



JAZZ NOTES™

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Mixing It Up

►► *By Michael J. West*

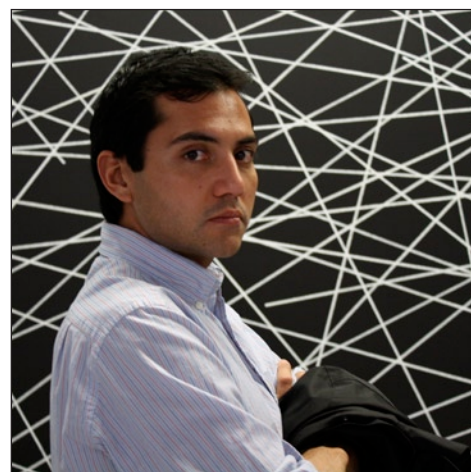
NATE CHINEN is a columnist for *JazzTimes*, a jazz and pop critic for *The New York Times* and a four-time winner of the JJA's Helen Dance-Robert Palmer Award for Review and Feature Writing—all of which he's achieved by the tender age of 33. The JJA's Michael J. West recently sat down with Chinen to discuss his career trajectory and the changing face of jazz journalism.



Michael J. West: *For starters, you're a 33-year-old writing for The New York Times—the ideal to which we all aspire. How did you come so far so fast?*

Nate Chinen: The short version is that I've been writing about jazz since 1996, from the age of 20, initially in Philadelphia. I moved to New York in 1998 and began working on George Wein's autobiography, *Myself Among Others*, all the while maintaining various freelance relationships. I struck up the *JazzTimes* relationship initially as a features writer, and gradually that led to the column. Gary Giddins's departure from *The Village Voice* led to an opportunity to contribute there. That, to me, was the big time—following in Gary's footsteps, working with Robert Christgau. That was how the people at the *Times* caught wind of me.

The funny thing is that that path was really a conventional path at the time. But that infrastructure doesn't exist anymore. So were I coming up now, I'd probably be a jazz blogger, and I doubt I would harbor



Ashley Lederer

any grand illusions about making a living from it. It's unclear just what the future is for that. All of us are soldiering on, and I think there'll actually be some new model that'll make sense. But right now, I'm actually very excited about how transparent and lively the dialogue is between jazz bloggers and commenters and such. I do, however, think we need to be careful to preserve some of that traditional journalistic and critical voice.

MJW: *That raises an interesting question, in that you launched your blog in order to continue your column after JazzTimes's apparent demise. Now that JazzTimes is back, what's next?*

NC: They'll happen side by side. I've told *JazzTimes* that I want to continue the blog, and they seemed perfectly happy with

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that. It's like broadcasting at different frequencies: A blog entry might be much more quickly and loosely constructed than a *JazzTimes* column, but it can also engage in a lively back-and-forth discussion in a way the magazine can't. I'm still learning the ropes, but for now it's nice to dialogue. It has many more advantages than disadvantages.

MJW: *One of the disadvantages is you don't get paid for the blog, and you do for the print media outlets. Does that inform the way you write for either format?*

NC: Oh, sure. Most of what's on the blog is much more compact and casual than what I might write for publications. Hopefully that doesn't mean that it's less thoughtful or rigorous, but it is less formal, less about laying down a thesis and leading you through it. Some of them are really just quick little hits—not the level of sustained insight you'd want from a full journalistic review. The needs and expectations are different: One of those is professional work, and the other has license to be a little more casual and a little less comprehensive. And that's precisely what some older journalists may balk at in the blog format. But I've been really impressed lately by how much deep, intelligent jazz blogging has been done by people of the generation older than myself—those who don't fit that “blogger” archetype of the twenty-somethings, like Ted Gioia and his crew at *Jazz.com*, or Marc Myers's stuff for *JazzWax*.

We've all become accustomed to the idea that we can activate readership online, with people who aren't seeking the traditional media. In the wake of the *JazzTimes* situation, I heard from some people who said, “Hey, I'm a big jazz fan, and I've never picked up a copy of *JazzTimes*—but I'm reading your blog.” But there are still so many people who go to the magazine first. I've seen my column there as a conduit to readers who aren't necessarily on the

blogs. So when I write a column about Facebook in *JazzTimes* I'm fully aware that I'm speaking to people who have never been on Facebook and don't know what it is. And that's what is great about the column: The jazz audience is small and beleaguered enough that we don't need to close anybody off. Let's reach as many people as possible.

“The jazz audience is small enough and beleaguered enough that we don't need to close anybody off.”

MJW: *Do you have a snapshot view of the current jazz scene?*

NC: There's a lot happening. From a purely musical standpoint, jazz is doing great. In an average week I see a lot of stuff and there's always something that either knocks me out or comes close, and every year there's another few names that we all have to sit up and pay attention to. At the same time I think about straight-up bebop and full-tilt swing, and I hear less of that now around the clubs than I did a while ago. It would be a shame if that departed entirely. But on the whole, I don't think it's better or worse off than at any other time.

MJW: *What about the current state of jazz journalism?*

NC: It seems pretty robust; there's a lot of discussion going on. Are there places where people who aren't already in the hive can be reached by a piece of jazz journalism? That seems the tougher question. There's great stuff happening online, and in the pages of the few spe-

cialty magazines, but except perhaps for NPR, there's no mainstream platform. I feel that responsibility in my place at the *Times*—there's a certain stewardship that comes with it.

MJW: *You also do pop music journalism at the Times. Does that make your job easier, or are things equally tough on the pop side?*

NC: It's across the board. I have a lot of friends who are pop critics and they're not feeling any more secure than we are. This year *Blender* died, *Vibe* died. These are huge publications, not niche.

An interesting thing about writing about pop as well as jazz: It's not something that I had been allowed to do before arriving at the *Times*. At the *Voice* and at various other publications, I was instructed in very clear terms that I was the jazz guy and that was it. (Keep in mind that this was before blogging was seen as a viable outlet.) It was a really fun and daunting thing to suddenly be writing about rock and pop and hip-hop and world music in such a high-profile forum. But it was very liberating—it's nice to mix it up.

Periodically I run into someone from the jazz world who doesn't really understand—“why waste your time on this noise?” But it's just like, if you go to the gym, you can't just work on your biceps every day; you need balance. And I think as a critic, you need to hear different things, in different ways, and write about them differently. Reviewing Jordin Sparks's new record makes me a better jazz critic.

It's worth pointing out, too, that jazz musicians are not cloistered in their tastes or listening habits, so it seems to me that if you're writing about the current crop of jazz musicians, you have to be aware of the pop-culture landscape they're a part of. If they're not closing themselves off, why would you?



TWEET, TWEET: *Do you Twitter? Hear great live jazz? Tweet about it using the hashtag #jazzlives. For details and updates consult Howard Mandel's blog, <http://www.artsjournal.com/jazzbeyondjazz/>*

Making room for a new jazzer.

It's a Girl!

ON JULY 21, 2009, I had the craziest day of my life. When it was over, my wife and I were looking into the eyes of our daughter, Tess Mary Adler, six pounds and five ounces at birth. You'll forgive me for keeping this editor's note short—I have diapers to change.

I'll just say this, and it's not an original thought, but it's true: Music sounds better with Tess in the world. To make way for her arrival, I had to put my Rotel receiver, Rega turntable and B&W speakers into storage. A big sacrifice, one of many to come. But I can live without the gear. I've got the most powerful sound enhancer of them all.

In an interview shortly after the birth of his daughter, bassist Ben Allison told me that to have a child is to move from being priority number one to priority number three, behind the baby and the new mom. In our case, with a dog and four cats (our beloved greyhound,



Noah Kalina

From the Editor

David R. Adler

Angus, just passed on), I am now priority number eight.

Which is to say, it's all very humbling. And what it means for a maintaining and furthering a freelance career I have yet to find out. But plunging into the unknown was what got me into this business in the first place. I'll get by with a little patience, a lot of deep breaths and a willingness to improvise.



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The Jazz Journalists Association (JJA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, promoting the interests of writers, photographers, broadcasters and new media professionals covering jazz. The JJA supports the creation and dissemination of accurate, balanced, ethical and informative journalism on all of jazz's genres; the growth, development and education of the jazz audience and the dissemination of information pertaining to jazz to the general public, by providing forums for the discussion of jazz-related issues and events, fostering the development of journalistic and presentation skills among new journalists and the continuing development of such skills in journalists already engaged in the field.

