Gene Lees Ad Libitum

Jazzletter

PO Box 240, Ojai CA 93024-0240

September 2002 *Vol. 21 No. 9*

Opinionating

As you may know, the *Globe and Mail* in Toronto is considered Canada's national newspaper. From time to time its arts or book editors have called on me to contribute pieces, and I have done so. But recently the paper printed something so outrageous that it sent me to consulting a number of musicians and critics.

Reviewing of books or anything else is not just a matter of having opinions — or *opinionating*, as I like to call it. Some things are matters of fact, and when facts are available, opinion is intolerable.

Charles Edward Smith, George Frazier, Bill Coss, Leonard Feather, Don DeMicheal, George Hoeffer, George Simon, John S. Wilson, and Stanley Dance are all dead. For some time now, I have been saying that when Nat Hentoff, Whitney Balliett, Dan Morgenstern, Ira Gitler and I are gone, there will be no one left who had direct contact with the principals of jazz, the men who created the music. Younger writers will be dependent on books and articles and other printed sources which are often wrong. And their errors will be reproduced. Part of the function of the *Jazzletter*, as you know, is to get down in print as many memories of history as possible. For when these musicians are gone, there will be no more primary sources, and much history will have been lost.

A *Globe and Mail* writer, reviewing one of my books a few years ago, said that I left my home at Burlington Beach to seek fame and fortune. I presume that he left his home to seek obscurity and poverty, but let that pass. Burlington Beach was never my home. My parents lived there for a while, and I spent some time with them in order to go to the beach. The writer had to show you how much *secret knowledge* he had of my life and career. This is the hipper-than-thou syndrome. Leonard Feather always credited me with coining that expression, but I think I got it from Leonard. What that writer said could get picked up by other writers. The *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* has my birth date wrong. And the date gets reproduced, because an encyclopedia, after all, is an Authority. Is it?

The 1973 *Encyclopedia Britannica* says of Fauré's *Requiem*, "It was composed in memory of his father . . . ." It was not. His father was alive when he wrote it. Similarly, any number of jazz articles have said that Bill Evans wrote *Turn Out the Stars* on the occasion of his father's death. He did not. That song was written in the little basement apartment Bill shared with me for a while. One night when Bill was out, playing at the Village Vanguard, I noticed the name of a movie in *TV Guide*, something called *Turn off the Moon*. I altered that and gave it to Bill when he got home. When he and I wrote the song, his father was alive and well and living in Florida, and in fact Bill had just returned from visiting him. But the piece was later played in a segment of a Town Hall concert that was dedicated to his father's memory, and this was stated in the liner notes of the resultant album, setting the myth in motion. And of course the myth of the death of Bessie Smith unleashed on the world by the irresponsible John Hammond continues on its way. These things illustrate Voltaire's point that "history is a fiction that has been agreed upon." Henry Ford was castigated for saying, "History is bunk," but what he actually said is "History is bunk as it is taught in schools," and he was right. And so the appearance of egregious error in print is a matter for concern.

(I have proposed that some university set up a data base of all the errors about jazz that find their way into print, but so far no one seems interested.)

I have found the *Globe and Mail* in error about jazz on a number of occasions, but something that appeared there a few months ago is unconscionable, a review of a book about the famous concert in Toronto's Massey Hall nearly fifty years ago, on May 15, 1953.Titled *Quintet of the Year*, it is by a British television producer named Geoffrey Haydon. He describes the concert, which would hardly provide material for a 369-page book, but he fills it out with outlines of the lives of the five participants, Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, Bud Powell, Charles Mingus, and Max Roach. I haven't read the book; I have no need of it, and in any event much British writing on jazz gives one the impression that the writer is looking across the Atlantic with the telescope turned backwards. For example, Max Harrison, who writes about America with confidence and lofty British aplomb, has never

been here, and is apparently proud of it. Stanley Dance lived here much of his life, and he still didn't quite get the hang of it.

