



## Wynton Marsalis

Location: Walpole, NH

Date: June 12, 1999

**... From the 1830s and the 40s, and it seemed important to somehow understand and tolerate an essential undertow to minstrelsy.**

Well, the ironic thing about minstrelsy is that in one way, the imitation of the Negro characters is a compliment by the white people because of the, the old cliché, "Imitation is the highest form of flattery." But they couldn't find themselves to really imitate anything complimentary about the Negroes so it always had to be shuffling and Tom-ing and grinning and skinning, unless it was Zip Coon who had a harsher personality. And then we have a real ironic situation when the black minstrels are, are born and they start imitating a white imitation of some, of the behavior of some black people.

**It seems to me at the heart of it is this notion that African-American life and culture supposedly kept out at the margins of American society is actually at the center of it. And that's the beginning; it's laying... We've got a whole network of a minstrelsy which is essentially spreading however fractured a gospel of African-American life.**

I think that there's something that was so resilient in the black people and that everyone in America could recognize that resilience. And that was something that was really necessary to survive in America. And even though it was masquerading farce and comedy and dance and a form of music, and it was, it seemed like it was uncomplimentary, actually it was something centrally American about it. And that was the beginning of a long relationship between blacks and whites and black entertainment and white appropriation of it, and the addition of white things, the addition of black things and this strange dance that we've been doing with each other since, really, the beginning of our relationship in America.

**And, and we shouldn't fail to also underscore that all through this time to the present, there's a degrading aspect to minstrelsy. Is that?**

There's a degrading aspect of minstrelsy only because to address the actual emotion would be too powerful. It's like in your family, or it's like a lot, a lot of times, a man and a woman, or it would be someone that he really loves and he can never bring himself to say, "I love you." Or any other emotion, it the actuality of, that actuality of which you feel. In, in a way, (let me try to switch it because that, that one didn't work) it's really like a lot of actors will say that they are, they act their best when they're given a role that has nothing to do with them. When they have, when they have to assume a role that's like them, it's too close and that's how black and whites have been in the United States of America. It's too close; it's too deep a story so you have to degrade the relationship. You have to do degrading things so that you can live with the tremendous affront to humanity that slavery was. And then you can come to grips with it in the form of humor, in the form of far..., farce. Then you don't feel so bad about it. But you're still dealing with it and that's where the blues started to come in.

**That's what I want to bring up. We led ourselves down the garden path, in the wrong direction because in our blues section we start with the guitar blues which is from another idiom altogether, in a way. And what I need to understand is this connection between the early call and response of a church and then how the blues brought in and became, bringing their horns in became a kind of singing horn. Talk about the influence of the church. We've said there're two main influences after the war but really, there're three, are there not?**

Well, you have the tradition of the spirituals in slavery which have a, a very deep and profound spiritual connotation. And then you have the Afro-American version of hymn-singing which was all over America, people are singing these hymns, but the Afro-American has a style of hymn-singing, a style of a, of, of call and response in the church - the reverend says something and you respond - and we find the musicians starting to pick this up in New Orleans because there's all these horns left over from the Civil War and they're playing marching band music. Well now they're playing hymns, too. And when they play the hymns, they play the straight hymn and then they add a little something to the hymn, and that little something that they add, well, that's jazz. And they start to add it and they're singing when they add it. And the style that Buddy Bolden was said to, to, to play, they said they played "singing horns." And they sang exactly like that, that deacon in the back or, or the sister in the front row that sang with a lot of fervor and feeling and emotion.

**Put me - I have to separate the time - Buddy Bolden's a separate chapter. But the Civil War left horns and they began to use those horns to do the call and response. Don't take me to jazz yet; keep it**

**in post Civil War. New Orleans is liberated and in that liberation, tremendous energy comes and there's something that's being drawn out by musicians from the church.**

OK. You have, you have musicians playing their horns. They have all these instruments that are left over from the Civil War, and, like military instruments, and the trumpets that are played in a militaristic style: Boom-boom ba boomboom boom boom boom boom! Then, all of a sudden, they start si.., playing these songs, hymns: do-oo-oo dee dee boo- dee-dee-da... but instead of playing in a straight military style of a, of a, of a hymn or beautiful melody, now they're imitating the sound of the people in the church singing. They have what's, what, what the vibrato at the end of the note – they shaking those as: doe-oo-oo-oo dee-ee dee boodeedle loo-dee-ee... then the music gets another power in feeling.

**Now, Buddy Bolden, this singing horn thing – if you can talk about it and bring me back, the call and response of the church brought me to combine with the blues... I want you to leave Buddy out of this. I just want to be in the blues section and the blues men are imitating the call and response of the...**

Well, in a strange twist, well the way things most, let me see... In the way that profound things almost always happen, a thing and the opposite of that thing are matched together. And that's what we find in the secular and in the sacred music. The blues, which is the section, secular music, comes out of church music and out of the amen cadence, "Amen...," that you sing in church. And a lot of the blues phrasings and the sound of the blues is exactly like the sound that you would hear in the church. And the musicians are all in New Orleans and they're listening to this. They hear, in the churches that they're going to, they hear people singing in that type of style and then they're hearing the sound of the blues coming through. And the blues, even though now they're singing about a man and a woman – it's "My baby left me and something bad happened to me..." they're hearing the same sound that they hear in church.

**And in churches, the singing of churches, now we're finding that the instruments are able to sing in a way, in a higher level.**

Now, you have the people singing about getting the spiritual sound of the church and they also are getting that secular sound of the blues. And the musicians who could understand both of those things and put both of them on their horns side-by-sides, so they could represent that angel and that devil, hnn, that was the ones that could play.

**Buddy Bolden and the singing voice of that.**

Buddy Bolden is the first great synthesizer. He's, he's a composer, because he's making up his music and making it sound logical. He's a performer because he's performing at the same time. He's a great cornet soloist

because he can play the trumpet in a somewhat virtuosic fashion. He's the first jazz musician because he sounds better than the people in the church singing. With the horn. He's playing his horn with so much expression that one lady said, "Every time Bolden played, your heart broke." Know... One, one lady said, "Every time Bolden played, you felt his heart was breaking." So he could sing with that fervor and the feeling of the human voice which is much more flexible than the horn. And then, he could play the rag-time music. He understood the sophistication of the harmonies and then, he could play the blues. And we're always saying that because Bolden's music was the blues, they played with feeling because it was... Wait a minute, let me say it again. They used to always say that because Bolden's music was syncopated, the people danced. Because his music was the blues, they danced with feeling, and because it was jazz, they danced with feeling and accuracy. And that's Bolden. He invented that beat that we call the Big Four. That, that skip on the fourth beat, or so legend has it. And once he put that rhythm with the song, that's what we have. Incantation and percussion. Boom. Boomdooda be-fore we talked about it.

### **What is the Big Four?**

The Big Four is when you accent the second fourth beat of a march. So you, in a straight, strict march you'll be going doom-chi-doom-chi doom-chi-doom-chi doom-chi-doom-chi doom-chi-doom-chi. With the Big Four, you go doom-chi-doom-chi doom-chi-ka-doom boom chi-doom-chi-doom chi-ka-doom-boom. So on that fourth beat, the drum and the cymbal hit together. And that point is where jazz music started to really get its lilt.

### **What's the peephole story? He told his great grandmother he was a night watchman. Just start it there: he told his great grandmother. He told his great grandmother he was a...**

Well, you know, Jelly Roll told his grandmama that he was a night watchman and he wasn't lying. But he didn't tell her what he was watching. Because he worked in these houses of prostitution, he had the best seat in the house. They had a little peephole and he would c..., he would play to the choreography of the prostitute. And he would get tips based on how successful he was. So if he really came up with something hip when they do a little twist or turn there, they give him a little extra money.

### **Part of the danger, or part of what makes jazz so risky for so many people is that it does go through a door that leads into places where people are... it's a very sexual place. And part of jazz is its ability to articulate that language of intimacy.**

Well, that adult sensuality and that adult sexuality should not be confused with pornography that's in jazz. And jazz is real. It deals with that man and that woman. It deals with things that might be perverse. It deals with depraved things because the musician saw all of these things. New Orleans

was the hotbed of that type of sexual activity and we weren't Puritan. In New Orleans with no, no Puritanism, those people were living life and we say, in jazz music it says, this is what we do and it's beautiful. And it's also terrible. But that's what gives our music its bite and its feeling and that's what the world wanted from our music. It didn't hide what went on under the sheets. Yeah. This goes on; it's been going on and it's going to keep going on 'cause it's good.

**Swing. In the 20s there was a misinterpretation and you can re-capitulate this for me, of African-American sensuality or sexuality in a kind of sense of broad license. But in swing, there's a discipline imposed which was about the courtch..., the ritual of courtship. Give me a sense of what jazz is doing in the early 30s.**

Well, a lot of the emotion of the jazz in the, in the 20s was a misreading of the Afro-American sensuality. Because the sensuality of a woman was very important in Afro-American community. For many of the whites, it seemed like some freedom and promiscuity and lack of morality. Well, now, as we get into the thirties, people are starting to make sense out of this new-found sexual freedom and we start to return to the rituals of courtship that are central to the art of romance. And the musicians start to have it; the female singers in the bands, the way people look, the way that they're dressed and the music starts to take on that high tone that still has the sexuality in it, but now, it's not like amazement at some new toy - it's more of a recognition of jazz. This is who we are and this man, and we love these women, and we want them to love us. And this is our sound. And then people start to swing.

