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Jazzletter

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Mail Bag

That time of year again! I continue to enjoy the *Jazzletters* so very much.

My darling Walter has grandsons who did not really have a chance to get to know their wonderful grandfather. I am keeping a file of the *Jazzletters*, hoping that as they grow older they will enjoy reading about their grandpa's lifelong love.

Shortly after Walter's death, I got a cat named Jazzie. She has helped me keep my sanity and fill a hard-to-fill void.

Merry Christmas.

Audrey Iooss, Riverhead, New York

Walter Iooss was a fine bass player who at one time was with the Benny Goodman band.

You served up a gem in your piece on Bobby Scott's passing. "I have tapes . . . which I will treasure until I join him in the silence." Beautiful, and exactly right for the emotion felt.

As you know, I'm 74 until May 9. Talking to Connie the other evening, I said, "My elderly status has proved something for me. When I was in my youth and loving music, I used to wonder to myself whether or not I'd retain the loving in my later years." I do. And I'm loving it more because I've picked up so much knowledge about it, heightening my appreciation of technique and interpretation. Bank on it, Gene, you'll be listening and loving it for the rest of your days.

Jack MacLeod, Richland, Michigan

We've been loving all the articles and especially the Bobby Scott. We sang at his tribute at St. Peter's in New York City and the next day he was gone. None of us will get out of this alive.

Roy Kral, Montclair, New Jersey

I just finished reading your book *Meet Me at Jim and Andy's*. I have played bass since 1968, mostly in rock/pop settings in the San Francisco area where I grew up. I started playing jazz at UC Berkeley in the mid-1970s under the direction of Dr. David Tucker and Sue Muscarella. But in the last year or so, jazz has for me become very vital and important. I can now understand Paul Desmond's humor. "A man assembling a mobile while riding a unicycle" completely settles it for me as how to describe a Miles solo.

In the world of Jaco Pastorious and John Patitucci, my favorite bassist is Ray Brown. The man swings! Unfortunately, I play left handed and it breaks my heart that I have never played an upright and probably never will.

I'm a younger cat (37) than the people you associate with, and I want to thank you for writing this book. It shattered the prejudiced viewpoint I had of these legends, that they were somehow superhuman. After reading some of the humorous, wild, and gentle ways of some of the "old-timers", I have concluded they tune their instruments the same way I do. It feels great!

Reading about your jazz buddies, I feel I would have been at home in the 1950s and '60s playing jazz. But then I was in short pants. I feel like I've missed an extraordinary era. If I ever had the opportunity to meet any one of the living legends, after reading about them, I think I would be quite comfortable: choked with emotion, but comfortable.

I will never play *Quiet Nights of Quiet Stars* again the same way after knowing its roots. I will be playing *Waltz for Debby* this Wednesday at a get-together and will be thinking of you and Jobim and sadly of Bill Evans. All the practicing I do, all the wonderful and talented musicians I play with from time to time, has changed after reading about the great men and women you and others write about. I read a book on Milt Hinton that really opened me up to the real world of jazz. Reading such books along with fake books has given me a better perspective on our magnificent jazz music.

I did a session with a guitarist about a year ago, and he mentioned at a break that "one would have to understand where jazz has come from before one can contribute to it." I now know what he means. I truly wish I could contribute some small token. I also feel that for every recorded artist there are a hundred who go unrecorded, which is a terrible shame.

I ramble on, but I felt I had to write to you and express my need to communicate to you and the real world of jazz. Thanks again.

Jim Fink, Mountlake Terrace, Washington

Walk up to some of those living legends and introduce yourself. You'll find they are mostly good people -- and mostly gentle people. I can think of maybe five jazz musicians I have disliked.

I'll show you what I mean. Two short memories.

I was talking to Pete Rugolo at a social event a year or two ago. I told him a story.