Haydon's book was reviewed in the *Globe and Mail* by Edward O'Connor. His review contains this paragraph:

"The raw material of the lives is heartbreaking. Gillespie was the only one of the five who didn't spend time in the psychiatric ward at Bellevue. We learn that Parker's first drug of choice during his miserably brief youth was ground nutmeg. He then graduated to Benzedrine and went on from there. He was only 34 when he died, but a doctor who examined him in the last week of his life assumed he was in his sixties. Mingus was a paranoid who punched two of his horn players in the mouth, deliberately trying to ruin their embouchure (sic). At the age of 20, Bud Powell sustained brain damage from a beating by the Philadelphia police that would plague him for the rest of his life. Gillespie and Roach were dogged by alcoholism."

I don't know who says the doctor judged Parker to be in his sixties, Haydon or O'Connor, but it's wrong. It wasn't a doctor who "examined him in the last week of his life." It was the medical examiner who examined his corpse, and he thought Bird was in his middle fifties.

But that's not the disturbing line. The upsetting assertion is that Dizzy was dogged by alcoholism.

I was friends with Dizzy from 1959 until he died. I was with him at many festivals and in many cities, and I sang with him in a concert in Ottawa, spending two or three days with him without interruption. I never saw Dizzy take a drink.

Not trusting my own memory, I called a lot of people who knew him well. When I read that line to Phil Woods, who worked extensively with Dizzy, he said, "That's bullshit!" Phil and I have both done a fair bit of drinking, and so are not looking down from a tower when we discuss boozing. Dizzy just wasn't one of us drinkers.

I called Nat Hentoff, who knew Dizzy extremely well. He said, with some heat, "That's ridiculous." I spoke to Roger Kellaway, who did a tour of Israel in Dizzy's group. He said, "Dizzy didn't drink in Israel, and he didn't drink on the boat."

I called two of the pianists who worked most with Dizzy, Mike Longo and Junior Mance. They both denied that Dizzy was alcoholic.

I called Dave Usher, a successful Detroit businessman who once owned DG records with Dizzy and often functioned as his manager, and certainly was his constant adviser and consultant. Dave traveled with Dizzy on the famous Middle Eastern and South American big-band tours. He said, "Oh bullshit. I'll tell you the kind of alcoholic he was. Give him one drink, and he's tipsy. Dizzy was not a drinker."

We all knew of course that Dizzy was partial to pot. That's the only thing he did. And not that much of that. For the record, I have known many persons who died of alcohol and its complications. I have never heard of anyone dying of marijuana, and I strongly favor its complete legalization. This is not for reasons of rationalization. I don't use it and in fact don't like it, but that doesn't mean I haven't watched others use it year in and year out with pleasure (it certainly enhances your hearing!) and without deleterious effect. I have a composer friend nearing eighty who has been using it since he was in his teens, and he is perfectly functional, and brilliant. But that's a discussion for another time.

After surveying many of Dizzy's close friends and professional associates, I sent an e-mail to Jack Kirchhoff, the book editor of the *Globe and Mail*, protesting the assertion and expecting my letter to be printed. One of the things to which I objected is that O'Connor states without qualification that Dizzy was dogged by alcoholism as a fact, not as an opinion, and not even as a quote from the book. This means that it is said with the full weight of the newspaper's authority.

Kirchhoff not only didn't print my letter, he turned it over to O'Connor to refute. This is what O'Connor wrote:

> The statement that Dizzy Gillespie was "dogged by alcoholism" was based on the following passages from *Quintet of the Year* and Gillespie's autobiography *To BE or Not . . . to BOP*.
>
> [Geoffrey Haydon tells how DG missed the news of Martin Luther King's assassination because he spent the day and night of April 4 1968 in a drunken stupor. He then says:]
>
> "Reflecting soberly upon this and other alcohol-fueled follies, Gillespie recognized that he must climb from the degrading circle of boredom, depression and binge-drinking into which he had descended. His guide towards redemption was Beth McKinley, a missionary for the B'hai faith." p. 184

Please note that Haydon states these things as fact without even trying to substantiate them. O'Connor continued in his letter to Kirchhoff:

> [Gillespie describes the assassination-day incident and another at some length in his autobiography. He then says:]

> "Maybe that's the way the riots and the assassination of Brother King and, mainly, my own spiritual shortcomings of that time affected me. If something hurt or impressed me badly — or just out of plain boredom — I'd lapse into getting drunk and act extremely uncivil, until it occurred to me that I was going around the world making myself look foolish before people who respected me and the music we played. Yeah, traveling in Japan I got drunk on sake, which I thought was some kind of Japanese tea, messed up the music in rehearsals and made an ass out of myself by getting into an argument with Moody on stage . . . . Shortly after that I stopped drinking altogether. It took me a little while to reach that conclusion." p. 472.

