes well for what I was trying to get them to do, which is put in the work but always know where they came from and look at where they’ve all gone.

Artists ‘memories of Ralph Peterson:

Antonio Sanchez recalls his first meeting with Peterson: “My interaction with Ralph was fairly short. I first met him through a friend around ’93 while I was at Berklee. I was fresh from Mexico and I was really trying to get into jazz. I played a little bit of jazz in Mexico but not really straight-ahead. I wasn’t aware of the vocabulary that you need to command in order to sound authentic. My friend asked me if I would be into taking a lesson with Ralph because Ralph was going to be in town and my friend was organizing a full afternoon of lessons for Ralph. I had seen Ralph play with Michael Brecker, so I said sure. At the lesson there was a drum set and he had a trumpet with him, and I didn’t know he played trumpet. He had me sit at the drums and said, “Let’s just play it loose,” and I started playing, and he started blowing on the trumpet like he was a professional trumpet player. It was incredible to me. He would play a phrase and I was a little in awe of being there with Ralph, and in being a little uninformed of how jazz worked. I remember he played a phrase and I just looked at him while playing, but I wasn’t really answering anything that he was playing, and he immediately stopped me and lectured me about how it’s all interactive, how it’s supposed to be a conversation and counterpart. It was really cool to hear that from a drummer while he played another instrument really well. That made a big impression on me.”

Steve Wilson shares a memory about Peterson: “Ralph was one of the reasons I moved to New York. He was in the group Out of the Blue, along with Kenny Garrett, and when Kenny left the band to join Miles, Kenny called me to fill in for him for some of the Out of the Blue dates. So, I made some dates with the band, and Ralph really dug my playing, and said, “We’d love to have you in the band.” I moved to New York in ’87 as a result and worked with the band and also with Ralph’s first quintet. From the first time that I played with Ralph, it was really a revelation because Ralph was the first drummer I played with that could hear all of the music, all of the time. I had played with some great drummers before that, but Ralph could hear everything. As a matter of fact, he heard my phrasing and he knew what I was going to play before I played it! I was like, ‘What the hell is that?’ It was amazing, and then I discovered what a great musician he is as a pianist, trumpeter, bassist, and composer. I remember we were hanging out at his crib one time, listening to the record The Real McCoy, and he knew that record like a score. He knew everything that Joe Henderson played, everything that McCoy played, every bassline that Ron played. He knew solos and everything. I said, ‘Now I get it, now I understand.’ Being around him really taught me how to hear, because at that time, I was still just trying to develop as a soloist, trying to figure out harmony, but in terms of playing music and hearing it, then I understood how he played because this determined how he could orchestrate. I think still a lot of people don’t understand about the brilliance of Ralph. He hears everything, all of the time, so everything he plays has context. So, when he plays something that seems out of time and free, there’s always a pulse in time and form of what he’s doing. When I started playing his compositions in his band, where he would have these odd phrases, it made me really think about the music differently and it opened up some new doors. That first band with Geri Allen, Phil Bowser and Terence [Blanchard], that was a dynamite band, it was killin’. [Laughs] Playing with Ralph’s band was a major step for me growth wise, as musician playing with Ralph, and being around him. He’s one of the smartest people I’ve ever known. He’s a few years younger than me but even then, at 25-years-old, he’s had wisdom beyond his years. He’s a heavy cat and I always talk to my students about him because of what I got from him, and what I continue to get from him. He continues to influence a lot of what I do musically.

---

“The greatest discovery of any generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering the attitudes of their minds.” - Albert Schweitzer
Get Your Music In The News With Massive Press Coverage Guaranteed In 24 To 48 Hours

Guaranteed Publication On Hundreds of Major Network Media & Authority News Sites + Distribution To Traditional Print & Broadcast Networks — To Drive Traffic & Sales To Your Business
All Without The Expense, Frustration & Disappointing Results From So Many Publicists!