A conference-planning update and a recruiting need.

Full Speed Ahead

DEAR JJA MEMBERS,

FIRST THINGS FIRST: The JJA needs a new membership secretary—an important job with responsibilities and complexities, but not one that need be all-consuming. Ask what you can do for your organization? You can consider being its membership secretary, which means interacting with new members, letting current members know when their dues have lapsed, overseeing the important JJA membership list. If you're interested in this position, please email me right quick (jazzmandel@earthlink.net) for further details.

One reason the membership secretary is crucial right now is that the JJA ends the summer full of new projects. We've initiated public interactive discussions online at jazzhouse.org for planning our proposed conference, "Jazz Journalism in Transition: Audiences and Outlets in the 21st Century," currently scheduled for January 7 through 10 at Jazz at Lincoln Center. Thanks to JJA Vice President Yvonne Ervin, we've started a mentoring program for 11th and 12th grade students at Urban Assembly School of Music and Art who want to write about music. We are launching a Labor Day campaign to get everybody to tweet or post to Facebook about jazz they've heard—who and where—hoping to get some new metrics about the age and size of the current audience for jazz (defined so broadly that many people may not identify what they're hearing as "jazz" unless so prompted—like the new Willie Nelson record, ain't that in at least some sense "jazz"?). Details about that Twitter/Facebook campaign are available elsewhere at jazzhouse.org—I hope you'll participate on your blog or website, through your Facebook or Twitter accounts, or somehow.

Those are the main things the organization has in process right now, besides *Jazz Notes* of course, the *Jazz Matters*

panels being held at festivals and educational institutions, and wrap-up of the 2009 Jazz Awards, one of our most successful events yet. Also, we're on tenterhooks waiting to hear whether funding for the JJA conference has been granted by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and whether a grant we applied for through the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation's jazz.NEXT



Louise DeGiac

President's Report Howard Mandel

program comes through. That one would support the distribution of some 50 hi-def pocket video cameras to JJA members who volunteer for training to create video reports on jazz topics, for posting at sites like JazzVision (from our friends at jazzcorner.com) and YouTube.

The challenges in realizing these efforts can inform us of the challenges facing our profession overall. One thing that's come up consistently in the past two months is how distant West Coast jazz journalists feel from those of us on the Eastern Seaboard (especially New York)—and I can only imagine that Chicagoans, people living elsewhere in the Midwest, in the Pacific Northwest, in the southeast or west, are also feeling far from the interests of the JJA. It's not so—we'd like to get everyone working together! It's hard to do, but isn't that why Al Gore invented the

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Internet? Let's learn to use it to the max! That's the only way we'll sustain our profession, so we may as well do it. And it's fun, easy! Well, maybe not easy, but yes, fun, especially if we can throw a four-day conference in New York to help us all get ourselves together, the better to move forward.

That's the JJA's mission over the next few months, and if we pull it off, we'll have realized a substantive goal. No one in the organization can do it alone, and even a few of us banded together

can't do it without YOU. So please, get involved with these programs, or think up others you want to pour energy and time into that will advance us all. Email any of the JJA's officers or board members or other members and make something about jazz journalism happen. The JJA is an organization of individuals, each working independently to advance themselves and the music we all love. But writers, editors, bloggers, photographers, broadcasters, web producers—if you've paid your dues you can participate in our programs,

networks, brainstorm, parties. You can be at the fore in determining what jazz journalism, music journalism, arts journalism, becomes. You can make connections throughout jazz journalism and into connected spheres that you'll find useful as you go along. And among you, certainly there's a budding membership secretary. That person, please raise your hand!

PRESIDENT HOWARD



The health of the circuit, summer 2009 and beyond.

Jazz Festivals and the Economy

► By *arnold jay smith*

IS THIS TOPIC really a mystery? Don't we know the answer? Haven't the headlines about corporate sponsors dropping out said it all? Now that *JazzTimes* has been sold and revived, the impact of the sad news of another print outlet's passing has been somewhat diminished. But here's a bit of what I discovered after some research and a personal and very informal survey of festival promoters.

First the not-all-that-bad news headlines:

- ▶ JVC opts out of the George Wein-produced JVC Jazz Festival in New York and other major not-wholly-jazz festivals.
- ▶ The Festival Network, which bought the rights to the name "Newport Jazz Festival," fails to live up to its obligations.
- ▶ Wein himself steps up to the plate and announces he'll produce his own festival in Newport.
- ▶ Medical Tech firm CareFusion joins Wein for Newport 2009 and New York '10.
- ▶ General Motors goes in and out of Chapter 11 but not before Montreal

desperately looks elsewhere for a lead sponsor.

- ▶ TD (the multinational Toronto Dominion Bank) announces it will become that lead sponsor.
- ▶ Wein's Saratoga-based spinoff festival continues under the aegis of Freihofers and shows a small increase.
- ▶ Washington, DC's Duke Ellington Festival shows an increase in attendance as well.
- ▶ Bad weather and high statewide unemployment lead to realistic downscaling at the Portland Jazz Festival.
- ▶ New York's Vision Festival continues its critically acclaimed alternative path with no competition in 2009, but proceeds fall nonetheless.
- ▶ The Litchfield Jazz Festival expands to a new venue in Kent, Connecticut.

"It was a wonderful bolt from the blue." This was how an ecstatic George Wein described the support of CareFusion. "A miracle," he said. "They walked into my office and asked to join in." The

contract extends into New York in 2010 with options. "You can't survive without major commercial support," Wein has said. "The town, the state, whatever, can't keep up with the increasing expenses."

George Wein's CareFusion Jazz Festival 55 (formerly the Newport Jazz Festival—they're sticklers about the new name) was a near disappointment. "Frankly, I was concerned about the advance," Wein told me. There were a scant 4,000 tickets sold for Saturday and Sunday. Saturday's weather was sunny and warm, enticing a 50 percent walk up; the final tally was 6,000. Sunday was not as good. Overcast skies and a threat of rain drew 4,500. I was told that tickets were being sold at half price on BosTix. By contrast, the preceding weekend's "George Wein's Folk Festival 50" drew 9,200 on Saturday and 7,500 Sunday. "Bear in mind that this was our 50th anniversary," a former Wein aide said. The bottom line on Saturday was aided by Marsalis Music, which purchased the entire day at the Waterside Tent for Branford and their other artists.

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Andre Menard, founding artistic director of Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, which celebrated its 30th anniversary in '09, shook his head emphatically when asked about the lack of corporate financing. "You've got to have it if you want the big acts," he said. When we spoke, TD had not yet come aboard. The outdoor areas of the festival, the largest in the world, seemed tamer than usual, probably due to the heavy and steady rains in the early going, but Menard said they were "about even" attendance-wise. I guess if you factor in Stevie Wonder's free concert, which drew some 200,000+, and the sold-out large rooms that's a realistic assessment. "Downsizing is not an option," Menard said proudly. The official summation stated that they "covered their nut" with a large box office to the tune of \$5.1 million (Canadian) as well as increased ancillary sales.

Freihofer's producer Dan Melnick proudly announced that his Saratoga Performing Arts Center's 2x-12-hour extravaganza showed an income increase of one percent. "We cut the budget and brought it in with a small profit. Hey, in economic times like these, that's an accomplishment," Melnick said by telephone.

Melnick, formerly a staffer with Wein, also handled the successful tour of the Blue Note 7, the celebratory group for that record label's 70th Anniversary. "We're planning an encore in 2010," he announced, "but this time overseas. We hear that the European festivals are paying less and less. They have lost some of their governmental support and they are booking less jazz."

The Saratoga event first saw life as part of the Newport-New York Jazz Festival in 1978. "There is 50-50 support, my company with SPAC and added sponsorship from Freihofer's [an upstate-New York-based bread company]," Melnick said. "The festival has always made money. We keep things tight and very commercial. It's tougher now than when George was doing it; expenses have gone up and consequently the margins are tighter. It all goes into one

pot, ticket sales, t-shirts, food, as well as SPAC and Freihofer's support." SPAC covers what you'd expect: the building, staff, security, help with advertising and the like.