O'Connor concludes his letter to Kirchhoff, "Sounds to me like DG qualified as an alcoholic. The fact that he got his life together with the help of the B'hai faith and stopped drinking entirely doesn't deny this — it only serves to confirm it.

"Let me know if you want anything further on this."

Ah. I see! The scales have fallen from my eyes. If you drink you're an alcoholic. And if you don't drink, that *proves* you're an alcoholic.

I asked Moody about the incident in Japan. He said, "Oliver Nelson brought in a big bottle of sake, and Mike Longo and Dizzy and the rest of us got messed up. We laughed about it the next day."

No one can speak with more authority on this matter than Moody. First of all, there are few persons alive who knew Dizzy as long as he did. They first worked together in 1946. Second, Moody is himself a recovered alcoholic, and speaks openly about it. He has been dry for decades. And he said flatly, " Dizzy was *not* an alcoholic."

In his biography of Dizzy, Alyn Shipton says that on the day of Martin Luther King's assassination, "his reaction to the news was to get spectacularly inebriated . . . ."

I'm sure he was not the only one to do so. Shipton states: "He had never been much of a drinker, enjoying a taste after playing or smoking a small amount of marijuana . . . ." Note that Haydon says that Dizzy *missed the news* of King's death because he was in (contemptuous, judgmental phrase) "a drunken stupor," when Shipton says he got drunk *because of* the news.

And, in any case, a few benders in a lifetime do not an alcoholic make.

Edward O'Connor's only authority is two books, both of them dubious. Anybody who knows the jazz world intimately knows that Dizzy did not write that autobiography. His "collaborator" Al Fraser did. And Leonard Feather had reason to believe that Dizzy never even read it. Dave Usher said, "Oh I know very well that Dizzy didn't write that book. Some things that were purported to be so in that book are not true."

When I read the quoted passage to Nat Hentoff, he said, "That doesn't even sound like Dizzy. Can you imagine him saying 'I'd lapse into?'" When you have interviewed anyone as often as Nat and I interviewed Dizzy, and known him as well as we did, you know his diction and the rhythm of his speech. And that paragraph assuredly doesn't capture them.

I decided to check among my friends in the Toronto jazz community. I first called Mark Miller, the regular jazz critic for the *Globe and Mail*, author of several books on jazz, including a recent companion to jazz in Canada, and a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*. I asked him if he'd ever heard of O'Connor. He said, "In a word, no."

So I called the photographer John Reeves, who knows everyone in the jazz world in Canada, and Bill King, editor of *The Jazz Report*, a Canadian jazz magazine. Neither had ever heard of Edward O'Connor. I called the trumpet player Guido Basso. He'd never heard of him, and Guido too knew Dizzy well. When I told him the assertion about Dizzy's alcoholism, he too said, "Bullshit."

Another Toronto friend is Paul Gollom, a lawyer and non-professional classical clarinetist. He said, "As a lawyer I encounter instances of bent truth every day. I suppose if one becomes inebriated once or twice in a lifetime, then this renders that individual an alcoholic, according to the *Globe and Mail*'s critic. Imagine the frustrations encountered by a libel and slander lawyer who must deal with these issues each day. Truth may be relative but some facts are actually subject to verification. Mr. O'Connor did not think twice before he took the leap into the fantasy world. One wonders why Mr. O'Connor felt compelled to express this judgment in a review. I read the review and concluded that the book was not worth acquiring. This really says more about the reviewer than the book. I am not familiar with Mr. O'Connor other than by that review."

