



The NOTE



Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania • Fall 2008



MANNY ALBAM • JAZZ IN THE MAGIC VILLAGE • SIDEMAN ASIDES • THINKING OF AL

In this issue...

- 3 Phil In The Gap
by Phil Woods
- 4 A Note from the Collection Coordinator
by Bob Bush
- 5 From the Academy
by Patrick Dorian
- 6 Thinking of Al
by Doug Ramsey
- 8 From the ACMJC Oral History Project:
An Interview with Manny Albam
- 20 Live at the Lounge: Jazz in the Magic Village
by Jack Simpson
- 22 Reflections on the Artistic Process – Part Three
by David Liebman
- 28 Pocono Jazz: On Campus and Off
- 32 Sideman Asides
compiled by Patrick Dorian
- 32 Readers, Please Take Note
- 33 Mailbag
- 34 Contributors & Acknowledgments
- 35 About the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection

From the Collection . . .



Cover Photo (front): David Liebman, performing with his master class students at the Deer Head Inn, Delaware Water Gap, PA, August 1, 2008, by Charles Perry Hebard/



Centerfold Photo: Jimmy Rowles on piano and Al Cohn on saxophone, performing at a radio broadcast, Kansas City, Mo., c. 1977, by Jay Anderson, donated by Flo Cohn.



Cover Photo (back): Hank Jones, Bern, Switzerland, 1985, by Herb Snitzer, donated by Mr. Snitzer.



The NOTE

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The mission of the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection is to stimulate, enrich, and support research, teaching, learning, and appreciation of all forms of jazz. The ACMJC is a distinctive archive built upon a unique and symbiotic relationship between the Pocono Mountains jazz community and East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania. With the support of a world-wide network of jazz advocates, the ACMJC seeks to promote the local and global history of jazz by making its resources available and useful to students, researchers, educators, musicians, historians, journalists and jazz enthusiasts of all kinds, and to preserve its holdings for future generations.

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David Coulter

The Bag-less Journey

by Phil Woods

It was a couple of days after the MRI had told Doctor Davis I had a herniated disk (Benny Goodman called it a slipped disk) and I was leaving for a two-week tour of Euro-Land. I ran into great sax man Joe Lovano, who was on his way to tour with Saxophone Summit with David Liebman and Ravi Coltrane. I had my boarding passes for Lisbon and on to Funchal, lovely capital city of the Madeira Islands off the Moroccan coast. (Ironic, since a Portuguese promoter had cancelled a previous two-fer gig with the quintet.)

I hit the President's Lounge – love their plastic-wrapped American cheese and saltines with a glass of cold water. Yeah! But I pass on the Fritos, world traveler, bon vivant, and boulevardier that I am! I stopped at the gate counter to reconfirm my wheelchair requests and ran right into Eva Perón.

"Excuse me, Madame. Could you please re-confirm my wheelchair in Lisbon?"

"Where is your paper ticket?"

"Paper ticket? I have an e-ticket and have received my two boarding passes – one for this Continental flight and one for my TAP (stands for "Take Another Plane") flight to Funchal. I just want assurance that I will have a wheelchair at both airports because I

only have one hour for my connection."

"I repeat. Where is your paper ticket? You cannot get on this plane unless I see your paper ticket, sir!"

"Dear lady, my business class ticket cost more than \$8,000 and I am Silver Elite status. Are you seriously telling me I also need a paper ticket?"

"I am, sir!"

I coolly replied: "You have to be kidding me! The last time I saw a paper ticket, it was in the 1900s!"

"Stand over there, sir – you are not going anywhere tonight."

Should be a great tour. Luckily, the other gate attendant, one in a bright red jacket, took me in hand and I was sorted out.

The wheelchair was waiting for me and I made my flight to Funchal where I was met by my driver. Unfortunately, my bag did not have the same luck. Oh well! I have three days here and they said it should be on the next flight. It arrived two days later on the night before I left. I should have come home at that moment. The gig went well although nobody would come near me since I was riper than a Moroccan mango. And sounded like one.

I played with New Orleans native altoist Jesse Davis (whose baggage was lost from and back to Verona) and Jaspar Lundgard, whose bass from Stockholm arrived at the hotel after the concert. Pianist Ben Aronov arrived from Provence and drummer Doug Sides from Düsseldorf. Both had

better luck and looked nice in their fresh clean clothes – and smelled even better.

My bag showed up the next morning and I spent a day at poolside and had a great lunch. The next morning, I was off to Lisbon for my flight to Copenhagen where I would spend almost a week. Good town to hang in. The gig was with altoist Benjamin Koppell, whose Dad was one of the original members of the popular Danish rock band, King Crimson. Also on the gig was Bobby Watson, a fine alto man and dear friend. So, between us, there was more than 150 years of musical service. The gig was also a celebration of drummer Alex Riel's 50 years in the biz. TAP was on-time and my flight to Copenhagen on Lufthansa Air went well. And my bag arrived! Hooray! After a shaky start, things seemed to be smoothing out.

I stayed at the King Arthur Hotel, long a favorite among musicians. It has been renovated and is charming and functional, located not far from downtown, and close to all transportation. I and my luggage had a huge suite overlooking the courtyard. It was the last time we were together. Once again, I ran into Joe Lovano, along with my neighbor, David Liebman. Always a treat to meet the elite with a beat on a foreign street! Our gigs were all part of the Copenhagen Jazz Festival.

We did two nights in a club and it was a ball playing with three great alto players. Now the hard part: two flights and a gig the same day. Ouch! My back was in pain, but ever onward – a Lufthansa flight to Frankfurt and then a

Continued on Page 30



Charles Perry Hebard

Sounds of Synergy

by Bob Bush

The word “synergy” is derived from a Greek word that means “working together.” When conjuring up a title for our new ESU Jazz Synergy Series, it seemed the perfect way to describe the collaborations that

power the most successful jazz projects here in the Pocono region.

Effective regional community outreach is an important University objective and has always been a high priority for the ACMJC. With that in mind, I think the ESU Jazz Synergy Series embodies many of the valued aspects of partnership, collaboration, and community focus. Here are some examples of synergy from this year’s inaugural series:

❖ On Sept. 4, the series was launched with a concert billed “ESU Welcomes COTA 2008,” a salute by the University to the annual Delaware Water Gap Celebration of the Arts on the eve of the 31st COTA festival. Performers included former COTA Cats Bobby Avey and Jay Rattman, followed by the headliner group, Co-op Bop, featuring COTA stalwarts Nelson Hill, Craig Kastelnik, Alan Gaumer, Tom Kozic and Gary Rissmiller.

❖ On Oct. 16, the Cohen Recital Hall at ESU was the site of “An Evening of Solo Piano Artistry” featuring two of the most respected piano musicians in jazz: Hal Galper and Phil Markowitz. In addition to both having strong ties over many years to the Pocono jazz scene, Hal and Phil demonstrated an artistic synergy in their playing by virtue of their commitment to exploring innovative approaches to improvised jazz.

❖ As this issue was going to press, the COTA Festival Orchestra featuring Phil Woods was preparing to add several new tunes to their growing repertoire for the second official Library Alive concert on Nov. 10 at the Sherman Theater in Stroudsburg. Unofficially, this would be the fifth time that this outstanding ensemble has performed the classic compositions and arrangements from the ACMJC’s music inventory. Most recently, the big band delighted crowds at the Scranton and COTA jazz festivals, and has upcoming bookings next year at the Berks Jazz Festival in March and Library Alive III in April at the Sherman. Who could have predicted the synergistic opportunities that would come along since their first concert performance at *Jazz Jubilee 2005: A Salute to Al & Zoot* at ESU!

❖ On Feb. 15, the Sunday of President’s Day weekend, ESU will host “A Salute to Big Band Jazz,” featuring the Jazz Artists Repertory Orchestra, or more commonly known in these parts as JARO. The synergy aspects will be especially strong for this event: in addition to featuring a gifted group of Pocono region musicians, JARO began many years ago as the Ralph Hughes Big Band, named after its late trumpet-playing leader, who was the driving force in establishing the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection at ESU. JARO also features direct connections to ESU in the form of three members who are University employees: Professor of Music and trumpeter Patrick Dorian, ESU Jazz Ensemble Director and trombonist Jim Daniels, and Director of Computing Services and drummer Bob D’Aversa.

The jazz program at ESU is built on a solid tradition of community and campus partnerships. The ESU Jazz Synergy Series is an exciting new vehicle for leveraging the kinds of artistic collaborations that will directly benefit not only ESU students but all area youths and the cultural fabric of the Pocono community. That’s a synergy we would all do well to support. ☺



Charles Perry Hebard

Pocono Plaudits and Pockets

by Patrick Dorian

The plutonium-like artistic density of our Pocono jazz community continues to be recognized on far-reaching levels! Jesse Green recorded the National Public Radio program,

Piano Jazz with Marian McPartland, in October. Hundreds of our readers everywhere in North America will be able to experience his artistry via their local NPR affiliate. Jesse's personal and musical personalities brilliantly shine through! Burn on, JG!

We don't stop there. Congratulations to Dr. Phil Woods and the Delaware Water Gap Celebration of the Arts for receiving the Pennsylvania Governor's Award for the Arts in the category of Pennsylvania Creative Community Award. Lois Brownsey-Heckman, who is a "doubler" at both Red Rock Recording Studio and the office of Pennsylvania State Representative John Siptroth, was instrumental in initiating this long-overdue honor. Yours truly takes great pride in being peripherally involved in the nomination process and even greater pride in knowing all involved! Phil and COTA will be honored in Williamsport, PA, in November by Governor Ed Rendell, along with the other recipients, including actor Michael Keaton and jazz poet and English professor Sascha Feinstein.

The Academy assigns mandatory winter reading to all recipients of *The NOTE*. Completion of this task in a timely manner will lead to significant life enrichment.

The book is *Deconstructing Sammy: Music, Money, Madness, and the Mob* by Matt Birkbeck (published by Amistad, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers). It was released in September to critical acclaim and

documents Sammy Davis Jr.'s relationship with his wife, Altovise, who lived at the Murray family's Hillside Inn in the Poconos. She turned to our local former federal prosecutor, Albert "Sonny" Murray, who for seven years attempted to resolve Sammy's debts, restore his estate, and revive his legacy.

For an additional riveting back story from the September 14, 2008, issue of the *Pocono Record*, go to www.poconorecord.com and enter "Tale of Two Families" into the search box.

More about the Hillside (yet another Pocono "jazz pocket") will appear in this column next year.

Pocono Pockets of Jazz, Part Three: Route 209 Ramblings

Denny Carrig first met vocalist Jerry Harris at the Back Door on Main Street in Stroudsburg, PA, in the early 1970s. It's interesting that a vast majority of musicians (along with perhaps hundreds of non-musician females) can vividly recall their first "Harris encounter" (overwhelmingly in a positive reflection).

Denny and Bob Mancuso presented live music at their tavern, called Friends, with a couple of other folks in 1975 for about a year. It was located just north of East Stroudsburg on Route 209. Denny and Bob are the present owners of the legendary Deer Head Inn in Delaware Water Gap, along with Jay Wilson and Mary Carrig, so the moniker of "friends" is impressively enduring. On Tuesdays, he would regularly stop by at the Bottom o' the Fox in DWG to hear Jerry sing with Asparagus Sunshine.

Never heard of Asparagus Sunshine? Well, that's for next time, including the "unspeakable" five-letter formation of Asparagus Sunshine.

First, we must present a segment about Werry's Pub and Motel. It was farther up Route 209, about a mile north of Marshall's Creek. Master drummer, now supreme constructor of knives, Bud Nealy, remembers

Continued on Page 31

Thinking of Al



William Claxton

by Doug Ramsey

One morning in 1973 in Washington, DC, I was waiting to be seated for breakfast at the Airline Inn, a motel south of the Capitol near the UPI Television News bureau. Someone behind me greeted me by name. I looked back and, to my surprise, saw Al Cohn. Al and I met through Zoot Sims shortly after my family and I moved to New York in 1970. We became cordial acquaintances during my frequent visits to the Half Note, home base for him and Zoot.

It turned out that Al was in town orchestrating the score of the musical *Raisin* during the show's pre-Broadway shape-up. I was UPITN's chief (meaning all-purpose) correspondent, covering the White House, the Watergate hearings in Federal court and the U.S. Senate, and traveling with President Richard M. Nixon on those increasingly rare occasions when he emerged from the bunker. For a time, I traveled to DC and spent most of every week there. I was delighted to find a kindred soul among the lobbyists, lawyers, Teamsters Union representatives and occasional – uh – professional women who populated the Airline Inn when Congress was in session.

After that initial encounter, Al and I met for breakfast every morning while he was working on *Raisin*. Our talks touched on his work, my work, Watergate, international affairs and whatever we had heard or read in the news that morning. His curiosity about the world ranged as wide as his humor.

He had me chuckling much of the time. I'd give anything to have recordings of those conversations.

Heavily in demand for his composing and arranging talents, Al played relatively little between 1960 and 1974. At breakfast that first morning, he told me the writing money was good, but the work was hard and gave him little of the satisfaction of playing jazz. Shortly after, he cut back to a few major television writing jobs each year and concentrated on his horn.

After we left New York in the spring of 1975, I didn't see Al again until November, 1979. I was writing for *Texas Monthly* about the Midland Jazz Classic, a successful clone of Dick Gibson's famous Colorado jazz party. Well-heeled cognoscenti from the West Texas oil country and beyond attended six days of a small, private festival. The musicians that year were: Milt Hinton, Jack Lesberg, and Michael Moore, bass; Johnny Mince, Abe Most, Bob Wilber, Al Cohn, and Zoot Sims, reeds; Jackie Williams, Gus Johnson, and Mousey Alexander, drums; Cal Collins, guitar; Dick Hyman, Dave McKenna, and Ralph Sutton, piano; Urbie Green and Bill Watrous, trombone; Ruby Braff, Pee Wee Erwin, and Joe Wilder, trumpet; Terry Gibbs, vibes; and Carol Sloane, vocals.

In that *Texas Monthly* piece, I wrote, "The musicians are given room and board at the Hilton, where the Classic is held, and are paid about \$800 for the week, considerably less than many of them would be earning in the studios of Los Angeles and New York. They do it just for love."

Doug Ramsey is the 2008 winner of the Jazz Journalists Association Lifetime Achievement Award.

He is the author of *Take Five: The Public and Private Lives of Paul Desmond*. He contributes to *Jazz Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and other publications and blogs about jazz and other matters at www.artsjournal.com/rifftides.

The *Texas Monthly* article about the Midland Jazz Classic is in his book *Jazz Matters: Reflections on the Music and Some of its Makers*.

We are very fortunate to have recently received this fond remembrance by Doug of cherished time he spent with Al Cohn.



Al Cohn with Al Porcino's
Band of the Century,
Roosevelt Hotel, New York
City, c. 1973.