**What did radio do? You said an amazing thing: it didn't, you know...**

Segregate. Well, we have to realize that just like in New Orleans, a, a band would march down the street; everybody heard the music. Buddy Bolden's open this trumpet up. If you were white, green, red, it didn't make a difference. You were going to hear some swinging jazz music. If you played trumpet, you wanted to play like him. The radio did that in an ad... The radio did that nationally. Now, you could be in Dubuque, and you could hear somebody playing in a ballroom somewhere in New York, many times, you, you didn't know whether the band was black or white. All you knew was, Man, whatever this is, I want to get a part of this. And the radio did a lot to break down segregation. In fact, even though the laws remained, in fact those m..., tho..., the, in fact, people all around the United States of America were listening to the mind and the soul of the Afro-American unguarded. They could really check out the music of Duke Ellington, the music of Count Basie.

**Because the airwaves were not segregated.**

Right. Because the airwaves were not segregated and could not be segregated.

## **I want to talk about Miles's style.**

Yeah.

### **It's important not to respond to Miles's style with any didacticism. What is he, who is he speaking to? Why can a woman hear that?**

Well, Miles has really a bisexuality in his sound. And his sound is very, very tender to come out of a man. Lester Young was like that before him. And he, he comes to, t..., he devel..., he, he comes to New York and he's playing the style of Charlie Parker and of D..., really mainly of Dizzy Gillespie, which is very fast and athletic and muscular. And he starts to realize that that's not him. He has to find a sound and a style that has the more delicate side of his nature. Now, he still has that r..., that toughness and that blade up in there, so his sound is not weepy or weak. But it has another type of delicacy and a type of sen..., it has a sentiment that draws the romance out of the music and presents it to people. He has a vulnerability that he's not afraid of sharing with people that are listening to him. And once that, once he, he allowed that vulnerability to come into his sound, and he has that kind of hidden quality that it has - he would put the mute in front of the trumpet - well, then his sound became irresistible.

### **We confuse things when we begin to blame white musicians for the sins of the society and at the same time, African-American musicians have always had to deal with the fact that they knew that their playing was superior but it was always the white musician that was being promoted.**

We have to realize that the c..., relationship between the musicians is very complex because we're all in the same craft and we work on the same things. And you take a young white kid that might be 13 or 14 when he first hears Buster Billie on the clarinet, in the case of somebody like Benny Goodman, he loves that sound. He's not thinking to himself, "I'm going to grow up one day and I'll be, because I'm white, I'm going to be known, and I'll become the King of Swing." He's thinking, "I sure would like to play like Buster Billie." And they come around the bandstand, they're hanging with the musicians and the black musicians love to have the attention of the younger musicians, whether they're white or black. They want to show `em whatever they can because they want the art form to grow. The white musician learns how to play and gets to a certain degree of proficiency, not as good as the black musician that they learned from, but then, they're gobbled up by the larger society, and they're elevated far above the black musician. Well, this put them in a compromised position, also. And ... because Benny Goodman didn't say, "I'm the King of Swing." Well, now he's in the position where he's making all of the money; he's getting all of the publicity. All the girls love him. And the musicians that he learned from, whose musicianship maybe he hasn't surpassed, they're saying "What about us?" And then a certain type of

animosity is then created which is not a part of the purity and the actual feeling that musicians have when they're trying to learn and deal with music. And also, a lot of the black musicians are taking music from German band instruction, band instructors and people from Europe and white American instructors. The music itself is, is not segregated in any way the way that the society is. You've got like George Gershwin, he's a piano player.. He's out, he's listening to James P. Johnson, Fats Waller. He's trying to learn. And they also are listening to him.

### **How do I understand John Lewis and his success?**

Thank John Lewis and, and Dizzy, and a lot of musicians with real intellectual interests, Miles Davis, they realize that the bebop musical was one way of playing but it was not jazz. And they were always trying to connect the music to itself and not end up being some lost patrol of people out away from the main body. In the case of John Lewis, we see the very sophisticated arrangements, using music that grooves from all over the world, addressing the classical music tradition. We also see his piano style develop coming out of Duke Ellington and his solo style like Louis Armstrong. But he's a, a pianist who's rooted in the bebop tradition. Played in Dizzy Gillespie's Bebop Band with Dizzy Gillespie. We see the humor, the, the attempt to bring the Big Band back, to have people dancing, reaching out to music of other cultures with John Ripozo and a bunch like Duke Ellington did before him and Jelly Roll, before him.

**Dope changes the whole landscape. Before, there's a toleration for the excesses of the musician. Dope changes everything and it also makes the jam session the model. It takes, it used to take place after hours when you're showing off and now forces the paying customers to be subjected to that kind of virile egoism.**

Yeah, dope t..., dope, dope really took a lot out of the development of the music because the musicians would be playing in jam sessions and you don't rehearse for that. You just play and you enjoy each other's playing. But a paying customer, you, it was always more formal. You'd have a chance to rehearse and you get everything together. Well, now everybody was high and they didn't want to spend that time working on the music. They just get together, play, play a head, which is your sixteen measures or something of a little melody, then a long string of solos. And then also, the, the, the social relationship between the musicians changed because a dope addict is trying to get money all the time and they create this clannish environment where if you're not a part of that dope crowd, they don't want to hang with you. They want to make you feel like you're an outsider. So then they go from being outsiders, being in the jazz; well, now they're insiders. They're a part of this, of this dope world. And the network of houses musicians used to stay in during segregated times, the houses of black families, well they can't do that now because the dope... Mu..., musicians will come and they're stealing from the people and they just having a negative influence on the family life of

these people. And the musicians themselves become harder and more guarded. And less, there's less love to go around. Because that dope is sucking all the love up.

**And yet, you can sympathize with an art form that makes you high as you play, needing some kind of outlet.**

Yeah, well, dope is not a matter of who's wrong. Because anybody can fall victim to dope. You encounter it and it makes you feel so good, you have to have some more. And then, you got to just keep having it. And when you're playing music, jazz, you could lose track of time. You just playing; you're in this world and it, the world that you're in is perfect. You're just searching for something and you're trying to hear it and you find it in the minds of other people or they're floating in this invisible world of music, when, and you have an audience of people that's idolizing you, they love the fact that you're playing. It's a tremendous high for your ego and also for your spirit and your sexuality is high, because the s..., of the sexual aspect of the music. Well now, soon as that music is over, that too is over. Maybe somebody might come up to you, if you're lucky, you might be able to hook up with a woman and have a good time for a night, but many nights you're not. You ain't going to hook up with one every night. But that dope is always there for you, if you got the money for it. And the dope is going to make you maintain that high. And then also, when you're a musician, you're very sensitive to the world you're living in. Now, these musicians were very, very intelligent men. A man like Charlie Parker, he understood what the United States had to offer, and how far short of it, it our country fell. And he was deeply concerned with this thing; it had a profound impact on him. It was very painful. The dope is there to tell you, "It's alright, man." Somebody call you a nigger or, you know, you don't get..., you, you... And it ain't even just the fact of someone calling you a nigger; the fact that there's healing that you have to give to the country, they're not going to get that healing from you because of who they perceive you to be based on the color of your skin. That's the most painful thing, because that healing that Charlie Parker has to give the Untied States of America, well, that's his spiritual reason for beening... Well, that's his spiritual reason for being on Earth. And that hurt him even more than you calling him a name. Now, that dope is going to tell him, "Oh, man, that's alright. That's alright. Everything is fine."

**And dope just didn't happen.**

No. We have to realize that the dope, the, the dope didn't just happen because the, because of the racial condition of the people, I mean. I remember the great Art Blakey telling me once when he was in, in high school, he could go into, to the corner drugstore and they were selling dope, giving tabs of dope away to people. And selling it for a nickel like it was gum or something. And it was something that was consciously put into the black community and it, it, it, it extracted a very terrible toll, the legacy of which we're living with today.

# Wynton Marsalis

Location: A&J Recording  
Date September 11, 1999

## **We should start at the beginning, which is, of course, Louis Armstrong.**

I think that we need to understand that Louis Armstrong grew up in a, in a area that's been romanticized, but the actual fact of living in that area was not pretty. There's speculation that his mother was a prostitute. Knife fights, gun fights, razor fights were, were a regular of life and the many things that happen when people are poor, uneducated, and in, in a s..., in a small space together. Like guys that are beating their wives and getting drunk every day. People who were trying to intimidate you and take your money. Little things that there's no reason that he would, would, would mention later in his life. The feeling that you are helpless and that you need to be pro..., protected. Just meaningless violence perpetrated against you and you having to have a... And also you being extremely fearful. Louis Armstrong talks about how sometimes he didn't know when he was going to eat or his, his mamma would... Louis Armstrong talks about how his mamma could stretch, stretch a meal and that sometimes they were on a level of poverty where he didn't know what was going to come next. He was used to his stomach growling. Now, somebody saying that in words is a story that we're used to hearing, *Horatio Alger* is a famous story but you have to think about your, your own stomach grumbling, and your, your own kids coming home tonight and not knowing if there's some food. And you, you having to boil some pork bones or something in some water and eat pork-bone soup and your, your kids not being able to walk out in the street or... Not being able to walk out on the street is not the right analogy. Your kids or, or you being endangered or, or you having to go out and sell yourself to make some money. See? Well, a lot of times in these situations, we have to put ourselves in this, in, in the same condition and then we can get a clearer understanding. And this is the environment that Louis Armstrong grew up in. But it was not devoid of joy. 'Course these people are also very colorful. That same guy that might b..., be out in the street drunk every day, hitting on his wife, acting crazy, doing the most reprehensible thing you ever saw, might be the funniest person in the neighborhood. And this environment gave Louis Armstrong an understanding of the complexity of life and he, he, it really gave him a first class understanding of the blues.