O'Connor not only doesn't know the jazz world of the United States, he doesn't know key figures in Canada. Jack Kirchoff finally got back to me, writing:

"Edward O'Connor is a writer and editor who lives in Toronto. He is, I believe, in his early thirties. He has written one novel about a jazz-guitar prodigy, a few short stories and

several articles, and three or four on jazz topics for the *Globe* over the past eight or so years."

Oh boy. One of those people who write novels about jazz. I remember a college girl who called me at the *Down Beat* office around 1960. She asked me to have lunch with her and teach her "all about" jazz slang, because she was planning to write a novel about jazz and wanted it to be authentic. I do not recall my response. You'd think that someone in Toronto who wanted to write a novel about jazz would at least get to know Guido Basso et al.

Note that O'Connor cites secondary sources as his "authority" for stating that Dizzy was an alcoholic, two books. Why didn't he go to primary sources, such as Phil Woods and James Moody, or for that matter even me? I was in the audience the night of that Massey Hall concert. But more to the point, Haydon could have gone to Dave Usher. Dave was not only there, he was backstage all evening with the principals, and it was he who took Charlie Parker to the airport for the return trip to New York. "Bird was drinking," Dave told me. "Dizzy wasn't, but then he hardly ever drank." Usher was a witness to all that went on that night, and Haydon never even consulted him.

Nat Hentoff said, "The whole thing really buttresses your theory about people depending on secondary and even tertiary sources."

For some time now I have been in discussion with my friend Judith Schlesinger about the fad and tendency to think of creative people as mad. A lot of jazz musicians know Dr. Schlesinger quite well. They may not know her professional qualifications. This is a partial list:

With a PhD in psychology from NYU, she is a psychotherapist with seventeen years of teaching university-level psychology. She is listed in the international academic data base as an expert on the psychology of music. She is a member of the American Psychological Association (active in Division 10, for psychology and creativity), a member of the National Association of Science Writers, Jazz Alliance International, a past consultant to psychology's flagship journal, *The American Psychologist*, and she is currently on the board of *Ethical Human Sciences and Services: An International Journal of Critical Inquiry*, where her three-part series on creativity and madness has been appearing. She is writing *Dangerous Joy?: The Mad Musician and Other Creative Myths*. It traces, she says, "the nonsense back to Plato and examines its crumbly, pseudoscientific foundation." She wrote the following for the online publication *All About Jazz*. It is reprinted by permission.

The JazzTimes Halloween Scare

By Judith Schlesinger

In October of 2002, *JazzTimes* ran a cover story called *Hard Bop, Hard Time: Music, Madness and Roy Brooks*. It was good timing, since the article was as dark and scary — and as full of fantasy — as Halloween. It warns that jazz musicians are especially prone to developing bipolar "disease," a "treacherous" mental "illness" that destroys creativity and careers and kills people.

Using the sad story of drummer Roy Brooks as his outline, writer Jim Dulzo paints an overgeneralized picture of the dangers facing creative people, misrepresenting the nature of bipolar diagnosis and treatment. He's probably scared a lot of people, and it's completely unnecessary.

I don't doubt his good intentions; it's important to expose the lack of adequate health care for jazz musicians, and I'm glad to see the wonderful Jazz Foundation get some press. But this article is not only misleading, it's written in crescendo, which makes it sound even more urgent and dire.

To be fair, Dulzo is no mental health professional. He's a music industry guy who interviewed one expert (Roberta Sanders, Roy Brooks's therapist) and read another (psychologist Kay Jamison, the most passionate proponent of the "mad creative" notion). I believe Dulzo misunderstood his first source and was suckered by the second — as so many are — into assuming her research is the definitive, scientific answer to the ancient questions about creative madness. Moreover, as an outsider, Dulzo would have little idea of the heated, long-term controversy within psychology's walls about the validity of diagnosis in general, the existence of mental "illness" in particular, and whether creative people are necessarily more susceptible to it.

This isn't the place to unspool all these controversies, since my goal is to shed some light on the darkness as quickly as I can. Besides, bipolar disorder has a much wider range of severity than Dulzo describes; you can get the diagnosis if you have only one episode in your life. And many people with that label — including those who've been hospitalized in the past — are living productive, stable, and even contented lives.