"I pay the performers and a staff that comes north for lighting and sound. This event can survive without Freihofer's but it would be much

The goal, one promoter explains, is not to spend all the corporate funds. You need them going forward.

smaller." Wein has said that without past sponsorship—Schlitz, American Airlines, Brown & Williamson (Kool), and ultimately JVC—his festivals could not be successful. Melnick went further. "In all the years I worked with George [beginning in 1990], the New York festivals never made money without a sponsor," he said. "The event is so expensive to produce and we never sold enough tickets to cover them. But you must remember this: we offered a lot of free events, did a lot of advertising and marketing and our staff was large. None of those things were covered by any money from anywhere. We lost money on one concert and made it on another." The goal, Melnick explained, is not to spend all the corporate funds. You need them going forward.

Like Menard, Melnick said that pop and R&B artists do draw. "We've lost so many of the jazz greats that we have to offer festival-goers some substitution," he said. Wein's JVC concerts had been doing that for years; Montrealers have never seen a jazz-only festival. "The audiences love George Coleman and McCoy Tyner as much as George Benson," Melnick noted. "But they also love

Smokey Robinson and Gladys Knight and Taj Mahal. The mega European events, such as Stockholm, North Sea, Montreux as well as Montreal, need the big names to fill the halls. The smaller countries use jazz artists exclusively as their nut is smaller." As a matter of fact, this year Montreal packed their largest ticketed venues with straight-ahead jazz concerts by Dave Brubeck and Tony Bennett.

Melnick worked alongside Duke Ellington Jazz Festival producer Charlie Fishman to plan that Washington, DC event, which is mostly free and outdoors. Fishman, who gets support from the city, the feds and this year from the State of Louisiana—the '09 fest was entirely New Orleans-flavored—produced only one ticketed show at the Kennedy Center, a tribute to Ellis Marsalis replete with his sons, honorary son Harry Connick, Jr., and Kennedy Center music director Dr. Billy Taylor, who considers the event an unqualified success. "It sold out," he noted. Melnick said that Fishman did not realize the dollar total he envisioned thanks to the economy, as municipalities reduced their stipends. The good news is that smaller contributors and local businesses stepped in to save it because they thought "jazz is an important event for the city of Washington." "We also trimmed some fat," Melnick added.

Out west in Oregon, Portland Jazz Festival producer Bill Royston said via email, "Generally, the festival had its first deficit since starting the organization in 2003. However, we have paid off most of those debts, and will have all paid by the end of August. Our 2009 sales were down 27 percent from 2008, but we are moving forward with a leaner and more modest 2010 event. Our 2008 festival deficit came directly because of the current economic situation. Oregon has the second highest unemployment rate in the country at over 12 percent, and with a February festival, we landed right at the epicenter of the problems."

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Where Montreal had rain, Portland has its own meteorological issues. “The Northwest economic climate changes shortly before the Christmas holidays,” Royston said. “[This year it was] provoked by a major snow storm (for us!) that wiped out retail shopping a week out. Our sales, up through mid-December, were equal to past years. However, after the holidays and into early January sales dived and never recovered.

“Planning for the future is both a challenge and a roll of the dice,” he continued. “Further, as a festival that depends uniquely on tourism and a 30 percent attendance based on out-of-towners who stay in participating hotels, eat at restaurants and enjoy Oregon’s tax-free shopping, the challenges are even greater... and riskier. Portland is not large enough to support the festival scale as we have developed it the past few years.

“There are very few corporate headquarters in the Portland area,” Royston offered as well. “While we’ve had great success with sponsorships over the past few years, the majority were national sponsors. That money has decreased significantly, and national companies are less inclined to invest in smaller markets like Portland. I believe that this is solely based upon the economy. The situations like Festival Network and *JazzTimes* have little effect on those of us living near the end of the universe in relation to major East Coast markets.”

Vision Festival director Patricia Nicholson Parker heads up the festival’s parent company, Arts for Art. She says that AFA and the Vision Festival have been able to maintain a fairly consistent level of success throughout its 14 years of existence. She is not satisfied with the current level, however. She worked to bring in some new people this year, outreached to potential audiences through new email campaigns and web advertising. “This year was our first time at the Abrons Art Center

on Grand Street. It worked very well, with great sound and a good environment for our varied presentations; this will have more impact with next year’s crowd,” she emailed.

Nicholson Parker went on to say that she thought fewer Europeans came this year. She also noted, “In this economic climate, it is extremely difficult to raise grant money from foundations from which one has not already received funds. Therefore, AFA tightened its belt wherever possible without jeopardizing the quality of our programming.”

Attendance in ’09, she said, was about the same. “Maybe five percent less. We lowered ticket prices and made discount tickets more available, which may or may not have been a mistake. I did receive a smaller box office take, about 10 percent less, but I was able to make up for that with the increased money from concessions.”

Summing up, she said: “I do not feel the need to hunker down in this bad economy. I think that AFA must continue to move forward and build on its achievements. It is important to communicate with artists, their potential audiences and funders.... This art is too important to be tossed away because of market pressures. On the other hand, it is too important not to sell it well to our markets. I feel that the marketing of this art is a priority in the coming year. High creative standards, consistency and communication are the real keys to success.”

The Litchfield Jazz Festival’s move to Kent, Connecticut was an auspicious one. Public relations director Lindsey Turner reported that they broke even. “Our advance sales were slightly ahead [of last year],” she told me. Walk-ups might have lagged in that it rained heavily on opening night, causing flooding in and around the performance tent area, which prompted a move indoors to the hockey rink. The sound equipment was hastily reconfigured, but there were fewer lawn areas

for viewing. Actually, there were none. One could hear but not see the artists. I heard complaints, but no requests for refunds.

One of those complaints came from a prospective vendor who said that the increase in rent for the kiosks caused him not to participate. “You have to conserve someplace,” he said as he handed out cards displaying his art.

Indeed, the areas around the food and crafts kiosks were a soggy morass. One artist was wearing construction boots. Others wore colorful foul-weather gear. Lines were smaller as well. From a cursory look you might think sales were down, but on closer scrutiny, Ben & Jerry’s ran out of some stock, and the more pricey steamed live lobsters were selling well.

I started conversations about how the economy was affecting individual patrons—things are slow, but not desperate, yet—but the upscale town of Kent itself participated in the festivities. Crafts were on display; the bed and breakfasts were full, restaurants not so, save for the after-jam party at the Fife’n’Drum Pub on Saturday night. No recession there—the joint was packed and jumping.

Turner added this about the economy: “We’ve never had a headline sponsor like JVC to depend on for our budget, so we weren’t in a position to have to scramble to fill that large gap. We budget as tightly as we can (in fact we spent the least amount of money [this year]). We have many loyal sponsors—lots of in-kind sponsorships, which help us keep the cost of promoting and running the event down. Although we don’t have a comprehensive report yet from our ticketing company, it looks like even with the rain we were only a little bit behind last year.” She noted that some sales might have been lost thanks to advertisements in *Jazz Times* that were never seen.



A Camera's Eye View

► Text and images by Bill King

THERE IS SOMETHING truly empowering being behind the lens of a camera, waiting with expectation for the moment when an artist strikes bare wires and something electric unexpectedly happens. Privately, ownership of that moment resides with the artist; publically, the documentation belongs to the person behind the lens. Where it goes after that is a matter of goodwill or good business.

For all of its iconic moments, jazz photography is still a freelance medium, with few dollars to be earned in support of the habit. Most practitioners burn out after a couple years. The late Paul Hoeffler used to gripe about all of the “charity” calls he fielded from day to day. I used to sit in his

workspace and clutch those glorious black-and-whites of Billie Holiday, Sarah Vaughan, Ellington, Dizzy and Oscar and lose myself in the artistic dreamscape. Hoeffler was a master printer who labored over every inch of information in a negative until the appropriate balance and density between black, grey and white was achieved. Those toxic darkroom chemicals would cost him his life in the end. If Paul had remained cancer-free long enough to experience a 14-megapixel marvel, he surely would have embraced advancing technology with the same enthusiasm jazz icon Herman Leonard expressed holding the new Nikon D700.

Photographing at jazz festivals is my specialty and passion. I love the ener-

gy—the camaraderie between fellow lens jockeys, the challenge, the music, the musicians and the opportunity to paint with the eye. Conditions for the most part will defeat you. Lighting is usually miserable. The most you’ll ever get is three songs, sometimes 30 seconds if artist management wants to mess with your head. I’ve worked under all conditions, even the “don’t shoot this side of my face” restriction. At this point nothing fazes.