Doug Ramsey

By this time, Al had been playing tenor virtually full-time for five years and had reached a level surpassing even the remarkable work he did in the 1950s. In person and on recordings, he was formidable. Consider the examples of his Xanadu recordings for Don Schlitten in the second half of the '70s. *Heavy Love*, the 1977 duo album with Jimmy Rowles, is a perfect album, a masterpiece.

From the *Texas Monthly* article about the Midland party:

"He has never played with more intensity, conviction, or lyricism. It seemed to me in Midland that, chorus for chorus, Cohn was examining the innermost possibilities of the music with more consistent profundity than any other player. A lingering image is Cohn looking over Terry Gibbs' shoulder during the vibraharpist's brilliant solo on 'After You've Gone,' studying the keyboard as intently as a Talmudic scholar searching for revelations, then launching into his own solo as if he'd

found them."

I left Texas for New Orleans, San Francisco and Los Angeles – a typical gypsy itinerary for a television news director. Over the next decade, I seldom saw Al. During the holidays toward the end of 1987, Lou Levy called to report that he was going to do a couple of nights with Al at The Money Tree, a small club in Toluca Lake, not far from Universal Studios. He said that Monty Budwig would be on bass, with a drummer to be named.

I had been listening to Al's Concord album *Nonpareil*, another perfect LP, the one with the definitive version of the tune Johnny Mandel named for Al, "El Cajon." It had Levy, Budwig, and Jake Hanna on drums. Maybe Jake would be on this gig.

My wife and I arrived early in hopes of getting a good seat. That turned out not to be a problem; attendance was light. The drummer wasn't a problem, either; far from it. He was Nick Martinis, as withdrawn as Hanna

was outgoing, but one of L.A.'s most reliable timekeepers.

Al blew us away, almost literally. Since the last time I had heard him, his tone had taken on depth, body, and darkness. He was swinging with ferocity and a flow of invention that was at once relaxed and passionate. He seemed compelled to play as intensely as possible on each tune. Levy, Budwig and Martinis responded to the energy. Al had been Lou's hero since their days on Woody Herman's Second Herd. As he comped, he was fixated on what Cohn was creating. Lou played a beautiful gig. It was one of four or five evenings of music that remain on call, preserved in my memory.

During breaks, Al sat with us. Lou joined us from time to time. We chatted about this and that, swapping stories, remembering Zoot, laughing a lot. Less than three months later, Al was gone. I am grateful for that evening at The Money Tree and thankful that I knew him. ☺

From the ACMJC Oral History Project: An Interview with Manny Albam

Manny Albam (b. June 24, 1922, d. Oct. 2, 2001) speaks with Flo Cohn about his long and successful career as a jazz performer, composer, arranger, conductor, and educator.

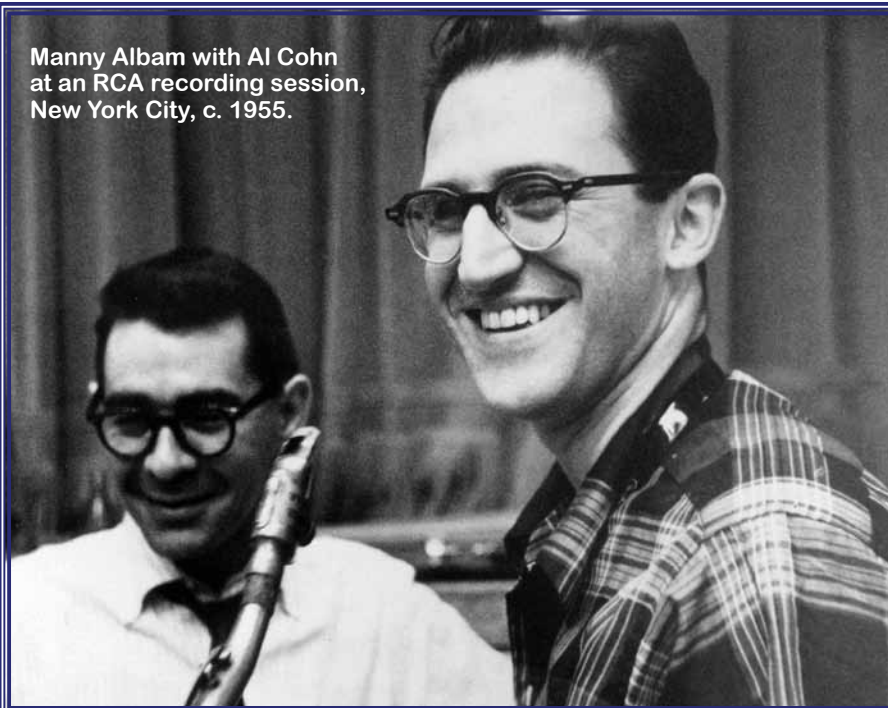
During a career that spanned seven decades, Manny worked with such jazz legends as Coleman Hawkins, Stan Getz, Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, Bob Brookmeyer, Sarah Vaughan, McCoy Tyner, and Carmen McRae. His impressive musical resume included stints in the big bands of Charlie Barnet, Jerry Wald, Boyd Raeburn, Georgie Auld, Charlie Spivak, Don Joseph, and Muggsy Spanier.

He eventually gave up playing in favor of arranging and composing. He achieved much success, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, making recordings with his own studio bands as well as contributing arrangements for leaders of small groups (Terry Gibbs, Hal McKusick, Gerry Mulligan, Dizzy Gillespie) and big bands (Count Basie, Woody Herman, Stan Kenton, Buddy Rich).

Manny Albam's compositions ranged from large-scale pieces for jazz orchestra (such as *The Blues Is Everybody's Business*) to chamber music and music for films and television.

This interview took place at Manny's home in Croton-on-Hudson, New York on February 8, 1990 and was originally published in an abridged form in the May 1990 issue of *The NOTE* (Vol. 2, No. 2).

Manny Albam with Al Cohn at an RCA recording session, New York City, c. 1955.



From the ACMJC photo archive

Flo Cohn [FC]: It's February 8, 1990. I'm at the home of Manny Albam in Croton-on-Hudson, New York. Here we are, Manny, I've already introduced you. ... So, tell me all about it. [both laugh] ...

Manny Albam [MA]: I was born in Santo Domingo and I just managed to get back there when I was about 60 years old.

FC: Music ... [did] that come from your family?

MA: My father played flute ... as an amateur, in a way. I didn't know very much about him but they tell me he was a flute player. My mother loved music. She was always going to the opera or buying new records.

FC: So, it was in the home.

MA: Yes. ... I remember winding up the Victrola and playing all these things. And then a friend of mine I used to hang out with when I was

about six took me over to his house one day. His [older] brother was playing a Bix Beiderbecke record and that hooked me. ... And that really got me to know that there was other music in the world, [other] than what I had been listening to. [It] took a while to get interested in it, but I guess I always was. I used to fool around at the piano trying to write little songs and things like that when I was a kid. I didn't know much about how to put it down ... on paper, anything like that, but I had a pretty good memory. Finally, in high school, somehow or other [I] got a clarinet in my hand and did some of that. Let me see, who was in school with us – Kai Winding.

FC: Oh!

MA: They didn't allow anything like that [jazz] in the band, in the orchestra, in high school. We [were] both thrown out for warming up. [laughs]

FC: You mean jazz. They didn't want jazz.

MA: Yeah, none at all, none at all. And I think what I learned was [learned] on the streets, really, from guys on the streets, and hanging out and going uptown. At that time, you could go uptown [to Harlem in NYC] any time of the day or night. And it's funny because if you walked uptown with a music case in your hand, of any kind, they would protect you. They'd say, "Don't fool with him. He's a musician."

FC: Oh, how nice! *[laughs]*

MA: They really had heroes in those times that were musicians. Now they're basketball players, I guess. But [it] used to be, you'd stop any kid on the street and ask him, "Who's in Ellington's orchestra?" and he could tell you.

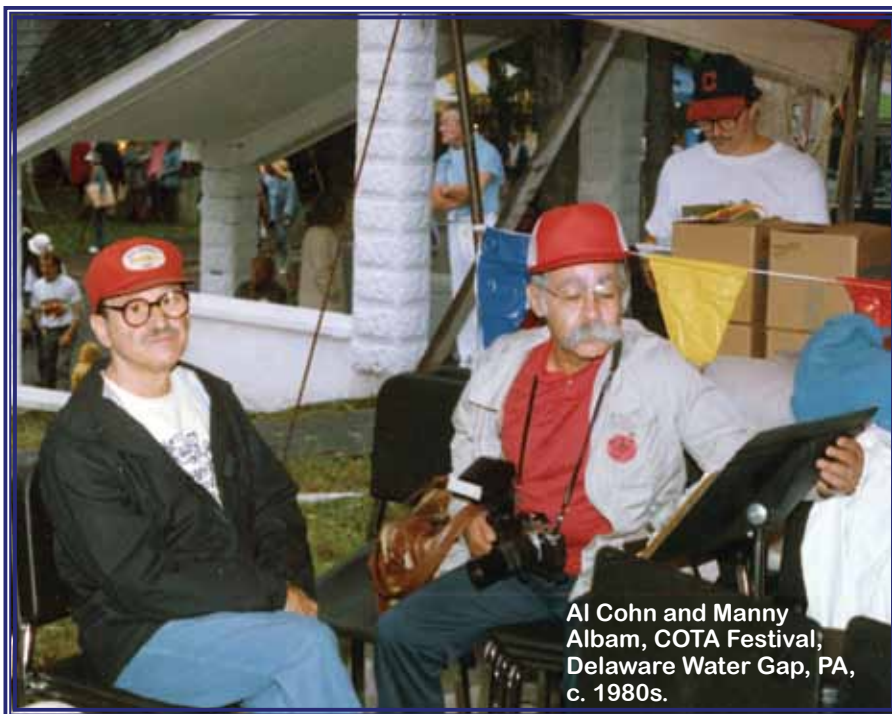
FC: Was it a time when you were able to sit in or were you still too young?

MA: At that time, I was still a little bit too young. But a little bit later I started hanging out in the Village a little bit. I didn't live too far from [Greenwich] Village, and there was a club called George's with a very nice trio; a guitar, bass, and piano trio. Leonard Ware was the [guitarist]. I would come in and occasionally they would have horn players that worked there also. Herbie Fields did one before he turned out to be sort of a heavy rock-oriented ... player. He was quite a [saxophone] player.

And I remember Vic Dickenson used to come in, and some other guys. I would bring my alto in, I was playing alto at the time. I think I was a bit over my head but they encouraged me, which was nice. I think I was about 16. I got out of high school on my 16th birthday so it gave me a chance to sit around and practice a lot rather than go to school for the next two years. I was out. I had my diploma and everything. *[FC laughs]* So I did a lot of practicing. And then, let me see. I went away with Bob Chester's band. Muggsy Spanier.

FC: Were these long road trips?

MA: The Muggsy Spanier trip, yes.



Al Cohn and Manny Albam, COTA Festival, Delaware Water Gap, PA, c. 1980s.

From the ACMJC photo archive

I think it was a USO [tour]. We played a lot of army camps anyway, whether it was USO or not. And then Bob Chester's band got hold of me and I went out with them. Bill Harris was in the band. There were some nice people: Nick Travis, Johnny LaPorta. It was a good band. We went out and did a couple of Bob Hope shows from different naval bases and army camps.

FC: This must have been about the '40s, huh?

MA: Yes, I think it was about '43 and '44. From there I got into Georgie Auld's band and helped him put a band together. He asked me about young guys, you know, did I know any young people. As a matter of fact, Al [Cohn] joined the band a little bit after it was formed. I think it was around for about six-seven months. He was with Joe Marsala at the time and then he left the band and came with us. Al Porcino was in that [Georgie Auld] band.

We didn't do much writing for it but I sure learned how to write by playing in that band. I used to do some copying to pick up some extra money. Budd Johnson, especially, was writing for the band. And every time he'd bring a new arrangement, I'd sit him down and say, "Well, why did you do this? You put these two notes together and

they look like they would clash." And he'd say, "No, they don't clash because this other note ..." And he would talk to me for hours.

[I] also started hanging out with Dizzy and some other people. Dizzy recorded some with us so I got to meet him that way with Georgie's band. It was open at that time. Everybody was trying to teach you something. Dizzy would stay for hours at a piano and show you what Monk did the night before. It really was a way to learn, and it was the only way because [there were] no schools going like there are now. We had none of that. In fact, they would frown on you if you were a jazz player at Eastman [School of Music]. And now Eastman has probably the [best] jazz program in the world. Things change *[laughs]* ...

FC: Yes

MA: ... and for the better. Al used to sit right next to me in Georgie's band. We used to have a lot of fun together.

FC: So, your early years were really on the road, playing. Were you playing alto then?

MA: ... Well, in Georgie's band, I played alto ... especially because Georgie was also a saxophone player. In those days, generally the sax sec-

tions were only four people: there were [usually] two altos and two tenors, with the second alto doubling baritone. For some reason or other, I got hooked on Harry Carney. *[laughs]* That sound! And I got myself a baritone. It was fortunate because Georgie decided to add the fifth sax in the section and kind of lay out of playing a lot of it [himself]. It was a godsend because from that chair, you hear everything above you; the way the chords are stacked, and the way voicings come out. You're not in the middle trying to listen both ways. You really hear up.

FC: I never thought of that.

MA: It taught me a lot. From there on in, let me see ... I was with Boyd Raeburn for a while. That was interesting. Some very interesting writers, some of whom you know.

FC: Was that with George [Handy] ... *[both laugh]* ... during that time?

MA: Yes ...

FC: ... Eddie Finckel?

MA: Eddie Finckel and all his cello-playing sons and brothers and nephews and everything. *[FC laughs]* Yeah, Ed wrote a lot for the band. And so did Johnny Richards – the early part of Johnny's stuff. And I started writing a little bit at that time. I went with a lot of bands. I was with [Charlie] Barnet, and Sam Donahue, and Charlie Ventura, in one of those little groups that he had.

FC: When you wrote, did you think of the band you were with?

MA: Oh yeah. Yeah. Sure.

FC: I mean, you weren't just writing because you were trying to learn. ...

MA: No, you wrote for that particular band. I wouldn't write anything, let's say, for the Bob Chester band that I would write for Georgie's band because it was a different style and a completely different feeling. Tiny Kahn and I joined the [Charlie Barnet] band together and did a little bit of writing for it. I did a lot of writing for him. I had sort

of a deal to play and write. And from there, when the band broke up, one of the guys went into the Charlie Spivak band and got me to start writing for Spivak. I did that for about four or five years, two arrangements a week. That was really the best learning period that I had, sitting there.

FC: But so far, you haven't mentioned any ... formal training.

MA: No, I never had any.

FC: You learned by listening.