And now to the major inaccuracies in the article:

Bipolar disorder is a death sentence.

Dulzo's contention that "depression killed Thelonious Monk" is simply false. Monk's psychology may have derailed

his career, but his life was ended by a stroke at age 64. In any event, bipolar disorder is not necessarily a "vicious," "merciless" "disease" that inevitably "whips its victim's mental state between crippling lows and maniacal highs." Dulzo overlooks the full range of official possibilities, including the Bipolar II category where the mania is less severe and called "hypomania," which literally means "under mania." There's also a relatively mild syndrome called "cyclothymia," for people whose emotions tend to dip and rise (and who used to be called "moody)."

Dulzo also warns that "Jaco Pastorius' fate offers a chilling reminder of just how quickly bipolar disease can kill," speculating that "his illness probably led to the confrontation and resultant brawl that killed him in a Fort Lauderdale bar."

Who can prove it? It also troubles me how this evokes the insidious stereotype that the mentally "ill" are more violent than the "normal." In fact, the opposite is true, and by a long shot.

People with bipolar disorder "have to [see] therapists daily" and require "long-term, publicly-funded, assisted living."

These claims, attributed to Roberta Sanders, startled me and all the colleagues I mentioned them to. Worse, they've unnecessarily alarmed people. Intensive treatment may be necessary for those in acute episodes, who are often hospitalized. But most diagnosed bipolars are not in continuous crisis and can visit their therapists on a more relaxed schedule. (Some even function without them.)

As the director of a mental health clinic, Sanders must know this. My bet is that she was quoted out of context, with Dulzo drawing on her 20 years of frustrated compassion for Brooks to paint a picture of universal doom. The truth is that not everyone slips through the cracks, and not every jazz musician is poised on the edge of darkness.

People who abuse drugs and alcohol are really bipolar.

To strengthen his case about the terrible psychological perils of jazz, Dulzo throws some famous addicts into the mix and suggests they were bipolar, too. Although clinicians have connected some dots between substance abuse and bipolar disorder, they still can't tell chicken from egg: for example, do people get drunk and stoned to self-medicate their bipolar discomfort, or do drinking and drugs cause bipolar disorder? For the record, the bipolar spectrum contains a special category for "substance-induced mood disorder" (which can be either manic or depressive, or both), suggesting that if addicts were to quit, they might lose their mood disorders as well.

All jazz writers are qualified to make clinical diagnoses.

As much as I admire Gary Giddins, Nat Hentoff, and Ira Gitler for their perceptive jazz criticism, Dulzo presents their opinions as if they were clinical evidence. For example, Giddins writes beautifully, and he's certainly entitled to speculate about "the very thin line between being eccentric and being truly ill," but that doesn't make it a psychological fact. Besides, trotting out the same old roster of troubled musicians to "prove" that all musicians are in danger is stretching it, to say the least. At best, it's selective reporting. What about Diz and Duke, to name just two of the many who managed to remain brilliant, prolific and sane? The media and public love those shooting stars — they're far less interested in long, productive, stable lives. That's why we get feature films about Chet Baker and Bird, rather than Ray Brown and Brubeck.

"Jamison cites formal biographical studies which indicate that between one-quarter and one-half of artists are mentally ill — two to five times above the 'normal' rate of the general population."

This is absolute nonsense. All of these numbers are estimates, and the ones about artists border on the hallucinatory (more on that soon). In the latest psychiatric bible, the DSM-IV, the lifetime prevalence rate of the most-serious Bipolar I disorder is estimated as being up to 1.6 % of the general population; the chances of getting Bipolar II disorder is allegedly .5%. This means that the total "normal" rate is about 2% of the population. Now, if we believe the worst-case guesstimate — that 50% of artists are "mentally ill" — we're actually hearing that artists are twenty-five times more likely to have this problem. This is horrifying and unsubstantiated, as well as bad math.

First of all, you cannot make a confident statement like this unless you're drawing on large-scale studies that compare bipolar frequency among creative and non-creative people — assuming you can define those things precisely and to everyone's satisfaction, which has so far been impossible. The truth is, nobody knows the actual percentage of artists among us.