## **Early in his life, he is taken in by his grandmother ...?**

Here's a man... You have to realize with, with Louis Armstrong's relationship to the Karnovsky's that you have to think about a little kid that realizes something is wrong. And they don't know what it is, but soon they realize that what's wrong is the color of their skin and that now they're the object of barbs from the outside world. Being called "nigger," seeing grown men called

"boy" and addressed in a disrespectful fashion, feeling the fear and the, the, the, the overwhelming... Let me see. Feeling the, the fear and helplessness... See, how I can really say it. Growing up and feeling that the older people around you cannot protect you from this thing that exists, which is not the racism that we call out today, but a, a, a something that had been in practice for two or three-hundred years at that time, of just completely degrading and debasing a group of people and the people didn't accept the debasement – it's not like they said, "We, we are less than human," but there was a certain social order in things that they were raised to accept. And the way that white people would treat a dark-skinned Negro like Louis Armstrong, almost as if his humanity was not even... it, it's as if he was a ca..., one of those donkeys or a horse or something. Now this is something that we don't see a lot today. Well, we don't understand that that's how things were for a lot of people and it, it will give you a, a ve..., a profoundly negative outlook on white people in general. But because that was just the way things were, it wouldn't be the type of negativity that we would express. It, because also you would accept it because that's all you know. And then, into this environment comes somebody who's like the people that you have seen degrade all the other people you know. But all of a sudden, they're nice to you and they treat you like you're a human being, and they invite you in, into their home and they, they try to look out for you and, "Have you had some thing to eat?" And using our modern sensibilities it's easy for us to scoff at that, like, like the people are doing, trying to get a grant or salvation work. But in real human terms and what it meant to a little, a little boy at that time, we can see how that would profoundly, we could see how that, that would shape Louis Armstrong's understanding of what is possible. And that act allows him to understand that well, this is not just the nature of white people. That's just these white people. It allows him to understand in concrete terms that the things that are wrong and the way that we're being treated is a conscious decision by these people that act this way and they don't have to be like that. That's why later in his life, when he says, "They teach it in school. They've been avoiding that Constitution all, all these years. They teach it in school, but somebody tells 'em to, to not pay attention to it. Maybe it's their parents or something." It's, it's then, with the Karnovshy's, as a boy, he understands well, we're all human beings. It, it's possible for some white people to treat you as if you're a human being, too. And this is an important part of his life. I don't know if that was clear or not.

**I want to deal with Ellington in his early biography, before he moves to DC. He seems, unlike Armstrong, so difficult to know. What's important to understand?**

The thing that Duke Ellington has that separates him from all of his other friends and people he's around is he has a great artistic sensibility, which means that he understands, he has a very... He has a very broad vision of what's going on in any given circumstance. He has the ability to order things. He knows who's who, who has the power, who's the funny guy, who's the one who knows where all the women are, who's the gangster, who's the one

to watch out for. And he can make, he can assess these things very quickly. He's definitely going to be in the top level of the intelligence of who, who's ever there. The top level of intelligen..., He's definitely going to be one of the most intelligent people and he's very handsome. So women love him, and he has great manners and he knows how to get along. He's not a pushover and he's also big. He's not a little small guy. So all the guys who might want to intimidate him, they look at that size and say, "Well, we might not like the way this boy talks but we don't really want to take this chance of jumping on him." And he's a very social person, very well-spoken, witty, knows how to come up with them one and two-liners that can get somebody from the pool-hall to the bedroom and he knows how to use that to his advantage. When he was 18, I think, or 19, he, his job was booking bands. He took out an ad in the telephone directory. Was it the telephone or was it the newspaper? Telephone, right?

### **Telephone.**

He took out an ad in the telephone directory saying that, "If you want bands, call Duke Ellington." So he was providing jobs for other musicians. He was like the, the, the contractor. And that's something that's, you have to be pretty enterprising to be 18 or 19 and have that type of job. And also, the musicians have to respect you. Now, that's not an easy job. And also Duke Ellington was an artist. He received a scholarship to Pratt, (right?) Pratt. He received a scholarship to Pratt Institute and this shows us that he had an artistic sensibility. Right?, he understood what was going on, and when you understand what was going on, it doesn't really make a difference where you from. You can be from wherever everybody else is. 'Cause when you understand what's going on, you become the person who everyone is looking to, to make the scene and under... that's not what I'm trying to say. When you understand what's going on, you're never out of place. You can always find your place, and people want you to be in their company, because they know you're going to bring something that's needed.

### **How is it that Louis Armstrong, this hick from New Orleans, with underwear sticking out the bottom of his pants, with tied up shoes... how does ???**

Well, the story of Louis Armstrong and Lil, that's one of the great stories, great romance stories. Because you have a guy from New Orleans, not the most handsome person in the world, had already been married to a prostitute, was, was kind of a wild country boy. And she's slick and city-fied, and has this school intelligence. They're in the band; she starts to hear his trumpet playing, but she doesn't really know what he's playing. All the guys in the band are hitting on her, men hitting on her all the time. And then she hears him play in the studio and she sees they have to move him away. They start to... I want to bring something to this. And then they going to make this recording. Now, we have to realize that until you hear yourself on a recording, you know what you've heard, but you don't actually know.

Because when you're playing with a musician, or even when you're listening to them, it's just going on. The music is so much in real time. Just like hearing your own voice. You're not, you know what somebody else's voice sounds like, but you don't really, it's not objectified. It's just their voice. Now when you hear their voice on a tape, well, that's very different. So when they started to make this recording, the majesty of Louis Armstrong became apparent to everybody in that room. First, in the story, first in the fact that his sound was so big they had to move him away from the horn. So, automatically, Joe Oliver and everybody's looking around like, Oh man, maybe we need to be putting more sound out. Then they start to listen to the, to the pressings. Now, there's no telling how many pressings they heard – maybe five, six, seven of each song. And each song, they'd be telling Louis Armstrong he has to back up some more, he sounded unbelievable on each one. His rhythm, his drive, his feeling and Lil Hardin is listening to that and she saying, "Hmm. (laugh) OK. This country boy is playing a lot of horn." And by the end of the session, he's way off there on the side, and she says, "I felt so sorry for him all over there by himself." But she was looking at him by himself saying, "Hmm, he's doing something very different from what the rest of 'em us are doing. And I want to get me some of whatever that is that he's doing."

**I want to get to the central crux of the issue – trying to understand, pre-Bix, the whites area traveling band... a watershed moment???**

Well, I think that, that the, the Austin Hyde kids, when they start to go to Chicago, this is something that goes always back to Uncle Remus. But the difference was Old Uncle Remus, he was this old helpless man, old uncle sitting down, telling the little white kid of the ways of the world and all this, these stories that could put them in touch with the jungle as well as the mind. Well, now this has been transformed because the men that these kids are looking out on the stage now are well dressed, sophisticated men and Louis Armstrong is close to their age. So they're looking at a man... There's the element of competition in there, as well as awe, as well as envy, as well as respect, as well as love, reverence, there're many things there. Shame. Because now here's some white kids who've been taught these people are inferior to you their entire lives. That's every newspaper article, everything we've seen, the mythology of America's all saying, "A nigger ain't shit." That's what you have been taught. Now, you're standing up and you're looking at these men playing and you're a musician. You're saying to yourself, "Boy, I sure wish I could play like these guys." How do you feel when you, how does that make you feel? We could put ourselves in that position. If you were taught that way, to think that way about women or Chinese people, or Japanese or any person that is not you, and then what you want to be the greatest people in that are the people that you've been taught to disrespect. Where do you put them?

**So this is almost, not heroic effort to move downward, but this is, there're incredible pressures on these white people who've been**

**taught that you can't get anything from this source, and yet, their whole being is ???**

Well, then at that time, there would be in..., tremendous pressure placed on these young white kids. First, because they're the first generation of white kids to really have a, a reverence and a respect for black people who in their minds are objectively superior to them. Jack Johnson might have won the heavy-weight championship but he didn't have a, a throng of followers of young kids who wanted to be like Jack Johnson. And also, let me see. How can I say it? I'm, I'm, I'm not, let me get to, right to the idea that I want.

**I think that jazz, like you said last night, is this opportunity, the first opportunity for and that creates, this isn't just a Pollyanna liberal vision of Utopia. This is going to cause severe psychological dislocation for the whites?**

OK. Right, I see. Now, when the, when these white kids come now to hear King Oliver and Louis Armstrong playing this music, we have to realize that this is some of the most abstract and sophisticated music that anybody has ever heard, short of Bach. And they're listening to it and they are musicians, and they, they're attracted to the groove and the feeling of the music. Well, they've been taught their entire lives that nothing of any good can come out of some niggers. And now, they're listening to this, and they're saying, "Man, this is what we want to play like." They start playing, and they keep coming down. And they start learning. Joe Oliver's inviting 'em into the music. They say, "Well, we will come into the South Side, all black club." This handful of white kids come, come in and hear musicians and there're adults in the club, and they're, these are kids coming into an adult club, and the bandleader, the great Joe Oliver, from New Orleans, now in Chicago says, "Let these white kids come in and listen to this music," not because he wanted to patronize them. Because he wanted, he knew that they were really listening to this music. Now this was, was probably a very curious thing to him. Not that he hadn't seen that in New Orleans. But not in Chicago, on the South Side. And here's a group of kids from the same place, where all musicians were coming out every night to hear his band play. He said, "OK. These kids are alright." And Joe Oliver's OK was like a wave of approval to them. Now, they go out and start learning how to play the music. Well, what is the society's response to them? Hmm, well. Either they can make it and be known as the white this, which is not the thing that made them want to play the music in the beginning. Or else, they can be scorned by their parents, as playing dirty black music that's going to just make you be a drunk and in the gutter and, and have all kind of good sex that you ought not be having. Or, they're going to grapple with the art form and learn how to play it and become as good as they can play, but even if they become the great, as great as they can possibly be, which is the case of Bix Beiderbecke, they still going to be far short of Louis Armstrong. And he is their contemporary. So, how do they, then, as men with the natural competitive drive that a man has, and a desire always to be number one, and be white and be taught that

you should be number one, how are they going to come to grips with this as they grow in, into manhood? And that was the great question that confronted them throughout their entire lives.