The Festival International de Jazz de Montréal is perhaps the most gracious forum in which to photograph. With that in mind, I thought I’d share a few impressions from this season’s event. This is work done on the fly. It’s fast, deliberate and exhausting.



Melody Gardot

Theatre Maisonneuve de la Place des Arts
July 1, 6 p.m.

This is one artist I dread photographing. I tried last year and the absence of light made it near impossible to extract anything beyond a silhouette, which I tried converting to black and white. Lost cause!

Fortunately, Gardot hikes to a workable spot and picks up the guitar. Eventually she bends upward toward the light and suddenly, her entire body is bathed in strong accentuating light. My hand stays firmly planted and clicks in rhythm just when I feel an emotional peak.

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Dave Brubeck

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier de la Place des Arts
July 4, 7:30 p.m.

I know his music like the number of roads leading out of my hometown. Brubeck was there for me in high school and college.

He wore a cream-colored jacket and a broad smile. None of us knew he'd lost a son a couple days before. There was no evidence of that in his composure and comfort behind the piano.



Tony Bennett

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier de la Place des Arts
July 3, 7:30 p.m.

I've planned this in my head for years. I knew going in this would be a battle zone. The money shooters would be there, so my thought was arrive early, stake a position and hold firm.

Light shined on the man like a magnified ray of gracious sun. Every detail from shoeshine to crease in that broad loving smile could be recorded. This shoot was easy. Music just poured and rolled.



Esperanza Spalding

Jazz Dans La Nuit
July 2, 10:30 p.m.

Spalding is the flavor of the day. She has momentum—a big jazz vocabulary, great looks, style and personality and virtuoso command of the acoustic bass. She also resides musically in the future.

As Spalding jumped into action, dancing and singing around the microphone, I sensed a challenge of major proportions. I knew a good many images would blur, so I held back until she picked up the bass. I assumed she wouldn't stray far from the location. Spalding plays like an athlete. It's not your average 20-minute workout—this is nine innings with no relief and four quarters of full-court intensity.

continued on next page | »



Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Chano Dominguez Quartet

Salle Wilfrid-Pelletier de la Place des Arts

June 30, 7:30 p.m.

With Wynton, I had to wait until the band filled the seats. When I saw Marsalis take first chair in the trumpet section I immediately headed toward the opposite side of room to get a clear view of his position. The music starts. It's luxurious—big sweeping themes—flamenco—Ellington style. Through the lens it's all action. Suddenly, the brass kick in and Wynton lifts the bell of the horn above the section. He does this for a good 20 seconds—enough time to reset the aperture and ISO. I wait until he freezes, holding a long tone, and I click.



News of Members

DAVID R. ADLER wrote liner notes for Sofia Rei Koutsovitis's *Sube Azul* (World Village), Darryl Harper's *Stories in Real Time* (HiPNOTIC) and Dr. Lonnie Smith's *The Art of Organizing*, a long-shelved 1993 session for Criss Cross. David also covered J.D. Allen, Marcus and E.J. Strickland, Bill Carrothers, Steve Kuhn and more for *Time Out New York*.

BRIDGET ARNWINE contributed a book review to the *Encyclopedia of Hip-Hop Literature*.

NATE CHINEN now has a blog, The Gig (thegig.typepad.com). He is still writing about jazz and other music for *The New York Times*—and for *JazzTimes*, where his monthly column, also called The Gig, recently marked its five-year anniversary.

JAMES HALE was voted Journalist of the Year in Canada's 2009 National Jazz Awards. More than 7,000 people participated in the online voting.

RUSTY HASSAN interviewed Fred Kaplan on his WPFW radio show (Washington, DC) about Fred's new book *1959*:

The Year Everything Changed. The book covers the events of that year including the Cuban Revolution, the invention of the microchip, the literature of Norman Mailer, Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs as well as the music of Miles Davis and Ornette Coleman. Rusty also interviewed Charles McPherson, who spoke about his work with Charles Mingus and his playing on the soundtrack to Clint Eastwood's film *Bird*. Rusty also conducted the history sessions for the Blues Alley jazz camp.

THOMAS JACOBSEN wrote the liner notes for a new CD, *The Tradition Continues*, by the Onward Brass Band of New Orleans. He also reviewed recent CDs by Hungarian clarinetist Lajos Dudas and French clarinetist Stephane Chausse for *The Clarinet* magazine. His article "Les Clarinetistes de la Nouvelle Orleans" appeared in a recent issue of the *Bulletin* of the Hot Club of France.

WOLFRAM KNAUER is organizing "Tension/Spannung: a conference about Albert Mangelsdorff and his impact on jazz in Germany," part of the 11th

Darmstadt Jazzforum, a regular conference and concert series since 1989 (www.jazzinstitut.de). The event will take place in Darmstadt, Germany, from October 1–3, 2009, and will focus on a man considered the most outstanding musician in German jazz. Among the international presenters will be musicologists, journalists, art historians and musicians. Wolfram will moderate most of the conference and also give a paper on how German musicians deal with their own folkloric tradition, which has long been met with certain reservations after the Nazis' appropriation of everything native to the country.

ROZANNE LEVINE was a featured artist on Canadian broadcaster Ron Sweetman's July 29 CKCU-FM radio show "In A Mellow Tone," titled "Reed Masters." Rozanne was the sole woman musician among such artists as Phil Woods, Benny Carter, Jon Irabagon, Ben Webster and Jason Robinson. Ron played the two alto clarinet solos by Rozanne that bookend her June 2009 release,

continued on next page »

Only Moment, on the Acoustics label. *Only Moment* is the debut release by Rozanne's ensemble Chakra Tuning, which includes Mark Whitecage, Perry Robinson and Rosi Hertlein. More information on Rozanne and *Only Moment* at www.erjn.it/mus/whitecage.htm.

JOHN LITWEILER's new novel, *Mojo Snake Minuet*, has been published by Goodbait Books.

MARK MILLER's ninth book, *Herbie Nichols: A Jazzist's Life*, is scheduled for publication by The Mercury Press on November 1.

MARTIN MUELLER, Executive Director of The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, traveled with faculty members to Tel Aviv, Israel for two weeks in July to launch a new BFA degree partnership with the Center for Jazz Studies at the Israel Conservatory of Music, enabling Israeli students to complete their first two years of study in Israel and complete the final two years at The New School. Martin was the guest of honor at a dinner hosted by Israeli politician Meir Shitrit, celebrating the partnership and recognizing the role of Arnie Lawrence and The New School in the development of Israeli jazz. Among the guests were former Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni. A gala concert held the following night featured Israeli bassist and New School alumnus Avishai Cohen, in addition to performances by CJS Big Band and other artists.

ROBERTA PIKET performs on September 3 and 5 with some of the best musicians on the improvised music scene, including Perry Robinson, in two underground Brooklyn venues. In late September, Roberta's more structured but no less creative piano trio plays the late night set at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola. Please see robertajazz.com for details.

BOB PROTZMAN (protz@verizon.net), longtime jazz writer for the St. Paul,

Minnesota-based *Pioneer Press* (1968–98) and former *Down Beat* contributor, is now writing about jazz for the monthly *Erie Life* magazine, based in Erie, Pennsylvania (Bob's hometown and current residence). The magazine covers the tri-state area, including Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Buffalo, etc. Bob also hosts "Everything Jazz," 3–6 p.m. Fridays on Erie's new full-time jazz radio station, JAZZ FM (streams at erieradio.com).

STEVE RATHE at Murray Street Productions is at work on Jazz at Lincoln Center Radio's 17th season, which begins in October. Veteran actor Wendell Pierce (*The Wire*) will host the season's new shows. The program is heard on 242 Stations in North America and is now also on Radio New Zealand. Fall highlights include: McCoy Tyner revisiting the Trane connection with Ravi Coltrane; Marcus Roberts shaking up The Ionious Monk; Dianne Reeves with Joe Lovano and Wynton Marsalis to honor hardbop's jazz elite on Blue Note's 70th anniversary.

JOHN TUMPAK was the featured guest on two weekly radio shows. He appeared on "Big Band Spotlight" on KUCV-FM, part of the nine-station Nebraska Educational Telecommunications network, and on "Swingin' Down the Lane," which broadcasts on 67 stations in 27 states and Europe. He discussed his new book, *When Swing Was The Thing: Personality Profiles of the Big Band Era* [reviewed on page 14 of this issue], on both programs.