What Jamison and others have done is project a number based on their selective focus on celebrities who fit the stereotypes of the disturbed or out-of-control artist. Few people notice that one of Jamison's most quoted claims — that 50% of poets are mentally ill — comes from only nine people in her 1989 study, but it still remains a headline. Unfortunately, her research is rarely examined closely, even by those with the training and responsibility to do it — including psychologists, textbook writers, and — as you will soon see — heads of major national studies. Moreover, some of her most influential conclusions about artistic "madness" were based on the same 47 people, all of them personally selected, interviewed, and judged by herself.

The large-scale research that could produce the definitive answer has not been done, and in fact a terrific chance to do so was recently botched. In 2001, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) launched a $22 million study of bipolar disorder, the largest survey ever, recruiting five thousand participants at 18 centers across the country. With five thousand people filling out questionnaires, it was the moment to finally nail down, once and for all, and with real scientific validity, whether creative people are more vulnerable to bipolar disorder — but they dropped the ball. They're just not interested, according to the head of the study, whom I personally interviewed (and who referred me to Jamison's work for answers).

Meanwhile, the wording of their occupational questions prevents freelance artists from clearly identifying themselves as such. As a result, even if this massive research does scoop up a number of jazz musicians (as well as other creative types), their responses will disappear into the larger mix. It's a sadly missed opportunity.

More on those "formal biographical studies" . . .

There's nothing "formal" about them, not in the sense of legitimate scientific method. These studies are what I call "psychological autopsies," a pop-psych technique of diagnosing artists, most of them long deceased, by looking at their letters and what their contemporaries had to say about their behavior.

There are only a few documented cases of suicide or asylum visits to suggest a serious problem in the days before clinical psychology. Otherwise, these "formal" investigations consist of pawing through someone's history for "evidence" that supports the researchers' already-firm belief that creative people are nuts.

For example, if a woman writes that her brother the composer has his ups and downs, and a poet famous for his passion describes passionate moments of elation and despair, they're slapped with a bipolar label and added to the long roster this method invariably generates. The list is then published in a big book, such as Jamison's *Touched with Fire*, or Ludwig's *The Price of Greatness*, together with lots of impressive charts, then swallowed whole by the public — and far too many professionals. Diagnosis in real time is difficult enough. Diagnosing someone who's been dead 200 years is flimsy. Using such blatantly biased techniques to shadow every artist with the threat of mental "illness" is nothing less than irresponsible, and a lot closer to outrageous.

I don't blame Dulzo, for how could he know all this? Jamison is the most vocal and prolific champion of the link between creativity and madness who co-wrote (not authored, as Dulzo says) a textbook on bipolar disorder, then became a media darling when she "came out" as a bipolar herself, in *An Unquiet Mind.*

She's spent much of her career making bipolar disorder an elitist badge of creativity.

Again, this isn't the place to detail what's wrong with her theories, and why psychologists haven't mounted a greater public challenge to her claims. Let me just leave it at this: Jamison's research is full of holes, but her conclusions are popular because they confirm what so many people want to believe — that creative people must suffer for their talent.

What is this thing called bipolar "disease," anyway?

Officially, bipolar is not a "disease" at all, but a "disorder." This reflects the profession's continued inability to find any diseased tissue brain anomaly, genetic or blood markers that are reliably associated with this behavior (or any other psychiatric diagnosis, for that matter). Every guild member knows that diagnostic categories are based on practitioner agreement and political horse trading, rather than hard science; they haven't been verified as discrete medical entities, and not for lack of trying. As it happens, the official definition of "mania" overlaps so thoroughly with the excited, productive creative state that many artists automatically qualify as "manic" just by doing what they do. In any case, all diagnoses, which change and grow (or disappear) with each revision of the manual, are made by an often-confusing symptom checklist which is notoriously subjective, and therefore prone to tremendous individual variation.