When I was very young, I went to hear one of the bands I liked in a big old brick armory in the town where I was born, Hamilton, Ontario. Somewhat awed, I struck up a conversation with the band's arranger, who was standing about, and whom I recognized from photos. He not only talked to me as if I were his equal, he invited me to join him in the balcony. We sat and listened to the band all evening. He discussed the band, the charts, and music in general. He was very famous. And he was very gracious to me. I never forgot it.

"Do you know who that arranger was, Pete?" I said.

"No, who?" Pete said.

"You."

Not too long after that evening in the balcony with Pete, I was living in Toronto, sharing an apartment with my sister, four years younger than I. We went to a club to hear that great Red Norvo Trio that included Charlie Mingus and Tal Farlow. (Legally, she wasn't supposed to be in there.) Somehow, I got up the nerve to speak to Red at an intermission, telling him how much I admired the group and thinking I was probably making a fool of myself by doing so.

After the last set, much to my surprise, Red approached us

and said, "Where are you kids going?"

"Just home to have a bite to eat and get some sleep." And on some stupid impulse, I blurted, "Would you like to join us?"

And he said, "I'd love to."

And Red drove us home in his Cadillac and my sister made him sandwiches and we talked almost until dawn.

I never forgot that, either.

I met Marian McPartland about the same time and in the same way. We have been friends ever since.

It wasn't just my interest in music, then, that drew me in the direction I eventually took. I liked the people, too. I still do.

And stick around. One of the next issues is on a brilliant bassist, composer, and arranger who is just your age: John Clayton and his comparably gifted brother Jeff.

The Well Wisher

Dave Raksin is the source of this story.

Toward the end of his life, Arthur Schwartz made an album of his songs in England. Some of the rockers were hanging around the studio. When Arthur finished a take of *Dancing in the Dark*, a young long-hair said, "Is that your tune?"

"Yes," Arthur said, "that's my tune."

"Well, good luck with it, man."

The Good Gray Fox

Part One

The jokes of jazz musicians always make points of some sort. Two recent examples:

Girl singer with trio in a nightclub gets a request from a customer for *When Sonny Gets Blue*. Politely she says, "Gee, I'm sorry, sir, I don't think I know it all the way through."

Piano player says, "That's okay, kid, I know it. Go ahead and start and I'll feed you."

Girl starts: "When Sonny gets blue . . . " and looks to the pianist for her next line.

Pianist says, "B-flat minor seventh."

That joke fractures singers, many of whom have a dark conviction that all the world's piano players are out to get them.

Second joke. How many girl singers does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

Just one. She'll get the piano player to do it anyway.

And that joke in turn fractures pianists.

Taken together, the two jokes -- and they seemingly went into circulation at the same time -- tell you a good deal of what I call the war between the pianists and the singers. And it is all too true that many pianists do indeed despise working for singers.

There are some notable exceptions, pianists who do the job with grace and beauty and care and sensitivity to the problems of the singer, whose job entails a dimension other than music itself: dramatic narration. This charitable breed includes Alan Broadbent, Hank Jones, Gene DiNovi, Ralph Sharon, John Bunch, Michael Renzi, Doug Talbert, Ellis Larkins, Bill Miller, Mike Lang, and a few more. Some of them have specialized in the art of accompanying singers. It will be discovered that many of them sing passably well and most have an interest in lyrics.

One of the masters of the art is a certain Louis A. Levy, born in Chicago March 5, 1928. He grew up handsome, with thick straight hair that turned gray as he passed through his twenties and white by his thirties.

Peggy Lee calls him "my good gray fox." He spent fifteen years as her accompanist and music director. He also spent a substantial time with Ella Fitzgerald, who always gets the best, as often as not the elegant Tommy Flanagan. Lou Levy was even for a year Frank Sinatra's accompanist, a job normally held by Bill Miller.

I told Lou the two singer-and-pianist jokes, and reminded him that many pianists do indeed look on singers with quiet condescension if not sulking hostility. His reply was quick and to the point: "They're crazy."