BENEFITS

- **Massive Seed Exposure To Increase Chances For Increased Media Coverage** — Positive Stories And Images Of Your Business Via Major Network & Authority Media Build Your Brand, Prime Your Clients To Trust You And Your Business More.
- **Builds Your Positive Image** — Creates Increased Buzz And Exposure
- **Increased Awareness, Trust, Reputation For Your Business** — Builds Your Positive Image
- **Higher Visibility To Build Your Authority** — Via Publication Of Your News On Numerous Respected, High Authority, Major Network Sites & Media Syndicators
- **Improved Website Ratings & More Traffic** — Through High Quality Links From Hundreds Of Trustworthy Brand Name TV And Radio Websites
- **More Online Citations For Higher Visibility**
- **Generate More Leads & Clients**

Distribution: Online & Traditional Media

- 13,000 Radio/TV stations (AM, FM, News, Talk, Music, more)
- 3,000 magazines (segment by market, interest)
- 8,000 Newspapers (dailies & weeklies) in the USA

Comprehensive Media Reports

Click on links to see the 100’s of media placement of your news

BONUS: ORDER Your Press Release & Get FREE DISTRIBUTION SERVICES To Send Your CD to the Media (You just pay for postage and envelopes). Why pay $500, $1,000, $1,500 a month or more for these services (often with no followup!) — when you can get it free as a value-added premium!

ORDER Start Your Promotion NOW! - PressToRelease.com

Experience Results In 24-48 Hours! CALL 215-887-8880
Ernie Watts
Always on the journey (Part 3 of 3)

Interview & Photos by Eric Nemeyer

(Continued from the previous issue of Jazz Inside)

JI: Could you talk about your association with Charlie Haden, who is himself a sensitive and soft-spoken individual? How did his music gel with what you do?

EW: Well, I think it goes back to the melody again. He’s very in tune to a melodic concept and I think he draw other people who have the same values. I met Charlie in Los Angeles. I was playing an orchestral piece, a great French composer, Michel Colombier, who wrote a piece for saxophone and orchestra. He wrote it for me; he’s a very good friend. This piece was called “Night Bird.” We were performing it at the Chane Mobile Art Pavilion in Los Angeles and Charlie was backstage. When I came off the stage, he came up to me and introduced himself. Of course I knew who he was. He said, “Maybe we should get together and play some music.” And I said, “Great. Let’s do it.” That’s how it started. Then he put together a couple of editions of the Liberation Orchestra, and I played with those out in California. Then we did two or three tours with Pat Metheny, though I don’t think that any of those were recorded. After that we started doing our Quartet West, playing in different contexts together. It’s like family. You know how you meet somebody sometimes and you feel like you’ve always known them. Well, it was like that with Charlie.

JI: How did the group begin evolving?

EW: Well, we never had a rehearsal. We’d bring in tunes, Charlie would bring in tunes, we would try it, and if it works and the energy’s coming across we’d keep it. It’s very organic.

JI: Pat Metheny has a different concept than Quartet West, his own style and approach. When you were touring with him, what kind of adjustments did you make in your perspective with a group like his?

EW: I think the essence of the artist is to realize and never forget that there’s no music business without the music. It’s music business. If there’s no music, there’s no business. Because of that, because we are the creators, the artists, we have the ability to structure the business. Because we are artists and because of some of us don’t believe the power that we have, a lot of us have given that power away. That is why we have what we have now. That’s called the music business. But, the essence is still: there’s no music business without the music. Everything comes from the energy of the music. The people who recognize that have control of their lives. The artists that recognize that have control of their lives. The artists that don’t recognize that are on the merry-go-round. They’re doing what the guys that don’t do music tell them what they should do. It has outlived its usefulness and that is why the music business is falling apart. The music business has allowed the values to fall apart, so the business is falling apart. It has no substance, so it can’t stand, so it’s not. All you have to do is look around. And the people that are creative and believe in what they’re doing, they start their own record companies and they do their music. They sell their music on the web sites and on the guys, and you don’t need them. I don’t need somebody telling me that I can only play a tune for three-and-a-half minutes and I’ve got to use a drum machine, and a whole bunch of other stuff that I don’t intend to use. Or, “Hey, you played with Marvin Gaye. Let’s do a tribute to Marvin Gaye!” Or, “Hey, you played with the Temptations. Let’s do a tribute to the Temptations!” Why? The thing is, if you don’t do it, they’ll find a 19 year old kid that wants to be in the music business more than anything else and they’ll get them to do it. And that’s what you’ve got – you’ve got smooth jazz. That’s why you’ve got smooth jazz, because it’s about what’s on the radio. So that’s what they do – anything to be in the music business and hear their record on the radio. So that’s what they do – they do anything. And that’s what’s on the radio – anything. And that’s fine, because the taxi drivers like it, and the secretaries like it, and the people that are having dinner like it, so it has a purpose. That’s fine too. You know, I’ve got no problem with any of it. The only thing is, it’s not my personal choice to do these things. And then if it’s posed to me that I have to do these things in order to survive or whatever, that’s just not true. The difference between me and a whole load of other people is I know it’s not true, and I can say to them, “No, that’s not true.” It’s about what we feel. It’s about how we think. We are the creators of our lives. If there’s something going on that you don’t agree with, then you don’t have to do it.