MICHAEL J. WEST covered four festivals this summer: the Mary Lou Williams Women in Jazz Festival and the Duke Ellington Festival for *Washington City Paper*; the Central Pennsylvania Friends of Jazz Festival for *Jazz.com*; and Umbria Jazz for *Allaboutjazz.com*. In addition, Mike wrote liner notes for Daniel Smith's forthcoming CD for Summit Records, *Blue Bassoon*, and completed a feature article for the *Jazz-*

Times Education Guide on the 40th anniversary of the Jazz Studies program at New England Conservatory.



New Members

AGUS SETIAWAN BASUNI of Indonesia is a photographer who has covered the Toronto Jazz Festival, Vancouver Jazz Festival, Chicago Blues Festival, North Sea Jazz Festival, Montreux Jazz Festival, Java Jazz Festival, Miri Jazz Festival, Madison Summer Jazz Festival. For more info visit wartajazz.com.

JASON CRANE is host of the weekly jazz interview show "The Jazz Session," thejazzsession.com.

CURTIS DAVENPORT, based in Charlotte, North Carolina, is a columnist and contributor to *Jazz Improv* (now called *Eric Nemeyer's Jazz Inside*).

ELLEN GOLDENSOHN of New York is Editor of *Chamber Music America* magazine.

HERBERT HEIM is a jazz photographer based in Grossaitingen, Germany.

CHUCK OBUCHOWSKI of West Hartford, Connecticut, is jazz music director at WWUH 91.3 FM and a freelance writer (including all jazz concert reviews for the *Hartford Courant*).

ROSS PORTER of Toronto is author of *The Essential Jazz Recordings* (McLelland and Stewart), as well as a documentarian and CEO of Jazz.FM91, Canada's premier jazz station.

DERK RICHARDSON is Senior Editor of *Afar* magazine (Afar Media); host/programmer of "The Hear & Now" (Thursdays 10 p.m.–midnight) on KPFA 94.1 FM Berkeley; and contributing writer for *The Absolute Sound* and *Playback* magazines.



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Personal memories, and classic images, of a great departed saxophonist.

Charlie Mariano: A Remembrance

► By Patrick Hinely

CHARLIE MARIANO DIED ON June 16 at age 85 in Cologne, where he had lived for over 30 years. He died of cancer, peacefully it is said, under hospice care.

There was no mention of his passing in *The New York Times*; perhaps the coverage provided by their subsidiary *The Boston Globe*, in Mariano's hometown, was deemed sufficient. In any case, New York was seldom his scene; he was more a citizen of the global village than of Greenwich Village. Initial onset of Mariano's multicultural explorations predated even Don Cherry's. Both of them connected more—and different—dots than any other American jazz players in evolving what we now call world music.

There is a site, charliemarianotribute.de, which, blessedly, in English, includes a comprehensive discography, biography and much more. I cannot resist mentioning Mariano's first professional gig: age 18, for \$19 a week, at Izzy Ort's bar and dance hall in what was then known as Boston's combat zone.

He was a member of that vanishing generation that fell in love with swing before there was bop, mastered both and attained that ability to play both inside and outside. Among saxophonists, he was one of the few who could speak with equal authority to the music of Charlie Parker or Evan Parker. Mariano knew there was something out there, beyond science.

While Mariano's prolific recordings are well enumerated in that online discography, a few obscurities merit focus here:

Osmosis (RCA, 1970), the only album by the Bostonian jazz-rock septet of the same name, which has aged surprisingly well. In their day, they were openers for Frank Zappa and Miles Davis, which well indicates their direction, predicting later Brit prog-rock. (CD reissue on Synton, of unspecified European origin.)

Magic Mansions, Mike Nock Quartet, 1977, on Laurie. One of his few recordings made in New York, and one of his best. Nock still plays some of the tunes Mariano brought to those sessions. Their piano and soprano sax duet opening for "Everglad" is about as close to perfection as mortals can get. (LP only.)

October, a sextet date from 1977, on Contemp (also licensed by Inner City). His first album as a European bandleader, also introduced Trilok Gurtu to the West. (LP only.)

Tea for Four, a 1980 quartet with Edward Vesala, Arild Andersen and Pork Pie founder Jasper Van't Hof, on the Leo (Finland, not UK) label. The playing field was level but by

no means flat. Projects like this made much of what was going on in the U.S. at the time seem even less interesting. (LP only.)

One Night in '88, Pas de Trois and *Live in Concert*, featuring the trio of Mariano with pianist Wolfgang Dauner and bandoneon player Dino Saluzzi, all on Mood. While the Pork Pie troika lasted a lot longer, this grouping of peers inspired a different, deeper digging on all parts, often enough pretty, always beautiful.

Adagio, with his 1993 trio on Lipstick, featuring renderings of classical themes from Albinoni to Villa-Lobos, as well as Beethoven, Chopin and Dvořák, among others. Steve Swallow says hearing those still brings tears to his and Carla Bley's eyes.

It was my good fortune to cross paths with Mariano several times over the years, and thrice he generously humored me as I attempted to commit portraiture. Herewith, five chosen Marianographs:



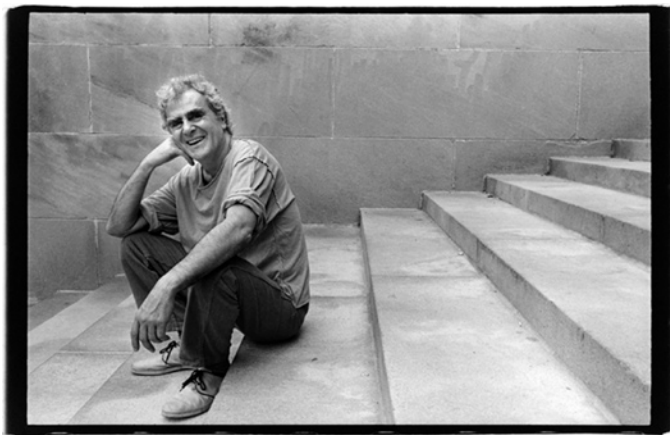
©1979, Patrick Hinely, Work/Play®

1979: Colours band photo, Cellar Door, Washington, DC: (L-R) Rainer Brueninghaus, Charlie Mariano, bandleader Eberhard Weber and John Marshall. This impromptu team pic on the edge of nightfall ended up gracing the back of their final album, *Little Movements*, on ECM.

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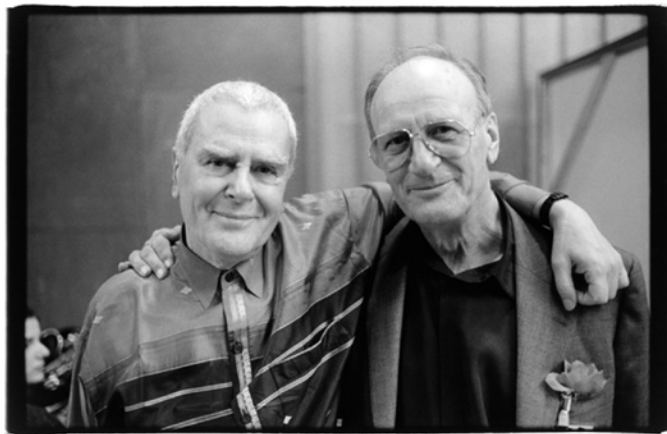
Renew online at www.jazzhouse.org.



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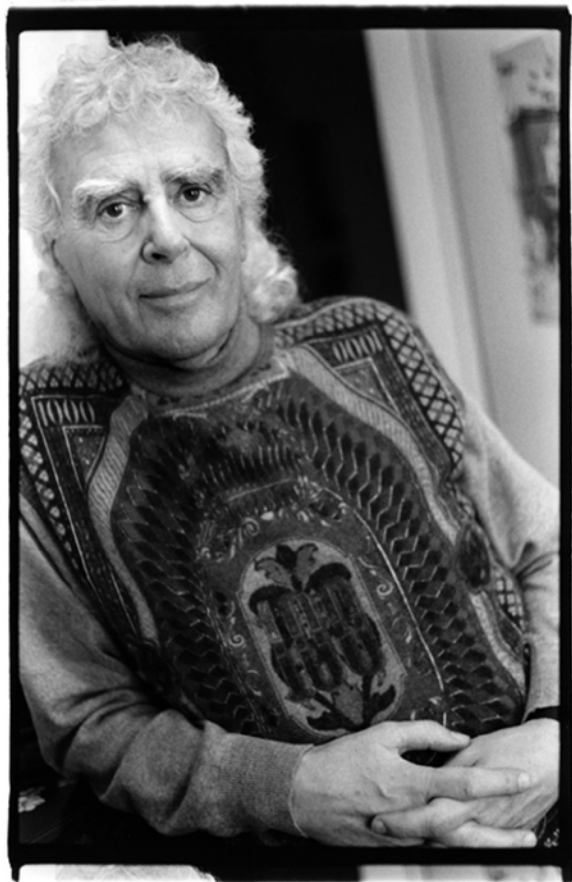
1983: Portrait, on the Harvard campus, Cambridge, Massachusetts. While Charlie always seemed comfortable in his own skin no matter where we were, this was one of his childhood stomping grounds—his dad, after immigrating from Italy, worked for many years at Harvard as a cook. Previously unpublished.