**Bud Freeman says, "In those days, we were brainwashed into believing blacks were inferior to us, to look down on any race that wasn't white... their way of life equally as important as...?"**

Well, we hear when the musicians speak, like, like Bud Freeman, and Jimmy McPartland, we hear when they talk that they yearned for an America that is true to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and to the religious doctrines, the heart of these religious doctrines. But we have to all, also realize that it's, it's the, the, the stuff of myth of Louis Armstrong and these men. That's how it always is in myth. The person who... Cinderella. The one who you keep out and you push down and you kick – that's the one with the moral authority, with the gift. That's as old as night, night and day. That's as old as dust. And it's not about black or white. But here it is now, that same myth, in black and white. And here're these white guys that want to learn how to play this music for the beauty of it. And for the love it and they recognize that this music has in it a love of this country, this same country that has put its foot as far up in the behind of these men as they could get it. And these same men come up and affirm the importance of democracy. And even though the musicians don't say it in these type of technical terms, this is all of what they feel. And they feel a love and respect for these men and for this music, and for this country. And they start to wonder, well... They start to see the hypocrisy of our nation. And they want to get away from that. But are 15 white men who, with horns going to change 300 years of American history in the direction of avalanche of ignorance that we've poured down on our nation to protect the fact that we enslave people, at a certain time? Are these men going to have the power to stand against this? Are they going to be able to, to, to... No. It's v..., it's going to be very difficult for them to do that because they, they're going to tell you the truth as much as they can, but when the information starts to come out, it's going to be distorted. It's not going to have the power that it has when it's in their heart. It's not going to come out their mouths the way that they feel it. Because there's a lot of pressure, and there're a lot of attacks and a lot of things that are going to go down for that truth to be spoken.

**I want to talk about the anomaly of this friendship between white men and their...**

Well, you have a lot of interesting relationships between the caste system, the, the, the different members of the caste in America. Like you have Fletcher Henderson, who's what we'll call a Creole, a high-yellow Negro. In, in, in New Orleans we call 'em a Creole, where you're just yellow, in, in the north, and Paul Whiteman, who was white and somebody like Louis Armstrong that's dark-skinned. Now Fletcher Henderson was going to be much closer to getting those little extras perks that Louis Armstrong was

going to be. And yet Paul Whiteman, who's called the King of Jazz, well, he's not going to feel comfortable with that title. But he's not going to deny it cause he can make him some money with it, and, and bring the music out here and we see this later with Benny Goodman. He didn't call himself the King of Swing. And it's picked by this nation. Paul Whiteman, the King of Jazz. Paul... and it's really funny that the man's name is Whiteman. And Paul Whiteman, there he is. OK? He doesn't really even consider himself to be a jazz musician. But he has great taste. He knows about jazz music, he, he understood who George Gershwin was. I mean, he had, he understood who the best white musicians were to get in his band. He's the guy who could hear and who's a good musician. So, he's really uncomfortable with the position Fletcher Henderson is put in, because it goes against his sense of integrity and against his musicianship. But is he going to face the entire culture and stand up on a soapbox and say, "I'm not the King of Jazz. Fletcher Henderson is."? That's a, that's a long leap. That's a long step for any man to take, only, only the people like Martin Luther King would do that. That's, that's a lot to ask a musician to do. Just like it would have been a lot to ask Benny Goodman to stand up at every concert and say, "I'm not the King of Swing." Because you've got 4,000 writers that are saying, "This is the King of Swing." And also...

**Put me in Benny's shoes, the King of Swing, and make me feel that soon and not embarrass me.**

You know, we have to, we have to always, to understand thee things that took place in these earlier times, we have to put ourselves in this position. It's like maybe we all have felt you won a prize that somebody else should have won.

**Oh.**

Maybe they beat you in a, in a race, or you, they got the highest grade and the teacher likes you and they gave you the award. Well, every time you see that person, you feel a pang of, of guilt. Or you feel, but, you know, you might not acknowledge it, but you feel like, "Oh, man," you know, you deserve this. And put yourself in Benny Goodman's shoes. Now he struggled, he's a great musician. He, he practiced, he worked and there's no doubt that he deserved to be recognized for his playing. But he knew he wasn't playing like Sidney Bechet. Now he's being called the King of Swing. And here's a man who really knows what something that's swinging is. He knows about Count Basie. He had, he's using Fletcher Henderson's arrangements. He knows who Louis Armstrong is. He's studied his music his entire life. He understands that that's it, it's extremely hypocritical. Not hypocritical. He understands that it's... He, he understands that this is a, that him being called the King of Swing is an example of the hypocrisy in our society. But he, he can't deny that, the name, because everybody's calling him that. But when he's standing next to Louis Armstrong, he's saying, saying to himself, "Damn, man. I..." He wants to look at him and say, "Man, I'm sorry they

calling me this. I, I'm sorry I have this title. And we know you're the King of Swing." But he can't, he can't do that. That, that's just not in the cards. So he's stuck with a situation that's unnatural to begin with, it forces him to, to appear to be superior to a man that he knows he's not superior to. And there's nothing worse for a man, than to be given something that you know belongs to somebody else. There's somebody else... There's nothing worse for, for you to run a race and come in third and they give you first. Because your whole life, you're looking at that first saying, "Well, that's first, but it's not really first." Everybody's coming in looking and they're saying, "Man, you, when did you win that?" You say, "Yeah, you know, I, I won that."

### **Private school just outside of Chicago.**

Well, with Bix Beiderbecke, we have another great mythic story in art. Here's a guy with a natural artistic sensibility and he's in a typical household. This could be Matisse in France with his father. And his father, of course, he doesn't want him to be a musician, why, why does anybody want their son to be a musician? First, a musician is like an overtone of being a sissy, and on the other hand, they, they get drunk and they have all the women, or they live the, the easy life. It's not a, not a respectable job. It's not something that you should be doing. Then he's playing jazz music, which is, man that's... Not only are you being a musician, you're going to play jazz? The music that black folk, black people are playing? But this man has a natural musical sensibility. He loves this music. And you can hear it. He teaches himself how to play, which is a very difficult thing to do. It indicates an intense desire to play this music. And in a, in a mythic twist, they send him to the worst place they could imagine him being sent, but it's actually the best place. And that's like Brer Rabbit being exiled to the briar patch. Well, he was born in the briar patch. And Bix Beiderbecke was reborn in the spirit of jazz music, and that's why all of the musicians, the white musicians around him really could relate to him because I feel that he had an undying love for the integrity of the music. And that's really the statement he was trying to make. Now, it's unfortunate that he's been turned into this icon of white jazz in an attempt to put him up with Louis Armstrong. Nobody can be put up with Louis Armstrong. That's just the fact of it all. But, Bix Beiderbecke had the type of artistic sensibility that could project aspects of Armstrong's personality with a power equal to many of the jazz musicians and if, if were not for the fact that he was subjected to this race and this ignorance, he would've, he would've probably developed and grown much more as a musician rather than killing himself, because the pressure that was placed on him really killed him. You have a man with integrity, with an artistic sensibility who struggled against his entire upbringing to play an art form. And he gets out to play this art form and then he's gobbled up by the society. First it doesn't want him to play, then it demands that he be greater than the greatest man that ever played. Now, the, the group of musicians, they're not that way. Because Bix Beiderbecke is teaching a lot of the white musicians about the feeling of jazz. Not by talking about it, but because he loves this music with such an intensity that them being around

him makes them understand something about what's required to become a musician.

### **So this isn't a tragedy of alcoholism, but a tragedy of...?**

Well, Bix Beiderbecke is an American tragedy. It's the tragedy of the white guy who wants to participate in an art that's been called a black art, who's on a very, very high level... No. Let me say it again. Bix Beiderbecke's tragedy is an American tragedy. It's about the white man who understands how far our culture is and our society is from what it should be. And this music has given him a glimpse of what is. And what is going on is such an illusion, and it goes so f..., it's so far against what is. This is a man whose hearing is so deep into the meaning of this music that it broke his heart. And he wanted to get that alcohol and that dope, whatever he could get to ease the pain of that, much like we see in Charlie Parker, much later. Because a lot of times, when you deal with the truth and the unadulterated fashion, man, it can be really painful to see what's going on. That's not just a word. It's like to, to bring it all home is like the first time that a wife realizes that her husband is been cheating on her for twenty years. Or the first time a husband realizes that, "Man, that's something that could break your heart in a way that you might not ever recover from that." What about the white guy that's been raised to think in terms of black and white, then he has to confront Louis Armstrong and a music that he loves as deeply as anyone has ever loved it? What, what is that going to make him understand about being American?