After three marriages, Lou is now single. But he has had a long-lasting relationship with Pinky Winters, a sensitive singer little heard outside southern California and too seldom even there. She and Lou teach a course in the art of accompaniment at the Dick Grove School of Music, which has gradually emerged as one of the best jazz schools in the country.

Lou said, "Guys who don't like to accompany are doing themselves a disservice. When I teach my class, I tell them, 'When you play for an instrumentalist, you're accompanying.' They think it means only singers. I tell them that when I play for Al Cohn or Stan Getz, I'm accompanying. They can't make you sound better, you can only make them sound better. They're trying to do their best and you're trying to add to it, to enhance their performance and make a better end result out of the whole thing.

"A lot of times guys who resent singers aren't as good as the singers, believe me. Some piano players think it's demeaning to accompany a singer. I don't understand that at all.

"A real good singer who understands the story of a song gives a lot better performance than a guy who's just playing A-minor seventh to D seventh to G. These guys are, I think, often very unaware of how much is involved in the material they're performing at the time. When guys are used to just playing and not knowing the story of the song, they tend to get a little jaded. They don't get to the essence of the song. Even if I'm playing *The Night Has a Thousand Eyes* at a break-neck tempo, I still think of the lyrics. It might sound

nuts, but these things go through my mind at the strangest moments. We'll be playing *Cherokee* and I'll think, 'Sweet Indian maiden . . . ' It sort of slows you down and makes you more serious.

"Obviously with some of the fantastic Gershwin and Cole Porter and Harold Arlen stuff, that's much deeper. When I'm into a ballad, I'm definitely into the lyrics, even in the middle of my improvising. I'm always on the lyric. It keeps the melody in mind. I like to improvise off the melody, not just off chords. How many times do you run up to the same chords? There's two-five-ones in songs, and then there are *I Got Rhythm* bridges, and *Honeysuckle Rose* bridges. Songs for the most part are made up of very similar situations. If you're going to go on that alone, you're going to come up with the same ideas over and over again. So I constantly retain the melody and, believe it or not, the lyrics. That affects my decisions in my improvising quite often. Because the inflection, the way you milk the note, will be from the lyric, rather than the note itself."

I pointed out that Lester Young believed every musician should know the lyrics of the song he was playing.