MA: I didn't have any [formal training] until I was about 30 or 31, and that came about, *[laughs]* it was funny. I did this album ... in about 1957, a jazz version of *West Side Story*. Al was on that and [Bob] Brookmeyer and, oh, everybody. [Leonard] Bernstein heard it and liked it very much. [He] said, "Well, any time you want to write anything for my orchestra ..." and he was the conductor of the [New York] Philharmonic at the time. He said, "Send me the score. I'd be very interested in it." And it scared the hell out of me! *[both laugh]*

I had done some stuff for strings, you know, but commercial stuff. So, I went to Tibor Serly and studied with him for a couple of years. He was a very dear and very close friend to Béla Bartók. They had been roommates when they went to the conservatory in Budapest. In fact, Tibor finished [some of Bartók's compositions]. One thing I know of but there were some others. One was a viola concerto that Bartók left unfinished. He just left sketches and Serly finished that one. [He] taught me quite a bit about form. ... He always said, "Well, the music comes out of you, but the form comes out of the world." ...

We did a lot of work together. He was a remarkable man. He was probably the best conductor of Bartók's music that ever was. And he had a prodigious memory. For a while, he had me working on some Mozart piano sonatas and [we would] turn them into string quartets and then make them bigger and bigger. Maybe a year would go by and I'd be working on the same thing again. I [had] put it away a year ago and [would] take it out again and try to add more parts to

it. I'd bring it back [to him] and he'd say, "You make the same mistake that you did back there a year ago." Now, you know, this man had a lot of students and to remember one little measure or a couple of measures that I had loused up ... *[both laugh]* and to call me on it, that was incredible. And he was right!

FC: Yeah, how about that!

MA: Absolutely. So anyway, Bernstein actually was the guy that put the fear in me, to tell me to go out and learn about things. I didn't tell him, "Well, gee, I don't know how to write for a symphony orchestra." I was given an opportunity – I don't know what year, probably '58 or '57 – to do ... one piece of music that would cover an album, about 35-40 minutes worth. It was called *The Blues is Everybody's Business*. Some of it was with a big band, augmented a little bit, and then the other couple of sections were with strings and the ... the jazz soloists

I thought it was very successful from the standpoint that I really learned a heck of a lot about form because of that. To take something, 12 bars of blues, and then make it last and change and have different shades of blue. So that put me into a kind of groove of beginning to think of writing bigger, longer kinds of things.

[Charlie] Barnet was also nice to me and he had me write. One day, he said, "Why don't you just write something to go about 15-20 minutes." He was interested in bigger than just three-and-a-half minute charts. And, unfortunately, *[laughs]* the thing turned out very well but Capitol records didn't want to put it on a 12-inch record. So we did the last three minutes of the piece, which was like a recapitulation of the whole beginning. And that kind of got something. Symphony Sid [Torin, a jazz disk jockey in NYC] used to play it ... at 2:00 a.m. every night. *[both laugh]* But, it got me into thinking about longer [pieces]. You know, longer than just, well, do three choruses and we'll open it up for somebody to play in the middle and all that. Composition, more than arranging. And it's been going that way ever since, I think.

FC: But that was the beginning,

wasn't it? Now, where and what time in our lives was that? Was that in the '40s also?

MA: Well, that was in the '50s ... middle to late '50s and '60s.

FC: Because, you know, you people were first. Now nobody cares ... they don't think in terms of length. Do they?

MA: No, not any more. Well, the LP is what really did it. When we first started recording in the '50s, you were still kind of relegated to doing ... almost a formula. You had twelve pieces on an album: six pieces on one side and six on the other. And if you sometimes snuck in a long one, it would be five on one [side] and six on the other, or five and five if you had two [long tunes].

But ... you had to scale everything [down] to be three-and-a-half, four minutes – no more than four minutes in length. ... I also got into chamber music because some of the guys that I used to have on some of the recordings that I did were not completely jazz players. But they were great players. Harvey Phillips was a marvelous tuba player. He could sit down and read the parts and make it sound like a jazz tuba player but he didn't improvise very well – he could a little bit.

Anyway, I used to use him on sessions. He was with the New York Brass Quintet, which was a heck of a group. He called me up one day and he said, "Write something for us." And I did that, and that began to get me into something else. I don't know how this happened ... but a guy who was doing a movie called me up one day and asked if I would like to ... write the score for it. I said, "Well, how did you hear about me?" He said, "Well, Alec Wilder told me about you." And I had never met Alec, and to this day, I suspect that maybe because Harvey and Alec were very close, perhaps



Manny Albam, COTA Festival, Delaware Water Gap, PA, c. 1980s.

From the ACMJC photo archive

Alec asked around and Harvey said, "Well, why don't you try Manny?" ... As a matter of fact, I didn't like it. [laughs] I had done something with Al [Cohn]. He did a thing [with] some Wilder tunes on an album he did with strings. [That Old Feeling, RCA] And I [arranged] some of it, and [so did] Ralph [Burns], for [RCA] Victor. I think I did a chart called "Soft As Spring." I didn't like the chart but maybe Alec did. ... I thought I treated it too close to the lead sheet. It was sort of vanilla the way [I arranged it]. I always kind of shudder a little bit about that particular thing but Al brought it off. [laughs]

FC: Well, you're more critical also, maybe.

MA: Maybe. Yeah.

FC: Which is okay.

MA: So, Al had got me into a kind of mind set. The way he worked was, he would just meet somebody and [if] he loved the way they played, he'd

write for them.

FC: Mmm hmm. I know.

MA: Then I got to Eastman [School of Music in Rochester, NY]. Ray Wright ... had been ... using one of my albums, that [The Blues is Everybody's Business, to teach from. And he called me up and asked me if I wanted to come up and teach with him. That was ... a good 25, 26 years ago. And Alec [Wilder] being from Rochester, we started hanging out a lot of up there. His attitude was something that really rubbed off on me. The attitude [that] if you like music, write it. And write it for people you like. Don't worry about those that you don't [like], you'll always find people that you like [who will] play your music. And that's the way I've been working ever since. I still write longer pieces, outside of charts that people ask me to write. You know, I'll get a call and they'll say, well, write up a three-chorus arrangement of this and that. That's something else. I don't even consider that

to be my work, you know? That's work. In fact, Al and I worked on that TV show together.

FC: Yes?

MA: "That's Life."

FC: Oh, "That's Life." That's right.

MA: I think I did about half of [the shows] and then Elliot [Lawrence] got me to do a Broadway show, which – [laughs] I hope I never have to even look at another one.

FC: Well, I know why Al didn't like to do them. Why didn't you?

MA: Well, I thought, here we were. We were set up to do a brand new one-hour musical each week, and it went like clockwork. We'd get the new music on Tuesday. We'd have the charts ready for Thursday rehearsals.

FC: Whew!

MA: They would rehearse them.

Friday, they would tape. Saturday, the thing was on the air, every Saturday for 13 weeks. And here I am. I'm working on a show with George Abbott, who is supposedly the greatest director that ever was; a pretty good composer, Al Haig; and Allan Sherman did the lyrics. But nobody knew what the hell was happening. *[FC laughs]* It's incredible. We did a tryout in Philadelphia for a couple of weeks and Abbott would sit in the theater. And [when] people laughed at a line on the stage, he'd have to turn to his assistant and say, "Why did they laugh at that line?" You know, things like that. The choreographer couldn't remember from one day to the next what he told me about the beats he wanted to do. And this and that – it was really chaos. There was really no organization, and I suspect that a lot of these [shows] happen that way and it's just luck that they make it.

FC: Or it's all an accident, huh?

MA: Yeah.

FC: A lot of egos.

MA: Yeah, oh *[laughs]*. Allan Sherman. For a while, he wanted to play drums. He couldn't stand the drummer that they had hired. He wanted to get in the pit and play drums. He got them to fire Jules Munchin, [who] was a pretty good comic actor and singer. [Sherman] wanted to play Julie's part. He had a re-write, and ... he went through this whole thing. It was like watching a circus, you know, but a disorganized circus, like when people slip off the trapeze and all that.

FC: *[laughs]* Yes

MA: So the show opened on a Friday. It did a Saturday matinee and a Saturday evening and that was it.

FC: All that effort.

MA: I can't say I was sorry to see it go. I much prefer to deal with people who have professional ideas. I don't know how to describe it. It's a hard thing to put together. Not that TV is that great. But I mean, to put together 13 brand new shows, with brand new songs, and new actors, and ...

FC: It's almost too much, isn't it?

MA: It was, but it worked. And it didn't work badly, you know.

FC: It was taped, wasn't it? Or was it live?

MA: I suspect it could have been [live]. Well, I know they did a taping session of the music. So maybe if they did it live, the music was taped. I don't know. That was a while ago.

FC: I know. Early '60s.

MA: Yeah. I got very interested in the chamber music stuff that I do. Then Harvey [Phillips] called me up, he does this to me all the time, and he said, "Manny, I've got Carnegie Hall booked. I'm going to do a concert there with a string quartet and I don't have any music. Write something." *[FC laughs]* So, I sat down and tried to conceive of what a tuba and string quartet would sound like together. And it sounded good. It's really something that I feel good about it because it has opened a whole thing for me.

A trombone player that heard it said, "You gotta write for me." So, I started getting commissions along the way of things like that for odd instrumentations. And I would still get to do big pieces up at Eastman. At the end of our summer, we always have a guest artist come up and work with us. I ... generally write something for him [to play with] this big 50-piece orchestra we have [there]. That is fun. I've had maybe 20, 25 things that I've done that way. So, you write the music because you like it, not because somebody asks you – tells you – what to do about it. I guess Al must have felt the same way.

FC: Yes. Well, it was just a lot of hard work and very little ...

MA: [It was a] way to make money.

FC: Yes.

MA: And that's it. I mean, you earn a living from it maybe. I did some commercials and things like that for a while. The people that you deal with talk a different language. [You] don't even know what they're talking about. It's strange. It's really like you're going to Poland or something. *[FC laughs]* And trying to understand what their concept of music is, it's incredible. You need a translator. And, for a while, I



Donated by John Metcalf

Standing (from left): Paul Selden, Urbie Green, Ernie Wilkins, Nat Pierce, Robert Farnon, Frank Hunter, Irwin Kostal, Maury Laws; Seated (from left): Dick Hafer, Manny Albam, Quincy Jones, Al Cohn, Obie Massengill, Milt Hinton, Marion Evans; New York City, c. 1960.

had one, which was great.

FC: Well, when did you start to do your weekly stints at Eastman?

MA: Well, the weekly things are done here, in New York, at BMI. [Broadcast Music, Inc.]

FC: No, I don't mean that. I mean teaching.

MA: Oh yeah, at Glassboro [State College in Glassboro, NJ, now Rowan University].

FC: [Indiscernible] Glassboro and Eastman and ...

MA: Well, Eastman was three weeks every summer. [Manny Albam was co-director of the prestigious Summer Arranger's Workshop at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY.]

FC: Oh, just summer? I'm sorry.

MA: Yes, and then one semester Ray Wright took off. He wrote a book and I went up. I used to fly up on Mondays and I'd be back Thursday night. I did a whole semester for him, like January through May. That's when Al came up, as a matter of fact. He sounded great. I have some tapes of that. I don't [think] you've ever heard them.

FC: No. ... You had good students there because they were music students.

MA: Well, I think some of the best students that come out of music schools don't have airs about them, you know? Some music schools will graduate people that feel that, oh, they were on the concert stage, and they're that great and whatever. These kids that come out of Eastman know that they're going to go into bands, and they're going to write, and they're going to go to New York and work in the pits, and ...

FC: Be a professional.

MA: Yes, they're professionals. ... In the beginning, Eastman was like every other conservatory. And guys would come back – Jimmy Buffington was one – and say, "Look, you're not training us to go to the music hall and play. We get down there to New York and we have to sight read music, and with an understanding of the music that

we never [learned]. You never showed us what it's all about." And [Eastman listened and] they turned it over.

FC: Good for them.

MA: So [now], an instrumentalist [at Eastman] plays in the jazz band, in the opera, in the wind ensemble, in symphony orchestras. And they're all good. They're not, you know, half-assed musical organizations. They're all really good. I learned a lot from that. [It] also taught me a lot about the teaching I was doing at Glassboro, trying to teach people [who] had no understanding whatsoever why they were musicians. And that's a shame, it really is. But it began to really unnerve me.

FC: So, the people that went to Glassboro ... are they going to go on and be professionals or are they going to be something else?

MA: Let me give you an average. I think out of the first four years that I was there, we had some people that went through a band and stayed three or four years in the same band. I think half of the people at that time could [have] become professional musicians. Then it began to tail off. The last couple of years I was there, I could only consider one, one guy, out of the whole music department, which was about 300 kids, only one that I felt, well, he knows why he's [here] and what music is about and can progress. Strangely enough, I guess the [higher education] system in most states tells you that everybody is equal. You know, you have to [give all students an] equal opportunity to learn. But what they forget is that ... [in order to] be equal, ... you have to have equal talent, you know? Music is a very special thing. It's not for everybody.

FC: Everything is. Not everybody can do everything.

MA: Exactly. A lot of these kids could be great [at] something else but boy, they –. [pauses] It was hard. [laughs]

FC: It seems like a waste of their time.

MA: And mine.

FC: Well, and yours, of course.

MA: ... Some of the teachers ... were decent players, and I could get some writing done for them and for myself. But, I really had to get back to hearing again when I left there ... to hear what a band should really sound like. And, fortunately, I got it back. ... [pauses] I haven't been [back] there in two years.

FC: Where did you hear your first band [both laugh] after leaving there?

MA: At Eastman. It was either Eastman or the Royal Philharmonic. Just after I [left Glassboro] I went over and did a thing with the Royal Philharmonic ...

FC: Wow.

MA: ... a jazz alto concerto. Bud Shank played it. It's on a record over in England. [Bud Shank with Manny Albam and The Royal Philharmonic, Mole Jazz, Nov. 1985] I'm hoping it's going to come over here. But that really begins to bring you back, you know. [laughs] You begin to hear again. You would throw a downbeat and hear a chord and know what it should sound like, but you couldn't get it. You could go over it and over it and over it and ... you wouldn't get [what] the sound was.

FC: Any special writing that you may be doing now?

MA: ... I just finished a piece for unaccompanied cello. I went to the wedding of a friend of mine's son who turned out to be a great cellist. I knew the kid when he was a fetus, you know? [FC laughs] He turned out to be quite a player. For a wedding gift, then, I wrote a piece for him.

FC: Was this Finckel's son?

MA: No, it was Lee Friedlander's son. Lee, the photographer.

FC: Oh.

MA: The kid [Erik Friedlander] is a hell of a cellist. I don't even think I could call him a kid anymore but ... [FC laughs] ... he impressed me. I heard a recital he had done with a violin player, a duo recital. ... He transcribes Coltrane and things like that. And plus he plays anybody, you know, any of the classical people. He plays with a lot of

orchestras. He did some recordings with Harvey Swartz. He's into music, the complete music.