### **Within a week of his arrival at Lakehust Academy, Bix, the South Side of Chicago, the Sunset Café, the Entertainer's Café, the Grand Auto Club to hear what he called...?**

Well, what Bix, w..., right, I mean. The, the... Let me see, how can I say it? It's important to distinguish... It's important to understand the difference between how the musicians are and what's written about it. A musician wants to play music. And a musician loves music and loves that instrument. And when they hear someone that's great on that instrument, there's a mixture of great envy, respect, and love, and when you practice an instrument 6, 7 hours a day, like the way Bix Beiderbecke had to practice to, to develop himself, you develop a love and a respect for it that's very difficult to explain to a non-musician. Only to say if you could imagine yourself doing something, it's like taking care of a baby. You work so hard on this thing. You going out every night, you hearing the greatest musician in the world play. Louis Armstrong. You're hearing musicians that are influenced by this style and this sound and you, you, all you want to do is be able to play. And you have the ability to play because you can hear these things. You wake up in the morning, you hearing melodies. You, you, you hearing progress on your horn. You're noticing that you're developing a very quickly and you're developing quicker than the other musicians are developing. You're noticing that your personality is being focused through your sound and you have little things you can play that only you can play. You're noticing that when you

play, you're moving people. And then, you're also going out hearing other people playing, being moved. And then you start to realize that you are part of a movement. Then you're a part of a whole group, which is a group of musicians. Then you realize there're these other musicians who have been d..., who you've been told "Don't listen to them, and they're not doing it. There are niggers and they ain't playing nothing and this is some cool music and it's all a joke." Then you realize it's the most serious thing you've ever encountered in your life. And then you realize that you realize that you too are a part of it. And it's got to be exhilarating and terrifying at the same time.

### **Just a sentence. What makes Trombauer so great?**

Well, Trombauer is actually, out of all of those musicians including Bix Beiderbecke, he's the greatest that hear on record because he actually invented a new style in jazz. It's the, the light kind of singing style that u..., utilizes the different intervals that are sometimes equated with French music. And it's a, a delicate sensibility, this very melodic that ties us into the ballad tradition. The Irish tradition and the, the, the light opera tradition of, the light, the light opera tradition that the New Orleanians love when they had the French Opera House. So, he's actually bringing a new sound in jazz, which is imitated by Lester Young and by other people in jazz. But he wasn't picked up on like Bix Beiderbecke was because Bix Beiderbecke was, was seen as the one who we needed to bring, to, to stave off the threat of Armstrong. So that's why, when you listen to those recordings today, when you hear Bix Beiderbecke, you're always left saying, "Where's the beef?," in terms of him fighting, him being an answer to Louis Armstrong. Whereas with Trombauer, you're always saying, "Yes." And well I, that's not, that wasn't that good but, I guess you got what you, what you were talking about with Trombauer.

### **I want to talk about Duke – to go to the later episodes.**

Oh, you know, let me make just one more point, I'm sorry, about, about Beiderbecke and Armstrong, obviously. Another important point about Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong and all of the cornet players is that the, the American cornetist, like Jules Levy, Bormeer Crill, Herbert L. Clark, they was, they were the, the most popular performers of their time, playing strict cornet music. And the cornet was the king. And these men had a tradition of battling. They would battle each other in big concerts to see who could, who could, who could out-blow the other. And this was carried right on into jazz. The cornet being the lead and the cornet soloist being the one with the most aggressive personality. And that's a part of understanding Bix Beiderbecke, part of understanding Louis Armstrong, in their relationship.

### **I want to talk about the early Duke ... in relationship to music early. Ragtime, how he tried to learn it, why and what he was hearing...? Segregated section and Sidney Bechet.**

OK. Duke, we see that... Let me see. Well, when Duke Ellington was a little boy, he would play the piano. And he would go to his Aunt Carrie's house in Philadelphia. And one summer, he went to Aunt Carrie's house and there was a little boy that could play the piano better than him. And when he, he, he experienced that jealousy that we always feel when we think that we're going to show off and somebody else's shows off for us much better than we will. So he goes home and he starts trying to get serious and get, and, and, and really study the piano. He gets into the Eastern Seaboard School, this high school, really into James P. Johnson. All the older musicians love Duke Ellington because he's so respectful and he knows how to listen. That's the important thing about him that carried him through his entire life – he was a great listener. So, when older musicians were, were talking to him, instead of that mixture of arrogance and insecurity that you always get with younger people, he was confident and humble. So they taught him all of these things and he started to learn how to play; he started getting around the piano. Now, in the same way that Louis Armstrong was inspired by King Oliver and the same way that Bix Beiderbecke by Louis Armstrong and the King Oliver Band, in the same way that ... Let me, let me find this one thought.

**Doesn't matter because at this point, all we need to know is in the same way that Louis Armstrong was inspired by King Oliver?**

OK. In the same way Louis Armstrong? Duke Ellington goes to the Howard Theater to hear Sidney Bechet. And all of a sudden he understands what music is about. It's about shouting, singing, crying, screaming, stomping, hopping, slapping, cussing. And he says to himself, "That's what I need to be getting me a piece of."

**Thank you. Whew! OK so later, the thing that's so difficult, his music speaks for itself. But as we deal with that very last part of him, his sacred concerts, all of that sort of stuff, what's important to remember about him?**

The most important thing to know about Duke Ellington is that he loved people, he loved life, and he loved music. Duke Ellington was about music. I mean the man wrote so much music so consistently, he never surrendered. And he was an ultimate creator. That means that he did not judge; he created. He didn't impose the form on things. The forms just were. He didn't, he wasn't a slave to convention. He, he understood that your imagination, y..., your... He understood what it took to make something invisible visible. He understood what it took to pull that thing out of... He, Duke Ellington knew how to, Duke Ellington, Duke Ellington knew how to... That remark that's hard for me to say is... Like it's a very non-, a non-specific thought about what he knew how to do. He... He knew how to take, Duke Ellington knew how to take what could be and make it what is. And he could that in so many different forms and he did do it. At the end of his life, he's like some grand old figure that's sitting up and around nothing but ruin. I think about

the end of his life all the time. It's just rock and, all the psychedelic music and people seeming like they're getting further and further apart – I'm talking about in the 70s, now. After the promise of the 60s and the 50s and people interviewing him all the time asking him what he thinks about James Brown and, I mean, just the questions he, he got asked. And the guys in his band are dying off and he's just like this, like Buddha or something. He's just sitting there. But what is he doing? He's still just swinging and playing. Swinging and playing. His health is failing on him. Now he's contemplating God all the time. So, he, and he's telling people, he's speaking out of his love of the people in the 20s and 30s when he was talking about race in the, and, and what was happening with race. Now, when race becomes important to everybody, he's talking about now, what we're talking about now. In the, in the 60s, when r., when... In the 20s and 30s, when segregation and attacking each others in race and black people feeling bad about themselves, when all of that was going on, he was writing songs like "Black Beauty" and "Talking About My People" and race. Now, after the 50s and 60s, everybody's talking about black power and we got our afros and our dashikis and we talking about down with whitey, Duke Ellington is talking about all of the people are our people. He's getting to the type of love and feeling that we're trying to strive to get to now. And he's man in who we see a tremendous growth. We see all these things in his life. We see a, just a unbelievable will. And now at the end of his life, there he is and he's swinging. And he's, he's not happy with what he's seeing. He's not, he's not elated. He's looking around at our society and he's saying, "Oh, man." He's seeing that the black audience is not listening to his music, he's seeing that the kids, like myself, we didn't listen to no Duke Ellington. He had a strange hairstyle, first. We were into Badoo boomp, doom-doom-dont dont-bee-doop doot... But he's not being, he's not trying to do that; he's still swinging. He's still trying to contemplate the Almighty. He's still used to bringing Money, Money Johnson out in front of the audience in the 70s and say "You all want to know what music is going to sound like tin the future?" Then Money Johnson would play "Won't You Come Home, Bill Bailey?" And that's to say the music is what, what we started off with, the New Orleans music. And that's like Beethoven at the end of his life and the F-major String Quartet sound like Haydn. Say, "OK, that's the truth there." It's not a matter of all these forma and all that. The essence of this style is this, and that's Duke.

**You once told an interviewer that Duke Ellington, there was something sensuous about his sound.**

Yeah, well Duke Ellington, part of the reason that we always had such a problem with jazz as Americans was what was you going to do when this black man came home with your white daughter and did stuff that you could never imagine doing to your wife? And some of that was true and Duke Ellington was always there to let you know, "Yeah, that's true." But very few people have that type of sexual and sensual imagination and energy and power. So, you didn't really have to be that worried about that. Duke Ellington is like Bacchus or Dionysis. He loves things carnal. That's where,

that's his domain. He's not ashamed of it, he's afraid of it, he's going to take you into that room and he's going to take you by your hand and show you what you need to figure out how to do when you get in there and the pursuit and the enjoyment of women is, short of contemplation of the Almighty, the greatest thing that's ever going to happen to you in your entire life. And he's there to let you know exactly how to do it, and he's there to let you know what you need to be doing and how you need to be doing it and in what tempo you need to be doing it in. So he's indispensable.