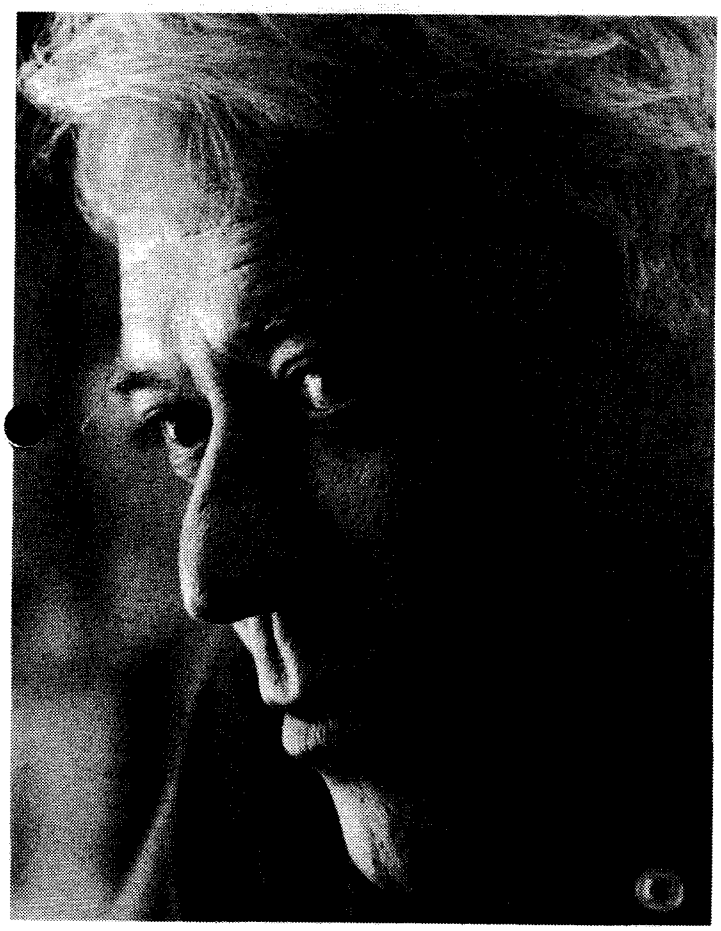

Photo by John Reeves

Lou said, "Roy Haynes is another who's that way. He's big into lyrics. He knows obscurity. Stan Getz is aware of lyrics. I'll show him a tune, and he'll look at the lyric and say, 'That's a beautiful story.' Yesterday we were going over that beautiful Irving Berlin song *It Only Happens When I Dance with You*. Stan was reading the lyric as I was playing, and he said, 'He sure was a sentimental old fool, wasn't he?' He loved that song."

I said, "You know who else is very interested in lyrics? Bob Farnon. I once said to Bob, even though I'm a lyricist, 'What difference does the lyric make when the tune was usually written first and the lyric attached later?' Bob said, 'It doesn't matter. It gives me a point of view, a point of departure, for the arrangement.'"

"And look at the results he gets!" Lou said. "When I *really* learned the value of a lyric was when I worked for Peggy Lee, because she is such a dramatic performer. She's an actress. She becomes an actress when she sings. Then I really had to pay attention, because after a while I became her conductor. And you have to be really on the ball to do that. You don't just react. You listen. You pay attention. You pay attention to dynamics. Because it's different from night to night or even show to show. I learned a lot from her. And I learned a lot from Ella, in a different way."

"Peg is a sensational actress," I said. "I can't imagine you haven't heard her imitate Billie Holiday. She did it on the phone to me one day, and it scared me."

Lou said, "Oh yes, I've heard it. Norman Granz, Ella Fitzgerald, Oscar Peterson, and I went to hear Peggy at Basin Street East in New York. We were all leaving for Europe with Jazz at the Philharmonic. I had just worked with her, and we all knew her. She did her tribute to Billie Holiday. By the time she was half-way through it, Norman, Ella, and Oscar were all in tears. It was that accurate. It was eerie. It was scary. And I guess I was the only one who didn't cry because I was dumbstruck by what was going on.

"I had not had that much personal experience with Billie Holiday, except that the year she died, I was with Shorty Rogers' group and she was on a tour with us. But that's how accurate Peggy Lee was about that. She also scared Count Basie to death with that.

"Yes indeed, I learned a lot from Peggy.

"And later, from Sinatra. I was already fifty-nine years old when I went with Frank. Some people would be panicked to have to play for Frank. I looked forward to it, especially when it was just him and me. Like the first half of *Angel Eyes*, out of tempo, before the orchestra comes in. He rephrases from night to night.

"One of the best lines I ever heard, you'll appreciate this: Once, when we were rehearsing on the stage of the Chicago Theater, Frank said, 'Okay, let's run it down,' and leaned on the piano. This was just piano and voice. I never play arpeggios or things, trying to make everything obvious. But I guess I played something a little too obvious, and Sinatra said, 'Well don't make it like, Hey, here he comes!'

"You never know with Frank. He's very free form. He's

not locked in at all. He'll hurry a phrase, or lay back on a phrase, or turn a note, and you have to be ready. You've got to pay attention. But it's fun. It keeps you on your toes."

I said, "Is that why Peg calls you 'my good gray fox?'"

"I guess," Lou said. "Actually the first one to call me a gray fox was Shorty Rogers. I have pictures of me with gray hair before 1950 hit."