FC: Yes, yes.

MA: That was fun. I did a thing for two violas, sort of a double viola sonata, for an old, old friend of mine. In fact, I used to study piano with his mother years ago, Manny Vardi. [He] was one of the world-class violists. And his wife is a heck of a violist. I did that for him and then he wanted me to do a jazz-oriented piece with piano accompaniment. And I've been doing that.

Some years back ... Eliot Daniel kind of captured me there for a while. I did a piece for him with string quartet where he plays flute on one movement and clarinet and tenor sax on each movement. You know, progressively gets into more and more hot music, I guess. [FC laughs] That turned out very nicely except that now he's given up the flute and the tenor just to play clarinet, and it's hard to get anybody else to do it. You have to have three people, or maybe two people. ...

I've been going over to Cologne to [work with] the radio orchestra over there, and to Finland and places like that. And I get to write new stuff. I just finished something for Ray Wright, who retired up at Eastman. We're going to give him a big party and I wrote something for him. It's called "Hoo-Ray."

FC: So, these trips to Cologne, are they [to play with the] radio orchestra, did you say?

MA: Yes.

FC: They're very good, aren't they?

MA: That's a good band, it really is. And cooperative! They just draw you in; they don't hold you off like a lot of places.

FC: ... Are you bringing something to them?

MA: ... Actually, last time I brought my library over and we just chose some stuff. In fact, I sent it over ... and they rehearsed it a week before I got there. [Then] ... we kind of shaped it a

little bit. We did three concerts. ... I'll probably be going back again in the fall.

FC: Some wonderful musicians there on those orchestras.

MA: Well, I was surprised Jon Eardley was there. I haven't seen him in a hundred years. [FC laughs] And some other guys ... but that band is good. I think it's one of the best bands in Europe. And the one in Helsinki [Finland] is pretty good also. That has been taking some of my [time]. I'm trying to think of [more] projects to do for them over there. I know two fellas over there I'd like to get together and do a piece for them. Both Charlie Mariano and Herbie Geller are in Germany. ... They did a recording with me some years ago out in California when they were there. And to put them back together – in fact, Charlie played baritone and Herbie played alto. But [I'd like] to get them together and do a work that would maybe be a four-movement piece where they play together, and each one would have a solo, and then they end up playing together.

FC: Nice.

MA: And the stuff I've been doing for Phil, Phil Woods, with the larger orchestra, and things like that.

FC: Do you ever work with singers?

MA: I haven't worked with a singer [since] –, let me see. ... In fact, right here. [reaches for something to show Flo] ... This is a project for Coca-Cola. ... One thing now and then, later on, maybe three or four more. I don't know what Coke is going to do with it. But it's tunes that they found in the Library of Congress which all have the word Coca-Cola in the tune somewhere.

FC: Oh really? [sings "Rum and Coca-Cola"]

MA: Well, that's the one everybody remembers. But they say they've found over 50 of them that people wrote and nothing ever happened. But "Rum and Coca-Cola" – I guess that's the one, outside of some of their jingles.

FC: Well, are you talking about a jingle?

MA: No, no. This is probably an album.

FC: Oh! And Coke is producing it?

MA: Yes. I don't know what they're going to do with it. ... We did one for the Bell Telephone Company. Maybe it's a premium, or they do it [and] they give them away at their board meetings. I have no idea what it's for. [both laugh] ... But they're funny tunes ... They're fun.

FC: Well, that's nice.

MA: You know, they're nice people. Again, when you're dealing with nice people, you can lay back a little bit and put your tongue in your cheek about the music and still make it work. You have to have a sense of humor.

FC: So I'm told. [both laugh] Tell me about BMI. ... [and] what it all means.

MA: What it all means still remains to be seen. But Burt Coral, who does the [public relations] stuff and especially has a lot to do with jazz at BMI, came up with an idea to do a workshop, a composers workshop. And he called in Brookmeyer and myself.

FC: Since this is going to be heard by people who might not know about BMI, tell us about BMI.

MA: Oh, right. BMI was originally the radio network's answer to ASCAP [American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers]. ... [laughs] I guess in the beginning, they didn't want to pay the royalties, or as much royalties as ASCAP demanded of them. So they formed a kind of a counter organization to collect ... and pay out royalties. They enrolled a lot of writers and publishers – it's a big thing.

I mean, it's not a small, off-in-the-closet thing. They've had Stravinsky and Bartók and a lot of people in their classical department. They run a little bit differently. ASCAP runs strictly on what the person's output is and [what] the air plays are, and they pay a specific amount of money to the composers. BMI sometimes offers incentives and yearly fees and things to keep you as a member. ...

I'm not sure, in the business sense,

of how they do it. But for years, I've been getting a guaranteed yearly fee from them for my stuff, even some years [when] my stuff hardly gets played. But they keep it going. At any rate, Burt Coral had this idea. He went to the president of [BMI] and to the board. They decided they would pay Bob Brookmeyer and myself to run the classes free to the people. And we began to audition writers. The first year we kind of handpicked the people. The word got out after the first year, so we had to start two more workshops.

FC: Great

MA: And now we have two advanced classes, or workshops, and one beginning workshop – people that are pretty well-versed in the music but haven't written [yet]. You know, they're good players but they've never scored. Bob ... [and I] ... teach simultaneously. That's something I learned from Ray Wright. We've been doing that at Eastman for 25 or so years and it really works, because it gives the student the idea that there's not [just] one way to do something.

FC: You mean you're in the room together?

MA: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

FC: Oh, I didn't know that.

MA: Yeah. [Bob] might say something and I could interrupt him if I had something to say about it.

FC: Oh, that is very good.

MA: And we've been doing this for, as I say, at Eastman for years in that summer program. But the idea is that we want everybody to realize there is no formula. Bob could tell you to do this. Okay, go ahead and do it. But that's not the only way. I have another way and that's not the only way. And somebody else has another way. And if you have another way, please tell us what it is so we can learn your way. I guess the word "workshop" is better than "class" because that's really what it is. Last year ... we used Mel Lewis's band and we had a kind of late afternoon preview of the [student's] works for the press and guests at the Village Vanguard. That turned out really successful. We played 14 pieces of pretty



Donated by Emile Charlap

(From left): Emile Charlap, Manny Albam, Milt Hinton, Al Cohn (partially hidden behind Milt), Al Epstein, Jack Lewis, Bernie Glow (partially hidden), Hal Schaeffer, George "The Fox" Williams, Don Ashworth (at bottom of photo); Birdland jazz club, New York City, 1956.

advanced music. I mean, further than Woody Herman's charts or Buddy Rich's charts. We're trying to get them more into really composing and using the soloists. In a sense, the soloist becomes a part of the composition. [It's] more than, well, you've got a composition, and now [you'll] open it up and have somebody play a solo inside of it, like we all used to do. And we play our own things, or sometimes we have guest conductors or composers come in and talk to the class.

FC: That's nice.

MA: When we have to take off, we send somebody else in. We've had Muhal Richard Abrams come in several times. Richie Bierach came in with ... your neighbor. [pauses] [Dave] Liebman.

FC: Oh, yes.

MA: ... And two days ago, we had a guy come in to really show them about conducting because, at this point, we want them to start conducting their own music. Before that, I was doing the conducting at the sessions. Now we want them to do it because that's part of their thing. So, that [work-

shop] has become pretty successful and hopefully it [will] keep going. It was a good idea to do this, I think. It has aroused interest in other places and somebody tells me ASCAP might start doing this.

FC: I know they have a theater.

MA: Yes, they have a theater workshop. They've had [it] for some time. [pauses] Let me see. [pauses] I was working on a ... thing when Thad left us, sort of an elegy, that we did with Mel's band and then added a string section and some other people. And I guess I'm going to write a blues for [pauses] Mel. [Mel Lewis died on February 2, 1990, six days prior to this interview]

FC: That band [the Thad Jones – Mel Lewis Orchestra, now the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra] will continue?

MA: Yes, the band is gonna keep going, which is a good thing, I think.

FC: Because Mel talked about that. [in his interview with Flo on Sept. 14, 1989]

MA: Yeah, well, the kid that's playing drums [Dennis Macrell] in the band

now, [that] young man plays more like Mel than anybody I've ever heard. ... He goes on the road quite a bit with different groups. But if he can keep it going, the book is marvelous. It's a big, thick book and there are new things coming in all the time. Kenny Werner, the piano player in the band, keeps writing. And I think they have a recording contract that the company wants to honor. So, they'll be doing at least one more album to begin with and keep the thing in perspective.

FC: That's good.

MA: But if that band goes down, then I think that's the last of the really good [big bands]. There are some younger people coming up with some pretty good stuff but it's not the same. [The charts don't] have the depth, the depth that [comes from] playing in the band. The music that's written for the [Thad Jones – Mel Lewis] band is really, really something. ... What else can I tell you? *[FC laughs]* What else can tell you? *[laughs]* I like to fish. *[laughs]*

FC: It's very quiet here.

MA: We have a reservoir about three minutes away, in the car, there.

FC: Can you run around it?

MA: We walk around it. *[laughs]* I don't run anymore. *[laughs]*

FC: Don't run anywhere, huh?
[both laugh]

MA: But, yeah we walk around it, and I fish in it. And I get a lot of thinking done. It's a funny thing. When you're fishing, all you're worried about is this real thin line that goes into the water and [whether it] will wiggle. And it kind of gets all your thoughts into a nice little skinny frame of mind. And that's it, really. I mean, you could sit there and watch that line for [hours]. All your concentration is in the reel.

FC: If you're lucky, [it] won't wiggle.

MA: A six-pound test line or something. *[both laugh]* Well, I don't know. I enjoy the wiggling. ... Betty [Manny's wife, artist Betty Hindes] is

a sculptor and an artist, as you know. And the same problems exist. ... I've got to read you something, by the way. I keep this in my wallet. I had this to read to the class, you know how our memory fails us. But this is a very famous playwright – it's not Neil Simon, it was another guy – that wrote on the Sid Caesar show.

FC: Mel? [Brooks]

MA: No, no. Not Mel. Uh ... drat!

FC: [laughs]

MA: Uh, Geb... *[stumbles]* Gelbhart ... Allen Gelbhart. [Manny tries to remember the name Larry Gelbart] ... He had two shows running on Broadway just recently, two successful ones. Where the devil is the damn thing? Oh, excuse me, the darn thing. *[pauses while searching through his wallet]* ... ah, voila!

FC: Ah!

MA: This was in the [New York] Times. It kind of tells you about how work happens, in any kind of thing. He [Larry Gelbart] says, first, you get the idea. And it may germinate for a long time or it just pops into your head. And then you work out structure. When you feel confident enough, you start to write. And you have to allow yourself the liberty of writing poorly. You have to get the bulk of it done, and then you start to refine it. And you have to put down less than marvelous material just to keep going toward whatever you think the end is going to be, which may become something else all together by the time you get there.

FC: [laughs] Yes.

MA: So that, it's Gebha-Gelbhart ... Larry Gelbart!

FC: And that is true in music, and in art, you know.

MA: And in anything, yeah. You know, the great thing about watching what Betty does ... it has to do with repetition. She does things that are permanent, in a way. She can destroy them if she wants [to]. But if she starts working on [an] idea, she might have four or five things that progress until she gets [one of them] to where she wants it. It's not all on one piece. She'll

do a piece and look at it and put it away. And while looking at the piece, she'll begin to work [on another], and [do this] maybe three or four different times until she gets to the one she wants. And the other ones to me are just as interesting because [they] show you the whole progress of what it is that led to the final thing. I enjoy all of them, although sometimes she'll put the other ones away and say, well, they're not up to this one. But the idea of making mistakes, I think, is what workshops are all about and what our thing at Eastman is about. It's the only place you have to do it. ...

FC: Where you can make a mistake ...

MA: And not suffer.

FC: ... and get it explained to you.

MA: Yeah, yeah. It can be explained.

FC: What the mistake is and why.

MA: But you don't suffer in the business. If you go into a recording session and you make a mistake, that's it. You're never going to get called back. Or as a player, too, if you don't read the part right, they're not going to call you again. We emphasize the fact that you're here to make mistakes. You're better off making mistakes and learning from mistakes than doing what you [already] really know, because you know that's going to work.

FC: Well, do you think that the young player is under a lot of pressure to do it right the first time, and no mistakes allowed?

MA: Oh, sure. Oh, yeah. That's the pressure that he gets.

FC: I mean from the beginning.

MA: I think so. I think he gets that from teachers in grade school, and from most teachers, I wouldn't say all of them, [but] in high school, especially. It's like being a football player or something else. You've got to be perfect.

FC: Also, it's not a question any more of them having a place to play, maybe? To learn ... as you had? Are those places around?

MA: You know, it's funny. I talk [about this] with Phil [Woods] every once in a while because he came off the streets. Then he went to Julliard and did very well there. But he thought that what he learned on the streets was much more pertinent than what he learned in Julliard. And Miles said the same thing. But to go through it, the only thing that I think a school teaches – [and] what I'm missing or what I've missed – is discipline.

FC: Right.

MA: You know, when they tell you to bring this ... well, you get the same thing in recording sessions. You've got to have your stuff ready at a specific day and time. You can always turn down doing it. If you don't want to do it, you don't have to do it. [But] in school, you have to do it. And it gives you a routine. I think that is where a lot of us went off the [chuckles] beaten track somehow. We never [disciplined] ourselves [into a routine]. If the work was there to do, we did it. And we did it pretty well. But when it wasn't there, we thought of other things to do. But the kids that I see now coming out of places like [Eastman], they ... get up in the morning and they work.

FC: Because they love it.

MA: Yes, and because there is a routine started that is like a tape [that's] going. I wish the hell I could do it. [pauses] When I was a kid, I had some heroes, like Benny Carter, and Coleman Hawkins, and all these people. Dizzy's more like a contemporary. He's just a [few] years older and we played in the same [era]. I still felt when I was writing some stuff for Hawk, for Hawkins, or some of these other people, that I was like a little kid in awe, you know?

FC: Yes. [laughs]

MA: And when he would start asking me questions about harmony



(From left): Terry Gibbs, Manny Albam, Gail Madden, Newport Jazz Festival, 1958.

Bill Crow

and things like that, I'd [wonder], "Why is he asking me about [that]?" And this still goes on ... with some people, even some of the younger people that I feel are magnificent players.

FC: Do you that they feel they haven't ...

MA: No. I feel that I'm still in awe of them in a way ...

FC: Oh!

MA: And when they start questioning me about things – how did you do this, or why this, and why that – I feel like, why is he asking me? I should be asking him! It's an incredible thing. [Manny makes a sound like "shheww"]. But I think that learning on the streets, or just [by] the seat of your pants, I think there's something to it. But ... it takes you a little bit longer ... to get around to it.