U.S. postage stamps featuring jazz artists, the sight of which brought a grin to his face. As he pointed to the image of Mingus, he voiced his disbelief that more than three decades had passed since they'd worked together. Previously unpublished.



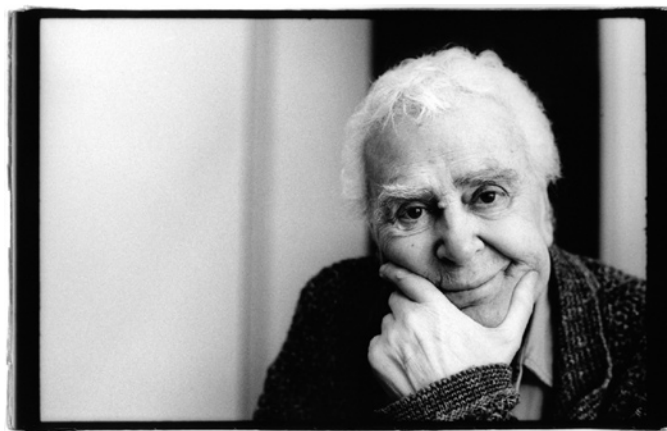
©1998, Patrick Hinely, Work/Play®

1998: Snapshot, at the request of both, with Albert Mangelsdorff, backstage, JazzFest Berlin. Artistic Director Mangelsdorff dropped by to see his longtime friend and cohort just when I happened to be passing through, and they struck this pose, unprompted, while they asked me to document the moment. Previously unpublished.



©1995, Patrick Hinely, Work/Play®

1995: Portrait, in his music room, Cologne. Despite an interval of 12 years, Charlie greeted me warmly during my first visit to his home. I had brought him a sheet of the new



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2008: Portrait, at his kitchen table, Cologne. Though I can never know how he really felt, while Charlie seemed a bit wistful that he could no longer play as much or as long as he liked, he also seemed basically at peace with the world. I think he took satisfaction in knowing he had done a lot of innovative and interesting things and done them well. This was the very last photo I took of him. It will appear in the booklet for *The Great Concert*, forthcoming on ENJA.



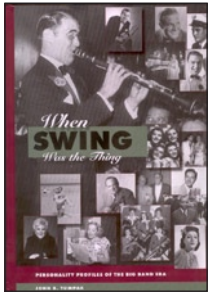
Book Reviews

When Swing Was the Thing: Personality Profiles of the Big Band Era

By John R. Tumpak

Marquette University Press, Milwaukee, WI, 2009;
264 pages; \$35.00 hardcover

► Review by W. Royal Stokes



AS SOMEONE WHO has published a book on the Swing Era and interviewed many musicians involved in that period of jazz, I was both delighted and mildly disappointed upon reading this collection. While the author explains his decision to include “under-recognized bandleaders, musicians, vocalists, and arrangers... on whom little had been written,” the

failure to provide profiles of Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Jimmie Lunceford and other African-American stalwarts of the era seems too glaring an oversight not to mention. Only John Kirby, Chick Webb and Gerald Wilson are featured in full profiles, and the careers of Fletcher Henderson, Sy Oliver and Don Redman are surveyed en masse in a four-page entry in the Arrangers section. The absences are especially conspicuous in light of the numerous index citations noting the impact of Ellington and the others on the individuals profiled.

That said, John Tumpak is to be commended for the thoroughness of his research, and for bringing to attention so many largely unsung heroes and heroines of the Swing Era in this collection of nearly 50 articles that originally appeared in or have been reprinted in more than 20 periodicals, including *L.A. Jazz Scene*, *The Mississippi Rag*, *Bandstand* and *The BBC Big Band Club*. His sources include his own and others’ interviews with the subjects themselves and with their relatives, friends and fellow musicians; “Historical societies and public libraries associated with hometowns” of the musicians; the archives of the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University and the Smithsonian Museum of American History; personal collections of the subjects’ families; and the author’s own wide-ranging reading in the Swing Era literature, as well as his close listening to several long-running radio shows specializing in the period. Tumpak has clearly done his homework and then some.

The volume is organized in sections: The Band Leaders, The Musicians, The Vocalists, the Arrangers and The Contributors. A phenomenon that surfaces in profile after profile is the degree to which the sidemen—and some of the leaders early into their careers—went from band to band. A typical example is trombonist Milt Bernhart, who served in the bands of Buddy Franklin, Jimmy James, Boyd Raeburn, Ted-

dy Powell, Stan Kenton, Benny Goodman, an army band that included drummer Jo Jones, and Howard Rumsey’s Light-house All-Stars. Another detail, quite familiar in jazz, is that so many of these musicians came from musical families. Guitarist Roc Hillman’s father played banjo on the vaudeville circuit and his two sisters were professional dancers. As for trumpeter Zeke Zarchy, who died in April at the age of 93, music “was definitely coded into his genes,” for his father “was an accomplished mandolin and accordion player,” his grandfather had been a professional musician in Russia and an aunt was a concert pianist and professor of music at Leningrad University.

Among the many delightful glimpses into early 20th-century culture is the brief account of Zarchy’s 1930s foray into Manhattan taxi dance halls, “where for ten cents a ticket a patron could dance with a hostess while a six-piece band played a tune for two choruses.” There are also grim accounts of life on the road and tales of the incredibly long hours of theater gigs that kicked off with matinees and continued into the early morning hours.

Kay Kyser, Jan Savitt, Alvino Rey, Orrin Tucker, Ray McKinley, Horace Heidt, Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw are among the bandleaders profiled. Jo Stafford, Kay Starr, Bob Eberly, Herb Jeffries and the King Sisters are among the more than a dozen singers included. Sidemen include Buddy Childers, Jake Hanna, Paul Tanner and former chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan, who in the early 1940s was in the reed section of Henry Jerome’s 16-piece dance band. Former Nixon counsel Leonard Garment, who played tenor saxophone in the Jerome band, “recalls that Greenspan kept the band books (they always balanced), and helped the musicians with preparing their income taxes.” The brief Contributors section summarizes the careers of jazz author George T. Simon and radio host Chuck Cecil, whose show “Swingin’ Years” celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2006.

Especially welcome to this longstanding supporter of women instrumentalists is the account of reed and flute player Rosalind Cron’s membership in the International Sweethearts of Rhythm. Born in 1925 and growing up in Boston, Cron was from a musically gifted family and she made early and important connections. Baritone saxophone legend Serge Chaloff was a high-school mentor and George Wein a classmate. She worked the Boston area with pianist Nat Pierce and sat in with Eddie Durham’s All-Star Girl Orchestra. Upon being asked to join the band, she declined in order to finish high school. After a three-month tour of the South with Ada Leonard’s All-American Girl Orchestra, she joined the Sweethearts in 1943 and stayed until early 1946.

By recapping the careers of several major players and affording many relatively obscure musicians their proverbial 15 minutes of fame, Tumpak has made a significant contribution to the history of jazz in the early years of the century through the 1935–1945 period when jazz was America’s popu-

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lar music. There are many photographs of the musicians in their prime and much later in life. It is altogether a handsomely produced volume. However, it deserved better copy editing and proofreading. Tumpak's confusion of "that," "who" and "which," as well as his comma-challenged handling of clauses, warrant attention that the publisher did not provide.