This conversation occurred in Pinky Winters' house in North Hollywood. Lou has a house nearby, but he spends much of his time at Pinky's these days. Pinky wasn't home. Or rather, she was hurrying out the door when I arrived, pausing long enough to give a hug and a quick kiss on the cheek, then getting into her car and taking off on some errand. Lou and I settled at her dining-room table, consumed quantities of coffee, and talked much of an afternoon away.

I have known Lou now for thirty years. He has never been anything but self-effacing. Yet he is enormously admired by musicians, perhaps precisely because of that sympathy that is the very essence of his playing, this archetypical bebopper.

Lou has reached that stage of life when you pause to look back and figure out how you got here. If this one thing hadn't happened, that other thing would not have happened. If you hadn't met so-and-so, life might have been better. Or worse. It's called taking stock, and I noticed that Lou is doing it now.

"My dad was from London, England, my mother from a little town called Poltava in Russia," he said. "When she was six months old, the family fled from the Cossacks. My grandfather spit at a Cossack who was mistreating him. I never knew my grandparents. They got out and they came to Baltimore, I believe. That's where my dad met my mom. My dad was fifteen years old when they left London. He told me some anti-Semitic things that happened. He lived in an area where the Irish and Jews fought a lot.

"My dad played the piano by ear on all the black keys. Everything was in G-flat. If the chord changed and happened to have a white note in it, it became a wrong chord. But he was entertaining. He was not a very successful man financially, but a well-loved guy who entertained the family at the parties. Mom was just a real great cook and a wonderful woman.

"Most of his life he was in fruit and produce, because his brothers were in that business. Getting up early in the morning, going down to the market, handling the produce as it came in from the farms. South Water Market, I believe they called it. They were distributors.

"So the musical part was only because my sister, four years older, studied piano. We had a piano in the house. And they said, 'Well, for another dollar, let him study too.' But I showed a liking for music. I think every kid must show a liking for music somehow. There were just the two of us, my sister and me.

"That was the time when the teacher would come over for five bucks and give a lesson. I was sort of jealous. I wanted to play too. I started at about the age of eight or nine. My sister gave it up and I continued on. She's still living in a suburb of Chicago -- Glenview, Illinois.

"I got interested in jazz, believe it or not, through listening to Glenn Miller. My sister was sixteen and had her bas mitvah party at the Panther Room of the Sherman Hotel. I was about twelve, and there was Glenn Miller's band, who I'd never, I don't think, even heard of. I was just overwhelmed with not only the sound of the band but the showmanship. They had great lighting. All the trombones would swing to the left. The mutes had stars on them. And the Modernaires looked real nice. I was just knocked out by this.

"Glenn Miller made me crazy for music. I was thirteen. I hadn't heard anything yet. That was such a gorgeous sound. I hadn't heard Count Basie and Benny Goodman. I played the piano a little bit, but what did I know from anything? But I heard this magic sound with the lead clarinet. Not that I paid any attention to where the lead was coming from. And the showmanship that was involved! It was visually a lovely ban[illegible] Everything looked so great and sounded so neat, and I thought 'Wow, I'd like to do that too!'"

"Well, you know," I said, "Horace Silver said almost exactly the same thing to me about seeing the Lunceford band. The choreography knocked him out. And he said, 'That's what I want to do.'"

"There was a lot of choreography in all those bands," Lou said. "It was beautiful.

"I started to think about it, and then I got into the high school jazz band. Sullivan High, the farthest north high school in Chicago. We were in a very good little quintet. We played for the dances. I find that a lot of people started that same way. Then I played with local guys around.

"But I think the big moment that got me fully into jazz was meeting Tiny Kahn when he came through Chicago with Georgie Auld. I played with him at some jam sessions. He took a liking to me and started showing me some things. A great musician, as some of us know. Then Georgie Auld's band came back. George Wallington was the pianist. He got sick. Tiny recommended me to Georgie, and said, 'Get th[illegible] kid.' So I played with the band.

"In that band, let alone Georgie, was Red Rodney, Serge Chaloff, and Curly Russell. That was my first professional gig. I think that was 1946. We worked at Jump Town at 47th and Western opposite Jackie and Roy.