FC: Yes. Well, when you think about Coleman Hawkins or somebody like that ... Ben Webster ... and those people.

MA: Or Al. You know, Al was very

...

FC: They were very special.

MA: Yeah. Al was sort of a junior of mine but I always thought of him as a giant. I was always really in awe of the man.

FC: He learned by the seat of his pants.

MA: Oh, of course, yeah! It's funny. There's nothing in our world, I think, [except] in our community, the music community, which has any other feeling about the people around you. Maybe in athletics it could be close – a good athletic team has that. ... But in music, I always thought that we do have a community.

FC: Oh, yes.

MA: And it's a big one.

FC: And the [oral history] interviews are telling me that everybody as a young [musician] was able to ask questions of that

older guy and he'd bring them up with him.

MA: Exactly.

FC: So, there was always that hand.

MA: Yup. There's very little of that ... anymore, I guess [you could still find it] in the schools. The funny thing in schools is, you spend a long time trying to gain their confidence. I'll do a seminar in, wherever, University of Miami or Tennessee, and I'll talk to the kids and say the same things that their teacher tells them. And their teachers invariably come to me at the end of a session and say, "You know, I say the same things and they don't even hear what I say. But when you come, they listen to you."

FC: [laughs]

MA: And it happens with me. When I was a teacher and I had somebody else come in, they would listen to the other guy. Some of them would come up to me but very few. I'm sure

Continued on Page 25

*Jimmy Rowles on piano and Al Cohn on saxophone,
performing at a radio broadcast, Kansas City, Mo., c 1977.*

Photo by Jay Anderson, donated by Flo Cohn





Memories of Jazz in the Magic Village

by Jack Simpson

The “Golden Age of Jazz” for me took place in a Walt Disney World Village venue in Central Florida back in the ‘70s and ‘80s. What is now called “Downtown Disney” was, in 1975, called Walt Disney World Village at Lake Buena Vista. There was the Village Restaurant, with the adjoining Village Lounge, which was used as a holding area for diners awaiting service. Musical entertainment was provided in the Village Lounge.

Fortunately, the Disney manager selected to oversee Village Lounge operations was Bob Cross, a dedicated lover of jazz. Bob was responsible also for the Top of the World facility, which featured dining and dancing to the Don Lamond Orchestra. The first indication I had of the good news to come was when I was asked, sometime in 1975, if I knew that Bobby Hackett was playing somewhere at Disney World, with a Bubba Kolb Trio. My answer was a very interested, “No.”

Frank “Bubba” Kolb turned out to be an instrumental music graduate of North Texas State University. He played trombone during the day in the theme park, and at night was the piano leader of the house trio in the Village Lounge. Louise Davis played upright bass, with Harvey Lang on drums. The Disney people were beginning to promote the new jazz lounge, and established a Tuesday “Press Night” so that the local media could meet featured musicians; interviews could be set up and performances heard. It was nicely done, and the media responded well for a while. After a few months, however, interest did wane in the Tuesday night sessions, until just the hard core “jazzers” were coming (notably, Jack and Lorraine Simpson). But, with the legendary names, the music, and the opportunity to meet some of our idols of a lifetime, who could stay home? It was about a 45-mile drive to the Village Lounge from our home in Cocoa, on Florida’s east coast. My “day job” was with RCA at Cape Canaveral, supporting various space and missile launches, and working difficult hours.

Jack Simpson was born in England in 1924. He fulfilled his boyhood ambition in 1947 by traveling to New York, and later became an American citizen. He eventually found his way to Central Florida where his long-time love of jazz helped him, in 1967, to begin an avocation in radio broadcasting. Now, after 41 years, he’s still at it; his *Jazz on the Beach* program is heard on WUCF in Orlando and WFIT in Melbourne. Jack has also produced many jazz concerts and festivals, and was the co-founder of the Space Coast Jazz Society. A long-time ACMJC supporter and reader of *The NOTE*, Jack shares some of his warm and vivid memories of a vibrant period in Central Florida when he and his wife of 52 years, Lorraine, witnessed many remarkable live jazz performances in their home region.

But, we were younger then, and it was “Hey ... Marian and Jimmy McPartland are at The Lounge this week!” Of course, we had to go!

The Village Lounge was a small and comfortable room seating about 120, including the bar. Couches and armchairs made things nice; coffee tables had bowls of good mixed nuts. The piano was also nicely tuned and Kolb, a Bud Powell-influenced player, knew how to use it. The trio seemed to please the visiting musicians and their audiences. It was sort of a “dream gig” for the stars, with rental cars and townhouse accommodations plus other perks provided.

When press nights ended, I was able to set up my own procedure for meeting and interviewing musicians for my radio shows. I am not a great interviewer, but my taped conversations with many of my heroes did provide some interesting moments for *Jazz on the Beach*. Here are a few of my personal recollections from those dozens of taped conversations, done mostly in the adjoining lobby to the Village Lounge, to the backdrop of

many kid-type extraneous noises as families entered or left the restaurant. These brief but precious anecdotes will have to suffice until the day when the interview tapes are fully transcribed:

❖ **Roy Eldridge** told me that he got tired of being considered the link between Louie and Dizzy. “What about Jabbo Smith?” he asked.

❖ **Jon Faddis** related that when he was about 15, he took 50 different Dizzy Gillespie record albums to the Monterey Jazz Festival, and Dizzy signed them all.

❖ **Red Norvo** told me, emphatically, to “get that tape recorder out of here!”

❖ **Joe Venuti** told me a funny story about a young New Orleans bassist whose playing ability wasn’t yet up to snuff. He said he asked the kid how much he was making on the gig. When the novice said, “\$57,” Joe told him he’d gladly pay him double if he didn’t play any more!

❖ When **Terry Gibbs** told me he'd be back, he wasn't kidding. But not just to play, but also to marry Becky, a cocktail waitress in the restaurant. I attended the wedding, and they have since celebrated their 30th anniversary.

❖ **Pee Wee Erwin** me that the trumpet/clarinet combination that made the "Glenn Miller Sound" was *his* idea.

❖ **Milt Hinton** told me he once had a job as a paper boy in Chicago, and early in the mornings, he would peer through the back windows of a jazz club. There were King Oliver and Louis Armstrong in their tuxedos, having a "taste." Milt said to himself, "That's the life for me!"

❖ I told **Milt Jackson** that I was using his recording of "Enchanted Lady" as my radio theme. He said he never liked that tune.

❖ **Wild Bill Davison** told me he would talk to me "upstairs." When we got there, I saw that he had a small bottle of refreshment stashed in a desk.

❖ **Derek Smith** related an amusing story that occurred in New York, about six months after he first arrived from his home country, England. He went down to the office of the local musicians union and was ready to pay the dues. But the guy there opened a side door, pointed inside, and said, "What's that?" Derek replied, "It's a piano." The man nodded and said, "You're in!"

❖ Upon opening a Village Lounge set, **Frank Rosolino** said to the crowd, "Welcome to Birdland." He proceeded to introduce the trio, and then said, "We'll take a short break now."

❖ **Kai Winding** said, "If you like, my wife Elinor and I would be glad to drive over to your house in Cocoa to give you a copy of my new record." I said that we would like, and so they came and we all became friends.

❖ **Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis** and **Harry "Sweets" Edison** were traveling as a duo after leaving Count Basie. They told me Basie had said: "Go and have good luck, and if things don't work out, you can always come back here."

❖ **Ira Sullivan** told me that he began in Chicago on trumpet, and then found there was more work for saxophones, so he played them too.



(Top) Jack Simpson interviews Milt Hinton, 1982. (middle) James Moody and Lorraine Simpson sing "Moody's Mood for Love," 1983; (bottom) Sonny Stitt and Jack Simpson, 1982.

Photos provided by Jack Simpson

❖ After **Zoot Sims** had explained to me why his horn looked so grungy, and why it would remain that way, I suggested that he relax before the next set. He said, "No, Jack, I'm relaxing here with *you*." For me, it was a remark to remember.

❖ **Sonny Stitt** heard that Milt Jackson, the previous week, had said: "Why doesn't Stitt make up his mind? We all know that the alto is his horn." Stitt said to me: "Who is he to talk? Does he pay my salary?"

❖ Following a blistering opener of "Broadway," **Al Cohn** said to me: "Yes, I like to swing."

When things looked a little shaky at the Village Lounge, Zoot suggested that Bubba Kolb buy a Subway sandwich shop franchise. Bubba did, and now he owns seven shops in Central Florida. Bubba was replaced on piano by Don Scaletta. Then Louise Davis, when transferred by Disney, was replaced by the ex-Clifford Brown bass man, George Morrow, who went on to become a beloved local character. Harvey Lang died, and Barry Smith (and sometimes Don Lamond) took over the drum set.

Before we were married (in 1956), Lorraine wanted to show me that she was really hip. Unknown to me, she took a day off from work to learn the lyrics of the Eddie Jeffer-

son vocalese tune, "Moody's Mood for Love," sung by King Pleasure. The song was based on James Moody's beautiful alto saxophone solo. She did it perfectly and I agreed that she was the absolute "gonest." Twenty-eight years later, I was able to tell the story to Moody himself, as he performed at the Village Lounge in 1983. Later, he called Lorraine up to the microphone for a duet with him on "Moody's Mood," an unforgettable experience for the Simpson family.

In the later '80s, Disney management and its geography changed, and the Village Lounge became a segment in our "good old days" memories. Luckily, Lorraine always made sure that we got a lot of pictures of jazz musicians being interviewed by me, with a few shown here. We still cherish the posters we saved that were mailed out to those on the Village Lounge mailing list. You can just imagine the feelings when those posters hit the jazz fan's mailboxes. For us, it was truly a "Golden Age of Jazz" in Central Florida. ☺

Part Three – Final Reflections



Marek Lazarski

by David Liebman

Gaining Artistic Control

If there is one universal axiom which applies to the arts, it is that the process is arduous and lengthy. The results of study and practice must be seen in a long-term context. Certain technical and conceptual skills are learned quickly but the more subtle aspects take time and perseverance. For the jazz improviser, one must find an acceptable balance between habit and spontaneity. Musically, habitual response means that a musical idea can be executed in real time without conscious thought, while spontaneous expression breathes life and immediacy into the gesture. Under the category of habitual responses in jazz are such skills as acquiring a convincing rhythmic feel, control of the idiomatic nuances of phrasing, instrumental mastery and tone – all encased in a viable soloistic concept. Longer term areas include composition and arranging skills, band leader experience, and a deep grasp of personal expressive devices which immediately identify one instrumentalist from another. Real hours spent in a consistent study / practice routine are mandatory, no matter how naturally gifted one may be, while patience with a view towards long-range results is necessary. Though one may feel pressured by the outside world at-large to mature rapidly, this music demands a minimum amount of time, mea-

sured in years, to yield positive results and a feeling of accomplishment. The pianist Bill Evans wrote: "An individual style develops out of a person's musicianship and artistic need. It comes from being committed over a long period of time to a comprehensive musical development."

On a more subtle level concerning artistic control, sensitivity can be developed but intuition is inborn. It is that inexplicable element which, to some degree, all people have about something(s). When intuition is involved, the results appear to have come about due to no specific cause. (Maybe intuition is the result of knowledge gained from past lives?) An artist should trust their intuition, as it is an important element of the creative process and continues to develop as one matures. Sometimes, it is just a "feeling" that a choice, one way or the other, should be made. For improvising musicians, intuition is very important because there is so little real time to make musical decisions in the moment.

Inspiration

In the beginning stages of the artistic process, inspiration comes from one's idols, mentors and, hopefully, peers. The desire to emulate someone more advanced spurs the young musician on. Once the budding artist has their basic craft together as described above (which also assumes an understanding of the history and traditions of the art form), inspiration comes about as a by-product of being human. Life's everyday interactions, and the universal emotions that all humankind experiences (love, birth, death, etc.), if observed as such, provide ample opportunity to inspire one's work. On a more subtle and personal level are experiences gleaned from the inner psychological states or "passages" of life as one matures. Self-awareness of these cycles should, can, and, in the final result, must inspire artistic creation. In actuality, one's art is a running autobiographical account of a life, available for all to witness, enjoy, and, for better or worse, judge. Being a true artist from this point of view is a challenging job, especially on the psychological level.

As a case in point, as I traveled through my own passages, the titles of original compositions

reflected an ever-changing focus as I grew. The way I write, titles often precede the actual composition, suggesting a musical idea to pursue. At first, inspiration for the titles came about as my subjective reflections of the world, in relation to a personal and obviously self-centered world view. Inspiration came from people, places, and experiences that directly affected my life. In the next stage, motivation was derived from thoughts concerning society, the past, and the world at-large. Presumably, the later years reflect the individual in relation to the cosmos, spiritual matters, and the passing on of eternal verities to future generations; in total, the accumulated wisdom of a life. Of course, each stage co-exists with and reflects knowledge gained from remembrances of past feelings, thoughts, and events. This is what keeps the process fresh and ongoing; the mixture of old and new experiences; the past with the present. Any artist who is aware of his or her surroundings and their relationship to the world theoretically could never run out of material for inspiration.

Matters of Personal and Artistic Balance

"Paying dues" is an expression which describes life for all people, not only artists. Resistance is necessary, at times, in life for forward motion to occur. When life and work are flowing satisfactorily, positive energy is being stored up for the next cycle of trials and tribulations. What goes up must come down! Observing life's cycles, it does appear that, in periods of stress, humankind calls upon both the best and worst in behavior. For an artist, heartfelt inspiration and real inner strength are often revealed at such periods and may result in personal creative pinnacles. Unfortunately, it appears that artists, possibly because of their heightened sensitivities, are more prone than their fellow man to succumb to frustration, depression, and self-pity, which can lead to self-destructive tendencies and lifestyles. One of the challenges of an artistic life is how to experience and gain insight through life's experiences while achieving a living and working balance within oneself and with the world at-large. It certainly appears that, sooner or later, most people strive for some sort of balance in their life. There are times (especially in youth) when "being out of rhythm" may actually be helpful towards attaining self-knowledge. But ultimately, a realistic sense of balance is essential for a long, healthy, and, for an artist, productive life.

In the art itself, the matter of balance is concerned with the seemingly contradictory tendencies of control and freedom. The challenge is to use both aspects at the most constructive moments. Specifically in the area of improvising, an ideal aesthetic balance might be described as total control of the language and tools of music, instrumental virtuosity, mental and intellectual depth, along with a personal flow which allows these and other factors to mix together spontaneously

producing lasting artistic results. The musician who sports a flashy technique to the detriment of musicality is an example of a poor balance. Another example of imbalance is the overly intellectual player who evidences little true passion. As in life, so goes art – there is a constant search for balance between opposite tendencies; the ultimate yin and yang paradigm.