JI: There is a quote by Bertrand Russell, “The trouble with this world is that the foolish are cocksure and the intelligent are all full of doubt.”

EW: There’s also a saying, “Ignorance of the law, is the law.” We’re all a part of this source energy. Whether you recognize it or not, you’re still a part of the source energy. When you realize that you’re a part of the source energy and you make that recognition and you submit yourself to that, then you realize that you’re not a victim of the universe; that you have choices; that everything you do is a choice and your life is a compilation of your choices over the years. If there’s stuff going on in your life that you don’t like, then you have to make choice differences, and then you’ll change. We are tools of the energy. It comes through us. Therefore our only responsibility is to be the sharp- est tool that we can be we can have a minimum of resistance for the energy to come through. That’s why as musicians, we practice. When you’re free and you’re fluid on your instrument and you get up on the stage, you’re an open channel for the energy.

(Continued on page 34)
Ernie Watts

(Continued from page 32)

to flow through you with the least amount of resistance. But the music belongs to everyone. Nobody owns the music. The music comes from the spirit, through us, and out. Music is God singing through us. That’s what we do – we allow God to play this incredible beauty to the Earth through us. And when you choose to do that, you also recognize a whole bunch of stuff. You recognize that music is God singing through us. You recognize that you have chosen to be a channel for this. You recognize that it’s going through you because you sure feel it. When I play, it’s like listening to somebody play. You also realize that to make this recognition is to create an environment where these things can come clean. You also recognize that you’ll always be taken care, because God is not going to give you a gift and God is not going to flow through you and then run you into a wall … or make you poor, or sad, or mentally ill. If you make the recognition to the Holy Spirit, everything is added onto you. You just have to stay on the track. All you have to do is stay on the track and you’ll survive. You know? We’re always making choices and we’re always getting information. The choices that we’re making all the time is to either go with the information or say, “Well, you know, I’ve got a better idea.” That’s your first mistake [laughs].

JI: When things aren’t working out – you’re not being creative or unable to have good relationships – it’s a function of the connection that you have to the spirits, or energy, or God, being corroded. You need to get yourself back on track, whatever that is for different people.

EW: From all of the studies that everybody’s made on being in touch with the Holy Spirit, it all seems to kind of boil down to this: at some point during the day, you have to have a quiet time. That’s when you get your information. Some people have it in the morning. Some people have it in the middle of the afternoon. Some people meditate maybe two or three times a day. Regardless, it’s very important to have a quiet time to focus so that energy comes through, so that you get yourself back in line. That’s very important.

JI: There are a lot of temptations that occur when you begin getting involved in music and creative endeavors. All of us, there are people tempting you with various and sundry experiences, substances, and all sorts of other things. It can be very difficult for people who are starting out to not think that that’s cool. If you’re in jazz, certainly you’ve read about people like Charlie Parker and other people succumbed to those temptations. Of course in Charlie Parker’s case, he was able to create incredible music despite his specific challenges that would have doomed other people. How do you suggest or encourage people to maintain their vigilance in the face of those kinds of temptations, in order to stay on the path of mastery?