"Tiny Kahn was a thorough musician. He composed, he arranged, he played the piano, he played drums. Flawlessly. He played the xylophone, vibes. He was self-taught. Johnny Mandel said, 'If Tiny Kahn had lived, what do you think he would have been?' I said, 'Johnny, he might have been even better than you.' Johnny still idolizes Tiny Kahn. Not only as a musician but as a friend. Tiny was a wonderful, wonderful guy, with a tremendous sense of humor. He died at twenty-nine. Didn't make it to thirty. He died of overweight. He was three hundred and ninety pounds or something. But a wonderful musician. He taught me a lot on the keyboard. I have always called him my mentor. He was the guy who played Hindemith and Alban Berg for me for the first time. And told me about Al Cohn and Johnny Mandel for the first time."

"How did you get into bebop?" I asked.

"The first one was Dizzy Gillespie. I heard *Disorder at the Border* with Coleman Hawkins. It was the first bebop record I ever heard. And it just floored me. I thought, 'What is it? I love it! I've got to find out what this is all about.' It was so sensational.

"Then I heard my first Bird record, *Hot House*, which was a wonderful record with Sid Catlett and Dizzy. *Shaw Nuff, Hot House, Salt Peanuts*. It was Bird and Diz. And then I met Bird. He played at the Argyle Show Lounge, which was a neighborhood club close to the Forty Hundreds North."

Chicago, like most major cities, is idiosyncratic. If you ever hear anyone say, "Yes, eh?" or "No, eh?" in response to a statement, you can bet money that that person is from Montreal. And when you hear street numbers described as Twenty Hundred North, Thirty Hundred North, you know the speaker is from Chicago. There's another Chicago give-away. Chicago people do not call a gangster a hood, rhyming with wood. They call him a hood, rhyming with food. The term probably derives from hoodlum. Together with a certain kind of very flat *a* in the long form of the vowel, these are tell-tale marks of a Chicagoan. And for all the years he has lived in California, much about Lou Levy still bespeaks Chicago.

"The Streamliner was near there," Lou said. "Right up Broadway."

"Well I lived between Broadway and the lake about Forty Hundred North," I said.

"Well there you go," Lou said. "You know the neighborhood. So, listen to this. In the neighborhood, right around the corner from where my friend lived, we could walk one block and see Charlie Parker, Miles Davis, Max Roach, Duke Jordan, and Tommy Potter. That was the band. What more could you ask for at that time? Here I was, sixteen or seventeen. I couldn't legitimately get in there. But we managed to get in a couple of times.

"Somebody told Bird about me. I was sort of the hot-shot piano player on the North Side at that time. He asked me to sit in. Wow. That's the one time in my life I think I was really scared. I *knew* I wasn't that good yet. I lived through it. I didn't do too well. But they were nice. I played the set. Bird said, 'Hey, kid, come on, we'll talk. I'll buy you a drink.' I said, 'I can't drink, I'm under age.' He said, 'Okay, have a Coke.'

"He got me a Coca-Cola and he said, 'Have you ever heard Bud Powell?'

"I said, 'No, I've been listening to Al Haig.'

"He looked up and blew a kiss to heaven, I can still see him, and he said, 'Bud Powell.' I'd heard of Bud Powell but I hadn't heard that much because there weren't that many records out yet. The Dizzy Gillespie records with Coleman Hawkins. After that the ones with Bird and Dexter Gordon. None of those involved Bud Powell.

"I thought, 'I'd better start listening to this guy.' I went out and bought some Bud Powell records. And Bird was right. He certainly was right. *That's* my big influence, Bud Powell.

"Bud Powell was such an unusual person. Later on, I knew him but I didn't know him. He was one of those guys you could talk to and when the conversation was over you had no idea what had transpired. First of all, he was a very handsome man. An extremely good-looking guy. He had a dignified look about him. But he had his problems, as we all know. They weren't drug problems, they were mental problems.