Consistency and Growth

One criterion of what constitutes a professional in a particular field, and especially in the performing arts, is consistency. The ability to maintain a minimum standard with occasional leaps into greatness is expected. If one considers creativity as an ongoing process of problem-solving (for example, the improviser homes in on one specific musical challenge posed by the composition, be it harmony, or rhythm, etc.), the professional is an individual who knows how to confront a new or intriguing "problem" in a disciplined and seamless manner, with the audience none the wiser. Stravinsky wrote in his *Poetics of Music* that: "the more art is controlled, limited, worked over, the more it is free."

By the time an artist has reached their second to third decade of the process, they are particularly ripe for creative breakthroughs. One still retains the energy and enthusiasm of youth yet is mature enough to solidify personal goals not driven by the expectations of others. Furthermore, if an artist has had any worldly success (in material terms; the ability to economically survive as an artist), this individual will have garnered some personal if not public rewards. A sense of pride and accomplishment will be present; yet, at the same time, there is ambition enough to attain further goals. The competitive element is still smoldering in one's thirties, driven to some degree by a combination of ego and peer pressure. As well, there is the understanding that financial security can ensure that one's artistic development and freedom to create will continue unabated. These "real world" forces may help stimulate an artist in a positive fashion as long as they are viewed in a proper perspective and do not control one's life. In general, it appears that by the time the next stage is reached, the artist's creative life is running along, one way or the other. Outside of any physical issues that accompany aging, the positive side for an artist is that one has had years of experience. Artistically, this equates to technical and emotional control and a level of inner freedom which allows the artist to dig deeper towards finding their own uniqueness.

Personal Issues

Artists face the same problems and challenges as anyone else in their personal relationships. Because of their unique lifestyle and heightened sensitivities, there are potentially more complications than the norm. Especially in the performing arts, there is the ever-present danger of playing the same role in real life as one does in performance. An "attitude" and a

public persona are necessary for the performer who faces a live audience (what actors refer to as the “fourth wall”). This reality vs. performer aspect can be tricky and balance is necessary between these two often contradictory forces at work, sometimes on a daily level. For some artists, constant travel also places an extra strain on relationships but there are untold creative rewards in seeing and experiencing the world. One does eventually recognize that what they do, though it does separate them from others in some respects, is, after all, a job like any other. After the flush of youthful adventurism, life usually calms down into a routine not so different from what takes place in the “real” world.

Western society from the Renaissance on has given special status to the artist, resulting in great works as well as heightened neurosis. It’s true that an artist who achieves fame in modern culture becomes a celebrity, possibly enabling them to create without everyday, mundane concerns. However, there is the danger and temptation of commercialization and its deadening influence on creativity. In this cultural milieu an artist is a prime candidate for anxiety and other mental (as well as physical) pressures. In more traditional societies the artist was a member of the community like any other person, fulfilling a specialized function necessary for the well-being of the populace, no different than the farmer or anyone else. This framework was and, in some parts of the world, still is conducive to creativity in different ways than the orthodox Western framework. No matter the context or period of history, every artist within a given culture has to deal with the world they live in, finding a way to accommodate their creative impulses while, at the same time, forging ahead for the sake of their own sanity as well as the art and its tradition.

Communication

Concerning communicating art to the world at-large: if, at times, it is difficult for the artist personally to understand other works in the field, it may be easier to empathize with how the inexperienced public can have problems in comprehension. It’s important that the artist realize what impression a work has on an audience and, without sacrificing quality, attempt to present the work with as much clarity as possible. The desire to communicate with large numbers of people is a specific goal unto itself and, for some, the primary one. If an artist can somehow keep a distinction between the artistic merits of a work and its success, as measured by popularity and acceptance, (s)he will remain on healthy artistic ground. One factor should not be a barometer of the value of the other. A successful commercial piece can be highly artistic and memorable (Picasso’s *Guernica* or Beethoven’s *Ninth Symphony* are two prime examples). But these exceptions and others like them are not the norm. An artist must keep these matters in perspective.

In the final result, an artist’s sense of humanity is what we see, hear, and feel. How the artist sees themselves in



Charles Perry Hebard

relation to the outside world is reflected in their work. Everyone is responsible for their own actions and beliefs, even to some degree in societies where freedom of expression is curtailed. In any given situation there is a point where outside factors, though influencing the results, cannot be used to justify one’s actions or beliefs. This is when a person’s sense of humanity, compassion, respect for others, moral and ethical codes, etc., intersect a creative act. In the final result, an artist’s body of work is a clear indication of where they stand in relation to the world as potential seer, critic, observer, destroyer, or creator of beauty and truth.

Everything one does has an effect somewhere, somehow, and at some point in time, though it may not be contemporaneous. One never fully recognizes the real world influence a work of art can have. To my mind, if an individual perseveres in their chosen field, and discovers through the artistic process the positive and life-affirming values of creation, much has been accomplished – at least on a personal level, if nothing more. Like a ripple in the water, the effect will eventually be felt downstream. Being involved in the creative process and all it signifies, a person has taken upon themselves the responsibility of looking inward to communicate something of value to the world, using their chosen art form as the vehicle to accomplish this. That is, at the minimum, personal bravery of the highest order with the potential to change the world! ☺

this happens to the other guys too. They say, "Well, that's what you've been saying, isn't it?" You've been saying the same thing. But they won't acknowledge that there's a barrier between them and the guy that they have to deal with week after week and somebody that comes in fresh that they've heard about and don't know too well.

FC: Yes.

MA: It's a strange phenomenon. Well, still, going back to Budd and Dizzy – without them, I think I would have been a musical cripple, really. Not that my years wouldn't have [taught] me something but they put stuff into perspective ...and they [instilled] the desire to do it. I got the feeling right off the bat that I wasn't bothering them. And that's a good thing. It didn't give me a feeling of inferiority in any way because they were so anxious to show me what was going on.

FC: That's great.

MA: ...There's more to music than just music. ... The last thing I think about when I write is the actual music. You think about the world around you. You think about form. You think about, oh, many things; your own misgivings about stuff, or your own insecurities and all that. It comes out. Ultimately, when I sit down to write, I just start writing. Very rarely do I have something I've really been thinking about and working out and putting down in sketches.

FC: Do you [ever] do sketches?

MA: Occasionally. Something might hit me in the car, and I'll try to remember it and run in and [write it] on these little pads. But ...it's not ... a complete sketch. I might put down the scale or a chord or a melody line or even sometimes just a rhythm. Diz – the first thing that comes to him is the rhythm and then he puts the notes to it. But it's the rhythmic values of his solos and his tunes and everything. The rhythm comes first.

FC: That's interesting.

MA: Yeah. I don't think that always happens with me, but it does. He told me this years ago; that you think of a phrase, and before you hear it fully, you hear the chords and the melody on top and all. But the phrase can kind of wake you up a little bit. And that's a help. I spent a lot of time with intervals; maybe hearing two notes together [to] see the way they want to react with each other, and then put a third one with them and see what that wants to do. And keep expanding on that way of thinking. It opens up a lot of places that I've never been before because every day those two intervals can change. You can change it just by adding another note.

FC: You have worked with a lyricist?

MA: Yes, on occasion. ...

FC: I know you've written with Fran Landesman.

MA: No, I haven't.

FC: Oh! I thought you had, I'm sorry.

MA: No, no, no. I [haven't written] with ... too many people. I wrote with a gal, she's on the West Coast now. Her name is Nancy Priddy. She was an interesting young gal [who] came out of the '60s feelings and all that – very calm and whatever. I enjoyed doing it but I'm really more into instrumentals. I love to work with ... a singer [who] has a good sense of what the lyrics say. ... But, as far as writing tunes with [lyricists], not too many.

FC: Or poets?

MA: Poets, well that would be something, to work with somebody's poetry. I never felt that I really finished [laughs] writing for a trumpet player or a saxophone player or something yet, you know.

FC: [laughs]

MA: I should. I had an idea years ago. Well, actually, [it was] when I wrote some commercials. In a sense you're dealing with lyrics [in commercials]. But what I don't like about some composers is that the music doesn't quite fit the way you would say the words, if you know what I mean.

FC: Oh yes.

MA: They'll elongate a word that you would never elongate in natural speech.

FC: [Dave] Frishberg is a very good example of writing like you speak.

MA: Well, yeah, but he plays with it. I think some of the opera people did the same thing. I mean, they would curl around a note, and run up and down scales, and then finally finish the word, which is playing with it. But there's still a way of spanning lyrics, I think, to put them in a rhythm that's more like speech. For me, the old blues singers did that very well. ... The old blues singers would just talk in some kind of musical way. But they would tell you their troubles and they would talk, and they would punctuate the sentences with guitar licks, and then they'd come and tell you more. Then they'd think about that a while, while I'm playing this little figure. It's interesting, a lot of it never turned out to be four measures, four measures, four measures, four measures, you know? A lot of it would be, okay, so I'll add an extra half a measure here ...

FC: Yes. [laughs] Yes.

MA: ... and I don't see anything wrong with that.

FC: No

MA: There [are] some singers that do it to me. As much as I like Ella Fitzgerald's sound, in a way, I don't like the way she treats the words in tunes. She'll read a sentence and put a comma in the middle of something that doesn't make any sense, it seems to me. But musically, it's beautiful. So if you close your ears to what she's saying, the music comes out great. But the reading of the message, of whatever the lyrics are, sometimes is pretty strange. She'll take a breath in the strangest place – like a horn player. I kind of agree with that, but then why sing the words? [both laugh]

FC: Do you think that sometimes ... the composer, if he's writing the music after the lyrics were written, deals with it differently than the person who writes the lyrics and the music?

MA: Could be – could very well be.

FC: Like Irving Berlin ...

MA: Or Cole Porter. Yeah, that could very well be. That way you get lyrics handed to you. I think a good combination of lyricist and composer [is when] ... the composer has a good feeling for the style of the lyrics. You know, they work together well and they probably iron out little things. Or sometimes a composer will ask the lyricist, "Can I shorten up on this?" or "Can you add a word here that might make it flow a little bit more?" It's interesting to me because I don't do it. I think maybe if I was really in the middle of all that I might have some ideas. I like to work with intelligent singers. You know, not belters but just people [who] are intelligent about what they're trying to say and have a fairly decent voice and they're in [laughs] fairly good pitch.

FC: What singers can you think of that you've liked?

MA: Well, the last thing I did with a singer was [with] ... Meredith D'Ambrosio. I don't know if you know her.

FC: No.

MA: She's a fairly decent piano player too and she chooses tunes that are not in the mainstream. Some of them are off the beaten track. When she goes back to old tunes, she even brings up things that have a lot more meaning than maybe they did when they were first written. Interesting gal – kind of a nice, deep voice – very quiet. We did an album with her with Phil Woods and Hank Jones and a string quartet when we needed them. ... She's an interesting singer and quiet, you know, [sings] in a quiet way. I don't like people screaming at me.

FC: [laughs] ... So you like to work with instruments?

MA: Yeah, yeah. I think more, having been an instrumentalist myself. Another thing with a lot of singers ... you get them under a little bit of pressure and they tighten. ... And there's a lot of ego that begins to kind of [laughs] come to the front when it shouldn't. I've

been known to walk out of some dates, recording sessions, and it was because I ... [laughs] I knew that the [singer] would never get it. I'd say, we'll make your tracks and that's as far as I can go. I can't get you to ...

FC: [laughs] Can't sing it for you, huh? [laughs]

MA: I can't sing it for you. You'll never learn it on this date. You'll never learn where the intro ends and you come in, and all that. Very strange.

FC: Well, there are a lot of non-professionals doing professional work.

MA: God, yes.

FC: And it's unfair, but that's life.

MA: More and more.

FC: Have you worked with any of these new electronics things? Have you worked with synthesizers?

MA: Some. A little bit, not a lot.

FC: What do you think of that?

MA: [sighs] I haven't made up my mind yet. One thing that I don't like about it is that a lot of my friends aren't working because these things are around. I think that if you could integrate some of those sounds into the sounds that a synthesizer can make, [sounds] that nobody else in the world can do on an instrument ... okay, maybe there's some merit to that. But when you take a synthesizer and say that you're going to replace 16 string players ...

FC: Yeah, no good.

MA: Why? You know. ... Again, [music is] a community.

FC: Well, they can't replace them anyway ... If you hear enough of it, it begins to sound electronic.

MA: Well, see, the danger in that is that there are going to be generations of people that don't know the difference. All they know is synthesized music, and elevator music, and music they hear in the supermarkets or even in the movies, you know? They're used to the sound and sometimes [when] they get to hear something live, it's not enough for them. I can't remember who it was ... somebody asked [them]

to go the opera ... and they said, no, they'd rather stay [home] and listen to the records because the records are better than the live performance.

FC: Wow. That's hard to explain.

MA: It is. Well, they're used to it. I mean, you can put your record player on and have it going all day. Even recorded sound is not the true sound. I much prefer to go and hear it live and see a little bit of perspiration and hear a little bit of air, [the] stuff that they begin to wipe out, you know. But you have to go along with it, in a way. I probably will use some kind of [electronic] keyboard to write [on] one day. The piano is great for me but you can get a little more stimulated by hearing different instrumental sounds if you're screwing around with a keyboard. You know, you punch in a trumpet and see how this maybe would sound. But I'd never use it in place of [a piano]. I might use it to stimulate myself but to sit there and invent the [chart] and set up a drum machine track and then go to a sampler and do a trombone section, I couldn't do that.

FC: And nobody has ever asked you to do that?

MA: No.

FC: That's good – because they might.

MA: Well, I'll tell you a funny story. In fact, it is very pertinent to this. I've got a friend in England, Chris Gunning, a very good composer. He came over here to do a commercial and he asked me to conduct it because the union wouldn't allow him to. This was a [commercial] for a wine company and the lyrics of the thing were "Taste the music," which is a nice thought.

FC: Yes.

MA: He had set up about a 50-piece orchestra: 40 strings, harp, percussion, a couple of French horns, woodwinds and the whole thing, two basses. I mean it was really a beautiful, lush date. The producer for the agency came in, and he looked around the studio, and he looked at Chris, and said, "Oh, I guess you're going to put the synthesizer on later." [laughs]

FC: Awwwwwwwwww.

MA: So Chris looked at him, and me, and said, "Synthesizer? You know, you got 50 people sitting out there. What the hell are you going to do with a synthesizer?"

FC: Well, the mentality is very frightening.

MA: It's a buzz word. In other words, somebody hears that they just did a session for Coca-Cola with all synthesizers. Now, they have to do their next session with [a synthesizer]. They don't even know what it is.

FC: Sure. [laughs]

MA: I'll tell you another funny story with advertising. I had spent maybe two or three weeks going in maybe once a week and looking at a picture, and then talking with art directors, and having a whole [discussion] about a commercial with somebody. And we started talking about the sound that this thing was going to have. We ultimately decided – or I did and they went along with it – I was going to have a guitar player, a string quartet, and a harpsichord for this particular thing. And he said, "Oh yes, that sounds fine." Anyway, to make the whole story short, he walks into the recording session and he sees a guy tuning up his fiddle. And he says, "What is that violin doing here? I hate violins!"