EW: Kenny Werner wrote a very good book for that called Effortless Mastery – a wonderful little book. It’s a very interesting question. When you’re a kid learning how to play, you’re coming out of a competitive background. Even if in the back of your mind you know that music is more than that, you still want to be the best; you still want to be the first seed in All-State. All of that stuff. That’s the way our system is set up. We always want to be the best—that’s why we practice. After we practice for a while, then we look around and think about what we’re doing. You realize that it’s impossible to be the best at anything because how can you be the best when everybody’s different? There are no criteria. The only best that you can be is to be the best you that you can be. When you make that recognition, then that begins to put you on the track. Until you get on the track, you do have a lot of experiences. It’s a very tricky thing. Our life is our experiences. If you’re going to have a full life, you have to have a lot of experiences. Some of the experiences are positive. Some of the experiences are negative. Some of the experiences are positive in the beginning and then they turn negative. I think while you’re having experiences, you get information and you know when one experience is done and it’s time to turn the page. If you turn the page, you go on. If you don’t turn the page, you get stuck. It manifests with musicians in a lot of different ways. Sometimes, if you’re a musician and you’re doing a particular thing or a particular job and it’s great for a while but then ends up wearing part of our growth cycle. As long as you grow from them and as long as you go on, you get stronger. So it’s hard to tell a kid that’s learning how to play music what he should do, what he shouldn’t do, where he should go, what he should eat or not eat – don’t eat French Fries because it’s all cholesterol and all that kind of stuff – when he’s seventeen or eighteen years old. The thing that you have to tell people is that whatever you’re doing, when it stops feeling right, immediately turn the page. If it’s not working for you, turn the page – go on. That’s the hardest thing to do sometimes because we are creatures of habit. You’ve seen people in situations all the time and you get that thing of like, some people believe that a bad deal is better than no deal at all. But they don’t know that there’s a better deal waiting if they would just change the page. A lot of fear – I dealt with a lot of fear when I stopped doing studio work. I was making a whole bunch of money doing studio work but I wasn’t happy. I wanted to play jazz. There’s all of the history, the mythology, and all of the horrible information about what happens to jazz players. Have you ever seen a positive jazz movie? Have you ever seen a jazz movie where, at the end of the movie, the guy is doing great and everything is cool and people love him and he’s got a house and a family, and he’s just fine and he does a concert tour and he goes home? No! It’s always some guy dead in the gutter. Right?

“When you realize that you’re a part of the source energy and you make that recognition and you submit yourself to that, then you realize that you’re not a victim of the universe; that you have choices; that everything you do is a choice and your life is a compilation of your choices over the years.”

And that’s dramatic – that’s a good story. Ever seen a jazz story about somebody that came out on top? [laughs] But you know what? Somebody’s mother is watching those movies. And her kid is seven or eight years old and when he gets to be fourteen years old, he wants to play jazz. His mother remembers these movies, and she says, “No. You’ll kill yourself. You’ll die out there. You’re my kid. I love you. I can’t send you out there to do this!” Look what happened to Dexter Gordon. Look at what happened in that Round Midnight movie. Look at what happened in any of those movies.” You challenge fate. So, I went through all my fear stuff when I stopped doing studio work in order to really focus on my jazz playing. But I believe two things. I’m very stubborn and I got to the point where I really had to play. I felt like I would be better if I was broke playing than had a whole bunch of money and was unhappy. The other thing that I really believe more than anything is that universal energy is directing you.
Trust the world’s leading expert in vintage drums

When it comes to superb vintage drums you need a true expert. I have over 40 years of experience with vintage drums and have authenticated and brokered some of the rarest and finest sets in existence, including sets owned by some of the world’s most renowned drummers.

Whether you want to purchase or sell a fine vintage snare drum or drum set, or perhaps purchase something owned by a famous drummer you admire, trust the industry’s leading expert.

When you call or email, you get me. I am available and I want to speak with you. Feel free to call or email with questions and requests.

No one does “vintage” better, and you deserve the best.

www.maxwelldrums.com

Our experience:
In addition to operating our NY and Chicagoland stores, I currently serve as manager and curator of the world’s finest private collection of rare and celebrity owned drums in the world.