"I saw him play at Birdland and other places. One night in Paris, in '58 or '59, when I was with Ella Fitzgerald and Jazz at the Philharmonic, Ray Brown and Herb Ellis and I went down to the Blue Note. Bud was playing there with a French rhythm section. Bud Powell saw Ray, who he'd worked with a lot with Bird and Dizzy. People had been telling us, 'He doesn't sound like he used to sound.' He got up at the piano, and proceeded to play like you never heard anyone play before. No one ever played better jazz choruses than we heard that night. Ray Brown said, 'Man, I worked with him on Fifty-second Street, I worked with him with Bird, he never played better than this.' He was playing *The Best Thing for You Would Be Me* at a tempo you wouldn't believe. That thing is a sort of roller-coaster of changes, it goes through round-houses of chords and sequences, and he did it like a loop the loop, chorus after chorus, relentless, with such strength. People tire after a while. Their fingers do get tired. He never ran out of gas. It was a night that I'll never forget! God, if only I'd had a tape recorder! I'd have had the greatest album of Bud Powell of all times.

"We went back several nights later and he never came close. When he saw Ray, it must have snapped his mind back to the good old days. We went back two or three nights, and he never played that way again. I heard him again in New York when he came back in his waning days. It was sad to hear him. You could tell what he was playing in his mind, but it didn't come out. The authority was gone. But that night in the Blue Note in Paris was the greatest jazz performance I have ever been lucky enough to hear. I worked opposite Art Tatum, and I heard plenty of pretty brilliant shit. Bud Powell was different. Bud was like a breathing horn. It wasn't even a piano any more. He seemed to be able to breathe into a piano. His articulation was like a horn player. When they refer to trumpet-style piano with Earl Hines, *this* was trumpet-style piano. Bird-style piano. He sounded like Charlie Parker on the piano.

"With all due respect to some favorites, Oscar Peterson and Bill Evans and Ahmad Jamal, those superb greats, I never heard anyone breathe that much human jazz emotion into a piano. It just was startling. Nobody articulates the piano like Bud Powell. Nobody's been able to duplicate it, although there are a lot of guys who try to play like it. I've even been accused of sounding like him at times. Somebody said, 'Gee, that was you? I thought it was Bud Powell.'

"I said, 'Oh? Listen a little closer.'

"That was a great experience. There are people who had more technique. Phineas Newborn had more technique. But Bud had technique. His raw way of playing, this diabolic attack that he had on the piano, didn't sound like a correct technique, maybe, to people. Maybe it wasn't pianistic. But

man! Sheer jazz elegance. And honesty. That was the real stuff.

"The humanity of it. I have never heard anyone else who could make the piano sound like it was breathed into.

"Another big influence on me was Nat Cole. Huge influence.

"Later on I worked opposite Art Tatum in Minneapolis. I could say my influence was also Art Tatum, but who in the hell can play like Art Tatum? Luckily I wasn't the kind of person who was intimidated by someone who was so much better than I. For one thing, I was playing with a group. I certainly wouldn't want to get up there and play solo intermission for Art Tatum.

"Art was very encouraging. He took the time to say things like 'Gee, that was nice. You're on the right track.' He took the time to make you feel comfortable. We'd play sets and there'd be an intermission and there'd be crowd noise and people shouting and talk and clinking and drinking, and Art Tatum would get up there and play brrrrring, and that place came to a deathly quiet, as if somebody had shut the whole place down. Silence. Not even a statement, just the way he touched that piano. It was a loud quiet. Zap. Now that's magic. No matter what he did, it shut the room right down to zero.