FC: [laughs]

MA: And his assistant looks at him and says, "But we've been talking now for almost a month about a string quartet and a guitar." He thought a string quartet was four guitar players.

FC: Ohhhhhh [laughs]

MA: So, he said, "Okay, well record it anyway." So we record it. He takes it to Mason Adams who was doing the voice [over]. ... Mason reads the first thing and he walks into the studio and he says, "You know, that's one of the nicest tracks that I've ever worked with. It's just beautiful to work with the track."

FC: Good for him.

MA: And the guy looks at him and says, "Oh yeah, well ... we thought right from the beginning it should be a string quartet."

FC: We.

MA: Yeah, we! [laughs] So, that's the way these things work. And, you know, you don't need it. But they have some other language going which has nothing to do with music, and you can't explain to them. If you sit at a piano and you play something, a melody, and you say, well, the French horns are going to play this, or the tenor sax, or whatever, they can't visualize it. And then when they hear it in the studio, it doesn't sound like the piano. ...

FC: And they are the directors of this thing that has music.

MA: That's right. [FC laughs] I think 50 percent of the people ... [who] are originally actors and have to sing roles on Broadway have the same problem. They rehearse with a piano for weeks and weeks and weeks and weeks, and then they come into the orchestra rehearsal and they go nuts. They don't hear the sound anymore. [It] could be the same notes, the same lines that the piano player played. ... But now it's a flute playing, and now there's the brass section. [FC laughs] I've seen them. They start looking around, like "What's going on? This is not why I have been rehearsing all my life."

FC: Interesting.

MA: It is. Music is a hard instrument, as somebody used to say.

FC: [laughs] Yeah, who said that?

MA: [laughs] Somebody.

FC: I think it was Willie, the trombone player.

MA: [laughs] Willie Dennis?

FC: Willie Dennis. [both laugh]

MA: ... My mother had a fairly decent voice. She used to sing around the kitchen. She was really very hip to opera. When she was younger, she would go and stand in the back, you know, get standing room-only [tickets]. ... She and some friends would go. She really lived for the opera.

FC: Did she take you?

MA: No. It was before I was born. And by time I came along, [there were] recordings. She moved away from the cities [so] there [was] no chance to [go to the opera] but [the] recordings were something. ... I find to have music

around the house, I think, is an important thing. ... [I'd like to] play something for you. You might not have ever heard me doing anything like this. ...

FC: Okay.

MA: You've heard what I do for bands and things like that. This is ... for a trombone and string quartet. A monster trombonist ... [Manny plays one of his recorded pieces, "Concierto for Trombone and Strings," for Flo]

FC: Woowww! That's great!

MA: Thanks.

FC: Oh, I love it!

MA: It's fun.

FC: I love all those players, too.

MA: Those are kids from Eastman. Not the trombonist. But the string quartet is all underclassmen

FC: Well, it's beautiful writing.

MA: Thank you. Thanks. Thanks.

FC: Fun, too.

MA: Yeah. The main thing is to have fun. [laughs]

FC: Well, it is fun, isn't it? It is fun. It's very conversational at times, with the back and forth.

MA: Well the idea is not to make it a solo with accompaniment but to make it a real quintet.

FC: Great stuff.

MA: Well, thanks. [Now] I want to play you the girl that we talked about. Where is she? [Manny looks for the record]

FC: Get me the girl! Get me the girl!

MA: Here's the girl. Meredith D'Ambrosio. ... She did a Harold Danko tune, and I think she did a Frishberg [tune]. Let's see. [Manny stops talking while he puts a record on the turntable] Oops, that is going to be loud.

FC: You think?

MA: Oh yeah.

FC: [laughs]

[Manny plays a track for Flo from Little Jazz Bird, the recording he made in 1982 with singer Meredith D' Ambrosio. The interview tape ends in the middle of the tune.] ☺

Pocono Jazz: On Campus and Off



1



2

Garth Woods

Charles Perry Hebard



3

Charles Perry Hebard

(Top, left) Phil Woods with 2008 COTA Cats.

(Top, right), Wolfgang Knittel with the COTA Festival Orchestra.

(Above) Bob Keller, left, and Lew Del Gatto.

(Right) Steve Wilson addresses David Liebman's Saxophone Master Class.



4

Charles Perry Hebard

Jazz education and performance are alive and well in the Pocono Mountains region of Pennsylvania, as evidenced by the many outstanding festivals, workshops and concerts that were presented this summer and fall at ESU and nearby community jazz venues.

And the swinging spirits of Al and Zoot were palpable! Phil Woods ① and the COTA Festival Orchestra ② continued to fine-tune their growing repertoire of classic Al Cohn and other tunes from the ACMJC music inventory by performing sets at both the Scranton and COTA jazz festivals. Bob Keller and Lew Del Gatto ③ honored the two-tenor sound of Al and Zoot at both festivals, playing tunes from their new CD, *To Al and Zoot, With Love* (220 Music).

In the classroom, David Liebman conducted his 21st Saxophone Master Class in August, once again attracting highly-skilled students from around the world ⑤ to ESU. Featured guest this year was saxophonist Steve Wilson, ④ who captivated the class with his personal experiences and technical advice.

Locally, the second edition of COTA CampJazz was held in the Delaware Water Gap, and the students took time out from their clinics to visit the ACMJC in Kemp Library, where they met saxophonist Bob Keller and vintage jazz record expert Herb Young. ⑥

Finally, the ESU Jazz Synergy Series kicked off on Sept. 4 with an "ESU Welcomes COTA '08" concert featuring Bobby Avey, Jay Rattman and Co-op Bop. ⑦ A few weeks later, on Oct. 16, Hal Galper ⑧ and Phil Markowitz ⑨ treated an appreciative ESU student and community audience to "An Evening of Solo Piano Artistry."



Charles Perry Hebard



Charles Perry Hebard

(Left) Saxophone students Jeremy Lappitt, left, and Jun Kojima perform at the Deer Head Inn.
 (Above) Bob Keller and Herb Young with COTA CampJazz students at the AI Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection.



Charles Perry Hebard

Co-op Bop members, from left, Tom Kozic, Alan Gaumer, Nelson Hill perform at the "ESU Welcomes COTA '08" concert.



Charles Perry Hebard



Charles Perry Hebard

"An Evening of Solo Piano Artistry" at ESU featured (above) Hal Galper and (left) Phil Markowitz.

Continued from 3

flight on Dolomiti Air on a toy airplane to Verona. And then the shinola hit the fan. Bag did not show up. Now here is the deal: like in the U.S., airlines are hurting and to save bread, they are flying toy airplanes that don't have roomy luggage space. Consequently, all the bags had to be put under the plane. For some reason, mine, which was checked when I got my boarding pass, was deemed unfit. [Did you know that Swiss Air was the first airline to put doors on the storage shelf? Prior to this invention, all you could put overhead were coats and hats.]

The Verona gig was with Jesse Davis' band. Good rhythm section but the hotel was sadder than McKinley's funeral – even the horses cried. No clean drawers and I don't mean the dresser! The bathroom was the personification of Italian showers – no water, no curtain, no washcloth, and postage-sized towels. But the restaurant was great, of course.

So, I mini-bathed like a pauper but ate like a prince. My bag was at the gig so I changed my shirt and played the gig – then, on to the North Sea festival. This was only the second year that the festival was held in Rotterdam and I was curious about the new venue. Next day was just a travel day – to Munich on another toy airplane. Had a long delay before the flight to Amsterdam – should be no problem with the bag.

Wrong! More delays before take-off. The toy plane again had trouble fitting all the bags. We landed at Schipol in Amsterdam and I sat on the plane for an hour waiting for my wheelchair. I found out that Bobby Hutcherson hijacked it! It finally came and I joined my companions. I let them attend to bags and went to the van to await our departure to Rotterdam, about an hour's drive. And waited. And waited.

Finally, the North Sea guide called and said there was a problem with one of the bags. I asked whose bag and he said he didn't know – but I knew! Yes, they got me again.

Two hours later, I checked in drawer-less in Rotterdam. I was not happy. The hotel sucked, room service sucked, but other than that, it was a wonderful night off. At least the bathroom worked.

Next morning, I spotted Bobby Hutcherson with his wife, Rosemary, both dear friends, and I told him that he was busted for copping my wheelchair but was forgiven (we both have COPD).

However, my bag was waiting for me in my room. I basked in the wonder of a long bath with a fresh costume change, and then hit the gig. No problem! Back to Amsterdam for the flight home and that is your story on that. My bag and I both arrived safe and sound in Newark on the hip Boeing 767 – if it ain't Boeing, I ain't going! Home, sweet, home.

And home meant our 31st annual COTA festival.

I can't believe it was that long ago when Ed Joubert, Rick Chamberlain and I were hanging in the Deer Head Inn and idly talking of the possibility of moving the jam session outdoors. And speaking of the Deer Head: its co-owners – Bob Mancuso, Mary Carrig, Dennis Carrig, and Jason Wilson – are expanding their already considerable efforts to present the very best in jazz, food and lodging, with excellent results.

The day before COTA 31 began, our local newspaper opined that Hurricane Hanna would probably seriously impact our attendance. It did not mention that we had only been heavily rained upon once in 31 years. On that occasion, we moved into the Castle Inn and did not miss a beat.

Ever since then, we have rented a huge tent and, for the first time, used it to good advantage this year. We had 600 people at Saturday's concerts in spite of the horrid weather. This was more than attended the Zebra concert at the nearby Mountain Laurel Center on the same night.

So I thought I would add some pithy details here that readers in other

areas might find of interest:

On the Saturday afternoon and evening of hard-hearted Hurricane Hanna, we had eight bands playing in our COTA tent. Saxophonist Nelson Hill was featured in one of the first groups. He recently played some concerts with the Dave Brubeck Quartet.

The COTA Festival Orchestra featured, among other gifted players, the talents of Danny Cahn, lead trumpet player with Barbra Streisand, and tenor sax man Lew Del Gatto, who played with and was musical director for the *Saturday Night Live* band for more than 20 years. He is retired from that gig and now lives in Florida. He and Bob Keller recently recorded a CD of Al and Zoot's music and their two-tenors performance was appreciated by our hip audience.

The evening came to a terrific close with former COTA cat Nellie McKay singing and playing, everything from standards to her own quirky originals. She was recently featured on Broadway in the *Three Penny Opera* to critical acclaim and has issued her third CD.

By Sunday, the weather had cleared and the hill was alive with the sound of music – enjoyed by loyal fans who had a great day of music, memories and great food. Saxophonist Jay Rattman, currently attending the Manhattan School of Music, composed a piece that was performed by this year's COTA Cats, in memory of Pocono Mountain West High School valedictorian and former COTA Cat trombonist Michael Lacey, who was killed last year in a tragic motor vehicle accident. He was 18 years old.

On a brighter note, Eric Doney, distinguished pianist and composer, was given the prestigious Fred Waring Award. He also put together a piano summit for the festival featuring himself, Jesse Green (who played with his right hand only due to an injury), Bobby Avey, and Dave Lantz. We have incredible depth in the piano department because of Eric's expert teaching ability.

Sherrie Maricle and Five Play were

outstanding. This all-woman band can put a hurtin' on many of the guys. Very swinging! And closing the event was Simone, a local Stroudsburg resident artist and the daughter of iconic jazz singer Nina Simone. We try to only use groups with ties to the community.

This is the backbone of the unique back-story to our annual event that some folks miss. We have no corporate sponsorships. We don't sell alcohol and no one has ever been arrested for lewd, bawdy or lascivious behavior.

And the COTA festival is not the only example of positive community involvement by Pocono musicians and area jazz fans. This past year has been fruitful and productive in several other ways that tell an important community-based back-story too.

For starters, our second year of COTA CampJazz went well this summer. Even though attendance was down, the musical energy was up. We learned a great deal from last year, and our mentors – all having come through the COTA Cats program – were very much on their game in passing the torch to a new generation of great talent.

They are worthy of mention here: Jesse Green, Bobby Avey, Matt Vashlishan, Jay Rattman, Evan Gregor and Chuck Cooper. Outstanding work, guys! (Over the past 28 years, almost a thousand kids have been touched by our COTA Cat mentoring program). Once again, guitarist Spencer Reed and Suite Chirp Vicki Doney contributed invaluable to the Camp. And we were very happy to add David Liebman and Caris Visentin to our teaching staff this year. Bill Goodwin lent his considerable expertise to the program, and even though we had Chuck and Bill on board, there were no trap campers.

As most readers of *The NOTE* already know, last April we launched the first COTA Festival Orchestra "Library Alive" concert at the Sherman Theater in Stroudsburg, PA, to raise funds for the Al Cohn Memorial Collection and the COTA Fund for Young Musicians.

Attendance was not great, but we did raise some money for the causes. The big band also made an appearance at the Scranton Jazz Festival in early August through the efforts of Marko Marcinko, drummer extraordinaire and advisor to jazz educators throughout the Northeast PA area. And we did another "Library Alive" concert at the Sherman Theater on November 10.

Graham Carter's company, Jazzed Media, will be releasing the CD of the *Children's Suite* in the spring of 2009. Fellow COTA flounder Rick Chamberlain tells me that editing is complete on WVIA's six-camera video of the full-stage production of the *Suite* at the Sherman last fall (COTA's Thursday night opening for its 30th). So, it too will be out soon. All proceeds accrued after expenses on these projects will go to Pocono Area Transitional Housing (PATH), so this is also very good news.

A big surprise to COTA and me was our being named as recipients of Pennsylvania's 2008 Governor's Award for the Arts [see "Readers, please take NOTE" for details]. I am honored but the award really is shared by Ed, Rick and the hundreds of volunteers who make our event possible.

This gleaned from the September issue of *Allegro*, the newsletter of Musicians Union Local 802. The headline said: *Bass Player Affirms Right to Take Taxi*. Ritt Henn approached a minivan taxi to hail a ride. He knew his bass would fit because he has the same vehicle. Driver said "No" and drove off. Ritt sued and won! Cabbie got fined. Hooray! At last, some good news.

And this also from *Allegro* (but this is not good news): In September, we lost guitarists Joe Beck and Hiram Bullock, drummer Joe Cocuzzo and trombonist Rod Levitt – all good friends and work mates.

We returned from our annual Long Beach Island vacation to discover that someone stole all of the freshly cut firewood that the tree-trimmers had stacked in front of our house. Probably

a bad golfer – I live just up the road from one.

\$3.95 – we can't afford to yell "Four!" If I was 20 years younger, I would seriously consider moving back to France. Our country seems to have lost its way completely.