### **Let's talk about Miles, OK? About that period in the 50s.**

Now, with Miles Davis, you have another combination of people like what you had with Louis Armstrong, but just different. Here's another type of black man. First, coal-black and pretty. The women love him. Then with that, with that cute sound, he could put that sound on you and he, like Duke Ellington, he'll bring you into the bedroom. Very proud. Espousing the philosophy that he got from Charlie Parker, which was you don't have to kiss any behind. That's not what we are here to do. He and Max Roach and all the musicians that were around Charlie Parker all have that same type of belief in artistry. A, a man who's a great artist, and he has to deal with the hypocrisy of the society. Like any of these men. Once again, you have a man who's on a very high level of intelligence and sensitivity in a volatile situation and he understands the situation that he's in. See, that's the thing that always sets these men off. Or sets these women off. They understand the situation they're in. It's one thing if you were forced to, if you if you're a woman and you are forced to stay in a house with 7 or 8 children and you, and you, you, you can't fulfill your aspirations and you don't really have aspirations, you, or you just say, "Well, OK. I'll accept this." It's another thing if you are the most brilliant person that you've ever been around and you, and then you're the most intelligent, you have the most drive, the most fire, the h., the, the hu..., the hugest heart and the most desire to uplift the people around you and then somebody tells you you're a woman and you have to do this. Well, you going to rebel against that another way. That's not going to be a rebellion of, "Well, I'm going to do something different." It's going to be the feeling of some great unearthly injustice has been imposed on you and you're going to do everything in your power to get that off of you because you recognize not just for your own well-being, but you realize that you have something that you want to say and that that thing that you have to say is what everybody needs to hear. Miles Davis is, is in that position. And that's what we hear in his sound. That type of just deep penetrating intelligence and that tremendous feeling. Now, he, he covered his feeling up. He liked to cloak things. He played with a mute. He covered his feeling up with the brusque, angry type of, "I don't give a damn." That's protection. 'Cause a man like that, that's like a turtle with a shell. That turtle is real soft, so it needs a hard shell. A man like that has got to have that because he will not survive and he, he figures that out very early. And when, when, when we hear him in the 1950s, now he's, he's developed into manhood and one thing we have to know about Miles Davis above all else is he was one of the

hardest-working musicians ever in terms of developing his style. When he came to New York in 1945, he could not play. He was sad. You'd hear him on records and say, "Why is this guy playing with Charlie Parker?" By 1949, he was great. Now, I don't care who you are. If you were going from being our east song to that, to 194, in four years, you doing a lot and a lot and a lot of practicing. And we see that, once again, like what we saw with Bix Beiderbecke. What we see with Louis Armstrong. What we see with all the musicians, regardless of the level they reach in the music, when they're struck by the music, they just practice and practice and practice and desire to become better and better and better. This type of man, who's willing to spend that much of his time in doing something and wants to get better with that type of intensity. He is going to feel very strongly about the thing that he's doing.

### **How does this music – this is essential – how do we know how...**

You have to ask a woman that. I mean, Miles's music, Miles's music appeals to the vulnerable side of people. His music, it makes you feel very vulnerable. It's, it's very fragile, but it's tough. Like Lester Young before him. It's fragile, but it's tough. Billie Holiday was one of his favorites. It, Miles's music speaks to the solitary person inside of each of us and it soothes us in knowing that we are, all feel alone. We all have that in us. But on the other hand, he swings. The one gift he's always had is the gift of swing. Even when he couldn't play the trumpet, and didn't know harmony. He'd be swinging and that swing, when you have that type of command of rhythm, that always means that you experience joy. Because to play with real good strong rhythm is always joyous, it's never sad. So you have this kind of vulnerable, lonely, tender sound and just this die-hard swinger and this kind of combination of two opposite things always in art you get these things that are opposites, you put them together and that's the cocktail that, that is irresistible.

### **Why do you think...?**

What Miles Davis in this, in the period with Miles Davis as he is in the early 40s, we have the great American question of age and youth. That great battle that continues until today. What happens to a 18-year-old when a 40-year-old wants to be 18? And he is like a classic study of male menopause. Still got a young girlfriend, got to keep her happy. All the world is changing around you. You saw what happened to Lester Young and all the older musicians, how they just faded into obscurity, went out of style. By the music you played. Now you going to go out of style? But you don't really know the style of this new music. Seems kind of chaotic to you, but everybody loves it. You going to stay home and mind the store and get left behind? Or you going to jump up there with the kids? Well, you jump up there with the kids, but you're not a kid. Well, does that mean you have to be a old man? There's a lot of complex questions. What does a person that grows older do in a society that the musical trends have no respect for

maturity. You can't enrich and deepen your style because you, yourself are an anachronism. You, you, you, you are, you then become the cliché. Not, not how you, how you dress or talk, just you, the fact that you are 43 makes you out of style. For you to be hip, you've got to look like you're trying to be somebody 20 or 17. And it's, the bottom line, on all of this is the question of your personal integrity. And it's something that we confront every day. You're a businessman. What is the bottom line for you? You going to make those cars so that they can break down in six months so that you can make more money? You going to put that extra fuck on your record so you can sell another seven million? You going to take that extra strand of clothing off that girl that's the age of your daughter? So that you can sell another 23 million of something? You going to tell that extra lie you have to tell so that you can go purchase you another VCR or another home somewhere? That's the question that we're all asked every day. And sometimes we answer it and we, we're proud of and sometimes we kind of sell ourselves short. But that's the question.

### **Miles**

I think that when Miles stood up and saw Sly and the Family Stone and all the women they had, and women of all races now, white women and black women, not that he hadn't enjoyed himself but now they're in the media, they get in the gossip papers and they got thousands of people hollering and screaming at their music. He's playing the trumpet in a jazz band. They got the electric guitars going, the afros, the psychedelic pants, the groove the boom boom is hot and everybody's hot and they're screaming. There, people never did that for Charlie Parker. He could feel that he was old and out-of-date. And he did not want to grow old.

I hope I gave you what you wanted.

### **Clive Davis - I don't think you want rhythm to own the Clive Davis comment .**

For a white man at that time, for an American, the use of the word nigger was, why not, it's the best minstrelsy show, the, the coon song tradition, run nigger run. Nigger this, nigger that and that's, that's one of our favorite words as Americans. Now we see that coming back down in the black people. Spotting it all out in public now. But then, you have for a white man to call say call a black person a nigger to some other white people, yeah, they would do that all the time. It's not like when it's done today. It had another connotation, disrespectful, of course. But then that 's part of the story of Bix Beiderbecke and all these men, they were raised in that style. But that music has a truth in it that grabs them and brings them closer to the soul of America. Even while they call the musicians niggers. And that's how human beings are.

**That goes on the other bite that we like so much. You said this great thing – helped me understand Ornette Coleman is that these things happen sort of out of time, the performance of the avant garde was just a sort of a pre-jazz...?**

Well, no we just, we have a tendency to always look at things chronologically and think that, think that because someone becomes 35 they would necessarily come up with some thing that's more advanced than they could have thought of when they were 20. And I could, let me tell you in the case of Albert Einstein, he was very young when he came with the theory of relativity. He worked on other things but he came up with seventy-year old discovery when he was in his early 20s. And in the case of Ornette Coleman, we have something where a style that comes before the advent of an art form, comes at a certain point in the middle of it. And to not have form is pre-jazz. That's in, that's why I think that the, those, those aspects of Ornette Coleman's music that portion of Ornette Coleman's music that is formless because a lot of it does have form, but, the, the stuff that's not from his any, well, in the case of Ornette Coleman, he's swinging so it's not exactly the right analogy but let's say were he to abandon swing also and just, like on the album "Free Jazz" sometimes they just playing without any swing or anything. That's what you do when you first start playing, and it's a great tool for educating kids. How to just hear. There's no form. You just play. It's like chaos but you start to kind of organize it and find ideas that comm..., communicate with other people. But form comes after that. That's when you start to grapple with what you are able to do. Then you start to invent form. So before the organization of form, is no form. And we all experience that. It's like when a baby speaks, uhblip-blub-blub-blub, they just making up all kind of stuff, man it sounds beautiful, wonderful. Then they start to figure out: he, she, it. Then they can't say a sentence. Then they hook up in a sentence. Then a paragraph. Well, they go on and on and on and on. Now maybe they'll return to that babbling again. But it won't be an advance on speaking.

**Let's just talk about fusion in general. Because I think that you said that jazz fused because it could fuse, and you said it was also important to not make judgments good or bad with fusion.**

I think that one of the, one of the great misconceptions about jazz is what it chooses to combine with. What it chooses to fuse with. Because jazz music fuses with other music's, rhythm, other music's harmony, other music's sensibility and it brings into it, it brings the sound of the blues and its conception. Because jazz borrows flavorings from other musics and combines it with swing, the feeling of the blues and the sensibility of the jazz musician which is group improvisation. Superior musicianship, a bunch of musicians just talking to each other on the form of your music. Now, there's certain forms that jazz cannot fuse with because those forms come out of jazz. An example of that would be the shuffle-style of the 50s rock and roll. Bum de dum de dum be dum be dum be dum be dum doo doo. We always heard

these songs with the, with the saxophone solo which could be a jazz saxophone solo, John Coltrane grew up walking the bar playing this kind of music. Many jazz musicians of the 50s played this style of music. Well, when they were playing this style of music, they didn't consider it jazz fusion because it comes out of jazz. Now, once the popular music took on its own road, you have the 50s harm beating you have the kind of English influence R & B, you have the English influence, what they call rock and you have like the James Brown type of second generation version of, of, of R & B which was called funk or soul. The musicians that played with James Brown in those first bands, but Bernard Purdie and Maceo Parker, they were jazz musicians. So when they were playing with James Brown, they weren't fusing with jazz. They had played jazz already. They were playing another style of music. Now in the 70s where you came with this style of fuse with further developments of rock. The English rock, Emerson, Lake and Palmer was in vogue. And you had Led Zeplin and the English rock bands that were very popular amongst the musicians because they, they had songs that had different type of form and all these different things. Now the jazz musician, that, that was, that was the generation in which we had the jazz musicians from an earlier era, like the bebop time, who were considered to be the pillars of the foundation of jazz, trying to make some of that rock and roll money by coming together with rock and this was considered to be fusion. Now with the exception of the two or three good bands like John McLaughlin, Maha Vishnu, Herbie Hancock, Headhunters, Chick Corea, mainly piano players or guitar players who were playing with Miles Davis. The objectives of these musicians were not to fuse jazz with anything. It was to try to figure out how to get a more commercial audience. And Weather Report, which the most popular fusion band amongst the musicians started off, their music was mainly written by Wayne Shorter who was Miles Davis's saxophone player in the 60s and I'm going a long, long route for you right? And Joe Saveneau who also played piano with Miles, they were trying to play, their vision was actually to combine many different styles and come up with a jazz fusion. But as the 70s progressed, they abandoned that and they started to go more and more in the direction of commercial music and of pop music. And the way that you can distinguish that is what the bass and the drums play. What's on top of it is not the identity of the music. The identity is the bass and drums. And this is also a wonderful thing because they have the, most times they have the two most neglected members of the band. It's like the offensive and defensive line of a football team. You don't see them getting ahead of youse at the end of the game. But when that line falls apart, you're not going to run no 2,000 yards. It's not going to be 500 yards passing. So the heart and soul of the band is the bass and the drums. So if the bass and the drums are going bum te bap, bu bum bum bat, a bum bum te bum de bum, that's a funk groove. Now the fact that you doo doo deedle dee doo de dup, on top of it is not going to make it jazz. When they start to play clavé, that's Hispanic, Afro, Latin rhythms. If a majority of the time your rhythm section is playing that, it's not jazz. It's Afro-Hispanic music.