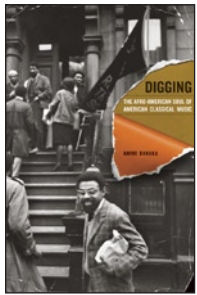


Digging: The Afro-American Soul of American Classical Music

By Amiri Baraka

University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2009;
436 pages; \$26.95 hardcover

» Review by Ron Scott



WIKIPEDIA DESCRIBES AMIRI Baraka, formerly LeRoi Jones, as a controversial American writer of poetry, drama, essays and music criticism.

The word "controversial" is used so often to describe him and his work, one would think his name is "controversial" rather than Baraka. He wears the adjective like a great-fitting expensive suit. Not everyone in this homogenized society can be called controversial, but in the past there were quite a few, including Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Rev. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., Paul Robeson, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Billie Holiday, Miles Davis and Thelonious Monk, among many others.

The question is this: Is it controversy or just a matter of human beings standing up and speaking the truth, even though it's not the popular route, whether political or musical? These questions sprout from the seeds of an African-American culture that finds politics at the heart of any issue.

Despite the controversy (sometimes a code word for "beware, this person is saying some crazy stuff, you can't trust really them"), Baraka is a distinguished author and playwright. His 1964 play *Dutchman* won an Obie Award. His jazz writing, in particular his 1963 book *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*, remains one of the most influential volumes of jazz criticism. The same can be said for his second book, *Black Music*, a collection of his previously published articles in his "Apple Cores" column from *Down Beat* magazine (1968).

There Baraka noted, "These essays are just those I collected in the last few years (I even left a few significant ones out). But one thing I've got is books needing to be published." So now, readers can dig *Digging*, one of Baraka's best written contributions to the world of jazz and the black diaspora.

Like the book *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* by James W. Loewen, Baraka's *Digging* dispels myths about American culture and improvised music in the there and now. Divided into three parts—"Essays," "Great Musicians" and "Notes, Reviews, and Observations"—it's more than a compilation. It reflects Baraka's soul-thoughts on the music and how it relates to its creators, the musicians. He discusses the historical seeds of jazz, from its long brutal travel in the dungeon of slavery to the shores of America and into the present, where the music plays a pivotal role in society from a social, cultural, political and psychological perspective.

Baraka discusses the icons (Ellington, Monk, Sarah Vaughan, Art Tatum, John Coltrane, Max Roach, Abbey Lincoln, Miles Davis, David Murray, Stevie Wonder and Jackie McLean among others). He also touches on great players who never reached the media's shining radar screen. He describes how their music affected him and the world. In his "Low Coup" (the Afro-American syncretic form of the Japanese haiku), Baraka writes: "IN THE FUNK WORLD if Elvis Presley is King, Who is James Brown ... GOD?"

The in-depth interviews (conducted by Baraka as both critic and friend) allow artists to speak from the heart about the music and its culture, and they highlight the author's views on the young musicians who will take this great music into new zones.

Baraka's words have a rhythmic, lyrical flow, swinging hard like Miles Davis's trumpet on the album *A Tribute to Jack Johnson*. His journey in *Digging* is as deep as Langston Hughes's great poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," sailing from the beat of the African drum, blues, ragtime, jazz, bebop, hardbop and cool, from traditional to the outside, inside out and back again. One of his bullets for thought: "Afro-American music is internationally celebrated, it employs millions of people worldwide, certainly it could support its creators!"

Ralph Ellison wrote in *Living With Music* (edited by Dr. Robert G. O'Meally): "Painful experiences go into the forging of a true singer of the blues." Baraka writes something similar in *Digging*, suggesting: "You would have to believe Tawana Browley if you heard Billie Holiday sing 'Strange Fruit.'"

In an interview with Bill Cosby, Baraka comments: "Except for Bill's North Philly exceptionalism, his memories of Bopping to the hippest of the new sounds animate my own recall of that period. We Bopped in Newark (before Hollywood made it about teenage suburban gangs) to Bird and Diz, Monk and Miles."

Baraka paints a complete portrait of Nina Simone as an intelligent, caring individual and friend, who, like most people, often got caught up in life's obstructions. This essay touches on Simone's widely publicized misadventures with American promoters and club owners, who opined on how difficult she

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was to deal with. “The fact that many times she was in the right and was trying to do what most of us would do, defend ourselves, seldom got through,” writes Baraka.

Baraka characterizes Duke Ellington’s great body of work as both African-American and American, citing Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois’s theory of Afro-American “twoness”—“the double consciousness which is the configuration of Afro-American social, psychological, and cultural sensibility,” as Du Bois wrote in *The Souls of Black Folk*. “Are we black or Americans?” asks Baraka in turn. “The fact is we are both (this is our double-edged sword) but that ‘twoness’ is the basis of schizophrenia only if we cannot realize both aspects of our Western experience. To be American, we must be shaped by three cultures; African, Native American and European.”

Music is Amiri Baraka’s soulful revolution, poetry his improvised words. Check out his stride just like an old bopper in the hipper now. Shhhh! There is music to be explored, lessons to be learned, conflicts to be examined, musical warriors to be praised for carrying the torch of their African ancestors from slavery to NOW. Thus Baraka offers *Digging*, an insightful book from a black perspective, with a keen eye and critical ears. Baraka is that black voice, that revolutionary messenger too often missing in today’s daily journalistic discourse.



Mentors Needed



YVONNE ERVIN, JJA Vice President, is organizing a group of mentors from the JJA for The Urban Assembly’s School for Music and Art’s 11th and 12th graders interested in writing about music. Although half a dozen JJA members did respond that they are interested in becoming mentors when we announced the program in July, Yvonne and the staff at Urban Assembly have decided to change the parameters so that more journalists might be able to participate. Contact will be, primarily, via email with gatherings of all the mentors and mentees at an evening music event in October, January (around the JJA conference), March and June. The mentees will write reviews with the help of their mentors and we’ll have a special section on jazzhouse.org to post their work. An informational meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on Thursday, September 17 at a place TBA. Please contact Yvonne if you are interested at yervin@urbanassembly.org or 646-278-4383.

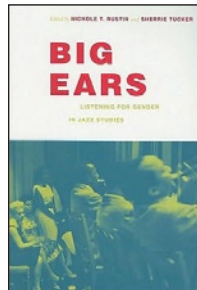


Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies

Nichole T. Rustin & Sherrie Tucker, eds.

Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 2008;
472 pages; \$26.95 paperback

» Review by Yvonne Ervin



THIS COLLECTION OF 15 scholarly essays was published to “draw attention to the traditional invisibility of gender within jazz studies.” If you want easier reading about women in jazz, open Sally Placksin’s *American Women in Jazz: 1900 to the Present* (the present ending in 1982—I wish she would write an update) or Linda Dahl’s *Stormy Weather: The Music and Lives of a Century of Jazzwomen*. But if you want to be prompted to think in sociological and musicological terms about gender as well as race in jazz, you should add this book to your reading list or at least to your reference library. The anthology is meant to serve as a teaching tool in a number of disciplines, including women’s studies and the “new jazz studies,” as Robert G. O’Meally termed it in the 2004 volume he edited called *Uptown Conversations*.

Big Ears was edited by Sherrie Tucker, Associate Professor of Jazz Studies at the University of Kansas (she was also a visiting professor at Columbia’s Center for Jazz Studies), and Nichole T. Rustin, author of the forthcoming *Jazz Men: Race, Masculine Difference and the Emotions in 1950s America*. Tucker’s and Rustin’s own essays are very compelling, taking the reader on an excursion through issues of gender and race using a movie as the catalyst.

Tucker’s entry is titled “But this music is mine already!”: ‘White Woman’ as Jazz Collector in the Film ‘New Orleans’ (1947).” Complete with 71 footnotes, the piece dissects the film’s young protagonist, who steals her maid’s song to sing at classical concert. The maid is played by Billie Holiday. Tucker explores a division of women jazz fans into “Jazz Virgins” and “Jazz Nerds,” and cites Maxine Gordon’s oral history project about women followers of jazz. She then examines Holiday’s only feature role in a film and her “refusal to act” in reaction to being cast as a maid who has to say, “It ain’t fitting for a lady to go to Storyville,” as if Lady Day herself weren’t a lady.