We have authenticated and brokered the sale of instruments owned by such famous drummers as Buddy Rich, Joe Morello, Elvin Jones, Mel Lewis, Tony Williams, Sonny Greer, Don Lamond, Cozy Cole, Papa Jo Jones, Philly Joe Jones, Gene Krupa, Peter Erskine, Stan Levey, Dave Tough, Louie Bellson, Jake Hanna, Earl Palmer, Billy Gladstone and more.

We have sold more of the world’s rarest drums and drum sets than anyone in the world. Items such as: the finest known Ludwig Top Hat and Cane drum set; the finest known and unique example of Leedy’s Autograph of the Stars set; four of the twelve known examples of ’50s era Gretsch cadillac nitron green “Birdland” drum sets; more Gretsch round badge era 12-14-18 drum sets than any dealer worldwide; eight of the rare Billy Gladstone snares (of which only 25 exist) and one of the only two complete Billy Gladstone drum sets.

Our worldwide clientele consists of serious players; collectors, investors and anyone else who loves the finest examples of rare vintage drums. Our expertise runs deep and is rooted in the superb instruments crafted by US manufacturers from the 1920s through the 1970s.
HERBIE HANCOCK • COMMON • KAMASI WASHINGTON
THUNDERCAT • CORINNE BAILEY RAE • HANCOCK/MCBRIDE/COLAIUTA
DIANNE REEVES • TANK AND THE BANGAS • THE BAD PLUS
TERENCE BLANCHARD FEATURING THE E-COLLECTIVE
DEE DEE BRIDGEWATER AND THE MEMPHIS SOULPHONY • BUIKA
THE RON CARTER TRIO • PJ MORTON • SONS OF KEMET
MAKAYA MCCRAVEN • CÉCILE MCLORIN SALVANT
GARY BARTZ ANOTHER EARTH 50-YEAR ANNIVERSARY
FEATURING RAVI COLTRANE & SPECIAL GUEST CHARLES TOLLIVER
RAVI COLTRANE/DAVID VIRELLES • SUN RA ARKESTRA • GHOST-NOTE
RALPH PETERSON AND THE MESSENGER LEGACY • KANDACE SPRINGS • ELEW
WOMEN OF THE WORLD • MARCUS STRICKLAND TWI-LIFE
CHRISTIAN SANDS - 3 PIANO ERROLL GARNER TRIBUTE! • DAFNIS PRIETO BIG BAND
SPANISH HARLEM ORCHESTRA • JAMES FRANCIES’ FLIGHT • AARON DIEHL
JENNY SCHEINMAN & ALLISON MILLER’S PARLOUR GAME
DARCY JAMES ARGUE’S SECRET SOCIETY • BILLY HART QUARTET
IN COMMON (WALTER SMITH III, MATT STEVENS, JOEL ROSS, HARISH RAGHAVAN, KENDRICK SCOTT)
CAMILA MEZA & THE NECTAR ORCHESTRA • JOEL ROSS ‘GOOD VIBES’ • HAILU MERGIA
TIA FULLER’S “DIAMOND CUT” • SAMMY MILLER AND THE CONGREGATION • DOMI & JD BECK
LAUREN SEVIAN/HELEN SUNG DUO • THE ROYAL BOPSTERS FEATURING SHEILA JORDAN • LAURIN TALESE
THE DAYNA STEPHENS GROUP • Mwenso & The Shakes • Marika Hughes • THE NEW STRING QUARTET
ALPHONSO HORNE AND THE GOTHAM KINGS • BRANDON GOLDBERG • MATANA ROBERTS
BRIAN MARSSELLA • TOM OREN • BEN MORRIS QUINTET • ERIC WURZELBACHER QUARTET
ALEXANDER HEFFNER, HOST OF THE OPEN MIND ON PBS • MARK STRYKER: “JAZZ FROM DETROIT”
SOPHISTICATED GIANT: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF DEXTER GORDON BY MAXINE GORDON
BERKLEE GLOBAL JAZZ INSTITUTE WORKSHOP • URI JAZZ BIG BAND • RIMEA SR. ALL-STATE JAZZ BAND

newportjazz.org