In closing, however, some great news! Patrick Dorian, our fellow *NOTE* columnist and founding director of the COTA Cats, who is always there for the kids, was made a full professor at ESU. The right guy for the right job! And he continues to nail those split-fourth trumpet parts. His wife, Mary, is proud, as are we. Kudos to our dear friend. ☺

From the Academy

Continued from 5

performing in the house band at the Tamiment resort (even FARTHER north, PAST Bushkill) and regularly experiencing/causing the musical activity at Werry's. It was actually down a set of stairs beneath the motel behind the pub (underground! ... after hours!).

Spencer Reed first experienced the basement of Werry's when he was performing at Tamiment in 1976. The activity started around 2 or 3 a.m. and would last all night so that the area's resort workers could unwind. Resort musicians would stop by to perform with Wolfgang Knittel, Paul Rostock and Bud, who served as the foundation for many a jam session.

Bud got to know Teddy Platt, who ran the place and tended bar. Teddy and his girlfriend, Rosemarie, loved jazz, and, in fact, his brother was a bassist. To this day, Bud speaks highly of the lima bean soup and Ed Hudak remembers Sunday afternoons sipping Teddy's regionally famous Bahama Mama concoction. When might last call have been at an after-hours establishment? 7 a.m.? 10 a.m.? Paul Rostock fondly recalls Teddy's famous line: "Last call for alcohol . . . no sh*t, this is it!" Speaking of last call, Teddy passed away in the late 1990s. ☺

Sideman Asides

Compiled by Patrick Dorian

Perhaps you needed to be there or perhaps you have to imagine Al, Zoot, and whomever speaking these quips. But no matter how you process these anecdotes, we include them to document another form of auditory joy from the jazz spirit.

Told to Phil Woods by bassist Harvie S at New York City's Tribeca Performing Arts Center in June 2008:

One time Al Cohn was going through a toll booth and the tariff was 55 cents. Al gave the toll attendant a dollar and a nickel. The guy looked at the money and said, "What is this?"

Al replied, "An intelligence test."

Relayed by guitarist Vic Juris:

I played my first gig with Al sometime in the early '80s subbing for his son, Joe, who is one of the best jazz

guitarists in the world. On the way to the club, I kept wondering what tunes Al was going to call and was hoping that I would know the songs, since I would be the only chording instrument that particular evening. My prayers were answered when Al handed me a book with all of his arrangements in numerical order. I raised the music stand so that the top of the music was almost up to eye level so I wouldn't flub any of the charts. After all, this was the great Al Cohn and I wanted to make him sound great!

After the first number or two, Al came over to me and said, "Vic, it's great that everyone in the room knows that you can read music. You will probably get a lot of gigs as a result of this one."

I felt like a complete moron when I double-checked my music stand. The height of it must have been taller than I am: six feet, one inch! Apprenticeship was a bitch sometimes . . . ☺

Readers, Please Take Note

COTA Festival Receives PA Governor's Award

Congratulations to co-founders Phil Woods and Rick Chamberlain, as well as the board members, advisors, musicians and volunteers of the annual Delaware Water Gap Celebration of the Arts jazz and arts festival. Phil and COTA have been honored with the 2008 Pennsylvania Creative Community Award, part of the Governor's Awards for the Arts. The annual honors are a 28-year gubernatorial tradition saluting outstanding Pennsylvania artists, arts organizations, and patrons who have made significant contributions to the advancement of the arts. In addition to Phil and the COTA organization, Governor Ed Rendell presented awards on November 12 at a ceremony in Williamsport, PA

to Michael Keaton, award-winning actor and Pittsburgh-area native; Sascha Feinstein, poet, essayist, and founding editor of the jazz and poetry journal, *Brilliant Corners*; and three other recipients.

The NOTE Cited in Jazz Publication

Thanks to Steve Ramm of Philadelphia, who writes a monthly column called *Anything Phonographic* in the jazz magazine *In the Groove*. Steve recommended The NOTE to his readers in the September 2008 issue ("For years, I've been receiving a wonderful jazz publication that's too good to keep a secret.") and even reminded his audience that although "the issues are free, a contribution is greatly appreciated."

Well, we certainly appreciate his endorsement and kind remarks!

JARO to Salute Big Band Jazz

The next event in the 2008-09 ESU Jazz Synergy Series will feature the Jazz Artists Repertory Orchestra (JARO), under the musical direction of Wolfgang Knittel, on Sunday, February 15. The program, billed as "A Salute to Big Band Jazz," will start at 3 p.m. in the Cecilia S. Cohen Recital Hall in the ESU Fine and Performing Arts Center. Tickets, available only at the door, will be \$5 general admission and free to all students with a current ID.

For more information about this or any other jazz event at ESU, call Bob Bush at (570) 422-3828 or send email to alcohncollection@esu.edu.

I truly enjoyed your marvelous article by Philip Peters about Harry Leahy in the Spring 2008 edition of *The NOTE*. I remember seeing Phil Woods' band at Sandy's in Beverly, Massachusetts, back in the 1970s with Harry on guitar. We had never heard of him at the time; our impression went from an initial "This guy is good!" to being totally knocked out. He seemed to be playing better and better as the night progressed; until we were convinced we were hearing a truly excellent guitarist. His playing was "class" defined, and the occasional comparison to Johnny Smith is probably justified. Players like this often slip through the cracks, so thanks for reminding us. Now, I'm going to listen again.

Mitch Seidman
Boston, MA

I just finished reading my first copy of *The NOTE*. It got here a little late, as it was "mis-sent to Jakarta, Indonesia," according to the envelope (despite the address being written very clearly and elegantly). I think the U.S. Postal Service wants to reinforce the stereotype about American citizens' deep lack of geographical knowledge!

Anyway, I enjoyed the magazine very much, and I'm grateful to you for sending it. I'm a struggling jazz guitarist, so the article on Harry Leahy was particularly interesting to me – I must check out his recordings. I was also gratified to read some film criticism by the great Phil Woods, and to discover that Phil rants about traffic conduct in a manner familiar to a grumpy old man like me. The Al Cohn interview was delightful. He's always appealed to me a lot; he was clearly a brilliant, funny and warm jazzman, and I love the way you're doing his spirit justice with the publication and with the work around the Collection.

I'll try to get myself organized enough to buy an international money

order so that I can contribute something to your project. In the meantime, thanks for including me and best wishes for the future.

Peter Jameson
Belfast, United Kingdom

I assume there are jazz fans as well as film buffs among the readers who might like to know details about the movie *Sweet and Low-Down* mentioned in the interview Phil Woods conducted with Zoot Sims and Pepper Adams (*The NOTE*, Fall 2005).

It's a 75-minute feature made in 1944, directed by Archie Mayo, starring Linda Darnell, Jack Oakie, Lynn Bari, James Cardwell, Allyn Joslyn, and Dickie Moore. The film has a rather thin story line of Benny Goodman giving the poor, slum-bred musician the big break, causing a rift with girlfriend Darnell. But the film's saving grace is the almost non-stop appearance of Goodman and his orchestra, featuring the quartet of Goodman, Jess Stacy on piano, Sid Weiss on bass, and Morey Feld on drums. Also participating is trombonist Bill Harris. Numbers include "Rachelle's Dream" and "Ten Days With Baby" sung by Lorraine Elliot. The source is David Meeker's *Jazz in the Movies: A Guide to Jazz Musicians 1917-1977* (Talisman Books, London 1977).

Congratulations on the great new look of *The NOTE*, and thank you so much for keeping me on the mailing list.

Miroljub Markovic
Varvarin, Serbia

The interview with Bob Dorough in the Fall 2007 issue of *The NOTE* stimulated a lot of memories for me. I've known Bobby for about 50 years, so we do have some history together. I initially met him after *Devil May Care* (1956) came out. He was playing with Bob Newman's group at Mount Airy Lodge. About the turn of the decade (1960), we also had a jazz composer's

workshop at the Deer Head Inn with such musicians as Jay Cameron and Rolf Ericson. Bobby was always encouraging of my efforts to write for five horns on such tunes as "It's A Wonderful World," "Walkin'," and "Manoir De Mes Rêves." Bob Newman was my main teacher/mentor. He was instructing me in Bird's flights on such tunes as "Yardbird Suite." Bob's photo in *The NOTE* impressed me as being earlier than 1954-55 because I recollected him as different from that picture. But he was a beautiful person who taught me about music and life.

Another more recent memory was when Bobby performed at our Central Pennsylvania Arts Festival (CPFA) in the 1970s. He stayed at our new house while we were still in our old one. He was such a gentleman that he didn't let us know that he didn't have any hot water because the heater hadn't been turned on!

The NOTE article stimulated me to contact Bobby about the album he did for Sam Most entitled *Sam Most Plays Bird, Monk and Miles*. He said that he didn't have a copy of it. Therefore, ... I made a copy of [the vinyl] and gave it to him at the Deer Head. He always introduces me to others as having a real doctorate. While I may have helped thousands of children in my practice, I make the point that Dr. Bob has influenced millions of children through his Scholastic Rock series. My own children were raised on Multiplication Rock, even being treated to a personalized version of "Lucky Seven Sampson" in which he changed one line to mention a pie we had treated him with ["I sure do thank you for the apple pie."]. I recently transferred the vinyl to CD so that one of my grandsons could learn his multiplication tables!

The same night at the Deer Head (12-21-07) was the Johnny Coates farewell concert [before his move to south-

ern California]. I talked to Johnny right after the first set, which had concluded with "That's All." I said that I thought he would end up with that. He said that he had something even better. And he sure did. His final song was the moving "I'll Be Seeing You." This was particularly moving for me because I used to sing some lines (with slight alterations) from this song as I put my three sons to bed.

The past flows into the present, the present into the future. I think of Bobby, Bob, and Johnny almost daily. As I move through my musical activities, their memories are often in the forefront. Bobby's effervescent personality and his "Young At Heart" attitude towards life makes you smile. Bob Newman still influences my daily practice, and I hear him exhorting me to blow through the horn and use my diaphragm. And Johnny's exquisite taste and touch on the piano are both discouraging (how could I ever approximate that?) and inspiring for what piano playing can be.

Recently, I was treated to a "swell-egant, elegant" 70th birthday party. As I was getting dressed upstairs, I heard "Devil May Care" coming from downstairs. I thought that my son had jacked up the stereo and was playing it loudly. He invited me to come downstairs and I was shocked to see Bobby playing our baby grand! ... I said, "So, you're

coming to my party!" And my wife said, "No, he's playing for it." Then Bobby said, "I'm your surprise. They couldn't get Sonny Rollins, so they got me."

Then my son Justin told me that he had someone on the phone for me. ...It was Johnny Coates, who himself had just turned 70 in February. He greeted me ... and proceeded to play "Happy Birthday" with some altered/substitute chords. After playing, Johnny told me a story about how when Zoot Sims was playing a New Year's Eve gig that Zoot had played "Happy Birthday" at midnight instead of "Auld Lang Syne," and that he was concerned that he might make the reverse substitution.

The refrain of the party took place in a local restaurant. Bobby played with a local bass player and started off with "Three Is A Magic Number." Bobby is a genius of a songwriter and the quintessential performer. My son had given him a playlist which included "But For Now," "I've Got Just About Everything," "Wake Up, Sally, It's Saturday," and "Devil May Care." I introduced this last song because I had quoted it in one of my books as a way people can learn from music and look at life with a better perspective. It's the bridge that's got the main message:

*When the day is through,
I suffer no regrets,
I know that he who frets,
Loses the night.*

*For only a fool dreams
that he can hold back the dawn,
He who is wise never tries
to revise what's past and gone.*

Then Bobby started at the bridge before going to the beginning of the tune. What a treat it was to have him here.

Since they are all older than I am (Johnny by two months, and the Bobs by some years), they are more like friends and mentors to me. But if they were "My Three Sons," I would have been as proud of them as I am of my own biological sons. They're the GREATEST!! And they'll live on forever in my heart, brain, and body!!

Don Keat
State College, PA

Readers, we love hearing from you! Just make sure you mark your correspondence that it is intended as a "Mailbag" letter (so we know that it's not a personal note), and include your name, city and state/country. Send it to:

Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection
– Kemp Library
200 Prospect St.
East Stroudsburg, PA 18301.

If you send your letter via email, put "Mailbag" in the subject line. Our email address is: alcohncollection@esu.edu. Please note that due to space limitations, those letters selected for publication may be edited.

Contributors & Acknowledgements

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About the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection

Long-time readers of *The NOTE* are no doubt very familiar with the history and makeup of the ACMJC. However, we're delighted to be adding new recipients to our mailing list on a regular basis. So, for those of you who may be just getting acquainted with us, here's a bit of general background information to let you know about this valuable ESU educational resource.

The **Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection** was established in 1988 to honor the life and legacy of "Mr. Music," Al Cohn – saxophonist, arranger, composer and Pocono neighbor. The collection is located on the ground level of ESU's Kemp Library and consists of donated jazz recordings, books, periodicals, oral histories, sheet music, art, photographs, memorabilia and ephemera. All styles and eras of jazz are represented in the Collection, with a special emphasis on the preservation and documentation of Al Cohn's music, his long-time association with Zoot Sims, and the contributions of the many jazz musicians considered to be influences, colleagues, disciples, admirers and friends of Al.

There are also several special collections within the ACMJC. The *Pocono Jazz Heritage Collection* maintains the history of the fertile jazz community here in the Pocono Mountains, through recordings, documents, photographs and a complete set of videos from the ESU Jazz Masters Seminar and Mentor Concert Series. The thousands of exceptional recordings in the *Coover Gazdar Collection* reflect the life-long love of jazz of this avid record collector and discographer. The *Eddie Safranski Collection* contains personal materials from the acclaimed bassist who played with the Charlie Barnet and Stan Kenton orchestras in the 1940s and worked as a music director for NBC in the 1950s and 1960s.

Materials in the collections are available year-round to students, researchers, musicians, journalists, educators and jazz enthusiasts, and are used as part of the ACMJC's outreach activities, such as the publication and world-wide distribution of *The NOTE* three times per year, and the weekly radio programs, *Jazz from A to Z* and the *Pocono Jazz Hour*, on WESS 90.3 FM.



Garth Woods

Bob Bush and Bill Hopkins, co-hosts of *Jazz from A to Z* on WESS 90.3FM, at the ACMJC/Jazz at ESU information booth, 2008 COTA Festival, Delaware Water Gap, PA

The Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection Needs Your Support!

Donations to the ACMJC are gratefully accepted and help to sustain the Collection and *The NOTE*. Corporate matching gifts are very welcome too! Please make all checks payable to "ESU Foundation – ACMJC" and mail them to:

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To donate materials, please call the Collection Coordinator at 570-422-3828 or send email to alcohncollection@esu.edu. And to all those who have so generously contributed to the ACMJC in the past, please accept our heartfelt thanks!

For more information, visit the ACMJC website at www.esu.edu/alcohncollection.



Hank Jones, Bern, Switzerland, 1985

Photo by Herb Snitzer,
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