**So the difference between fusion and the natural tendency of jazz to borrow from all these strains; is that the essential bargain was corrupted by the adopting of another rhythm?**

Right, the difference between jazz adopting elements from other musics and fusing with it which had gone on, like with Stan Getz and the bossanova and other things that had taken over, Miles Davis with "Sketches of Spain," Duke Ellington with many of his albums, when we reach fusion, jazz is not trying to fuse anything into its sensibility, the jazz musician is trying to figure out how to fit into the sensibility of rock and roll so that it can make some money and get that audience.

**And it gets lost.**

And, and, and as fusion progresses, 'cause the first fusion, we don't know what's going to happen. As fusion progresses, we see that the musicians desire is not to come up with a jazz sensibility and use things from rock and roll, but it's to just become a glorified pop musician who can play instrumental music also. No, but it's to become the, the musicians desire is not to become, it's not to take rock and roll and bring it into the sensibility of jazz, but it's to become a rock and roll musician and participate in all the benefits of that should be the money and the groupies and all that and play a jazz solo every now and then. And this comes, we get to see it in full, in full bloom when Miles Davis returns in the early 80s with a straight instrumental pop album that has no overtones of fusion at all. And we also see it with the demise of the great fusion bands as we progress into the 70s.

**Did that movement towards fusion threaten jazz. I mean was jazz imperiled again?**

Well, when the musicians started playing fusion, it really dealt death blows to jazz in, in several ways. First, fusion is not based on blues. Now if you were a musician that grew up playing blues, you always have that in your sound. But if you were a musician weaned on fusion, you don't have that in your sound then. Then, that was the first music of jazz that was not horn-based. Or singing. That music was based on electronic instruments, the electric guitar is the main instrument, or a synthesizer in the fusion band. Then that's a music that was not based on grooving in terms of all of the parts constantly interacting that music, with the exception of some of the early fusion bands, like, like Weather Report, their first attempts. That music was more about, what the funk music was about was maintaining a beat and a beat is static. A beat is when you freeze one moment of a groove. And the last thing jazz wants to be is frozen. An example is a beat is bum te bum a bum bat, a bum te bat ump te ump bat te bum bum bum, all night, just that, that's a beat. A groove is dynamic, that's what when you hear Elvin Jones play or Art Blakey, they're always playing something different and the bass is always playing something different. It's like, more like African music, it's . . .

## **So a jazz beat is a dynamic changing rhythm.**

A jazz beat, a jazz beat should be dynamic. And should be changing. Now the thing about jazz music is that it's not a matter of any particular groove but it's what you choose to do a majority of the time. There's no hard fast rule, like you can't play this beat. You can play that beat, but now if you're playing that beat 95% of the time, well, it's not jazz. It's got to be another form of music which doesn't mean that the music is not good. It just means that how can it be something when it has the identity of another thing. And it has the meaning and the feeling of another thing. All of these things got obscured in the 70s with full help from the critical establishment.

I can't stand the mother-fuckers. Shit.

**So I made this film on the Civil War which defined us. Shelby Foote said the Civil War defined us. And we made a film about Baseball because I thought it was a way to ask the question what had we become. If we were to define what it was that had begun. And I have seen almost from the beginning that jazz is about some redemptive soul of the country and that that's what this is about and it seems that this story of jazz is the story of promise.**

That is the thing, the thing in jazz that will get Bix Beiderbecke up out of his bed at 2:00 in the morning to pick that coronet up and practice with, with into the pillow for another two or three hours after he knew what it was. Or that would make Louis Armstrong travel around the world 70 years, that would make Louis Armstrong travel around the world for 50 something years just non-stop, just get up out of his sickbed, crawl up on the bandstand and play. The thing that would make Duke Ellington, the thing that would make Thelonius Monk, Miles Davis, Charlie Parker, any of these people that we've heard about, all these wonderful people, Mary Lou Williams, the Roll Callers is in this, the thing that would make all of these people give their lives for this. And they did give their lives for, it gives us a glimpse into what America is going to be when it becomes itself. And this music tells you that it will become itself. And when you get a taste of that, there's just nothing else you're going to taste that's this sweet. That's a sweet taste, man.

**There's that moment when he said he had big plans for peacetime. He was trying to do something. In some ways he brought this hybrid somewhere caught between ragtime and something that's developing which is jazz and he brought it and it conquered the old world but he was actually after something entirely new. Now, we don't want to give away the tragedy yet, that it's cut short. But what's James Reese Europe? Where's he going?**

Well James Reese Europe is similar to many of the great figures in American music in that he's always trying to synthesize elements around him that seem to be, to disagree. He's from, from the band tradition, Patrick Gilmore,

John Philips Sousa, a very popular tradition in America, brass bands, coming out of the military, out from the Civil War. The great military bands, every, every city has a many great bands that are playing in these Gazebos on Saturday and of course in the military, the military band of the United States, Sousa established a military band and built it to such a height and all of the instrumentalists all over the country are studying the band method and they are aware of these bands. He takes his band and then he starts to play like Sousa played before him, ragtime pieces. He starts playing, trying to figure out how to get the sound of the blues in his music. He starts trying to figure out how to get that lilt and that feeling that the black American is bringing to music all, all types of American music and when people start to hear this band, the concert band, which is usually playing in that kind of straight, stiff way playing this loose kind of grooving lilted fashion, they can't believe what they're hearing. When they start to hear these horns going from the European style of dit dit dit dit dit dit dit, doo doo doo dit dit de doo. The American way, the sound like people talking, man everybody is going crazy and James Reese Europe is looking at the response of the people and he's saying to himself let's do this some more, let's get more of this, more, more, more. And that's what it's like in our country when we start to come together. You see, a little bit of it and you see a little success and you say, "Let's do some more of this; let's do some more of this." And, and that's what he's really excited about.

**We had this thing, we used a lot of Armstrong, I don't know if we really need this, but what Armstrong and Oliver were doing when they were playing together on the South Side and we don't really ever explain what – just elude to it, when he first got there, what were they hearing and what was happening? How Armstrong transformed the Henderson orchestra – Gary said he invented swing and you took issue with that.**

Yeah. He didn't invent swing. He was just the best at it.

**We need to have that nailed. The Black and Tan Fantasy thing that we had from Gary is totally mysterious.**

See, the best, the best thing to do with that is if we have the footage and you want me to break it down or you want somebody else to break it down, which might be better than me breaking it down, I could write out all of what it is for them and it would take me ten minutes and it would really be a great thing. It could make another person seem like they really know, which is always better than having the same person just talking all.

**In the 1930s Duke Ellington is specifically writing pieces of music that's addressing the question of race in America. He is dealing with it and it seems to come from background. What's going on there?**

Well, at that time there were so many negative articles about black people and did they have the intelligence to do this and there still was this great inferiority complex and always the desire to place, to push the black man down at all costs to make him feel just bad about himself and who he was and Duke Ellington, his response was always in the, in the, his, his response was with race pride, "Black Beauty," he was, he wrote that in the 20s. And his orchestra was about, he used to call it Negro music and Negro expression and he was very clearly in that camp. And that's why he was hated by a lot of white critics. He and John Hammond didn't get along at all. John Hammond was trying to tell him he should integrate his band and Duke, who became one of the greatest integrationists. At that time, he was like, "You integrate your band. He's telling me what I should be doing with my band." He was a man with a lot of fire and pride and you can believe that Duke Ellington did not like what he saw going on. And even though he wasn't the type of man who would come out with a lot of verbal pronouncements on it, in his music he makes it very, very clear that he is very, very proud of who he is, what he is, and he feels that he's, his music and the music of his people, which would be Afro-American, was a tremendous contribution to the world of music, bar none.

### **And he's a race man.**

He's definitely, without a question, a race man. In the 1920s and '30s, he is definitely a race man. He makes, he's clear in his music.

### **And he comes out of this middle class tradition and he moves effortlessly in his own parochial way in Washington through the many worlds and it seems in some ways he's just taking the microcosm of DC in and widening.**

Well, we have to realize that a man like Duke Ellington doesn't come from the middle class or any class. He's a man of the world. And because he might have grown up in one neighborhood doesn't mean that he doesn't know what's going on in other neighborhoods. And he understands the basic injustice of the caste system. He understands that. He might have understood that when he was twelve or ten or nine, a man like that with that type of sensitivity and he's determined not to recreate that in his own life. He had all kinds of men in his band. It didn't make a difference to him. If you came from Alabama or if you was a sophisticate from the Upper East side of New York, if you could play, you were going to be in his band.