"Bill had that quality too. I mean Bill Evans. Is there another Bill? You just say Bill now and everybody knows who you mean. The room would go into a trance. It was different with Bill than it was with Art. Bill was so romantic. I remember the women would fall in love with him. I took a wonderful girl to see him once. We sat at the bar. And she went into tears. And she didn't know *that* much about music, and she didn't know who Bill was. She was in love with him from then on. It was at Shelly's Manne Hole. Larry Bunker was with him at the time. I remember Dave Grusin leaning against a post with his hands in his pockets, listening with total rapture. You're in the high rent district when you see someone like that in a trance over Bill.

"But all that was later. I got into the business pretty young. Local gigs around town in Chicago. Played with guys all over the city. At that time Chicago was a real hub for the guys from Kansas City, New York. They'd come through on their way to Milwaukee or St. Louis or the other cities in the midwest. There were tons of places for them to play.

"Not too long after that, Bird came and sat in with Georgie Auld's group, which now had Tiny Kahn and Frank Rosolino and Max Bennett and Georgie and myself. It was a great little quintet. We were up on the North Side of Chicago at the Silhouette Club, and Bird came all the way from the South Side for our last set. He did that two or three times. He'd come and play. And he was wonderful! He was always so encouraging!

"The good guys! Art Tatum. When they're that good, they're always very encouraging, very kind, very considerate to younger guys. It's always constructive criticism, if any criticism at all.

"Dizzy was always wonderful, and very complimentary. Miles, the few times I played with him, was very helpful. Very concerned. He showed me some things on the piano. The really great guys tend to want to help the younger guys. Especially when they hear them trying to emulate them.

"A long time later, I worked a gig with Stan Getz and Miles Davis. We did three nights in Arizona and one here at the Shrine Auditorium and one somewhere else. We had Max Bennett on bass and a guy named Gary Fromer on drums. There was a piano downstairs and I was playing the opening strain from the second violin concerto by Bartok, which I think is one of the most beautiful, soulful few bars of all time. Miles sat down and said, 'Play that again.' I played the same thing for Dizzy, he loved it.

"I got a gig with Sarah Vaughan, too. I was the first piano player she was able to hire with her own money. I was still living at home. She'd pick me up every night and take me to work at the Silhouette Club on Howard Street, and deposit me at home after the gig. She was real nice to my folks. That was a couple of weeks.

"Then I got a call from Chubby Jackson, on the recommendation of Tiny Kahn, to go to Europe with Conte Candoli and Terry Gibbs. It was Chubby's Fifth Dimensional jazz group. After three months in Sweden and Denmark, we came back and the group broke up. That was 1948.

"Chubby went back with Woody Herman and got me with that band.

"When I joined, Herbie Steward had been replaced by Al Cohn. So they had Al, Stan Getz, Zoot, and Serge Chaloff. The brass was Ernie Royal, Bernie Glow, Shorty Rogers, Irv Markowitz, and Stan Fishelson. The trombones were Bill Harris, Ollie Wilson, Bob Swift, and Earl Swope. Don Lamond was playing drums. Chubby on bass. Terry Gibbs was playing vibes. Oh God, what a wonderful experience! I'd love to go through it again now that I know a few things. When you're in the midst of such greatness at such a young age, I don't know if you realize what you're involved in. I was nineteen. The magnitude! I don't know if I appreciated it. I met Stan Getz in that band. I didn't know how good these guys were yet.

"One thing was made evident to me right away. Everybody in the band was crazy for Al Cohn. When he played, there was sheer reverence as everybody turned their eyes and their ears toward him. When somebody else played, they just looked straight ahead. When Al Cohn played, it was always something special. You can ask anyone who's left from that band.

"Yesterday, for instance, I was out at Stan Getz's house at Malibu. He played a tape that Al Cohn did in Amsterdam not very long before he died. The tune was *Some Other Spring* with a large orchestra. It's like it came from heaven, you can't believe how gorgeous it is. Stan still has that same reverence for Al. I remember in 1948 and '49, Stan would look up at Al with those blue eyes of his and just stare at him when he was playing. This is Stan Getz, and he's pretty snappy himself."

(To be continued)