Furthermore, Tucker tells the story of a fascinating woman whose ex-husband was a consultant to the film, and who virtually shares the name of the protagonist, Miralee. Marili Morden was the driving force behind Jazz Man Records in Hollywood in the late 1930s; she helped integrate Hollywood nightclubs as T-Bone Walker’s manager, brought Kid Ory out of retirement and convinced Orson Welles to hire Ory’s band

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for his radio show. In addition, Morden married Nesuhi Ertegun.

Tucker goes on to explore how the battle between the Hollywood left and right affected the production of the film. She also uncovers the politics behind Orson Welles' plans to produce a cinematic jazz epic that never materialized.

Rustin, for her part, examines race and masculinity in the book and movie versions of *A Young Man with a Horn*. In "Blow Man Blow: Representing Gender, White Primitives, and Jazz Melodrama through *A Young Man with a Horn*," she discusses the coming of age of trumpeter Rick Martin, a character loosely based on Bix Beiderbecke. She explores in detail Rick's relationship with his mentor, a black drummer named Smoke, and how the story relates to the fraternity and the integration of jazz. She contrasts the book to the movie, in which Smoke is a white piano player. In her "Coda" she deals with Spike Lee's *Mo' Better Blues* and his treatment of masculine fraternity in jazz. She concludes that we need a new way of "telling stories about race, masculinity, and jazz that exist on a continuum of homosocial relations."

Big Ears will have many readers opening their dictionaries, as most of the writing is very dense. But not all the essays

are as scholarly in tone. Ingrid Monson, a Norwegian-American lesbian jazz trumpeter who is also Harvard University's Quincy Jones Professor of African-American Music, contributes an autobiographical essay on race, gender and sexual preference as it relates to her multilayered career.

The book opens with a short excerpt on singing and the history of jazz from the JJA's Lara Pellegrinelli. In "The Song Is Who," Pellegrinelli tracks the erasure of women and singing, their primary participation in jazz, from major jazz histories and scholarly works. This leads off Part I, "Rooting Gender in Jazz History," which is followed by Part "Improvising Gender: Embodiment and Performance" (Part II) and "Reimagining Jazz Representations" (Part III).

It could be said that first public instance of gender analysis in jazz was in 1924, when Paul Whiteman tried to reach a wider audience by "making a lady out of jazz." *Big Ears* helps show how and why jazz music, and the men and women who play it, have evolved since then, as it paves the way for more analysis and discussion to come.



Congratulations to the JJA and all of the 2009 nominees!



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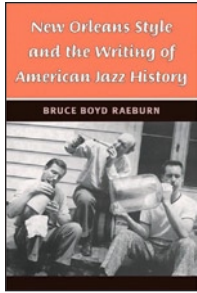
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New Orleans Style and the Writing of American Jazz History

By Bruce Boyd Raeburn

University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI, 2009;
342 pages; \$26.95 paperback

► Review by Charles Suhor



WHAT WE TODAY call “jazz journalism,” “jazz criticism” and “jazz history” began, like jazz itself, as the work of passionate amateurs. Bruce Raeburn, curator of the Tulane University Jazz Archive, traces the growth of the profession from the foundational writings of zealous record collectors to the mainstream of historical and critical studies. His brilliantly researched book is essential reading for jazz journalists.

Focusing on writings about the New Orleans style, Raeburn explores issues that have been disputed and recast over the years in magazines like *Down Beat*, *Esquire*, *HRS Society Rag*, *Jazz Information*, *Jazz Record*, *Metronome* and *Record Changer*. He notes that the early discourse evolved willy-nilly, with designations like ragtime, folk art, sweet versus hot jazz, corn and race music. Jazz was variously described as primitive, robotic, bourgeois, mechanistic, spontaneous, freewheeling, popular, artistic and what have you.

Jazz criticism involved a potpourri of insights and attitudes. A cadre of Marxist writers defined the music in terms of class struggle and racial oppression. Purists argued for the superiority of traditional New Orleans jazz, first over the emerging swing of the 1930s, then more ferociously over bebop in the mid-1940s. Other writers claimed that jazz progressed from simple to superior, more sophisticated forms. The dispute raged until “the combatants had completely exhausted their vocabulary of insults.” Ideas about jazz were also shaped, often distorted, by the demands of record companies for salable products and the predilections of A&R men and influential writers.

Pulling all of this into a coherent narrative is a formidable task, but Raeburn handles it well. He sees the writings of Charles Edward Smith, William (Bill) Russell and Frederick Ramsey, Jr., authors of the 1939 volume *Jazzmen*, as seminal. They “had given to the jazz world a firm foundation on which to build. Basing their work on historical research and devising theories accordingly, they produced a series of books and articles that are still useful as examples of jazz scholarship.”

The writers who participated in the unfolding discussion are too numerous to list here, but a few noteworthy figures are George Avakian, Rudi Blesh, Nesuhi Ertegun, Charles Delaunay, Leonard Feather, Ralph J. Gleason, John Hammond, S. I.

Hayakawa, Wilder Hobson, Andre Hodeir, George Hoefer, Alan Lomax, Hugues Panassie, Winthrop Sargeant, Marshall Stearns, Edmond Souchon, Virgil Thomson and Eugene Williams. The only photo in the book is a hilarious cover picture of Smith, Russell and Ramsey. I would have gladly paid a few dollars more for a photo gallery of the major principals.

Many JJA members will be familiar with these writers, but Raeburn laces the story of their contributions with rich detail, firm context and thoughtful commentary. He argues persuasively that New Orleans was the central origin site of jazz, dissecting Leonard Feather’s famous argument to the contrary in *The Book of Jazz*. He acknowledges the primacy of African-Americans in shaping the new music but sees the city’s unique environment as a network of cross-cultural influences. Above all, he rejects critical dogmas—those of traditional jazz purists as well as progressive/evolutionary critics. He praises writers and promoters like Avakian, Ertegun, Hammond and Smith, who expanded their tastes beyond rigid categories.

This admirable catholicity has a downside. Raeburn doesn’t provide a sharp image of his own view of the New Orleans style. He cites the musicological and sociological analyses of many writers and appears to accept the perspectives of early figures—especially Smith and Russell—on fundamentals such as group polyphony, basic instrumentation and African-American influence. But he waxes romantic and impressionistic when speaking in his own voice: “In the final analysis, New Orleans style was a way of *living* that manifested itself musically in the ‘City that Care Forgot’. ... Liberty, equality, fraternity, and *fun* are the hallmarks of the New Orleans style.”

Raeburn’s endnotes provide excellent documentation and further details that illuminate the text. But I have a concern about his bibliography that wouldn’t matter in a different kind of book. Raeburn gives only a brief, topically selected list of recommended materials, pointing out that the endnotes contain complete citations. But the information there, of course, is scattered among hundreds of notes spanning 60 pages. Since the essence of this study is a survey of writers, books and magazines that together portray the evolution of writing about jazz, a complete bibliography would provide a broad overview of the nature, amount and timing of the various contributions.

But Raeburn’s groundbreaking work hints provocatively at further avenues of research. He touches sporadically on the neglect and outright denigration of jazz in the New Orleans daily papers. A more fine-grained study might pick up the scent and track the roles of periodicals like *Figaro*, *New Orleans*, *Second Line* and *Vieux Carre Courier* in modeling a wider cultural vision and creating a niche for local jazz journalism.

An update of Raeburn’s work would also be useful. His account of critiques of the New Orleans style essentially ends

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after the traditional jazz versus swing and bebop wars. Intensive coverage of early styles slowed to a trickle in large circulation magazines, revived in part by the influence of Preservation Hall in the 1960s. But reviews of recordings and performances and commentaries and feature stories on a wide range of traditional jazz continued in specialized publications (*American Rag*, *JazzBeat*, *The Mississippi Rag*, *IAJRC Journal* and *Second Line*); bulletins of traditional jazz societies; foreign “trad” magazines; and recently with online sources like the few-holds-barred Dixieland Jazz Mailing List (islandnet.com/djml). The dynamic of the concurrent

decline of interest and diffusion of coverage in jazz journalism is a story worth telling.

But Raeburn’s book will be an abiding reference point on my bookshelf. While the author set out to do an academic study (a reworking of his doctoral thesis at Tulane), he displays a gift for rendering scholarly research in well-crafted prose. The result is serious and enjoyable reading, an in-depth account of the early history of jazz journalism.



Saxophonists Joshua Redman (left) and Joe Lovano (center) spar as bassist Reuben Rogers looks on at the Festival International de Jazz de Montréal, July 5, 2009. Photo by Bill King.



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