Funny: as I was writing this, in December of 2002, a new

study popped up in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology* which confirmed, once again, what clinicians have always known but try to keep quiet: that their personal theories influence the diagnoses they give. The increasing tendency to throw pills at psychological problems gives the false impression that their physical causes are fully known and understood, when they are neither. You can take it straight from the new study, done at Vanderbilt University: "In the case of mental disorders, there is no basic understanding of the underlying causes of these conditions. As a result, expert theorizing can be idiosyncratic and is likely to lead to conflicting diagnoses." (Ironically, this study was also funded by the National Institute of Mental Health.)

Defining psychological abstractions can never be precise, but the concept of bipolar has been particularly elastic. When the DSM-IV came out in 1994, it threw the diagnostic net so wide that it catches virtually anyone who's ever swung a mood. (The more disorders, the merrier — and, not coincidentally, the greater the chance for managed care reimbursement.) Meanwhile, the terms "bipolar" and its earlier, more romantic incarnation, "manic-depressive," have entered the language as descriptors of the peaks and valleys experienced by so-called "normal" people. As a result, bipolar diagnosis is increasingly common: more frequently made and more easily accepted, and, thanks to Jamison, rather chic. That still doesn't mean it's anything more substantive than a group of behaviors that professionals have chosen to call "bipolar." A "disease" it is not.

In conclusion, Dulzo has collected several pieces of the puzzle, but is working from the wrong picture. He lists some of the unique stressors that jazz musicians have to endure without recognizing how ongoing stress itself can cause psychological problems. And most "mad creative" researchers are so preoccupied with individual psyches that they ignore the inherent difficulty of trying to make a living as artists in a world that isn't very kind to them. Besides, most of their information comes from writers, who are eager to verbalize (and often dramatize) their emotional turmoil. They're not talking to jazz musicians, who are more likely to vent through their music, and whose creative psychology may be very different, for all we know.

The bottom line is that artists should not fear they've got a ticking psychological time bomb in their heads. I encourage jazz musicians whose moods interfere with their functioning to seek help, but then I'd say the same thing to anyone who was stuck, stumbling, unhappy, feeling out of control, or making the same mistakes over and over again. Someday, science will know exactly how the brain creates differences in talent and temperament. Right now, it doesn't, and to claim otherwise — especially when it hurts and stigmatizes a whole group of valuable individuals — is . . . well, just crazy.

Here are three good books that may be of interest:

Creativity and Madness: New Findings and Old Stereotypes, by psychiatrist and three-decade creativity researcher Arnold Rothenberg. Published in 1990 by John Hopkins Press. Real science, takes the myth apart piece by piece.

The Mad Genius Controversy: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance by George Becker. Sage Publications, Inc. 1978. Out of print, but still available online. Worth hunting for.

Making Us Crazy — DSM: The Psychiatric Bible and the Creation of Mental Disorders. The Free Press, 1997. Written for a general audience by professors

— Judith Schlesinger

Afterthoughts

All of this has led me to thinking about the jazz musicians I have known in my life. Twenty years ago, I could say that I had known, and sometimes well, almost every jazz musician of importance who had ever lived. And Leonard Feather knew them all, including Jelly Roll Morton.

I began running their images in my head, examining who was "crazy" or "disturbed". I thought about an especially dear friend, the late Art Farmer, and found him in memory and in fact eminently stable and sane. I thought about another dear friend, Donald Byrd, whom I have always found brilliant. And Benny Golson, a warm, kind, thoughtful man with a long and happy marriage.

Bud Shank made money in the Hollywood studios, invested it wisely in property, indulged his hobby of Formula One racing, and retired from the studios to devote the rest of his life to jazz. He lives with his second wife in Arizona. Then there's the magnificent trombonist Dick Nash, who similarly made money in the studios and lives nicely and well in Tarzana and has a grown family, including a son, Ted, who is an outstanding tenor player. I remember what a monument of literate intelligence and realistic sanity Lockjaw Davis was. Les McCann may be a study in eccentricity and wild humor, but he is anything but crazy, and is an accomplished photographer and very fine painter. The lovers of the music-and-madness theory never tell you about the people who get into drugs or alcohol and simply, on personal decision, quit.

And then there's the magnificent Clark Terry, who having

achieved the pinnacles of jazz brilliance, has devoted his life to music education.