### **What's Louis Armstrong and Oliver King doing on the south side? What are they playing, why is it so good? What's happening?**

Well, when, when, when Louis Armstrong and King Oliver are playing in Chicago, what happens, what was happening then is exactly what's what happened to us as the word of the computer spread. First you heard a little bit about computers, then all of a sudden everybody has computers. What

does a computer mean? It means that information is going to pass along much quicker. Now I can talk to somebody in China. We can get on the internet or we can do this and that. That's how it was with Louis Armstrong and King Oliver. First you just heard, man this boy just came in from New Orleans, just playing all kinds of trumpet and you have to go down here, some, some black club on the south side that they're playing in. They play so soft, with such groove that you can hear the patter of the dancers feet on the floor. Then musicians start to come in and they say, "I hear it but I don't believe what I'm hearing." And word just starts to travel. Then they make recordings. Oh, then it's traveling much quicker. Then you start to see them in person, we start in Chicago, then they, then they make recordings and it's just, everybody's starting to hear about, man, this thing that they're doing. And the thing that they're doing is exactly what they did with the computer industry. Somebody thought of something that was going to work. And then they started to figure out how to get it to people and then everybody started to have it. That's what they did. In New Orleans, something was invented that would work. And these men were the greatest exponents of that. And they traveled from where they were to bring this to the world and when they started playing it, everybody in the world was ready for it. So it just took time for the word to, to spread but it spread.

### **How did Louis Armstrong transform the band? What did he do?**

Well the Louis Armstrong/Fletcher Henderson band story is really one of the great stories and it's a story we all can relate to because, it's like if you're the new kid in class and everybody's teasing your pants that you have on but you can throw a football 70 yards, so all of a sudden your pants don't look like they're too high, then. You see all the other kids walking around with them pants 'cause they think well, man, if I, well maybe I'll throw the football 70 yards. Well that's what happened with him. He comes in, he's a country boy, but the thing about Pops is that he ain't no average country boy 'cause even though he's not the most well-read person. First, he grew up in the roughest, most wildest places. Just his stories about Storyville are just true and what he experienced is, just him telling the guys in that band no stories would make them so respectful and envious of him. And then them hearing his horn and hearing the truth of those things come out of his horn, oh man, they looked at him like how you would look at like some old-world trapper or something that just came in, he could go and hunt and fish and catch alligators and do all kind of crazy stuff. And just bring that to you. And he, he just came in there with what he was. Which was the greatest genius our music had produced to that time. And at first, of course they were skeptical of it. But it didn't take 'em long. You know, it never takes long to figure out who somebody is. Then you don't want to believe it at first then that second time, you say, "Well, it's just like it was that first time, and the third and the fourth." And boy, that rehearsal is a great place for you to learn something. 'Cause a lot of times, guys playing rehearsal, they're playing better than they play in concerts. 'Cause they're playing for each other. And they're saying, "Oh, yeah, you did that. Check this out." So you know after

that first week of rehearsal everybody in Fletcher Henderson's band was all over New York getting drunk, "Tell, my man, that country boy from New Orleans is, he plays something we've never heard come out of a horn."

### **Jelly Roll Morton**

Well Jelly Roll Morton is what we call uptown ruler in New Orleans. I mean he's a person equally at home in the houses of ill-repute and in the halls of every eruditionist scholarship. He's the first great intellectual in New Orleans music, in jazz music and he's a pimp. And he's both of those things, so you have to, you have to deal with it. And he's very difficult to deal with. And really because the writers at that time were not ever going to be willing to see any intellectual position over to anybody who was black. That just was never going to be your position. Not as long as they were writing about it. So he became public enemy number one in the jazz writer's mind. And he helped them because he was such a braggart and he would lie and he would irritate people. But many times great people are irritating. You'd have to work around them. You know, Wagner was irritating but he still was Wagner.

### **And what was great about his music?**

It captured the essence of New Orleans music and therefore the essence of what happens when a group of people come together and therefore the essence of the American experience. It captures the essence of that with no fuss. It's organic. If all of the elements of American music, if all of the elements of our music are based on dialogue and because it's about us speaking to each other. For example, you have a solo, that means you talk by yourself. It's, the music has solos that he wrote out. You have breaks, which means everybody stops. You have breaks which means everybody stops and you have a chance to talk by yourself, completely alone, and further the conversation. He has a lot of breaks in his music. And polyphonic improvisation which means everybody talks together. He writes out the three-part "Polyphany Forest." You have call and response which is our natural way of speaking. He has these great call and responses with the trumpet and piano, trumpet and the band. And you have a sectional concept of life which we call a chorus format which is the way most American architecture like the skyscraper's built that way. One floor stacked on top of another floor on top of another floor, all of equal space, but the space is broken up in different ways. So that what takes place on that first floor is going to be very different from that second floor. So the first chorus of a Jelly Roll Morton song is just as long as the second chorus. But the first chorus might be a piano solo, the second chorus might be three horns improvising. The third chorus might be breaks for the clarinet player, the fourth chorus might be a call and response between the trombone and the banjo. So he's really an intellectual and he's creating something that's unbelievably rich. Now Jelly Roll Morton was also a whorehouse pianist. He slipped through the peephole and played. He played marching band music. I mean he knew so

much music. And he could play all of that music and talk about it all in a very intelligent fashion and there just was no room for that kind of man.

### **"Kind of Blue"**

"Kind of Blue" is the greatest recording of modern jazz. "Kind of Blue" is such a great recording. It is, is, it's the perfect introduction to jazz music. To modern jazz music. First thing about it is the sound on the recording is great. The drums, he's not playing loud, so you can hear the bass. Everything is very clear. The forms are very easy to hear. So the average person is listening is not a musician, so that the person who's listening that's not a musician can tell where the top of the forms are and all these types of things. Then, most importantly, we have an example of four archetypical personalities clearly expressed on a recording. One is the hipster and the slickster. Miles Davis who also has a very intimate sound. Very tender and vulnerable. And we have the country boy preacher with religious zeal and unbelievable orgiastic sound in John Coltrane and then we have the ebullient southern teacher who's just going to, gregarious and just going to talk and talk very effusive and happy, that's Cannonball Adderly. Then we have the intellectual who's introspective, that's Bill Evans. Another person we have is the West Indian swinger, that's Wynton Kelly playing on some of it. And that's all underpinned by just a great swinging sound. With Paul Chambers just so steady on the bass, playing on the bottom, holding it all together and Jimmy Cobb, just snaring the swing off there for you. And, and the rhythm section doesn't get in their way. It just lays it out for these personalities to speak very clearly and you get one solo after another, clearly organized and it's a conception that they had been working on for years. That Miles had been working on since '47 or '48. And now it's 1959. So for twelve years he's been working on this conception and this is that concept come to fruition. And, yeah, I mean, that's what you hear on that record.

One more thing about that, though. And another thing about that album that's really great is the competition. 'Cause when you have all these great soloists, they all competing with each other. Now Miles taught a lot, taught 'Trane. 'Trane used to refer to Miles as his teacher. They brought Cannonball up later. All those men had tremendous respect for Miles. But when they're soloing, you can believe they're trying to say, "Well, okay, but can you handle this?" And on this record you hear each of these men without going all kind of wild, crazy effects. Just through the concentration on music. And the dedication to the themes and the form at hand trying to make the, the most powerful musical statement they can make and they are competing with each other, not in a malicious way. But in a way of saying, well, here's this and then Miles comes in and says, "Yeah, okay." And then 'Trane says, "Oh, yeah." Then Cannonball says, "What about this?" So you know that's the thing about having a band with that many great soloists in it. They're thinking about each other all the time. This is one story. You might not use it, but it's good. Like there's a great story about, about Cannonball and Miles, Miles walks over to Cannonball on the bandstand and goes, "Man, what is

that shit that 'Trane is playing?" And Cannonball looks at him and says, "Man, I don't know. If I knew what he was playing, I'd be playing some of it. Do you know?" Miles say, "Damn." And you know, that's one of the great stories too in jazz of how Miles and them sat up and watched Coltrane develop. When Coltrane started playing with Miles, he wasn't that, a lot of people wonder why did he hire 'Trane? Then when you listen to 'Trane on this record with Miles in 1961, this live record, in Stockholm where 'Trane is playing so much horn. I know Miles is, wasn't no room on his bandstand and he's he, he had to look at himself and say, "Man, what about the development of this man?" Much like Duke Ellington's band must have done to see him go from how he wrote music in 1925 to 1935.

### **Let's talk about John Coltrane.**

John Coltrane is a man who shows us what can be achieved through ultimate dedication and love of something because he doesn't have that overwhelming musical talent. He could play. He could always play Benny Goldson says, "He could play." But there's a recording of 'Trane playing in the Navy when he's 19 or something, you can't believe it's 'Trane. Like you never heard anybody that great sound that sad. And all of the musicians that are around him just watch him develop and he just continues to work, he just continues to work, he just works on, he starts trying, he has the Charlie Parker learn how to play his lines listening to Art Tatum. So he starts to develop this way of playing like Art Tatum which is using a lot of different chords in succession. On, on one chord. That's complicated, nobody would understand it. He starts to develop this way of playing that comes from Art Tatum's school of using different chords. Then he has this, the thing that's always in John Coltrane is the lyrical shout of the preacher in the heat and full fury of attempting to transform the congregation. And that's the source of John Coltrane's power. We talk about sheets of sound and Coltrane's the drones and the Indian music and all the different things that he did. He did, brought a lot of things into his music but the center of his music is that Sunday morning pulpit revival church meeting holler and shout. And more than any other jazz musician, he has that in his sound, even when he's crooning in a ballad.

### **The End.**