Sometimes, during my Chicago years, Ed Thigpen, then the drummer of the Oscar Peterson Trio, would stay with my wife and me in our apartment when the group was playing the London House. I remember warmly the pleasant times we passed together, and our long friendship since then.

I thought about how sane Hank Jones is, and the good life he has lived on his farm in upstate New York. I sometimes recall warmly a wonderful snow-bound weekend I spent there with Hank and his wife. And think about the late John Lewis, who was also an anthropologist.

You want to dwell on the ones who went off the rails? You can consider the alcoholic Bix Beiderbecke, but you'd be advised to look at the same time at his friend Frank Trumbauer, who became a test pilot for the U.S. Navy. And then there was Jack Teagarden, who was also an inventor who held several patents. Bill Perkins holds a number of patents. You should consider too those who went on to other professions. Bob Litwak became a heart surgeon. Jack Walters became a gynecological oncologist. Both are drummers. Trumpeter Sheldon Hendler became a biochemist and physician and does advanced research. Drummer Pete LaRocca became a lawyer. So did my friend Dave Klingman in Louisville. Facing the uncertainties of making a living in jazz, tenor saxophonist Spike Robinson became an engineer, worked for years in NASA, and when his children were grown, gave it up to go back to playing.

The curse of a jazz musician's life is the constant travel. Phil Woods jokes with the audience: "You don't pay me to play for you. You pay me to get here. I'll play for you for nothing." This travel inevitably causes a certain stress, although no different than that undergone by major concert pianists and violinists. It means a lot of time away from home, and no musician really likes it. But a psychologist with a love of jazz once noted to me that "they make very good use of their hotel time." And he meant that they often do enormous amounts of reading on the road and will surprise you with specialized knowledge of unexpected subjects.

But the other side of all this travel is a deep international sophistication. Quite a few jazz musicians speak at least one foreign language, and I've run into a few who spoke several. This gives them an unusually broad perspective.

The late Gerry Mulligan, one of my close friends, used to be frustrated, when he came home from the road, by the parochialism he found in average Americans who had never been anywhere, their sheer ignorance of the rest of the world. Aha! But Gerry used to be a junkie! the proponents of the artist-as-madman would with unseemly haste point out. Yeah, and he quit when he was still young. I know all the details of that story. When I was editor of *Down Beat*, I got interested in the use of heroin among jazz musicians and ran an entire issue on the subject. Over the years I questioned some of my acquaintances and friends who had quit heroin. You would be amazed at how many of them did so, almost all of them without help from those in the social "sciences." I questioned Al Cohn, Zoot Sims, Howard McGhee, Mulligan of course, J.J. Johnson, and more. I found there was no general explanation: each of them quit in his own way. And, J.J. Johnson told me, he found it easier to quit heroin than cigarettes, and he is not the only one to say this.

While we are on the subject, I favor the legalization, under controls, of heroin as well. But it will not happen, because prisons have become privatized, and are therefore growth industries. That means they need prisoners, and one way to assure that more prisons are built is to bust people for drugs.

If most of my friends have been jazz musicians, it has not been simply because I like the music and, as a songwriter, have had long working relationships with them. In large measure it is because I like them as people. Yes, I have known a few bad dudes among them. But they are mostly — and well above the norm of the population — good people, and equipped with the sure sign of high and quick intelligence: a fast sense of humor.

Are they obsessed with music? Yes, and I remember a piece of advice from a film producer I met: "Never trust anyone who isn't obsessive."

Now that I think of it, I don't.

Phil Woods was more than angry, he was incensed by the *Globe and Mail* article. He said, "Will they ever get it right? How much longer, Lord? I hate to contemplate what the non-swinging, non-loving, non-playing, non-writing revisionist motherfuckers will do to our lovely mistress when we are gone — let alone what they will say about our beloved friends who gave the full measure so nobly to the art and magic that we cherish."

As for John Birks Gillespie, he was one of the happiest human beings I ever knew. His marriage to Lorraine was long and rich. The most striking thing about him was his serenity. To be in his presence was to bask in the warmth of a gentle sun, and it was always a privilege.

And I shall never forget him.